

BISHOPSTONE PARISH
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Thursday 6th March 2008 at 7.30 pm.

MINUTES

- 1) **Present** : Parish Councillors : E R Draper (ERD) Chairman,
N T Barter (NTB),
T W Long (TWL),
J F Murray (JFM),
Neighbourhood Police PC Peter Jung
County Councillor : Tony Deane

There were 18 other people present, including Mr R Barrett representing the Montgomery Coal Charity.

- 2) **Apology for absence** : Apologies had been received from Parish Councillor B C Draper and from residents Mr and Mrs E Schruers.
- 3) **Declarations of Interest** : There were no amendments to those previously registered.
- 4) **Minutes of the 2007 meeting** : NTB proposed approval, seconded by JFM. Minutes of the meeting held on 1st March 2007 were approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 5) **Matters arising from the 2007 meeting minutes** : None
- 6) **Parish Council report for 2007** :

The Chairman asked the Clerk (TWL) to make a report on the Parish Council activity during 2007.

In January 2007 there had been 6 councillors with one vacancy and the year ended with two vacancies because of the resignation of Councillor Mrs Holdsworth.

Six council meetings had been held with only two councillor absences ; approximately 25 other external meetings had been attended by councillors where we had an interest to safeguard or where we found a value in being present. One training course on graffiti removal had been attended.

278 items were received by post and 315 e-mail messages. 48 letters had been sent and an unspecified number of e-mails.

The 30 planning applications upon which the council was consulted included :

- 1 new house (refused)
- 13 house extensions
- 7 garage, carport etc
- 4 lopping trees
- 1 conservatory (refused)
- 1 agricultural change of use
- 3 miscellaneous

Main achievements had been to expand the village website, maximise the services of the Parish Steward and encourage use of the Compactor lorry on its visits to collect bulky rubbish. Conversely the main failures had been to not get the C12 High Road condition improved, to not retain unchanged the Post Offices at Broad Chalke and Coombe Bissett and to have lost the mini-recycling point at the White Hart car park.

In 2008 we could expect to see the direction sign to the Parish Church installed, the feasibility study on the Three Horseshoes bridge completed so that Wiltshire County Council could decide how to treat it to satisfy the regulations, a boundary review to establish electoral areas for the new Unitary authority and a core strategy defined for the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Local Development Framework.

The aims for 2008 included :

- review parish footpaths & define maintenance improvements needed
- lay hardcore on muddy paths in the village
- add 2001 Census info to web site
- two litter collection days
- develop village history section on village website
- survey village road signs to define any upgrading needed
- try to interest somebody in organising a village fete
- continue defending the rural way of life

In response to a question TWL reported that the website was regularly updated and parishioners could receive notification of new additions by sending their e-mail address to bishopstone@talktalk.net

7) **Parish Council's accounts for the past year and observations on the current year :**

The Responsible Finance Officer (JFM) reported :-

“The financial year for the Parish runs from the 1st April through till the 31st March. This evenings report covers the year end 31st March 2007.

The principal income of the Parish comprises of a small share of the revenue raised from the Council Tax - £3,600 and interest earned on our funds held by our bankers £87.21.

Total expenditure excluding VAT amounted to £2,622.46.

The parish ended the year with balances at the bank of £4,656.53.

In accordance with the Act governing our financial affairs an internal audit of our accounts was carried out by Mr C J Atkinson of Atkinsons (Bishopstone) Limited. The external audit was carried out by Mazars LLP of Southampton. Mazars are appointed by the Audit Commission. No material issues were raised by either set of auditors.

After giving due notice and in accordance with the requirements the accounts were displayed on the parish notice boards over the period commencing 25th September 2007 and ending on the 22nd October 2007.

Whilst we have ended the year with what appears to be a fairly healthy balance in the bank it must be recognised this is due to the fact that the Clerk's work is being carried out by Mr Long free of charge. It is estimated that if we were to pay a clerk to carry out these duties it would cost the council between £1,000 and £1,500.

Another cost saving that must be recognised is the cutting of the grass at the recreation ground by Mr R. Thorne. This probably saves us in the region of £ 1,000 per annum.

If we were required to meet these expenses clearly the amount of the precept we claim at present would be insufficient in particular to meet all of our current grants. In recognition of this we have sought an increase in the Precept which if granted will raise it from the current £3,600 to £4,000. Care will have to be exercised in future to recognise the savings we are making through the work being carried out on behalf of the council by volunteers and I would recommend that we look to increase our precept annually at least by the rate of inflation.

As we are close to the end of the financial year ended 2008 I would advise that our expenses for the year will not exceed our precept and the balance at the bank will be approximately £5,100.00 I have brought with me this evening the annual financial return for the year end 31st March 2007 should anyone wish to review it.”

8) **District Councillor’s Report for 2007 :**

The District Councillor (ERD) reported that the May elections had been a significant event with the defeat of the Conservative Council by a Liberal-Labour coalition. The main issue that had defeated the sitting council had been the redevelopment of the Bourne Hill Council Office site. It was fact that something had to be done to improve the offices. Consultants had been engaged in 1994 who had recommended that the offices be moved to a new site at Old Sarum. This had been turned down at the time yet ERD had stated at that time and had consistently maintained since that it would have been the right step to take. Despite promising the electorate that the office development contract would be cancelled the new council had discovered that this would be impossible so the project was going ahead. It had been estimated at £16 million but would now be £19 million for a smaller building. Even after the development there would still have to be some council offices left elsewhere in the city. How the costs would be handled with the arrival of the unitary council was not known but it seemed probable that the new regime would end up paying.

Unitary government had been opposed throughout the consultation period but the Act had now been passed in parliament so it would be happening.

Residents would note that car parking charges in Salisbury were rising again. The approach was to further persuade people to use the Park and Ride facility. The final Park and Ride site at Petersfinger opposite Tesco was to be built although ERD had thought it wrong to position a site so close to the city centre. He had suggested with others that the under-used Culver Street car park should have had its charges reduced to those of the Park and Ride so as to encourage its use; the council had not agreed.

Only today the draft of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment had been published for consultation. Sites put forward had included three sites, Rebel’s Field, Netton and Whitlock, which he had expected Newcastle Estates to propose. It seemed unlikely that the sites would be agreed for development since the Forward Planning Team had considered that the majority of housing need in the village to 2026 would be met by small-scale infilling throughout the village and not through the allocation of large sites.

Social housing was not being allocated to village people because the points system allowed anyone who wished to live here to do so providing they had the required qualifying points. However old persons' bungalows were still largely available to local residents.

9) **County Councillor's Report for 2007 :**

County Councillor Tony Deane reported that in Wiltshire the standard of education was average which he did not think was good enough. He was therefore pleased that an Academy was to be built at Castledown with boarding places for 100 students. The County Council had also now been offered the opportunity of an Academy at Laverstock.

Waste and the need to recycle was changing our way of living for ever with the need to reduce the volumes going to landfill. Black boxes had been distributed throughout with some chaos in some parts of the county. However the problems would be overcome.

A unitary council would be about delivery and the record of Wiltshire County Council was that it had been good at delivery and better than most. 85% of council tax was paid to the county to spend and efficiency of delivery was a motive behind the move to unitary government. The transition was now taking place with electoral areas to be established of approximately 3,700 electors. Planning was a key activity and he hoped that the new area boards would, like the Salisbury Area Committees take that responsibility.

The C12 road was currently in a diabolical state. Two attempts had been made to rectify the pot holes. Unfortunately a 13 year backlog of road maintenance had been inherited when the present council had taken over so it would take time to correct things. Another attempt was going to be made on the road but they would be temporary repairs, there being no likelihood of an immediate rebuilding of the road happening.

10) **Neighbourhood Police Report for 2007/2008 :**

PC Peter Jung reported in some detail on the incidents that had occurred in the village between March 2007 and March 2008.

- 6 cases of theft from motor vehicles
- 4 cases of burglary
- 5 cases of theft
- 4 cases of criminal damage

Despite these incidents which were obviously distressing for the victims we should recognise that overall crime was a low level and everything should be done to keep it that way.

In response to a request he had tried to obtain figures for the number of speeding offences but had not been permitted to have actual numbers. The Safety Camera Partnership had written that :

"Since enforcement began in January of 2007, Bishopstone has received regular visits from the Safety Camera Partnership enforcement vehicles and overall, our statistics show a decrease in detection of incidents of offending.

Comparing the number of alleged offenders detected on each occasion of enforcement against the figure detected on the first day that enforcement was carried out, the numbers detected have been lower during 92% of those attendances. The latest attendance showed a decrease in offences detected of 48% compared to that of the first enforcement visit in January of 2007 I would suggest that the Parish Council members should be made aware that the time allocated to enforcement at community concern (exceptional) sites is considerably less than

that allocated to core sites where there is a history of collision injuries. This Partnership still follows the Department for Transport guidelines in regard to the time/hours allocated to enforcement at exceptional sites in that a maximum of 15% of the total hours spent enforcing at core sites (those with an accident history) can be allocated between all of the exceptional sites throughout the county.”

Responding to a question from the public about Neighbourhood Watch Bulletins that used to be circulated, PC Jung said that it was an area that the new PCSO would be looking at with a view to improving communication.

11) Village Hall Management Committee Report for 2007 :

The Committee Chairman (NTB) reported

“We really feel that we have at last started refurbishing the Hall, with a splendid new entrance and 80 new chairs. This could not have been done without grant-help from Awards for All, S.W.A.G., the Parish Council and of course a wonderful band of volunteers. A Refurbishment sub-committee was set up to obtain a Big Lottery Fund grant but although we got to the second round, we failed to obtain this particular grant. We are now looking into other ways of funding. Our priorities are insulation, heating and the kitchen/bar area with others to follow. We have applied to S.W.A.G. for a grant towards insulation and quotes are being obtained for double-glazing with basic work on the kitchen-layout and position on-going. Throughout the year we have had 6 films, 2 sales, 6 lunch club meetings and many other events to boost our funds for the work that needs to be done. Our grateful thanks to all our supporters, all our helpers and my hardworking committee.”

12) Recreation Ground Committee Report for 2007/2008 :

The Chairman appointed by the Parish Council (JFM) reported :

“A sub-committee to optimise the use of the recreation ground was formed by the Council and met for the first time in May of last year.

Rules governing its activities were adopted by the Council in July 2007.

Councillors Long and Murray were appointed to the sub-committee along with Mr S. Robinson who represents the Bishopstone Cricket Club. Should other sporting activities come to use the ground the Committee would look to representatives from such bodies to appoint someone to represent them on this committee.

Apart from optimising the use of the ground the committee is also charged with the responsibility of managing, safeguarding and protecting the interests of the ground.

As a guiding principle the committee, with the agreement of the Council, has agreed not to promote the ground in competition to the Chalke Valley Sports Club but rather that it should be managed in such a way that it compliments the activities of that body.

No budgets were set for the Committee this last year.

The only current user of the ground is the cricket club although the CVSC Football Section has used it on one occasion.

To promote the use of the ground the following actions are under way:

a) talks are at an advanced stage with the football section of the CVSC who have expressed the wish to use our ground: they currently run 4 teams and have only one pitch at their disposal. If successful this could result in them arranging for a changing room with toilets and showers being placed on the field: this would remain their property. If agreement can be reached with them over the use of the field they will be encouraged to run training sessions for children of this village.

b) we are also exploring the placement of junior goal posts at the ground which hopefully will encourage the youngsters to go and kick a ball around.

c) we are looking into the introduction of two sets of swings for use by the children. The cost and erection of the swings will be met out of R2 monies.

Part of the fence at the White Hart end of the ground has been trampled down, we intend to repair this at a cost of approximately £100.

A problem facing us is the removal of the debris left behind after the fire at the old pavilion. We have sought quotes to have this removed but clearly this work is not attractive to the local firms: one declined, the other lodged a price which is financially quite beyond us. A solution must be found if the football club are to erect their changing room at that site which is close to power and water.

If we can achieve this coming year what I have mentioned we should see considerable use being made of the ground this next year.

It would be nice if we could see other sports using the ground and we will be exploring this possibility. One thought we had but which requires volunteers is a Bishopstone children's rounders team.

In conclusion I would like to thank Trevor Long and Stan Robinson for their support this last year. Their time and input has been most helpful.

13) Parochial Church Council Report for 2007 :

The representative (NTB) reported

“Since our last Annual Meeting, there have been some repairs done to the Church around the Parapets and to the North Wall. The Church is used three times a month with the same number of clergymen as last year. A Carol Service was held in the Village Hall for 140 people and it was very much enjoyed. The status of Stratford Tony Church is the same and we are very appreciative of the grant towards the cutting of the grass in both Churchyards. Financially, the Church is on even keel, thanks very much to the efforts of the treasurer, Alan Bebbington and the hard-working Church Council.”

14) The Rev. Augustus Montgomery Coal Charity Report for 2007 :

The trustee Mr R Barrett reminded the parish that the charity had three trustees – The Rector, Revd Canon David Henley, Mrs Jill Bebbington and himself Mr Reg Barrett. The charity's income came from shares and its purpose was to help people in real need in the parish by

means of cash grants. Ten grants had been paid this year and it was especially satisfying that in almost every case the full amount suggested had been paid.

The Chairman (ERD) proposed from the chair that Mr Barrett continue as the Parish Council's trustee, all councillors concurring and Mr Barrett confirmed that he was willing.

15) **Public Question Time :**

Question : why could the 30 mph limit not be extended further along the High Road from Meadow View ?

Answer : at the time of its introduction we had complained strongly complained that the speed limit was not in the best place but the Highways Department had insisted that nothing would be done because of their policies. However the time would be coming for the Parish Council to raise the issue again as the County Council were required to prepare plans to implement the new government guidelines.

Question : If the Recreation Ground was to be developed then how could safety of children be protected ? Could a zebra crossing be installed for instance ?

Answer : Yes we realise that having the Recreation Ground on the opposite side of the road may not be ideal but we are at this point because of the history of it. A crossing on a minor road like this would be very unlikely.

Question : Some councils in Wiltshire are said to be disposing of assets. Would Salisbury be doing so ?

Answer : Based upon what had been said so far it seemed very unlikely.

Question : With the Unitary council, how would Parish Councils be affected ?

Answer : Officially not at all but the Chairman (ERD) predicted that in future years it was reasonable to foresee that this centralising trend would result in one parish for the Chalke Valley for instance and we would perhaps see the end of the small village parishes like ours.

Question : To help with sorting the recyclable waste why were there not different coloured black boxes for different things ?

Answer : The scheme was in its early days and we would see changes as it developed.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.30 pm

Signed as an accurate record :

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE