

Minutes of the Shipton under Wychwood Annual Parish Meeting, held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 8th April 2008 in the New Beaconsfield Hall.

PRESENT: S. Bean, Cllr. Hilary Biles, Caroline & David Beaumont, Anthony Cable, Michael Campbell, Anne & Peter Champness, Cllr. Malcolm Cochrane, Cllr. Jo Cook, Phillip Croxson, Gill & John Drew, Aelfthryth & John Gittings, Sir John Graham, Harry Grant, Margery Grantham, Pip Harries, Camilla & Hamish Harvey, Rosemary Hitchcock, Joan & Jack Howard-Drake, Jeremy Huntingford, Cllr. Neil Jagger, Pauline & Les Knightson, S. Lund, Anne Matthews, Cllr. Jill Mavin, Gwen McConnachie, Cllr. Robin McConnachie, Christopher Preston, Brian Rigby, Cllr. Rodney Rose, Annie Savill, Liz & John Shannon, PCSO Kirstyn Tyrer, Cllr. Alan Vickers, Peggy Walmsley, Liz Clarke-Watson, Cllr. Mike Watson, Daphne & Duncan Waugh, Sue & Stewart Williamson, Kay & Brian Young.

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Paul Chantry, Mary Cochrane, Rachel Grant, Gordon and Christine Halliday, Margaret and John Hartley, Jan Harvey, Gail Huntingford, James Walmsley, Jonathon and Belinda Wilson.

- 2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 10th April 2007:** The minutes were read out by the Clerk. Daphne Waugh proposed that they be accepted as a true record, seconded by Harry Grant and agreed unanimously by the meeting.

- 3. Chairman's Report:** Cllr. Alan Vickers introduced the Parish, District and County Councillors attending the meeting plus the Police Community Support Officer Kirstyn Tyrer, In the past year the Parish Council had held 12 meetings, considered 38 planning applications and received briefings from Gerald Simper on the Cotswold Voluntary Warden Scheme, Peggy Walmsley on the A361 Committee and Stuart Edlington on Cottsway Housing. The major event of the year had been the floods in July, The Chairman paid tribute to Cllr. Biles for her outstanding work during the emergency and the follow up process. Parish Councillors had taken part in meetings with various authorities and were liaising with neighbouring villages on future actions. Work has started on a Parish Emergency Plan as requested by the District and County Councils. Parishioners were invited to submit their names for inclusion in the plan if they had any relevant skills or equipment that might be useful in an emergency.
The Parish Council income for the year to the end of March 2008 was £24,000 in total. The precept had been increased to £18,000 for the year ending March 2009. This increase was to allow for the contingencies that Parish Councils are increasingly expected to cope with, and to ensure that the payments to the Clerk and the New Beaconsfield Hall were in line with best practice and that local facilities received an appropriate level of investment. The major expenditure is on grass cutting and new arrangements should make a significant saving on this item.

Two new sub-committees have been set up. One to involve allotment tenants in managing the allotment field and the second to undertake projects around the village. The Shipton Volunteers, run by Paul Chantry, has forty volunteers on the data base and spends two days a month on projects. The Spring Litter Blitz was the most extensive ever.

The Council has actively supported the work of the A361 Committee and, although the request for an extension of the 40mph limit on Burford Road and a change to 30mph on Station Road has been rejected by the County Council, we hope that some changes in the level of heavy traffic will happen. Repeater signs requests have also been rejected.

Planning applications are at about the same level as previous years. The Costcutters development has still not been finally resolved. In spite of great efforts by tom Jourdan, Hickman's have been allowed to extend their recycling business on Burford Hill.

Other points of interest have been;

- Successfully encouraging FWP Matthews to adopt Shipton Station
- Councillors attended the WODC Seminar on the development of rural strategies
- Councillors attended The Cottsway Open Day in Milton
- All Councillors attended the WODC seminars on the revised Code of Conduct – the only Parish to have to total attendance by all Councillors
- Raising the sewage discharge problem into Trots Brook with WODC
- £468 raised from Carols Round the Tree given to St. Mary's Church to help maintain the church fabric. Another initiative under discussion with the Church authorities is to arrange for the strewing of ashes on the bank in the closed churchyard.
- The website is now fully under Parish Council control and achieves 300 to 400 visits per week. Councillors distributed 20 welcome packs to new residents during the year.

The Chairman thanked all members of the Parish Council, and particularly the vice Chairman Malcolm Cochrane, for their hard work, help and support during the year. The Clerk, Alice Burns, had announced her intention to retire later in the year and on behalf of the Parish Council the chairman thanked her for her excellent work and commitment to the Council for the past five years. Looking to the future, the Chairman hoped that the parish would be able to resist the increasing political pressure to change our way of life and compromise our cultural heritage by maintaining and increasing the level of involvement in parish life and working together constructively with good will in an independent way

The Chairman then invited PCSO Kirstyn Tyrer to say a few words about her work in the Wychwoods as she had to leave the meeting early.

4. POLICING THE WYCHWOODS: PCSO Tyrer outlined the area she covered which extends to Great Rollright in the north. In the summer she hoped to be undertaking patrols by bicycle giving her more opportunity to stop and talk to people than using a car. The community were very supportive and PCSO Tyrer reminded parishioners that using the 0845 8505505 number gave immediate access to police help in non emergency situations. The police had been working to control speeding traffic in the village and in the two recent SIDS exercises a total of 30 cars had been detected exceeding the limit. They were also working closely with the A361 Committee to help where they could. Miss Tyrer had also begun a programme of visiting the Wychwood School, local playgroups and the regular coffee mornings. There had been 41 reported crimes in the area since April 2007 – 13 fewer than the previous year. The Chairman thanked PCSO Tyrer and hoped that she would continue to work closely with the Parish Council.

5. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Cllr Rose reported that the promise to get the Council tax increases down to 4% within four years had been achieved in two years. Cllr. Rose, in his capacity as chairman of the Community Safety Scrutiny Committee, has responsibility for reviews of all aspects of this service covering Coroners Courts, Trading Standards, retained Firemen, Emergency Planning. Unfortunately the fight to avoid the setting up of the South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre based in Fareham had been lost. The central control system was due to go live in 2010 and Cllr. Rose had been nominated as the Oxfordshire Director of the company formed to run the service centre. Other more local issues concerning Cllr. Rose are the development of extra care housing at the Langston House/ Greenlands site, and a major survey is now underway to look at the size of the potential development; also the monitoring of the Hickman's site to ensure that they adhere to planning constraints within their Certificate of Lawful Development.

6. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Cllr. Biles explained changes in the portfolio of interests she represented on the District Council. The financial settlement for local government had been dreadful with an increase of only 1%, well below inflation. Despite this the District Council would not be cutting services. There will be an increase of 4% overall on Council Tax.

The arrangements for domestic waste collection will change in 2010 in order to comply with new targets from the European Union. Non compliance results in large fines for councils. West Oxfordshire will have weekly collections of food and recyclables, and a fortnightly collection of residual waste. The green waste collection will be retained and it is proposed that this service will be free from 2009.

Langston House and Greenlands are still causing concern with the County Council changing their original commitment to the provision of extra care housing to 'include an element of ECH.' The area lost 16 beds when Langston House closed and the proposals do not compensate for this number at a time when there is a rising need for this type of provision. Parishioners can contribute to the consultation by contacting Cottsway or WODC.

Since the flooding emergency Cllr. Biles had stayed in touch with all the relevant agencies. The Environment agency had withdrawn an initial report after Cllr. Biles had drawn attention to serious errors. There were hopes for some funding from Europe but this is yet to be confirmed. The retained fire fighters from all over the county took on the brunt of the work during the emergency and Cllr. Biles asked that the parish formally recognise the work the fire fighters had undertaken. The three Wychwood villages will be meeting with the agencies, under the chairmanship of Cllr. Biles, in the near future to look at reports and recommendations. Hopefully this will be followed by action.

The new Bus Passes for over 60's have been introduced and can be used from 9.00am because of the infrequent rural bus services. Tokens can still be used if preferred. The Hospital in Chipping Norton should be built next year. The Theatre in Chipping Norton lost its Arts Council funding but WODC will continue to support its work particularly the provision of activities for young people.

Cllr. Biles expressed her enjoyment of her work and the satisfaction of helping people solve problems and asked if there were any questions.

The Chairman thanked Cllrs. Biles and Rose and asked for any questions. Mrs. Beaumont asked whether Bowerham was being run down as flats were being left empty. Cllr. Biles responded that a new tenant was moving in soon and a lot of work was needed to improve facilities there. Cllr. Biles would be monitoring the situation with Cottsway.

7. REPORT FROM ALLOTMENT SUB-COMMITTEE: Cllr Mavin reported that there were now 40 allotment holders, and that the Parish Council had agreed to let half plots in order to encourage more use of the land. New security arrangements were in place a new gate had been fitted and keys would be issued to tenants in the near future. Thanks were due to Jeremy Huntingford for all his hard work in arranging the installation. A Sub-Committee had been formed to look at the work needed to improve the allotment field. Priorities were more water points, improvements to the track and better arrangements for parking. The Wychwood Volunteers had proposed building compost bins to deal with the green waste from their clearing up activities and this proposal was under consideration.

8. REPORT ON PLAY AREA AND RECREATION FIELD: Cllr Cook reported that the whole area was well used by children from Shipton and the surrounding villages. Thanks to a donation from the Charity Ball funds the installation of a further piece of equipment was now a lot nearer. The Recreation field is used extensively by the junior football sides playing on 3 junior size pitches. The annual litter pick was more thorough than ever thanks to the help of the Shipton Volunteers extending the area covered to the Parish boundaries. Thanks were due to the many dog walkers who picked up litter throughout the year. A small committee had met with various contractors and had decided on a varied regime of cutting to allow some areas of grass to remain long whilst other areas would be cut more frequently.

9. REPORT ON TRANSPORT: Cllr. McConnachie informed parishioners about the transport survey being undertaken locally in conjunction with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, and urged people to take part. The survey was looking at transport to Woodstock and Chipping Norton. There were several outstanding problems with existing services but the level of use was still low. The train/bus link had also had problems with revision of bus and train timetables not being co-ordinated. The main aim was to encourage more people to use the service or it would be lost. The train service may improve with a feasibility study recommending the doubling of the track from Ascott to Finstock to create another passing place. Pressure on FGW had resulted in the early evening train now stopping at Shipton and a return stop on the train leaving Oxford at 10.52pm. There were concerns about possible increases in the parking fees for the Oxford City operated Park and Ride sites. Cllr. McConnachie invited questions or comments.

John Gittings commented that the pedestrian route from Shipton station at night was a deterrent to passengers. There was no footpath and the bridge was unlit and very narrow. Cllr. McConnachie would ascertain whether there were any plans to develop a crossing though in light of the recent accident at Tackley routes across tracks were unlikely to be encouraged. Cllr. Biles commented that the County Council had stated that the bridge was not wide enough for a footpath.

10. REPORT ON FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT: Cllr. Watson reported that a process of regular reviews of Parish Council accounts had started and would develop during the coming year. The accounts were being moved to a computer based package specifically designed for local councils. The year ended with a small operating surplus, despite investments made in improving the allotment infrastructure and support for the Shipton Volunteers. Overall the financial affairs of the Parish Council are well run with all significant expenditure being brought to the Council for approval. The precept pays for about 60% of parish council activities. The current level remains one of the lowest in the area and it is our goal to maintain it at a competitive level. We would also like to maintain a small surplus to build up a reasonable reserve to be able to respond to unexpected demands and to undertake long term improvements where needed. Plans are being made to improve the quality of the Recreation Field and also to undertake more work on the allotments. We rely on the goodwill of individual volunteers to maintain our environment but realise that in many areas we need professional assistance from time to time – we need to strike a balance between achieving a low precept and maintaining the village to the standard we would like.

11. REPORT OF THE SHIPTON UNDER WYCHWOOD UNITED

CHARITIES: The Clerk read the report prepared by the correspondent Mr. Tony Nock. The monies received by the charity in the year amounted to £1208.91 and payments of £1074.00 were made. The balance remaining was £3,168.02. Contributions had been made to Chipping Norton Hospital, Wychwoods Day Centre, Bowerham, Shipton Evergreens, Lawrence Home Nursing Team, Wychwood C of E Primary School and Wychwood Youth Club.

12. REPORT FROM THE LADY READE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION:

The report had been prepared by Mr. James Walmsley and informed parishioners that nine applications for funds had been considered in January. Seven applicants had received grants of £100.00 each and the remaining two applicants would be reconsidered when places in further education were confirmed. There would be increased publicity next year and Burford School would help to inform eligible candidates. Support had been received from Milton and Shipton Parish Councils and the Foundation was grateful for this.

13. REPORT FROM THE SHIPTON UNDER WYCHWOOD VILLAGE HALL AND RECREATION FIELD CHARITY:

Cllr. Cochrane reported that the hall continued to be a hub of community activity and would celebrate its 10th Anniversary on 30th August. This year a new activity, Malcolm's Café, had started on Monday mornings giving people an ideal meeting place. As the hall ages bills for repairs and renewals are increasing and a trading loss was anticipated this year. The Parish council had allocated a grant to help fund activities for young people and the Wychwood Day Centre. The first major outbreak of vandalism had happened this year when six re-enforced windows at the rear of the building were smashed. Thanks to the generosity of a local resident the costs of replacement were considerably reduced. Alice Burns would be retiring from her post as Hall Manager and the Hall Committee would like to express their thanks for her contribution to the success of the Hall. Sir John Graham asked if improvements could be made to the sound system and a microphone provided for public occasions. Mr. Knightson reminded the meeting that an induction loop had been installed but had not operated properly.

14. REPORT FROM WYCHWOOD CE PRIMARY SCHOOL:

The school roll stands at 294 pupils and all year groups except one are full. The new classrooms were completed on time and were available for use in September. The re- allocation of the old classrooms means that there is now a music room, another dining room and adult workroom and enabled the ICT suite to be moved. The School Travel Plan encourages children and parents to walk to school but local parking remains a problem. In November there was an Ofsted inspection which judged the school to be good and in December the Statutory Inspection of Anglican schools also gave a good report and in some areas judged the school to be outstanding. Sports teams have entered many competitions and several children have been successful in music exams. SATS results for year 6 were good in all three subjects. We are serving an average of 125 school dinners every day. The support of a very active PTA is invaluable and the children are encouraged to play their part in the community visiting the Day centre and raising funds for both local and national good causes.

15 OTHER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION:

a) A361 Committee: Liz Clarke-Watson updated parishioners on the progress made by the A361 committee in two years. Its aim was to make the A361 slower, quieter and safer, to persuade traffic to stick to limits and respect the village. Sixty volunteers were involved in traffic surveys; relationships had been established with other villages who suffered the same problems along the A361 route, Bloxham, Fulbrook, South Newington; SIDS operations were more frequent and a good relationship had been built up with local PCSOs. The next step was to raise more awareness and comments and contributions were wanted for the website.

b) Parish Council Minutes: Phillip Croxson asked why Parish Council Minutes did not appear on the Wychwood website. The Chairman responded that minutes were routinely put on to the website as soon as they were approved and he would assist Mr. Croxson to locate them.

There being no further questions the Chairman thanked all those present and declared the meeting closed at 9.20pm.