

**Minutes of the Shipton under Wychwood Annual Parish Meeting held at 7.30pm
on Tuesday 10th April 2007 in the New Beaconsfield Hall, Shipton under
Wychwood.**

Present: Cllr. Malcolm Cochrane (Chairman, Parish Council), Cllrs. Joanna Cook, Jill Mavin, Robin McConnachie, Alan Vickers, Mike Watson (Parish Council), Cllr. Hilary Biles (District Councillor), Cllr. Rodney Rose (County Councillor). Caroline & David Beaumont, L. & P. Champness, Mary Cochrane, John & Gill Drew, F. W. Evans, Aelfthryth & John Gittings, Gordon Halliday, John and Margaret Hartley, Camilla & Hamish Harvey, Paul & Judy Heywood, Joan and Jack Howard-Drake, Pauline & Les Knightson, Gwen Mc Connachie, John Pratt, Brian Rigby, Annie Savill, B. Sellars, Liz & John Shannon, James Stewart, Peggy & James Walmsley, R. Waterman, Terry Wigley, Sue & Stewart Williamson, John & Chris Wrate.

- 1.** **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr. Neil Jagger, Sir John & Lady Graham, Anne Matthews, Jonathon & Belinda Willson.
- 2.** **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11th April 2006:** The minutes were read out by the Clerk. The Chairman proposed that they should be signed as a true record and this was seconded by Mr. Beaumont and agreed unanimously.
- 3.** **Chairman's Report:** Cllr. Cochrane introduced the three new co-opted Parish Councillors attending the meeting, Cllrs. Mavin, McConnachie and Watson, and explained the areas of responsibility that each Parish Councillor had taken on, and that Councillors would report on those topics later in the meeting. Cllr. Cochrane commented on two planning applications that had caused concern locally. The Costcutters site proposals had been turned down at appeal but would re-appear, and the use of Hickman's site as a re-cycling base was also on-going although the appeal had been withdrawn. The new owners of the Tall Trees site would be applying for planning permission for a 60 bed nursing home with 10% local occupancy. The garden area was not involved in the planning application. The new planning process meant that many applications previously decided by the Planning Committee were now dealt with by officers mainly in order to help speed up the process. The A361 initiative had been welcomed and supported by the Parish Council but the County Council were the body who had the authority to implement actions to improve highway use. Although there were many ideas for traffic calming increasingly the OCC would not or could not fund them and would look to alternative sources of funding from other bodies such as Parish Councils. This year had seen an increase in the precept to £15,000.00 to offset the many expenses that now had to be met by the Parish Council such as emptying of extra litter bins, installing a street light in Ballards Close, increased charges for grass cutting. The 24% increase seemed high but when compared with other villages Shipton was still very good value. The year had also seen the establishment of the Living Churchyard project in conjunction with the Wychwood Project, and the installation of a new notice board courtesy of the delivery vehicle that demolished the old one. Cllr. Cochrane announced the establishment of a Monday Coffee

Morning at the New Beaconsfield Hall to give people an opportunity to socialise. Cllr. Cochrane also announced that he would be standing down as Chairman and praised his predecessors Mrs. Salter and Mr. Hartley for the contribution they had made to the work of the Council. He hoped that parishioners would continue to help and support the work of their Council, and thanked his fellow Councillors and the Clerk for their hard work.

4. County Councillor's Report: Cllr. Rose reported a busy year. There had been difficult decisions on setting the budgets and keeping to government imposed limits without compromising services. The County waste programme had three components reduction of waste, recycling and composting. A number of possible sites round the County were being considered as waste disposal sites of various types and difficult decisions would have to be made.

5. District Councillor's Report: Cllr. Biles was delighted to have been re-elected as District Councillor. There had been cuts in funding for the Supporting People programme which affected many aspects of assistance for the elderly, those with mental health problems and young people. There was continuing pressure to reinstate resident wardens in sheltered accommodation units. The changes in planning regulations meant that District Councillors had to be vigilant in looking at planning applications so that they could ask for applications that caused concern to be brought to the Planning Committee. Plans for the new Chipping Norton Hospital had suffered a series of setbacks but progress was being made. WODC had supported the County Council in opposing the bid by Oxford City Council to become a Unitary Authority. WODC were continuing to offer free parking in towns in the district as this was an important consideration for the wider rural community who used those centres for leisure and shopping activities. Mr. Evans asked about the plans for the timing of re-cycling collections. Cllr. Biles assured parishioners that no electronic chips were present in WODC bins and that the proposals being discussed were for residual waste to be collected fortnightly and food waste (in special containers) and recyclables to be collected weekly. A question about the ownership and future of Langston House was asked. This was now owned by Cottsway and there was discussion about whether more sheltered housing would be built. Cllr. Biles emphasised the promise that had been made when Langston House was closed that extra care housing would be created in the Wychwoods and she would be following the issue closely.

6. Report on Allotments: Cllr. Mavin reported that more allotments were being taken on since the Parish council had allowed part allotments to be rented. During the next year an Allotment Committee would be formed to help undertake some of the work that needed doing on the site and to prioritise some of the improvements for the site including better security, new water troughs and better surface for the track.

- 7.** **Report on Play Area, Recreation Field and Grass Mowing:** Cllr. Cook reported that the play area was inspected twice a year by ROSPA to maintain safety standards. The tunnel under the slide had been filled in and more drainage installed. The grass mowing programme had started and there would be less use of strimmers to avoid the scalping of the verges that occurred last year. The village litter pick 3 weeks ago was successful and litter levels were lower- mainly thanks to the help of all the dog walkers who pick up litter every day. Mrs. Beaumont raised the question of dog fouling on the play area and whether the dogs could be prevented from being on the site of the playground. Councillors felt it would be impossible to erect an effective barrier but urged everyone to put pressure on dog owners not to let dogs run free round the equipment.
- 8.** **Report on Transport and Policing:** Cllr. McConnachie reported that the new rail timetable had led to problems with the timing and routing of the Railbus service. First Great Western had provided the worst rail service in the country. David Cameron as the constituency MP had worked hard to push for urgent action to ensure better management by FGW. The target was to establish more stopping trains at Shipton and to ensure that an evening service was available. Park and Ride charges were likely to be increased. There were to be 5 Police Community Support Officers based at Chipping Norton Police Station. One of the problems so far had been that this limited number of officers had been deployed wherever necessary rather than having their own area. The Parish Council had been asked to help fund a PCSO post but without any guarantee that such funding would ensure a dedicated officer had decided not to contribute.
- 9.** **Report on the Website:** Cllr. Vickers reported that the website www.wychwood.org had been updated. The business directory had been revised and anyone with a business in the Wychwoods could have a free listing and a link to their own website. More photographs would be added next year. Welcome packs for new residents have also been revised and 25 had been distributed this year.
- 10.** **Report on Financial Management:** Cllr. Watson reported on new rules that needed additional oversight of the management of Parish Council accounts. Shipton accounts were well managed and a decision had been taken to implement a computer based system to enable consistent reporting to be made to Councillors. Current reserves were healthy and needed to be maintained at a reasonable level to facilitate modest investments in infrastructure. The level of tender for which three or more quotes would be required has been raised to £2000.00. The current precept is one of the lowest in the area but a balance had to be struck between achieving a low precept and maintaining the village to a high standard. The Council would continue to monitor expenditure carefully on behalf of parishioners.

- 11. Report of the Shipton under Wychwood United Charities:** The Trustees reported that monies received by the charity were £1472.23 and payments were £1170.00. Balances held at HSBC Bank were £3033.11. Contributions were made to Chipping Norton Hospital, Wychwoods Day Centre, Bowerham Home for the Elderly, Shipton Evergreens, Lawrence Home Nursing team, Wychwood Youth Club and Wychwood CE Primary School. Mr. Beaumont asked why individual payments were no longer made to parish residents.
- 12. Report of the Lady Reade Educational Foundation:** The charity had a balance of £1083.85 at 31st December 2006. Three applicants had shared a £300.00 grant. The Trustees were disappointed that only 3 applicants came forward and urged residents to encourage young people to apply.
- 13. Report of the Shipton under Wychwood Recreation Field and Village Hall Charity:** Mr. Halliday reported on activities at the New Beaconsfield Hall. The Hall continued to be used every week day and evening during term time and other one off events had included 4 charity balls, 2 weddings 5 plays and an opera. The hall was also a popular venue for birthday parties and other anniversaries. The Gym continued to be well used despite more competition than when it opened. Efforts to maintain and improve the appearance of the hall were ongoing. A small operating surplus had been made on turnover of £40,000.00. Mrs. Gill Drew, the booking clerk, whose dedication, enthusiasm and hard work over the years had ensured the success of the hall would be retiring in the summer. Everyone who visited or used the hall owed her a great debt of gratitude for all she had done to make it such a success.
- 14. Report from the Wychwood CE Primary School:** No report was made.
- 15. Other matters for Discussion:**
- a) **A361 Initiative:** Mrs. Walmsley informed the meeting of progress so far. The survey in October involved 47 volunteers and letters had been sent to HGV Operators congratulating them on good driving or noting excessive speeds. The group would continue to work on projects for speed reduction in co-operation with the police and wanted to share experiences with other villages and towns along the route of the A361.
- b) **WODC:** Cllr. Biles reported that the new Chief Executive of WODC, Mr. Neudegg would be shown round Shipton in the near future.
- Mr. Evans proposed a vote of thanks to all the Councillors for their work on behalf of the village. There being no other business the meeting closed at 21.25.