

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF BUTLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 6.30P.M. ON 3rd April 2012 IN THE CHURCH ROOM, BUTLEIGH.

PARISH COUNCILLORS PRESENT: A Brown (Chairman), A Carr, T Hoyle, M Hoyle, R Burdett, D Sharland, K Otton, T Dodkin

APOLOGIES: : Mr A Dawkins

OTHERS PRESENT: D Heeley, Mrs E Cuthbert, **G de Wilton, Mrs I de Wilton**, Mrs A Schloegl, D Schloegl, D Baldwin, Mrs C Baldwin, Mrs G Goad, Mrs H Holderness, R Holderness, Mr & Mrs Gaskell, **Mrs C Simpson, G Kirk, I Innes**, Mrs J Walker, Mrs G Service, Mrs R Moody, R Moody, J Worsdale, Mrs V Worsdale, Mrs S Stevens, P Bailey, **R Backhurst, Mrs M Backhurst, Mrs P Gane, A Laver**, Mrs W Jenner, Ms R Collinge, Ms B Rees-Smith, **Miss M Acland- Hood**, Mr M Ray, **Mrs A Scott**, Mrs P Ray, **Mrs M Brunt, G Brunt**, Mrs R Wren, G Alford, Mrs A Le Coq, C Dunne, Mrs U Dunne, Cllr **Nigel Woolcombe-Adams (MDC), Cllr Ken Maddock(SCC) (Those in bold stayed for the Annual Parish Meeting after the Community Led Planning presentation) T Done.**

PRESENTATION BY Guy Braga of SOMERSET COMMUNITY COUNCIL REGARDING COMMUNITY LED PLANNING introduced by Tim Hoyle.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Tony Brown reported :

WELCOME - Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting. This is a legally required event and it represents the opportunity for all Parishioners to hear reports of the activities of both the Parish Council and the various organisations within the Village. **CHAIRMANSHIP** – This is my third and final Annual Report to a Parish Meeting and I would reaffirm that a Chairman should not serve for more than three consecutive years.

I attended the investiture of the Street Parish Council Chairman in June and the kind invitation of Butleigh Cricket Club to celebrate their 50th Anniversary. The council has a full complement of councillors and consists of four elected and four co-opted members. I believe that the internal workings of the Parish Council are up-to-date and conform to all current legal requirements. We continue to face a challenging time ahead with the current financial climate in the country. The Localism Act is now with us and whilst it needs secondary legislation before it can be used, this is imminent. It will transfer some power from central to local government and this will change the role of town and parish councils radically with opportunities to change our communities.

As I have emphasised before, the central plank of the Localism Act is the chance to produce a neighbourhood plan which could be the only defence against unpopular development. As we have seen in the presentation earlier it is essential that any Community Led Plan is carried forward by parishioners and supported by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council has also had to comply with HMRC new ruling to register as an employer under the PAYE scheme.

COUNCIL MEETINGS – These have been held each month apart from August last year, usually on the first Tuesday of the month with no extra meetings needed within the last twelve months.

There has been an 85% councillor attendance record at meetings. Our Ward Councillor for Somerset CC, Ken Maddock, has not attended any of the Parish Council meetings, but our MDC member Nigel Woolcombe-Adams has attended 60% of meetings. Sadly very few members of the public rarely attend meetings with the exception being when controversial planning applications are on the agenda.

PLANNING As a “Statutory Consultee” the Parish Council received and offered responses to 34 planning applications in the Parish during the year. They recommended 20 for approval, 6 for refusal and 8 were left to the discretion of the Planning Officer. A number of important applications were considered including Affordable Housing, 2 Solar Parks, 2 proposed new dwellings and a farm building complex. 1 refusal went to appeal and was upheld by the Inspector. A successful negotiation with Solar Parks Ltd resulted in a voluntary contribution to the village of £2500 per annum for 25 years.

HIGHWAYS August 2011 Overhanging hedges/trees in High Street.

October 2011 Reported to County: Concerns regarding HGV's using the High Street after the destruction of a wall, and the speed of traffic through the High Street – particularly around the area of the school. November 2011 -Meeting with Tom Haywood on 9 November, we discussed the deterioration of white lines around the village, and the yellow horizontal lines on entering the village which should get people to slow down. I asked if it would be possible to renew the road lines to get people to take notice of the speed limit and recognise the junctions.

January 2012 Reported to County: the eradication of the white lines at the junction of the Baltonsborough Road and Watchwell Drove at Moor View. February 2012 reported to County: After an accident at the crossroads of Sub Road, Barton Road, and Wood Lane that the STOP sign on the Barton Road and the white junction markings are badly erased.

March 2012 Reported to County - concern expressed at the meeting on 6 March regarding HGV's using Wood Lane to gain access to Butleigh Wootton in order to deliver environmental waste. Back Town is also badly affected due to works being

carried out at the sewage farm. During December 2011 we acquired 25 bags of rock salt for use in the parish during severe weather.

FINANCE The Parish Precept for 2012/13 was set at £12,500 the same as the previous year and expenditure has matched the Budget on which this was based. In considering the Precept for the forthcoming year councillors were aware of the need to try to avoid any increase. By careful screening of bids received and allowing for unavoidable, recurring expenditure this proved possible; in doing so, it was necessary to reduce some bids to the same level as in the current financial year.

It is likely that more responsibilities will be devolved to Parish Councils in the next year or so and it is unlikely that the necessary funding will accompany these. So we must be prepared for the need to consider either an increase in the Precept required in the future or a trimming of grants and contributions. Most likely will be a combination of both measures and bidders should be prepared for possible reductions in future Parish Council financial support.

WAR MEMORIAL Although work had previously been done on repairing Butleigh's war memorial and a report compiled on restoration needed, no long-term work had been started to restore and preserve this memorial. Smaller restoration and patching had been completed some time in the recent past, but these repairs themselves are now badly weathered in many cases. So, in 2011 it was decided that work was needed to prevent further degradation of this old stone structure and major work conducted to preserve it in good condition for future generations in the village. Working on the previous report, and having spoken to Colin McNamee who was responsible for similar work in Baltonsborough, several local stone masons were contacted, who it was felt had the knowledge and experience to carry out works, as well as advice within their quotes on recommended courses of action. In the end, three masons – Peter Hayman of Taunton, John Mullin of Lydford and Glynwood & Plint of Glastonbury – met on site, with at least three members of the working group, and in each case a written report/quote was submitted soon thereafter. During this process it was stressed that minor patching of the stone was not what we were aiming at, but rather looking at a total restoration of the monument – stone work, carving, pointing & cetera. It was also asked of each mason to consider restoring the carved names so that they might be clearly read in situ. The working group met to discuss all three quotes, and the options contained therein, on Friday 30 March. From this meeting, and any decision reached, fundraising would begin to start the work - the village shop is already running an Easter raffle to raise money for the anticipated work. Taken in conjunction with the first annual laying of a RBL wreath by the Parish Council at the memorial in November 2011, it marks a more hands-on approach to this important monument in Butleigh. The service in 2011 was conducted alongside Butleigh Primary School, and was moving and well attended. It is expected that

we'll repeat this annually by Butleigh Parish Council, liaising with the school, and publicising it as a village event in the parish magazine

ENVIRONMENT Fly tipping continues to cause a blot around our parish. The services of Mendip District Council are occasionally needed to collect the items which range from car tyres, rubbish bags, builders wastes materials etc. The parish annual litter pick took place last Saturday and 24 volunteers supported this venture with generally slightly less litter collected, however people still disregard a lot of rubbish along our highways and byways.

FUTURE PROJECTS

- 1) A presentation on Community Led Planning was given in November to the Parish Council by a representative of the Community Council for Somerset following which the Parish Council agreed to pursue a Butleigh Parish Community Led Plan which was outlined earlier.
- 2) Following a note inserted into Parish News and Views a little interest has been shown in the need for a Parish website; volunteers are still required in order to move this forward.

CONCLUSION We await commencement of the building of 8 affordable homes off Chapel Lane and ultimately the larger housing development on the Old Hospital Site which will remove an eyesore at the southern approach to the village.

This council has supported the formation of The Butleigh Community Emergency Group and three meetings have taken place since its formation.

The Bus shelter is undergoing a spring clean and re-decorating and the trees on the Village Green are being attended to by an Arboriculturist, with one being felled and the remainder needing some pruning during the summer.

We promoted the setting up of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee committee to organise the parish celebrations and many activities have been planned to celebrate this special occasion. The council will be discussing a permanent memorial to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The effectiveness of the Lead Councillor system continues to work well with councillors raising items for the Agenda for our monthly meetings. There is still further for this system to develop: in particular matters requiring a decision require the submission of a Resolution that can be included in the published Agenda.

I must thank my fellow-Councillors for their co-operation and help throughout the year and for their duties as councillors serving this parish throughout the last year.

I also thank Sheila Petherbridge our Parish Clerk for her continued help, support and advice over the past twelve months and without whose support would make my role extremely difficult.

Additional thanks go to Mark Cornford for printing leaflets etc, Brian & Annie Marshall for their sterling work with tree preservation and maintenance at Cedar Walk, Graham Kirk & Dennis Jones assisting me with cleaning and painting the Bus Shelter, Peter Keggin & Queen's Diamond Jubilee Committee members

And anyone else who I have not mentioned or left out by mistake.

The public will continue to be made aware of all business to be transacted – in keeping with the requirement for Open Government.

Finally, the last three years as chairman has been a challenge and a difficult one at times and it would be no exaggeration to say that the next few years could be interesting but difficult times for local government and in particular the parish council will need your full support, particularly the community needs to take The Butleigh Led Plan on board and help us all to continually improve our environment, amenities and living conditions in this splendid and delightful parish.

FINANCE : A comprehensive report of the year end finances (unaudited), was given by the Clerk. The unaudited book was open for inspection.

BUTLEIGH PCC REPORT : Mr David Heeley reported:

The last 12 months has again been a year of change including the following key factors:

Our new Priest in Charge, the Rev Judith Jack, resident in Baltonsborough, has gradually introduced a series of initiatives particularly involving younger people.

The pattern of Services for Butleigh is now well established, and the innovative Café Church on the 4th Sunday of each month organised by Jackie Forsey provides a basis for stimulating discussion. Attendance is encouraging – perhaps Parish Councillors could venture to attend?

Church finances are finely balanced. Our circular to the whole Parish requesting some financial contribution was frankly very disappointing from the 'secular sector'. However, careful control of costs has enabled us to balance the books –just! We are again indebted to the Parish Council for their contribution to the upkeep of the graveyard, which is well maintained by Rob Hallett and much admired by many visitors. You will have noted no doubt the improvement to the Church path surface and the successful felling of the Tulip Tree & other branch trimming around the churchyard perimeters. Thanks to the Parish Council for the additional precept grant.

We have major work this year with the felling of the Wellingtonia at a cost of c. £3k; repairs to the Symcock Chapel Roof (leaks) at a cost of £600, and renovation of the Hood Tomb in the churchyard (to be financed by the Fairfield – Acland Hood – Trust). We are also looking at new fencing for the boundary line adjacent to the Ladies Walk property (i.e. Kippax woodland area) –it is in a very poor state of repair.

For the Wellingtonia we have in mind a Village appeal as it is such a widely seen and admired landmark. If the Parish Council is able to make an additional precept 'contribution' it would of course be much appreciated.

The Church and Church Room have been fairly well used during the year for a variety of meetings and events. There are very reasonable charges for the use of both facilities and we would ask the Parish Council to emphasise whenever possible the 'community value' of such facilities for meetings etc.

BUTLEIGH PLAYING FIELD ASSOCIATION REPORT : Ian Innes reported : The BPFA has had another very successful year with a small dedicated team that continues to develop and promote youth sport and activity throughout the village. This year we have had a fairly quiet year investment wise compared to recent years with the main focus being on the continued development of both the Playing Field and Holm Oaks Play Area.

Pavillion and Playing Field Area

- Football continues to be the main user of our facilities during the winter, with the following teams using Butleigh Playing Fields as their home venue:-Butleigh Dynamos (adults team); Wessex u.16's plus a very successful Saturday morning football club which has been run by Richard Hughes and Justin Hodge for the past 4 years now with between 20 -30 children attending each week. We have also been recognised by Somerset Football Association as they have held a number of coaching courses at the playing fields due to the quality of the pitch and pavilion and they now hold their regular "elite" girls training at the Playing Fields.
- The high quality artificial cricket wicket installed in April 2007 has allowed the development of cricket for children aged u8 – u16's plus a number of adult games. This aided by the investment in a cricket net surrounding the pitch has allowed for further use especially for the younger children who do need now need to travel along the busy main road. Encouraging to see a number of former youth team players now playing for Butleigh 1st and 2nd teams. Thanks to John Potts and Chris Greenwood for their coaching throughout the season.
- Tag rugby continued throughout the Summer months with between 30 – 50 children attending weekly sessions. Thanks to Colin Gravett and all the parents for their continued support and enthusiasm.
- Butleigh Multi Terrain Run have again held their annual event at the playing fields with circa 100 runners participating with circa 30 youngsters also competing in the junior races which have been developed over the last 2 years. This event signifies the community spirit we have in Butleigh, as we have large numbers of villagers assisting the event throughout the day.

- Butleigh Nursery School continues to use these excellent facilities throughout the year, giving the children an excellent environment to learn in.
- Pilate's classes have continued twice a week held by a local physiotherapist
- The 811 club has also made good use of the new pavilion through out the year during term time
- There have been a growing number of parties using the pavilion and the committee have continued to hold regular bingo and fund raising sessions with the quiz night this year being particularly successful..
- **With the continued investment in the area and most importantly the dedication of Pete Edmondson, we are able to continually offer an excellent facility for the enjoyment of the village.**
- **Investment for this year will include a new Basketball net and further drainage improvements.**

Holm Oaks Play Area

The investment in Holm Oaks has continued this year with a see saw being added to the play area and we are reviewing the central concrete area and how this can be improved plus a general spring clean up day will be arranged in May to prepare the area for Summer..

We will also be in discussions with the builders of the new developments at Holm Oaks to see how they can assist in some upgrades required at the play area.

Investments for 2012 potentially will include a new castle play area which is being reviewed at present.

BPFA committee:

Once again as a small dedicated committee we are very proud of what has been achieved this year, our facilities are admired and complimented throughout the year and I must especially thank Pete Edmondson for his continued commitment to the upkeep of the playing areas.

From a committee's perspective it was especially pleasing to welcome new members to the committee Rachel Wren, Rachel Collinge, Wendy Jenner and Chris Greenwood.

The other committee members for the year were: Peter Edmondson, Richard Hughes, Ruth Higgins, Jackie Starr and Stephanie Growdon and myself.

The committee would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued support and encouragement of our proposals.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH : K Otton reported :

The year 2011/1 was unfortunately not as crime free as previous years. Last year there were two thefts from Higher and Lower Hill arms, this was followed this year by a Butleigh School parents' car window being smashed and a bag taken. Then on March 28th a house on Sub Road was entered by a skylight and a computer and jewellery taken. This is a wake up call to everybody to make sure that their property's security is checked. Tim Richards, our PCSO does regularly patrol the village. According to Tim, this village is one of the best in the area for our Neighbourhood Watch. This is a real deterrent to the criminal fraternity.

Fly tipping continues to be a problem particularly in the following areas: Boulster Lane, Baltonsborough Road, Back Town, and Henley Lane. Items range from bags of household rubbish, tyres, builders waste etc. Dog fouling by irresponsible owners in Back Town, and the High Street in the vicinity of the shop and also Holm Oaks Estate is a continuing problem, which is unnecessary, and the offenders must be brought to task. Information on criminal activities in the area is quickly passed between our NHW groups and the Police, which makes for easier control of the criminal fraternity. With the ever tightening of money there are even more chances of criminal activity, so be alert at all times..

SPEEDWATCH REPORT : M Hoyle reported:

This report covers the last year from April 2011. I took over the co-ordinator role in January and I would like to thank Maggie Pusey both for her invaluable work in the past and also for the help that she has given me in the handover and in compiling this report.

18 Speedwatch sessions have been carried out during the year at different times of the day and days of the week. The numbers of vehicles driving through the village on a regular basis is quite startling:

up to 600 vehicles per hour between 7 a.m. - 9.30 a.m. and 3.30p.m. - 6 p.m. and 200 - 250 vehicles per hour during the day. Drivers travelling above 36mph receive a letter from the Somerset Police and any clocked three times will receive a visit from the Community Police Support Officer. When speeds over 50 were recorded on several days last week the police agreed to visit those concerned immediately. Somerset Police can also choose to set up speed traps where they consider speeding is a problem.

There are 4 main approved Speedwatch sites – 3 in Sub road (one at either end of Butleigh and one at the bottom of the hill in Butleigh Wootton) and one in Barton Rd.

We have also in the past few weeks had 2 sites approved in the 20mph zone around the school –this was in response to complaints from residents about the speed of traffic in the 20mph zone during school starting and finishing times. One of our volunteers has already carried out sessions at the start and end of the school day and it appeared that the most common speeders are, in fact, mothers delivering and collecting children to and from the school.

Five new volunteers have been trained this year and one previously trained volunteer has re-joined the group bringing the total number of available volunteers to 14. Another volunteer is to be trained next week.

We are trying to vary the pattern of Speedwatch sessions and have just completed a run of 5 consecutive sessions in the same position during the morning rush hour – it was these sessions that produced the speeds that so concerned the police. This month we aim to have simultaneous Speedwatch sessions at either end of the village – if we can get our broken second speed gun replaced.

Disappointingly, the percentage of speeding vehicles measured during Speedwatch sessions has not decreased this last year with around 40% travelling over the speed limit and 10% - 12% in excess of 40mph in a 30mph zone: one notable car entering the village on the Barton road has been picked up on nearly every Speedwatch session! There have been two accidents in the past month; a car in the hedge on Sub Road between Chapel Lane and Water Lane and a bad collision between two vehicles on the crossroad by The Rose and Portcullis.

Some of you may have noticed the fixed Speed Indicator Device located at the southern entrance to the village during the last two weeks in February. This device just records the speed of every car as it passes 24 hours a day and the results showed that less than 15% of the cars were keeping to the speed limit as they passed the device. This was yards from the Rose and Portcullis crossroads where the accident happened less than a week later.

Finally both Maggie and I would like to thank Terry Drake, the Mendip Speedwatch co-ordinator, for his invaluable support and encouragement and Tim Richards, our Community Police Support Officer, for his continual support both by e-mail and at the side of the road in all weathers.

BUTLEIGH AREA TRANSPORT SCHEME : T Done reported :

Once again we have had a successful year, having made an average of approximately 14 trips a month which is up one from 2010 of mostly retired members of our community. These trips are

mainly of a medical nature being Doctor, Dentist or Hospital Appointments and Journeys to catch Trains and Coaches but also a small percentage of Social trips.

Our membership of the "Mid Somerset Car Scheme Partnership" continues to keep our insurance costs down, and the discussions at Partnership meetings have the benefit of transfer of information between groups.

During the last year we have had no new drivers join us but 4 have left, we now have 14 Drivers.

We have reviewed our costs and increased our charges slightly as we wish to be self sufficient. In the event we made a small profit of £19.26 and now have reserves at the end of 2011 of £269.99.

The County transport subsidy cuts do not appear to affect us so far, but may in the future.

We have to offer a special thank you to the wonderful team of drivers we have in our scheme, it is very gratifying to receive the many thanks from our members for the care they have received.

VILLAGE HALL COUNCIL REPORT : Report on Village Hall Council Activities and Financial Reserves 2011/12(currently in mothball situation): by David Heeley:

We have liaised with the Chair of the Playing Field Association concerning the **principle** of a Village Hall facility adjacent to the Playing Field Pavilion. A positive response was received if an appropriate area of land was to become available.

There has been no 'movement' regarding the practicalities of an area of land at this stage becoming available, let alone any knowledge of costs etc. However, a line of communication has been established.

In these circumstances the Village Hall Council has not formally met during the preceding 12 months.

SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCILLORS & MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT: Nigel Woolcombe-Adams reported (MDC) MDC books balanced, good reserves, wishing to employ some young people within the organisation. New planning legislation - no great change anticipated. Local framework to be finalised in 5 years, local framework on time. Key objectives to create and support employment. There are a number of small businesses in the area. provision of affordable housing, Butleigh a good example of working together or the benefit of the whole community. Regular parish forums have replaced area committees.

Ken Maddock reported (SCC) . It has been another very difficult year financially for the County Council. But we are turning the corner.

The main source of income from central government grant is being reduced by 28% and is set to reduce by even more. We all understand the reasons for this - we are paying for past profligacy and failure to regulate a small number of irresponsible bankers adequately.

The previous council borrowed more than £350 million and these debts have to be serviced at a cost of £35 million a year, which equates to £100,000 a day. That is the third biggest budget area for the council. The money paid to money lenders cannot therefore be used to pay for services.

The demand for many of the council's care services are rising fast. We are of course pleased that people are living longer and are surviving more complex medical conditions. But it is expensive. Also we act as corporate parents for children who have no one else to look after them, and the numbers have risen steeply since the 'Baby Peter' tragedy. We are of course glad to do this. But it all adds to costs.

So less money to pay for rising demand. All this means some very tough decisions for the council and a relentless focus on priorities. Those priorities are summarised as follows:

1. To help people who need care or protection and have no one else to provide it.
2. To achieve best value for money and balance the books.
3. To help bring new jobs and future prosperity.

Prices for food, electricity and petrol are rising fast and many wages are frozen right across the county. Because of the hardships faced by individuals and families the council has decided to provide some relief by freezing the council tax again - this is the third year running it has been frozen.

We have broken the council's habit of borrowing money. This year, for the first time in a generation, we will start to reduce the council's longstanding debt. This will free up money which can in time be spent on services.

The number of people working for the council has reduced by more than a quarter. And new ways of working by those remaining are making significant improvements in productivity. Every area of the council's work is currently under fundamental review. We are talking with District, Town and Parish councils how we can find the best way through tough times together.

There is a prospect of thousands of new jobs: at Hinkley Point where they is likely to be a new nuclear power station; in Taunton where new roads are opening up derelict parts of the town; and in Bridgwater, where there are new jobs at Morrison's distribution centre, Mulberry are expanding

and two brand new state-of-the-art schools will open later this year. And many more across Somerset.

The county's roads are in better condition than they have been for years in spite of two of the harshest winters on record. We are leading the initiative to improve the A303 as the main spine route into the south-west peninsula. And we are at the forefront of the project to bring High Speed Broadband to the south-west sub region, working with national government to help show others how to bring the benefits to remote rural areas.

So, much has been done. There is more still to do. And there is a great deal to lose if we do not work hard to get it right. But we are turning the corner. We are working our way back to a more sustainable future.

PARISHIONERS QUESTIONS: Mrs C Simpson asked with regard to the tree felling on the village green. M Hoyle explained the reasons behind the felling and proposed pruning.

D Heeley requested that the Solar Park monies could be index linked. A Carr answered that the monies would be RPI linked.

Mrs P Gane concerned with regard to dog fouling in the Back Town area also the danger of children being injured at the Back Town Playing Fields entrance.

T Done asked what the procedure is regarding dogs fouling private verges. The Chairman suggested talking to the Dog Warden at Mendip District Council. T Dodkin stated that she wished to pursue this matter in the next year.

The meeting closed at 8.10 p.m.

Chairman

1st May 2012