

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF BUTLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.00P.M. ON 8th April 2014 IN THE CHURCH ROOM, BUTLEIGH.

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

APOLOGIES: Richard Burdett

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr & Mrs G de Wilton, Mr D Keggin, Mrs S Burdett, MrsM Brunt. Mr & Mrs D Pusey, Mrs A Foster, Mr & Mrs D Mulliner, Mr A Laver, Mrs S de Camp.

David Sharland introduced Wessex Water Authority's Martin Tidman- Planning Engineer and Jonathan Barker- Operations Manager.

Mr Tidman gave a comprehensive report on the workings and the capacities of the Sewage Treatment Works at Back Town.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT; ALAN CARR REPORTED:

Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting. This occasion gives Parishioners a chance to hear what the Parish Council has been doing on their behalf during the year. Other organisations in the village, supported by the Parish Council, also have their opportunity to update you.

Council Meetings

I am glad to say that the Council has been operating with its full complement of 8 Councillors throughout the year.

Meetings are usually held on the first Tuesday of the month and dates are published in advance on the Parish Noticeboard and in News and Views. There has been a 82% councillor attendance over the year.

Our County Council and Mendip Ward member, Nigel Woolcombe-Adams has attended 4 meetings during the year.

When issues have been of sufficient interest a small number of people have attended our monthly meetings.

Planning

As a Statutory Consultee, the Parish Council received and offered responses to 18 planning applications. 8 applications were approved and one refused by the Planning Authority. One was withdrawn before a decision and the remainder are awaiting decisions.

Since last year decisions regarding housing development have been led by Government policy contained in the National Planning Policy Framework with a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Until the Mendip Local Plan has been adopted, possibly in June, there is more likelihood that decisions will be contrary to local wishes and expectations.

A pre application consultation was organised by the Landowner relating to the proposed development at Lower Rockes Farm. We have been notified of a proposed development in Barton Road of 16 houses and tonight we will hear of more development proposals for the Old Hospital field.

Finance

The Parish Precept for 2014/2015 was set at £11,000 a reduction of £1000 on last year. A significant part of the budget goes towards keeping the village tidy. Financial support has been possible to Butleigh Playingfields and Play Area. A donation was made for repairs to the Church Room and adjoining car park. Small donations were made to charities and not for profit organisations likely to benefit villagers. In line with opinion expressed in the Parish Plan an allowance is included in the precept for improvements to public footpaths. The Council are also required by law to hold a contingency fund of 25% of annual expenditure.

Environment

Two litter picks have been organised during the year which have removed a large quantity of motorist related litter on the approach roads to the village. These events are well supported by all ages.

For a second year footpath access improvements have been achieved by replacing stiles for gates between Wood Lane and Quarry Lane. Heavy duty plastic matting has been installed on the Barton Road /High Street path to overcome muddy conditions in the winter. Butleigh is now included on the Mendip Ring, a district wide and recently way marked route of 117 miles.

Highways

Urgent highway repairs have been reported to Mendip Highways and have generally been actioned promptly. More substantial repairs have been delayed due to limited funding.

Parish Plan, Village Website and Future Projects

Tim Hoyle will give a separate report

Solar Park Funds

A Parish Council working party invited applications for funds and checked that the applicants met the agreed criteria. As a result £3200 was awarded last year to 3 organisations.

Future projects

In order to keep improving life in Butleigh, the Parish Council are continuing with or initiating the following:-

Obtain benefits for the village from proposed developments.

Improvement to public footpath access.

Village Website

Speedwatch

Pushing for a faster broadband service

CONCLUSION

On a limited budget the village has been managed by the Parish Council to provide a good environment and place to live. The Parish Plan involved a substantial effort by volunteers in the village and it will give useful guidance to the Council in years to come.

Where possible, support has been given to the important facilities namely School, Shop and Pub.

The Cricket Club has recently secured a long term future at the Cricket Ground and this should ensure that the northern approach to the village is protected.

The successful name change of the Old Hospital to Grenville Court proves that a concerted local effort can sometimes work.

The number of houses changing hands is testament to the fact that Butleigh is still a popular place to live.

Our next challenge is to consider the development proposals that are on the way and make the end result, appropriate to the village.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their individual contributions and support during the past year and to Sheila Petherbridge, our Clerk. The many conscientious volunteers in the village, also deserve our gratitude.

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 : Mrs S de Camp gave a report

BUTLEIGH PLAYING FIELD ASSOCIATION REPORT: Mr 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 activities throughout the village. This year our main investment has been the building of a play fort at the Holm Oaks play area which will benefit both the very young and teenage age group around the village.

Pavillion and Playing Field Area

- Football continues to be the main user of our facilities during the winter months however this usage at present is diminishing with now only 1 adult team using Butleigh Playing Fields as their home venue plus 2 junior teams. We have however continued to run a successful Saturday morning football club which has been run by Richard Hughes and Justin Hodge for the past 5 years 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.
- 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. It is encouraging to see a number of former youth team players now playing for Butleigh 1st and 2nd teams. No Saturday morning cricket took place this year but may well be introduced next year in conjunction with Butleigh Cricket Club.
- Tag rugby continued throughout the Summer months with between 40 – 60 children and adults attending weekly sessions. Thanks to Colin Gravett and all the parents for their continued support and enthusiasm.
- Butleigh Multi Terrain Run was again held at the playing fields with in excess of 100 runners participating, this is the highest level for a number of years. Circa 30 youngsters also took part in the junior races. This event signifies the community spirit we have in Butleigh, as we have large numbers of villagers assisting the event throughout the day, special thanks to Nick Foster and Pete Wright for organising the event.
- Butleigh Nursery School continues to use these 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 with the numbers now increasing substantially.
- The 811 club has also made good use of the new pavilion through out the year during term time and there is now also a Youth Club that uses the facilities throughout the summer months.
- 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. There is a Spring Ball on May 10th to raise funds for the BPFA.

- We have recently invested in new radiators for the pavilion area to ensure the users have a welcoming environment to work \ participate in.
- Potential long term proposal for a village tennis court is being reviewed at present – further information to follow in coming months.
- The sewerage system at the playing field needs to be addressed by Wessex Water as this is now the 2nd year we have had serious raw sewerage issues and I believe the parish committee need to take a pro-active stance on supporting us in resolving this. With more and more houses being built in the area – how is the sewerage works going to cope with the increased demand?.
- **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. Our thanks go to all those that have assisted throughout the year.**

Holm Oaks Play Area

The investment in Holm Oaks has been significant this year with the building of a play fort in the park which cost in the region of £15k, this money was raised through various funding channels especially Viridor and Solar Energy grants plus donations from local personnel and from our own funds. There will be an official opening day during the spring where we will invite all the village and fund raisers to the event.

The swings \ seats on both sets of equipment have been replaced due to wear and tear of the old one's.

The safety matting was also replaced by bark to improve the Health and Safety in the play area as the old matting was very slippery when wet.

We have also focused on the general upkeep of the area with various trees \ hedges removed and cut back for future development.

Investment this year will be around the upkeep of the area plus a potential new fence to align to the new housing development.

BPFA committee:

Once again as a small dedicated committee we are very proud of what has been achieved this year with our facilities admired and complimented throughout the year

From a committee's perspective it was very pleasing and beneficial to have our parish representatives attending meetings regularly, which is hopefully assisting communication both ways.

My concern with the BPFA at present is it's long term future and the recruitment of new members, we have a number of committee members resigning this year and the recruitment of new members especially in the role of chairman and secretary are proving difficult which the Parish Council need to be made aware of.

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

Finally could I make special mention ref Ruth Higgins who will be retiring this year after 30 years on the committee, no words that I can write would could sum up the contribution Ruth has made to the committee and the village overall however I would officially like to thank Ruth for her hard work and commitment to the committee and the village over this period.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT: Mr Chris Allanson- Bailey reported :

The year 2013/2014 has again been one of very little reported crime for the district. This does not mean that we should let our security vigilance drop. The regular visits from Tim Richards, out PCSO, who knows the district well is a big deterrent to would be criminals. With the number of new houses being built in our villages, the attraction to criminal activity might increase, so we must all remain on top of home security. The good interaction between neighbouring NHW schemes is a big help in keeping crime low. Fly tipping in Bolster Lane is still a continuing problem. With the continued tightening of money there are even more chances of criminal activity, so be alert at all times.

SPEED WATCH REPORT: Mr David Pusey reported:

Since July 2013, when I took responsibility for co-ordinating the Community Speedwatch, we have carried out 14 sessions. One planned session was aborted because of dense fog and the possibility of ice and one was curtailed because of wind and rain. One other session was not recorded as problems arose with the recording equipment (my fault). At the time of writing, a further 3 are planned. In summary, the results of the recorded sessions were:

16/07/2013 – Butleigh Wootton – 08:00 to 09:00 – 404 vehicles – 28 speeders

07/08/2013 – Butleigh Wootton – 08:30 to 09:30 – 334 vehicles – 31 speeders

15/08/2013 – Sub Road – 10:00 to 11:00 – 224 vehicles – 7 speeders

21/08/2013 – Barton Road – 08:00 to 09:00 – 61 vehicles – 6 speeders

28/08/2013 – Butleigh Wootton – 08:30 to 09:30 – 370 vehicles – 40 speeders

10/09/2013 – Sub Road – 07:50 to 09:00 – 450 vehicles – 16 speeders

18/09/2013 – Butleigh Wootton – 09:00 to 10:00 – 255 vehicles – 31 speeders

19/09/2013 – Sub Road – 07:45 to 09:00 – 483 vehicles – 16 speeders

05/02/2014 – Sub Road – 08:00 to 08:30 – 202 vehicles – 2 speeders – session curtailed – wind and rain

24/02/2014 – Sub Road – 08:00 to 09:00 – 452 vehicles – 5 speeders

25/02/2015 – Sub Road – 08:00 to 09:00 – 395 vehicles – 2 speeders

05/03/2014 – Sub Road – 08:00 – 09:00 – 409 vehicles – 7 speeders

13/03/2014 – Butleigh Wootton – 08:00 to 09:00 – Session cancelled – dense fog and possibility of ice

19/03/2014 – Butleigh Wootton – 08:30 to 09:30 – 424 vehicles – 18 speeders

19/03/2014 – Sub Road – 16:30 to 17:30 – 383 vehicles – 6 speeders

28/03/2014 – Sub Road – 10:30 to 11:30 – Session cancelled – heavy rain

As volunteers, it is not our principal job to catch speeders. Our presence alone should encourage drivers to observe speed limits. However, we do record and report speeders that we observe, who may, if they are regular offenders, come to the notice of the police. Those whom we record are not prosecuted. All speeders recorded are sent warning letters. Speeders recorded more than twice anywhere throughout the Mendip area are visited by the traffic police.

As a new development, Mendip area CSW is being used as a pilot scheme to check for lack of road fund licence, out of date insurance and MOTs which, if successful, will be rolled out to cover Avon and Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire police areas.

When I took over from Mary Hoyle, who had done a sterling job of running the Speedwatch, I had listed fourteen volunteers, of whom a number are regulars, and I thank them for their support and efforts. We could always do with more.

We have had our radar gun replaced with a much more modern, light, accurate and reliable 'Pocket radar' gun which works over a narrower spread, less confused by nearby vehicles.

Overall, the number of speeders through the village seems to be decreasing so we may assume that we are having a positive effect. I hope that residents also feel that our activities are beneficial to the community.

BATS REPORT: Mr Tom Done reported:

Butleigh Area Transport Scheme was launched 5th December 2003 in this very room with a grant from the now defunct "Countryside Agency" and the umbrella of the "Parish Council" we have now been running for ten years with our first trip on 10th December 2003 when James Vardon took Ann Wyllie to the Feversham Lane, Surgery, it is sad to realise that neither of them are with us any longer as are others who used our service in the early days, though two who were to benefit from our first month work are Jean Batten and Stan Hallett.

All this was the beginning of what I believe has been a very successful community lead project giving those in our village who either do not have their own transport or for some reason are no longer able to drive.

During our early years the Scheme we were founder members of the Mid Somerset Car Scheme Partnership which was formed to help and support the Volunteer Car Schemes which means we are able to discuss with others best practice it also insures that we are able to secure the best insurance terms the original funding for the Partnership came from Somerset County Council which enables the Partnership to support new Car Schemes being setup.

It is nice to know that so many of the original drivers still are part of the team and we have been pleased to welcome several new drivers to our team in recent years. For my part it has been both challenging and very rewarding to receive the many thanks for the work and caring of our drivers, I must say at this time I would not have been so successful if fulfilling all the requests made if I had not received such support from Jill answering the phone and on many occasions arranging a driver for some urgent request.

You will have noticed that we have changed the telephone number for making bookings to 850577 the reason being that it will now be possible to divert calls to another member of our team when Jill and I are away from home thus avoiding the need for members to be circulated with an alternative number.

During the last twelve months we have seen some very quiet months in fact in February 2013 we only had 2 trips where as in September 2013 we had 35 trips this number has been boosted by some regular trips from new members who are now unable to drive. A large part of our journeys are to Doctors, Dentists, Hospitals, Hairdressers, with some of purely social nature.

I am often asked who is eligible to use this service, my answer is you must live in Butleigh Parish be over 60 or have a reason not to be able to use Public Transport, but please do not be afraid to ask.

I know that I can speak for all of us who are involved in running BATS what a wonderful feeling one has in knowing that what you are doing is helping others in our Community.

Let us look forward to many more years of work.

Thank you all especially to the drivers who all always so willing to support the work of BATS, and to members for their kind and generous remarks and understanding of my delays in not replying.

PARISH PLAN REPORT: Mr Tim Hoyle reported:

As the result of direct efforts from a significant number of residents the Butleigh Parish Plan was completed in October 2013 and adopted by the Parish Council at the meeting on 5th November 2013. Copies have been distributed to everyone in Butleigh, Butleigh Wootton and outlying homes – further copies are available if required.

Of the 15 recommendations and actions some are well underway but some are still awaiting a lead person, who could be anyone from the village but whose prime requirement is some enthusiasm for the specific action.

Activities already well underway are the development of a village website by a group being led by Martin Peakman and an investigation into improved mobile phone coverage being led by Sian DeCamp.

The two most significant actions still to be started are i) to propose suggestions to improve the traffic situation around Butleigh ii) to re-introduce adequate lighting for the church path and iii) to mobilise parish residents to apply pressure to BT to improve broadband reception and, perhaps iv) a new village hall committee.

Other actions are still important and are being dealt with within the Parish Council.

If anyone has a wish to improve our wellbeing in Butleigh then I would be delighted to discuss these recommendations and actions further with them.

All work to date has been covered by a grant of £2835 from the Big Lottery Fund; a lot of the further work on many of the actions to improve our well-being does not need any significant funding.

MENDIP DISTRICT & SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT: Mr Nigel Woolcombe-Adams reported:

Mendip – Finances in sound order and no borrowings of any concern. In future local funds will need to be raised by business council tax as government funding will cease. Offices have been refurbished to enable it to be sub let to Shepton Mallett Town Council and Police. The cost of £3m will be paid back in 6 years.

Local Plan – Inspector is sitting at present in a Public Inquiry. Site specific allocations will come later. National Planning Framework – 5 year deliverable local land supply – Rolling programme.

SCC - budget problems. Services have been cut and more to come. Thanks to Highways staff who have coped with road collapses and flooding over the county.

Meeting closed at 8 p.m.

Chairman

6th May 2014.