

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF BUTLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.00P.M. ON 5th May 2015 IN THE CHURCH ROOM, BUTLEIGH.

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

APOLOGIES: Richard Burdett

OTHERS PRESENT: , Richard Hughes, Wayne Moore-Read, Tom Done, Graham Kirk, Rachel Bissett, Sian de Camp, Nick Foster, Cllr N Woolcombe-Adams

Mrs Rachel Bissett, Head Teacher of Butleigh VC Primary School gave a report on the present situation and range of activities undertaken at the school. 86 children on roll mainly from the village.

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.

Council Meetings

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

Meetings are usually held on the first Tuesday of the month and the dates are published in advance on the Parish Noticeboard and News and Views. There has been an 84% councillor attendance over 13 meetings.

Our County and District Ward Councillor Nigel Woolcombe-Adams has attended on 4 occasions during the year.

When contentious planning applications have been on the agenda up to 25 villagers have attended but generally public attendance has been limited.

Planning

As a Public Consultee the Parish Council dealt with 57 applications. We recommended 43 for approval and 7 for refusal. Mendip District Council approved 40 and refused 10 of these. The balance were either withdrawn or are awaiting decisions.

6 substantial applications for new housing were submitted. The village were given an opportunity to inspect plans and comment at Council meetings. 4 of these were recommended for refusal and 2, involving 16 new houses and 4 conversions were recommended for approval. All 6 were subsequently refused by Mendip District Council

The Planning Authority's failure to fill the 5 year allocation of new housing in the District caused a temporary relaxation of Planning control. As a result one application for a single dwelling in Kingweston Road, which was outside the Development limit, was approved by Mendip District Council. In July the Council submitted a response to the Modification of the Local Plan highlighting that houses built outside the development limit were not included in the village allocation.

Finance

The Parish Precept was set at £12,000 for 2015/2016 an increase of £1000 on last year. A significant part of the budget goes towards keeping the village tidy. Savings have been achieved by awarding a new ground maintenance contract. Financial support has been given to the Playing Fields and Play Area. Small donations were made to charities and not for profit organisations benefiting villagers. Funds have been allocated to footpath improvements.

Environment

A litter pick has been organised during the year to remove motorists discarded rubbish on the approach roads to the village. This was well supported by volunteers.

For a second year footpath access improvements have been achieved by replacing stiles for gates. We were greatly helped in this task by Mendip Ramblers who gave their services free.

Highways

Urgent repairs to road surfaces have been reported to Mendip Highways. Sometimes these have been delayed by budget restrictions. An improvement to surface water drainage in Banbury Lane has been completed. Repairs to the culvert headwall in Back Town were completed after considerable delay.

Solar Park Funds

The Parish Council working party processed one application for £1500 which was agreed and paid by the Solar Company.

Future Projects

Work has proceeded on the setting up of the village website. The Parish Council Agendas and Minutes are now available on the website.

A new Parish Noticeboard has been made to accommodate the Parish Footpath Map. We were notified in April 2015 that 300 properties in the village can now access the Superfast Broadband.

Conclusion

On a limited budget the Parish Council have managed to keep some of our most important facilities funded and operating. Butleigh is still regarded as a good place to live and this is borne out by sales of property.

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

Our next challenge will be to respond to Part 2 of the Mendip Local Plan which will involve the allocation of potential development land in the Parish. The preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan could be a useful exercise in this connection.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors and Clerk for their support in the past year and to all those volunteers who have supported the village, I extend my 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

This year, new people have taken on the offices of Treasurer and Secretary: Maggie Seward is Secretary and Mark Tolhurst, Treasurer. Tom Done has served as Churchwarden in the past but stepped into the role again this year; however, he will retire from the post of Churchwarden in 2016, so we are seeking his replacement.

After sixteen years on the PCC, Jackie Forsey is standing down from her role as Assistant Churchwarden and Chair of the Ministry Committee. She will, from now, be referred to as Assistant Verger to allow her to continue her involvement in services, but release her from PCC membership.

A new committee has been created at the PCC to run Fundraising, chaired by Sian Decamp. We hope that fund raising will involve people in the village. The Administration Committee will continue to be chaired by David Heeley; the Community Committee by Charmian Wright; a new chair is to be found for the Ministry Committee on the retirement of Jackie Forsey.

Attendance at regular services has, in contrast to the national trend, been maintained and we expect 35-45 at communion services. At Family services, attendance is slowly increasing so that we expect in the region of 35-40. At the fourth Sunday in the month, numbers have increased in the last six months and we have had 49 at a recent service. At the major festivals, we have seen increasing numbers particularly at the Crib service when 229 people attended.

Two new ventures have started this year: a Christian meditation group and a Bible study group. Both are well supported and continue to meet, both fortnightly.

The major work in the fabric of the church has been the application for the restoration of the C19 Pugin and Powell windows. A Faculty has been granted; Graham Dowding of Nailsworth has been appointed as Restorer; Viridor Credits has granted £12,413.00 and Churchcare has granted £5,000. Fundraising has taken place to contribute to the cost of works and more is planned this year.

The churchyard is well maintained by Rob Hallett. A churchyard working group that works twice a year helps to keep the churchyard in excellent order. We thank the Parish Council most sincerely for their financial support in the maintenance of the churchyard which is an important feature of our village.

The Wellingtonia memorial seat was completed in June and a short service was held to mark its completion. It has been appreciated by people in the village and is a striking new feature of the churchyard.

The Church room is not used to its full potential. During the last year, we have lost the yoga class, the dance class and the toddler group. However, there was a small surplus at the end of the financial year. The accounts are now included in the PCC accounts.

Church finances are orderly and very well supervised. We are very grateful to our Treasurer for mastering his task so quickly and efficiently. The church, however is largely supported by a congregation of senior years and this has obvious financial implications. In the light of this, our Parish Share was reduced this year and we are now graded as Band C.

Many people contribute to the care of the church and many visit for special services and occasions. We trust that the church is a welcoming and friendly community and we thank all who give their time to the life and influence of the church in this village.

BUTLEIGH PLAYING FIELD ASSOCIATION REPORT: Mr Richard Hughes reported:

This has been another busy active year for the playing fields. We have had a change of leadership losing Ian Innes, and Ruth Higgins has retired after serving the committee for some 30 years. Therefore the remaining committee members have been working hard trying to keep it all running smoothly after the loss of such leadership and experience. However this has not reduced the quality and consistency of sport in our village.

Football – we continue to support one men’s home team, a thriving Junior club taken over by Andrew England, and receive continuing rental and praise from visiting football clubs in the area. We are often the pitch you can play on when many others in the area are unplayable due to weather problems.

Rounders – our village based rounders team, lead by Collette Edmonson, are thriving, with our home ground the envy of many.

Tag Rugby – Thursday evenings in the summer attract a large number of children of all ages, and a few fish and chip supper finishes have been popular with parents and players.

Multi Terrain Run – a very successful, and highly complimented race once again, led by Peter Wright and Nick Foster, with extensive village support for marshaling duties.

Succession planning is underway for future years to ensure this popular event continues.

Quick cricket resumed last summer thanks to Pete Edmonson’s lead.

Youth club are meeting monthly, and the younger children enjoy 811 club most Friday evenings .

Butleigh Nursery continues to use the facilities throughout the year giving the children an excellent environment to start their learning and play.

Pilates classes in the pavilion are popular, provided by Angela Hughes.

Boot camp has thrived again this year, with many ladies braving dark wet cold nights to keep fit.

Our volunteer groundsman Pete Edmondson is a huge asset to the association, without his hard work and dedication we could not maintain these facilities.

All the activity clubs above contribute to the revenue of the BPFPA, which is reinvested in the facilities/ pitches. Running these facilities is proving increasingly expensive, and the committee work hard at other fund raising opportunities e.g. Quiz night, Multi terrain run cakes and teas, and Draw club.

However we also have much appreciated support from the parish council precept grant, and are also applying for further grants from Solar Park to top dress the main pitch which has weathered considerably this winter.

Holm Oaks Play Park

I hope you will agree that the new fort has been the icing on the cake of this very pleasant and fun play area. The equipment is maintained to a high standard and inspected annually.

Maintenance work is expensive.

Awards – this year we have received certificates of commendation for both play areas from the Somerset Playing Fields Association.

Committee - We are run by an increasingly small dedicated number of volunteer committee members. I have considerable concerns about the long term viability of the BPFa if we are not able to recruit new enthusiastic members. We will continue to actively recruit. The presence and support of 2 parish council representatives is much appreciated, and essential to ongoing communication.

We are very grateful to the parish council for their ongoing of support for these village facilities, which enhance the village and promote health and well being within our community.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT: Mr Chris Allanson-Bailey reported : The year 2014/15 for NHW was again, I am glad to say, one of low reported crime. The regular visits of our \police Support Officer, Tim Richards, to the area act as a very good crime deterrent. In recent months there have been a few incidents of break ins in the surrounding areas where a quad bike and other valuable items have been stolen. With our gardens coming to life after the winter this is a prime time for garden shed robberies. We must remember to keep our garden tools safely locked up. Any suspicious vehicles or persons that are seen in the villages are to be reported immediately to \police on 101, or if a crime is in progress 999 must be used.

Tim Richards new contact number is 07889 659243 (not24 hours)

SPEED WATCH REPORT: Mr David Pusey reported:

During the last 12 months, the CSW Team has been out on nine occasions at all our approved sites as follows: Sub Road – 6 times, Butleigh Wootton – twice, Barton Road – once.

We have been supplied with a more accurate speed camera, not a laser one but a much lighter (and cheaper one which is now standard issue in the Mendip CSW area. This, in conjunction with the voice recorder means that we are able to man a speedwatch event with only two people, rather than the three normally involved.

There were four occasions when speeds of over 50 mph were recorded, all in Butleigh Wootton, by four different vehicles. This is also the venue where the most frequent checks by the Camera Van take place.

The Police have available two camera vans, and now also have a number of camera motorcycles. These are able to access locations where the use of a van is not advisable due to location access.

I have not been so active in organising sessions recently, but in walking down to the shop on a number of occasions I have become aware of vehicles apparently speeding and will be organising a more intensive series of sessions in the coming year.

Checks in the busy rush periods show that speeds generally are lower than in the mid-morning or mid-afternoon period, when traffic generally is less dense. For this reason, I want to try during 2015 to concentrate on out-of-rush periods.

We have been invited to take part in a nation-wide speed awareness week (13th to 19th April) and I am drawing up plans to have sessions on as many days as possible during that week.

Originally, Mendip CSW were planning a similar exercise during the week 18th – 23rd May, and I intend to mount another series of sessions then.

BATS REPORT: Mr Tom Done reported:

We again had a very successful year with an average of 31 trips per month arranged throughout 2014 with passengers expressing their gratitude for the service provided. In December alone we made 51 trips using 19 drivers.

The Co-ordinator reports that with the increase in the number of trips he spends an average of approx 2+ hours per week arranging bookings and recording the same.

We can report that the "Mid Somerset Car Scheme Partnership" had granted a moratorium on driver insurance premiums for 2014/15.

The Accounts for 2013 had been reviewed and signed and draft Accounts for 2014 have been drafted.

We are not increasing our trip rates, which were last increased in July 2010, so will remain the same.

It has been agreed that Medical trips for ninety year old residents would be free for 12 months (i.e. 2015) after which the situation will be reviewed.

Alan Carr (Chairman)

Tom Done (Co-ordinator)

VILLAGE HALL COUNCIL REPORT Mr D Heeley reported : via the Chairman. 3 members at present. £16,000 held. Nothing further to report.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY ACTION GROUP : Mr A Brown reported: The Butleigh and Butleigh Wootton Community Emergency Action Group comprises of three members with eleven parishioners pledging their support. A community emergency plan was produced and activated in April 2014.

The aim of the plan is to allow the community to support itself in an emergency, Specifically, shelter during any emergency that affects the community when the normal response by the emergency services are delayed or overwhelmed due to the scope or nature of an incident.

Copies of the plan have been distributed to appropriate bodies within the parish which includes the shop, Clerk to the Parish Council, Police etc.

The Emergency Action Group attended the Thatch Cottage fire in Sub Rpoad, Butleigh on 4th February 2015 and were an invaluable help to the emergency services who attended in :-

- Assisting with Police and Traffic Control
- Liaison with Police, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Service in identification and visiting vulnerable residents
- Liaison with The Red Cross mobile unit and The Rose and Portcullis to provide temporary warm shelter and refreshments

We would like to recruit several more volunteers to join the Emergency Action Group.

MENDIP DISTRICT & SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT: Mr Nigel Woolcombe-Adams reported: Mendip District Council : Sound financial reserves at present. 'The Hub' at Mendip has been created including the Police, Shepton Mallet Town Council and others to contribute to the funds. The Leisure contract has been re-let and will save £3m, but facilities will improve. Business rate and new homes bonus will go into the MDC finances.

Affordable housing to be looked into funded by MDC. The Local Plan was adopted by MDC in December and Gladman Development challenged the housing figures but this was fought and the developer has issued a 'notice of discontinuance' in the High Court and met all MDC's costs. Part 2 of local plan to be discussed ref housing.

Somerset County Council : Childrens Services division has been determined again as inadequate. However, no child has suffered or been put in danger due to this and the staff are resilient and continue to improve. New Director has been appointed and a team from Essex CC are helping out.

The Childrens Improvement Board has not been up to standard including any contribution by the Police.

The Care Act – Carers are entitled to assessment and support.

Busses- £6.5m being spent by SCC resources for bus passes. £2m put in as a support for busses.

Highways – in the last 12 months there have been 25,000 'intrusions' into the county roads by contractors for statutory undertakers.

Finances- steady budget with income from shared use of buildings

Somerset Rivers Board has been formed this year with all houses in the County contributing to this board.

Meeting closed at 8 p.m.

Chairman
19th May 2015.