

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF BUTLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.00P.M. ON 5th April 2016 IN THE CHURCH ROOM, BUTLEIGH.

PARISH COUNCILLORS PRESENT: A Carr (Chairman), K Otton, W Moore-Read,
APOLOGIES: Richard Burdett, E Aitken

OTHERS PRESENT: M Hoyle, T Hoyle, T Done, G de Wilton, S de Camp, N Woolcombe-Adams, Mrs C Simpson

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT; ALAN CARR REPORTED: Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting. This meeting gives Parishioners a chance to hear what the Parish Council has been doing on their behalf during the year and raise any questions.

Council Meetings

Unfortunately this year the Council has been operating with less than its full compliment of Councillors. Currently there are 5 Councillors instead of 8. So far attempts to recruit have been unsuccessful.

Meetings are usually held on the first Tuesday of the month and the dates are published in advance on the Parish Noticeboard and in News and Views. There has been an 82% councillor attendance over 10 meetings.

Our County and District Ward Councillor Nigel Woolcombe-Adams has attended on 3 occasions during the year.

When contentious planning applications have been on the agenda a number of villagers have attended but generally public attendance has been limited.

Councillors have attended training sessions in Shepton Mallet when appropriate.

Planning

As a Public Consultee the Parish Council looked at 30 applications. We recommended 23 for approval and 3 for refusal. Mendip District Council approved 22 and refused 1 of these. The balance were either withdrawn or are awaiting decisions. There have been a number of Planning Appeals.

2015 was dominated by the consideration of Mendip Local Plan Part 2. This was of major concern, as it will lead to the allocation of sites by Mendip District Council for development in the village. A Village consultation was held and it was attended by about 10% of the village population. From the completed questionnaires, the Parish Council were able to formulate a response to Mendip District Council.

Finance

The Parish Precept was set at £12,000 for 2016/2017 similar to last year. A significant part of the budget goes towards keeping the village tidy. Savings have been achieved after discussions with the new ground maintenance contractor. Financial support has been given to the Playing Fields, Play Area and Churchyard. Small donations were made to charities and not for profit organisations benefiting villagers. Funds have been allocated to footpath improvements.

Environment

A litter pick was organised late in the year to remove motorists rubbish on the approach roads to the village. This was well supported by volunteers.

Highways

Urgent repairs to road surfaces have been reported to Mendip Highways. Sometimes these have been delayed by budget restrictions.

The water leakage in Sub Road was finally cured after much delay.

Various attempts to get Highways to put additional signage in the village to slow traffic or divert lorries have not been successful.

Solar Park Funds

The Parish Council working party processed three applications totalling £3800 which were agreed and paid by the Solar Company.

Future Projects

Due to the reduced number and other commitments of Councillors, no major initiatives have been undertaken this year. Parish Council support and guidance has been given for the proposed purchase of 2 plots of land adjoining the Playing field. If this proceeds 1.7 acres will be added to the existing area. This is regarded as a preliminary to possible extension of the Pavilion to form a Village Hall.

For a third year footpaths have continued to be improved with the help of Mendip Ramblers and now 71 pedestrian gates, are in place throughout the village. The Village Footpath Map has been updated and copies sold to interested parish members. Two formal footpath diversions have been considered and recommended for approval.

Conclusion

On a limited budget the Parish Council have managed to keep our most important facilities funded and operating. Butleigh is still a popular place to live and envied for its facilities. It has been selected to host the 2017 Mendip Walking Festival which is held over 3 days in August. Approaches have been made by other local Parishes to use our knowledge of Public Footpath and Play Area improvements.

During 2016 we expect to commission a Housing Needs Survey to be carried out by the Community Council for Somerset, which will help with a Neighbourhood Plan in the future. A survey was last carried out in 2008 but the information needs updating.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors and our Clerk, Sheila, for their support in the past year. I would also add a special word of gratitude to the many volunteers who have supported village organisations throughout the year.

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

Reverend Judith Jeffery resigned from her post as Priest in Charge of the Brue Benefice and left in September 2015. Her leaving service was held at St. Leonard's and a presentation was made to her. Alan Cotton spoke on behalf of the Benefice and thanked her for her work here. The church has been running smoothly during the Vacancy. All services have taken place led by a variety of local priests and our Readers. The Readers of the Benefice have worked very hard to cover extra duties and we are extremely grateful to them for all their willing help. Tom Done has agreed to stay as Churchwarden for a further year to help the new priest to settle in.

The Profile for the Benefice was produced by Churchwardens and Readers in consultation with the PCCs. The closing date for applications for the post of Priest in Charge is March 31, 2016. We hope interviews will take place in April.

We thank David Heeley who will continue to chair the Administration Committee and Charmian Wright who will continue to chair the Community Group. They both work very hard for the benefit of the church. Sian Decamp will chair the Ministry Group and Fundraising Group.

Attendance at regular service, in contrast to the national trend and despite the vacancy, has been maintained and we still expect 35-45 at communion services. At the services over Christmas, particularly the Crib and Carol services, numbers were very high and people, regular members and others, commented on the atmosphere created at these events. We have introduced services of Evensong, Evening Prayer, Morning Prayer as alternatives to lay-led services and they have all been popular. A weekly Lent course is being held at Butleigh, run by the Readers and attendance has been very good (18). The Farming Community Network of Somerset asked us to host their annual Plough Service at St Leonard's in January and this was a great occasion: the church was full and the Right Reverend Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton led the service. At the end of February we were pleased to host the Wells Cathedral Boys' choir for a sung Evensong and again, many attended.

The Bible Study Group took a break from January as the leader was going away for a while; it is hoped to restart later in the year. The Christian Meditation Group continues to meet fortnightly. Roy and Rosemary Moody have retired from running Rise and Shine, a meeting for young people from 9-12. They have run this group for ten years and have been loyal and faithful in this commitment which they have enjoyed. They feel it is time to stop now and so we hope that with a new vicar, youth work will be invigorated. We thank them both very much for their service and for all they have done for the young people in Butleigh.

The major work in the fabric of the church has been the restoration of the C18 Pugin and Powell windows. Graham Dowding of Nailsworth carried out the complex restoration and the windows were reinstalled in September 2015. As soon as permission is granted by the DAC, he will be restoring the upper traceries on the West Window which he says are valuable remnants of the early life of St. Leonard's church.

Discussions have begun on the final stage of the Development work of the church. The Committee will be reformed.

The churchyard continues to be maintained by Rob Hallett. A churchyard working group helps to keep the churchyard in excellent condition and we thank the Parish Council for their financial support in the maintenance of the churchyard.

Although Church Room income meets expenditure, it continues to be underused. The accounts are included in the PCC accounts.

The church finances are very well supervised and we are most grateful to our Treasurer, Mark Tolhurst for his efficient and careful work. In the past year, we have had a healthy income which has more than matched our expenses. We benefitted from a reduction in the parish share of approximately £2000. However, the church is largely supported by a congregation of people of senior years and this has obvious financial implications.

Many people contribute to the care of the church and many visit for special occasions and services. We trust that St Leonard's continues to be 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.

Football- we continue to support on men's home team and Baltonsborough Football Club have decided to use our facilities this season, and are keen to stay. A thriving Junior club continues and we 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. However, we have drainage issues in the centre of the pitch which will need to be sorted in the closed season.

Rounders- our village based rounders team, led by Collette Edmondson, is thriving, with our home ground the envy of many. The team may change this year, but still attracting village members to play.

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 , Nick Foster and Gordon Hughes, with extensive village support for marshalling duties.

811 club most Friday evenings for the younger children. Youth Club have not met for a while due to dwindling numbers.

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

Pilates classed 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 BPFa, 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 funds to support upgraded equipment at Holm Oaks Play Park. The equipment is maintained to a high standard and inspected annually. Maintenance work is expensive.

Committee- We are run by an increasingly small dedicated number of volunteer committee members. I continue to 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 parish council representatives is much appreciated, and essential to ongoing communication.

Plans- we look forward to the Butleigh Ball on 21st May, lead by Rachel Coling.

We are very grateful to the Parish Council for their ongoing 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 last twelve months for Buyleigh has been virtually crime free. Unfortunately around Lottisham, and West Bradley there have been several thefts of Landrovers and cattle trailers. So making sure that vehicles are left securely locked is of prime importance. Tim Richards, our PCSO, is doing a good job of regularly covering the district. His visits have been reduced as he now has to do some coverage of Street and Glastonbury. Fly tiipping is still a problem in some areas, mainly around Bolster Lane. Butleigh is recognised as being one of the best villages for reporting unusual vehicles and people to the Police. This must be maintained as it is a key factor for the low incidents of crime in our village. The quick passing of criminal

activity around the local NHW groups in the area is a key factor to keeping crime to a low level.

SPEED WATCH REPORT: Mr David Pusey reported: In the past 12 months, we have mounted 12 sessions at our three Speedwatch sites, and the general impression is that the site where the majority of people speed is in Butleigh Wootton. At this site, the pumping station, the speed limit is 30 mph and is also used by the mobile camera of the Roads Policing Unit. The road drops down from both directions and it is difficult to maintain 30 mph without braking. However, the road approaches a crossroads which constitutes a hazard. The crossroads is also a bus stop which adds to the hazard when the bus passes through.

Speeds at this point are frequently over 45mph, in both directions and in spite of the usual headlamp flash warnings given by others when a Speedwatch session is in progress. Another interesting point is that many of the speeders are women, often with children in the car on their way to school.

At busy periods, we are still seeing some 400 vehicles an hour through the village, and speed on Sub Road down the hill from the direction of the Rose and Portcullis into the narrow section of Sub Road between Chapel Lane and the High Street / Compton Street Junctions is of concern.

Following complaints from a resident about speeding, I was asked to investigate the development of a possible additional location in Baltonsborough Road. This had previously been considered, but the police were unable to give sanction as there is no site that meets the police safety criteria. The only practicable site is by the junction with Back Town, within the 30 mph zone. Unfortunately, it is too close to the 40 mph limit and shortage of visibility makes it difficult to measure a vehicle's speed in the 30 mph zone. In the opposite direction, the speed limit changes from 20 to 30 mph, and again, visibility makes it difficult to measure speed in the short distance of 30 mph road. The Mendip Speedwatch Co-ordinator also recommended that it was an impracticable site. I did carry out an unofficial check one morning, in company with a member of the Parish Council, and during the hour we spent there, there were no instances of speeding among some 70 vehicles.

I am planning to mount further Speedwatch sessions in the course of the next few months, so be prepared to see us at the roadside wearing our bright yellow jackets at the three sites: Butleigh Wootton, Sub Road and Barton Road. Fortunately, most drivers slow down when they see us. That's what we want – slowing down makes the village roads safer.

BATS REPORT: Mr Tom Done reported:

We again had a very successful year with the number of trips per month starting the year 2015 at 40 per month 20 of which was for one person (*who now has a personal carer*) we are now averaging 20 per month.

The Co-ordinator reports that the trail of transferring the phone to another member of the team has been very successful and we hope to extend this, thus giving others an insight as to the gratitude that is expressed for our service.

We can report that the "Mid Somerset Car Scheme Partnership" granted a moratorium on driver insurance premiums for 2015 however we will be paying during 2016 at a rate of about £8 per driver. The Accounts for 2015 have been reviewed and signed.

We did not increase our trip rates, which were last increased in July 2010, so remained the same in 2015 with the exception of free medical trips for over nineties, we feel it will be necessary to review this for 2016 with the increased number of members reaching this age.

The scheme has lost a number of drivers during the year for various reasons ill health being a major one though, we have welcomed one new driver and we are hoping that new members of our community will join our team as drivers.

Finally in this time of reduced Public Transport we cannot express how important it is for BATS service to be known to our community.

VILLAGE HALL COUNCIL REPORT Mr D Heeley reported : The Village Hall Council awoke from its slumbers in Autumn 2015. Land had become available from part of the Gane estate adjacent to the Playing Field: in essence a key opportunity.

Following negotiations with Angus MacDonald, the Playing Field Association, the Parish Council, and various Solicitors the Village Hall Council were pleased to hand a cheque to the Parish Council for £16,000 to cover the cost of two pieces of land (equal to the auction bid price) plus initial estimated legal fees.

It is likely that the Village Hall Council as such will be disbanded and certain members 'incorporated' with the Butleigh Playing Fields Association, though as yet nothing formal has been decided.

My thanks to all for their help and advice during the processes outlined.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY ACTION GROUP : Mr A Brown reported:

The Butleigh & Butleigh Wootton Community Emergency Action Group now comprises five members with eleven parishioners pledging their support.

Following a financial grant from Somerset County Council each team member is now provided with personal protection equipment which is appropriately marked "Community Emergency Team"

We are looking to purchase Walkie Talkie hand held radios for team members.

We would like to recruit additional volunteers to join the Emergency Action Team and in particular a secretary, a task of which would not be too onerous .

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

Mendip District Council : Local Plan part 2 is progressing and will be concluded by the end of the year. The new Mendip Leisure contract is progressing well with consequential savings. The Combined Services contract has been signed with 5 other authorities. This will show saving of £300,000 per year for ten years and has been awarded to Capita. The council offices continue to be rented out to other services, partners are the Police, SMTC and SCC staff. The council chamber is being used for wedding services. Mendip may set up a housing company as local authorities can borrow at a reduced rate. The Mendip finances are in good shape but there may need to be restructure and reshaping in the next 12 months. The aim is to balance the books and become financially self sufficient without Central Govt money.

Somerset County Council : The Somerset Rivers Body is now up and running and included in the Council Tax bill.

Adult social care is the most expensive and Council tax was raised by 2% to keep the service going.

'Somerset Together' will pull together Care in the Community. Child Social Care improving but there is a shortage of social workers.

Devolution – No decisions have been made by Central Government but services will be devolved with appropriate funding. Open to negotiation is a Mayor for the South West.

Finances pose serious problems for the future.

Hinkley Point nothing positive to report. New Homes Bonus or the Legacy Fund is being cut back over the next 4 years.

Meeting closed at 8.55p.m.

Chairman
3rd May 2016