

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF BUTLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.00P.M. ON 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017 IN THE CHURCH ROOM, BUTLEIGH.**

**PARISH COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** A Carr (Chairman), W Moore-Read, R Burdett, R Davidson, E Aitken

**APOLOGIES:** D Heeley, A Brown. Mrs S de Camp

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mr & Mrs T Hoyle, G Hughes, Dr R Hughes, G Kirk, Cllr N Woolcombe-Adams, A Petherick, D Salter. N Foster. Mr & Mrs England, R Gonzales & P Edmondson after BPPFA report

**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 ask any questions.

#### Parish Council Members and Meetings

There are currently 6 Parish Councillors. 4 of these were elected unopposed in May 2015 and a further 2 have been co-opted since then. The next election will take place in May 2019. Parish Councillors are unpaid volunteers from the village. All bring a skill or experience from their professional and personal lives.

The dates of Parish Council meetings are published at the beginning of the year and they normally take place on the first Tuesday of each month. Occasionally extra meetings are arranged when more time is required or a special issue has to be decided.

Our County Council and Mendip District Councillor is Nigel Woolcombe-Adams. He attends our meetings when his other commitments allow.

Meetings are normally attended by less than 4 members of the public except when contentious items are on the agenda.

#### Planning

This is a summary of the planning applications 'considered' by the Parish Council. It identifies those which came before the Council and which have subsequently been withdrawn. Not all the applications have been determined by the Planning Authority. As a public consultee, the Parish Council dealt with 30 Applications during the period. The Parish Council recommended 19 for approval and 3 for refusal. No comment was made in relation to 8. In the main this was because they related to tree works in the conservation Area and the decisions were left to the Mendip Tree Officer.

To date the Planning Authority have approved 19 and refused 2. The balance have either been withdrawn or not yet determined.

As would be expected the vast majority related to residential extensions, additions or alterations. Of the total, one related to a commercial or trade related enterprise and one related to the erection of a new residential dwelling.

Part 2 of the Mendip Local Plan was discussed at the January meeting following a request from the Planning Authority for the Parish Council to comment on the revised assessment of development allocation. A public consultation will be arranged in the village after publication of the revised plan.

#### Finance

The Parish precept was set at £13,000 for 2017/2018, a slight increase on last year.

A significant part of the precept supports the Playing Field Association, which includes the Play Area in Holm Oaks. The ground maintenance contract for the village, which has been running for 2 years, has been adjusted by agreement, to achieve savings but without reducing standards. Contributions are made to Churchyard maintenance, the Church Room repair fund and footpath maintenance. Small donations are made to Charities and not for profit organisations benefitting villagers. The annual accounts are audited by 2 different auditors.

#### Highways

The Parish Council have continued to monitor problems with road surfaces and report these to County Highways. The unfortunate situation of lorries entering the village and getting stuck, is being addressed by the Parish Council. Our MP has become involved and further details will be provided in due course.

The implications of owning Long Drove (Public Bridleway) between Blagrove Farm and Watchwell Drove became apparent during the year when the Internal Drainage Board demanded essential maintenance work to the surface of the drove costing in excess of £5000. A grant was obtained and there was no cost to the Parish. The cost of future maintenance will now have to be reflected in the precept.

Vehicle speeds through the village continue to be monitored by the County Council on 4 occasions a year. The temporary speed device at the south end of Sub Road regularly records an average of 43 mph in the 30 mph speed limit.

#### Environment

A litter pick was organised last year around the village and another one is planned for 22<sup>nd</sup> April this year. These are well supported by residents.

#### Community Fund

Each year a £2,500 donation is paid out of a community fund to benefit not for profit organisations in the village. A formal procedure for application is now well established and details of contact details are displayed in the village shop. A working party of 2 village and 1 Parish Council representatives are available to help with applications. To date £13,000 has been distributed.

#### Future Projects

Defibrillator – The Parish Council have recognised the importance of having a defibrillator in the village for that rare event of a cardiac arrest. A company who supplies the equipment have carried out a presentation to the council and the cost is approximately £2000 per machine. Fund raising is to take place on 6<sup>th</sup> May in conjunction with Rotary. A further event is expected in July.

Telephone Box – The box in the High Street has now been fully refurbished thanks to the efforts of a number of volunteers. The proposal is to use it to house the defibrillator.

Housing Needs Survey – After receiving a Big Lottery grant of £3,500 the Parish Council instructed the Community Council for Somerset to carry out a survey in Butleigh to establish the need for Affordable Housing and villagers housing needs generally. A brief summary is being provided by the Parish Council in the following meeting. The response rate of 38% is considered by CCS to be “strong”

Mobile phone mast - A proposal by Shared Access to erect a mast on the Playing Field was first considered in September last year. There followed a public consultation and discussion

at 4 Parish Council meetings, culminating in approval at the January meeting after planning permission had been granted. An extra Parish Council meeting has been arranged for the 11<sup>th</sup> April at 8pm.

Footpaths and Walking – The Annual Mendip Walking Festival will be held in Butleigh over the August Bank Holiday. About 300 people are expected to attend over 3 days. Four guided walks of different lengths will leave from the Playing Field each day. All villagers are encouraged to join in. The event is free of charge.

Land Purchase adjoining Playing Field – This proposal has encountered problems during the year mainly caused by an overage or uplift clause imposed by the previous owner. Funds are available for the purchase and a contribution to legal costs but not for fencing, release of the covenant and the balance of legal costs. Further discussions will continue with the current owner.

#### Conclusion

On a limited budget and with only 5 councillors (6 from December) we have managed to keep our most important facilities funded and operating. Various projects started during 2016 will occupy the next few months.

There is likely to be a public consultation on the Local Plan Part 2 to determine where Housing Development will take place in Butleigh.

Your elected Parish Council will continue to work for the whole village, currently with a population of about 820.

The Parish Council have raised over £11,000 in grants to assist in their obligations and provide benefits to the village. This has helped to prevent a large increase in the Council Tax precept for next year.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors and our Clerk, Sheila, for their support in the last year. I also recognise the tremendous efforts of the band of volunteers who give service to the village.

**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 Chris Hopkins was licensed as Priest in Charge of Baltonsborough, Butleigh, West Pennard, West Bradley and Lottisham at a service led by Bishop Peter Hancock in the church of West Pennard on Sunday, August 8, 2017. The church was full and the service uplifting .

The church had continued to run smoothly during the Vacancy until August and all services were led by a variety of local priests and our Readers. The Readers of the Benefice worked very hard to cover extra duties and we are extremely grateful to them for all their willing help.

This year, attendance at regular services, in contrast to the national trend and despite the vacancy, has again been maintained and we continue to expect 35-45 at the two regular communion services held on the second and third Sundays of the month . At the services over Christmas, particularly the Crib and Carol services, numbers were very high. We continue to offer a wide variety of services: Evensong, Evening Prayer, Morning Praise, Café church, Songs of Praise, Taize, are held in rotation on the fourth Sunday of the month and they have all been well supported. Bible Sunday is marked with a special service. The Family service on the first Sunday in the month, is well attended and Messy Church, an informal event for

children and parents, has been held twice in church on a Wednesday after school and has been very popular.

The Christian Meditation Group continues to meet fortnightly.

Since the retirement of Roy and Rosemary Moody last year, there has been no provision for young people aged 11 upwards.

Acorns is held every Wednesday after school during term time.

A preparation for Easter course is held during Lent and a series of meditations in Holy Week.

Tom Done will retire from the post of churchwarden at the end of March and we thank him for all his service to St Leonard's. We also thank David Heeley who will continue to chair the Administration Committee and Charmian Wright who will continue to chair the Community Group. Sian Decamp will continue to chair the Ministry Group and Fundraising Group.

The church fete was extremely successful and we thank Raquel Gonzalez and her committee for all their efforts and hard work. This event is an important and enjoyable village occasion and raises a significant amount of money for the work of the church. We continue to donate over 10% of all church income to charity.

In January, we installed a new data projector and screen for use in services and talks. We used a generous legacy, a grant and a loan to cover costs. This is a discreet and modern installation and was put to immediate use in services in January. We hope that people and groups in the village will want to use this excellent facility and a notice to that effect was put in News and Views. The other major work in the fabric of the church has been the installation of a new boiler which was a large and unanticipated expense.

It is hoped that Graham Dowding of Nailsworth will have restored damaged window panes in the West Window by Easter.

Discussions have begun on the final stage of the Development work of the church. The Committee has been reformed and will report to the PCC.

The churchyard continues to be maintained by Rob Hallett. There was a full review of the churchyard maintenance contract; tenders were received and Rob Hallett was invited to continue. 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.

The Church Room is used regularly and bookings are healthy.

The church finances are very well supervised and we are most grateful to our Treasurer, Mark Tolhurst for his efficient and careful work. The strain on our finances this year was due to the unexpected new boiler. As before, 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:**

In previous years I have presented a report proudly summarising the achievements of the BPFA over the last year. Sadly, this year my report will be very different, and will reflect a totally different slant.

I am sorry to say, but under the current financial set up and level of support, the BPFA is doomed.

It might not be this year, or even the next, but the rate of decline toward the inevitable will happen unless there are some significant changes. I am afraid to say I see padlocks on the

gate.

Let us see why.

Over the last few years we have lost a large number of organised activities for the young people of our village. Quick Cricket, Youth club, 811 children's club have all disappeared due to lack of a keen parent to take it on, and fears of inadequate insurance cover.

Somerset Playing Fields Association have withdrawn their support with regard to insurance, and we have had to hunt far and wide to get a much more expensive policy to cover a sports field and pavilion for public liability. This has also added the need for fortnightly inspections to both play areas to maintain cover.

Nursery numbers are dwindling, despite the involvement of the school.

We almost lost the children's football club due to concern re insurance issues. It's future is very precarious.

Tag rugby could be in it's last year. Ian Innes and Colin Gravatt have been clear this is their last year of running it, and there have been concerns again about what insurance cover they need.

Therefore in the next year we could be in a position where we have no children's clubs at all.

The only thriving activity on the grass is the adult football, but most of the players do not live in the village.

Our committee is dwindling in strength. We have a secretary and treasurer approaching 70, Pete the groundsman is becoming increasingly frustrated at our precarious position and will not keep going for long under the current arrangements.

The fundraising has been increasingly challenging. Basically there are 4 or 5 families that do everything. The draw club used to be our main fundraiser. I used to excuse myself of selling the tickets to my patients (ethical issues), but in the last few years, we have not had enough volunteers, so I have had to. This has involved me on performing medical consultations on several occasions, and once had to go back home to get my medical equipment to medically sort out a villager. This is not sustainable.

Our other big fundraiser is the Multi Terrain run, and we have no volunteer to run it next year, as Pete Wright, who has worked so hard for years to run a fantastic event has retired. This years event was a great success, but once again it was the same few people doing all the work.

The attempted purchase of the extra land seems to have been forced into the long grass, with clauses added to it's purchase contract which basically means, as far as I can see, there are no longer sufficient funds to buy the land.

The mast money might buy us some time, but will not change the fundamental issue of lack of engagement.

The BPFPA always used to be a community supported organisation. The community engagement has disappeared. Sometimes, rather than be fun, we just feel we work hard to mow the grass and maintain a facility to bolster the villagers house prices.

We are tired, fed up, and our children for whom many of us got involved, have either left, or are on their way out of the village. It is time for others to step up.

The village needs to decide what it wants. If it does not wake up, in a very short time there will be no play facilities in the village.

**SPEED WATCH REPORT: Alan Carr reported:** A volunteer is required to run Speedwatch.

**BATS REPORT: Mr Tom Done reported:**

We again had a very successful year with the number of trips per month starting the year 2016 at 21 per month .

The Co-ordinator reports that the of transferring the phone to another member of the team has been very successful, especially during the time he has been unwell.

We can report that the "Mid Somerset Car Scheme Partnership's" moratorium on driver insurance premiums for 2015 has ended and we now pay £8 per Driver. The Accounts for 2016 have been prepared.

We did not increase our trip rates, which were last increased in July 2010, so remained the same for 2016 with the exception of free medical trip for over nineties, we feel it will be necessary to review this for 2017 which has resulted in our decision to only offer this for trips to Street or Glastonbury (including West Mendip Hospital)

The scheme has lost a number of Drivers now only 16 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, and how rewarding it is to hear the complements for our passengers'.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT : Mr C Allanson-Bailey reported:** I am glad to say that another year has passed with little or no criminal activity in the area. There have been thefts of farm machinery in the West Bradley area. With Spring coming and we start gardening, do remember to look after your tools, and keep your garden sheds locked. Clearly marking equipment with your postcode with a UV marking pen is recommended by the Police.

There have been regular reports of rubbish being dumped around the lanes. Fortunately the council is good at clearing the rubbish. If anyone sees this happening, report it immediately to the Police or the Council.

Any suspicious vehicles or persons that are seen in the villages are to be reported immediately to the Police on number 101, or if a crime is in progress 999 must be used. Tim Richards contact number is 07889 659243 (not 24hrs).

**COMMUNITY EMERGENCY ACTION GROUP : Mr A Brown reported:** The Butleigh & Butleigh Wootton Community Emergency Action Group still comprises five members with a number of parishioners pledging their support.

Each team member has been issued with a Walkie Talkie hand held radio/ torch.

We hope to arrange a group exercise during March or May.

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

No incidents to report on since the last Parish Meeting 2016

The balance of funds allocated by the Somerset County Council for the group amount to £57.66 and this is held by the Parish Council for future use.

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

**Mendip District Council** recently underwent a positive peer review and are sound financially. 'Shape Mendip' now houses other public sector organisations and soon a new library.

The Cabinet and Full Council agreed a loan facility of £40million. This could be used to build houses for sale and to rent and create car parks.

Dulcote Quarry is to have a factory built for ready made food production that will eventually employ 300 people.

Wild Beer Company from Batcombe is moving to Bath & West showground site funded by crowd funding.

**Somerset County Council** election on 4<sup>th</sup> May.

Adult Social Care is the biggest and most difficult budget to balance. Money to now be funded locally by council tax.

Children's Social Care was deemed inadequate 2 years ago,. The improvement targets have been met.

Leader John Osman pressurising the govt central budget for Somerset schools – an extra £22million has been secured.

Future- Somerset University. Merger between Bridgwater and Taunton colleges.

New Garden Town planned near Taunton.

A303 and A358 improvements. Work out to consultation.

78,000 potholes filled in the last financial year.

Meeting closed at 8.55 p.m.

Chairman

25<sup>th</sup> April 2016