

FOVANT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 24 APRIL 2007 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: District Councillor Mrs Green, 9 Parish Councillors, 4 local organisation representatives and 7 members of the public.

In attendance: Mrs E Young (Clerk to the Council)

Chairman's Opening Remarks:

The Chairman, Cllr Knowles, welcomed those present. He explained the Parish Meeting consisted of all local government electors for the parish and was required to assemble between 1 March and 1 June once a year. The Chairman of the Parish Council must preside. The purpose of the meeting was to hear what the Parish Council and other organisations in the village had been doing. It was also an opportunity for an appraisal of the work which had been done and a method for the public to guide the Council as to their future objectives.

Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 4 April 2006 (having been circulated) were accepted and signed. It was agreed no further action need be taken.

There being no representation from the County Council or Community Police, District Councillor Mrs Green reported: as an Independent Councillor she worked on a number of working groups, committees and panels

- Council Tax: she considered this was a contentious issue and that it was too high bearing in mind that only a minority of the total population actually paid the full amount it was clear that the tax method was wrong.
- Local Government Housing Association: Council house tenants had voted by 72% to stay as tenants with SDC rather than transfer to a private Housing Association this year
- The Salisbury Council Local Plan was being phased out in favour of the Local Development Framework.
- R2 contributions – work was ongoing to make the award of grants wider than just outdoor recreational.
- Vision for Salisbury: 26 recommendations had come out with scope for improvements for Salisbury city, road network, entry points at Churchfields, the Station, Old Manor, Tescos at Southampton Road.
- The WCC 1-Tier Authority: 3 out of the 4 District Authorities were opposed. SDC felt this proposal would be unwieldy and remote from the electorate – decisions would be made in Trowbridge and there would be heavier workloads at local level for a 50% reduction in the number of Councillors.
- She deplored the centralisation of SDC offices which was going ahead with new build at Bourne Hill.
- Waste Collections: wheelie bins would be introduced in the area in the Autumn. The normal weekly household waste collection would be reduced to fortnightly only, alternating with a recycling collection.

Reports: All reports are filed with the minutes. The following are highlights.

Fovant Badges Society: Mr Adrian Matthews presented their report. The 2006 annual maintenance programme had been completed last June. All seven badges on Fovant Down had been trimmed and weeded. Much of the work had been carried out by Dean & Dyball Limited but once again the Royal Signals from Blandford had provided a small working party to trim, weed and rechalk their own badge. In 2007 it was planned to surface and re-chalk three badges, Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry, the Wiltshire Regiment and the London Rifle Brigade using some 65 tonnes of chalk. Total cost for annual maintenance for 2006 was just over £21,000 excluding VAT. Projections for future income and expenditure show a worrying picture. The Society receives no financial help from English Heritage and the Society is financially dependent on membership subscriptions (265 members), donations, and their own fund raising and sponsorship efforts for revenue.

The Annual Drumhead Service is scheduled to take place on Sunday 1 July at East Farm and the guest speaker will be Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, who is Honorary Colonel of the Royal Wessex Yeomanry.

Fovant Relief in Need Charity: Mrs J Coombes had sent in a report. The Trustees had met twice during the year and had been delighted to receipt a donation of £150 from the Fovant Fete Committee. Monies had been made available to help Fovant children.

Village Hall: Mrs Caverhill made her report. It had been a very active year for the Village Hall Committee. Several purchases had been made including 9 small tables, part funded by a Fete grant; a glass washer, part funded by Hall & Woodhouse. A night storage heater in the main hall, part funded by the Parish Council and a microwave and kitchen items. Other items had been donated, 2 large chafer dishes, a music centre, £50 donation, a new outside notice board given by the Parish Council for village hall use only. The main doors had been changed to open outwards to comply with Fire Regulations and the porch had been treated for damp and painted. A Risk Assessment had been completed and had raised a number of points which had still to be resolved. The new extension to the Village Hall Lease had been made on 1 August 2006 to continue in effect until 25 September 2011. Further improvements were being made to the Hall – improvements to the toilet area with a disabled toilet. *Community First* had given a grant of £5000 towards an estimated cost of £7.500. A lot of money had been raised from various functions during the year. Planning permission had been applied for a small extension behind the stage area.

Fovant Youth Club: Cllr Mitchell reported the Club continues to be well attended by children in Fovant and the surrounding villages. Thanks to two donations one from the Parish Council and one from a villager, the outside area had been refurbished; new gates are in place, the grass area cleared and turf laid with new gravel spread in the car park. A bench table had been donated and the Youth Club Chairman had made another with the logo 'FYC' (Fovant Youth Club) engraved on it. The area can now be used by children during the summer months. Indoor equipment, namely a large tennis table and small snooker table had been replaced together with a small air hockey table from Tisbury Youth Club which had closed. On 7 April, Mike and Helen Barratt from the Pembroke Arms had organised Fovant Fun Day, a day packed with fun for all ages. The event raised some £1130. The money will be donated to the Youth Club and the Committee will be asking the members for suggestions on how to use the money.

Footpaths: Cllr Mrs Harris reported that with the help of Nick Cowan, WCC Footpath Warden, and members of the Ramblers Association, four 'Kissing Gates' had been erected although a further three were needed.. She was indebted to Tony Lunt and other parishioners for their contribution to the funding of the gates and for their work checking whilst walking the footpaths. The Parish Council had introduced a Footpath "reporting form" last year (available from the Clerk, Post Office and Store) for observations and comments to be completed by walkers. This had proved very helpful.

Fovant History Society: Mike Harden presented a report on behalf of the FHIG on behalf of Liz Harden. All artefacts from the Pembroke collection of WW1 memorabilia had been checked and removed to safe storage. The October 2006 annual exhibition had had many visitors who gave the Society interesting photographs or cuttings of past Fovant events. The web site has taken considerable time and the "people" section still tops the list with the greatest number of "hits". Two new links have been established with Nadder Focus, the web site of the Nadder Valley Team Ministry and with UK Villages co.uk which covers a wider range of nearby villages. Book sales during 06/07 have continued slowly. 362 have been sold through outlets, 31 have been sold through mail order, 78 are out in various venues and 583 remain.

Neighbourhood Watch: Cllr Ray Bell reported the village continued to have a comparatively low level of crime and anti social behaviour. The reorganisation of the Wiltshire Police continues under the title Project Optimus – the principal drivers behind it were: the increase in the seriousness and complexity of national crime and the need for a stronger capability to investigate serious national crime, deal with critical incidents, etc. and Government policy. The police were now required to introduce neighbourhood policing teams (NPTs) and included in those teams, police community support officers (PCSOs). The first requires more strength at the force level, particularly in specialist functions. The second requires a police presence close to the community, a presence which will know and understand local concerns and work to resolve them. That presence is the neighbourhood policing team.

The Tisbury area which includes Fovant has a neighbourhood policing team. The head is PC Mark Steele and the team should consist of two, a PC (Community Beat Manager) and a PCSO. There is delay in providing the PCSO and meanwhile PC Mark Littlewood is the second member of the team. The Tisbury area is huge – north to south it extends from the county boundary with Dorset to slightly north of the A303 and west to east, from just west of Shaftesbury to just short of Compton Chamberlayne. Many incidents will be dealt with by police teams from the divisional level. As part of Project Optimus the force is reorganising into two divisions – the County division which includes our area and the Swindon division.

Police experience suggests that at this time of year we should be alert for: Cars broken into when parked in beauty spots; shed and garden theft; cold calling by unauthorised sellers, unregistered contractors touting for garden or building work, and teams of confidence tricksters tricking the elderly and distraction burglaries at the door.

Cllr Bell remarked upon the good work carried out by the local Neighbourhood Watch team and said the village owed a debt of gratitude to the Neighbourhood Watch volunteer co-ordinators whose dedication provides the indispensable foundation for its work making Fovant a safe place to live and work.

Fovant Parish Council: Cllr Knowles, the Chairman of the Parish Council, gave his report: the Local Elections for District and Parish Councils were to be held on 3 May. In Fovant's case a formal voting for Parish Councillors would not be required as not all the vacancies had been taken up. There were 7 nominees for 9 vacancies and there would be an opportunity for two more members of the public to join the Parish Council by co-option.

The Parish Council is the first tier of local democratic government – it is unpaid voluntary work and indeed most Councillors rarely even claim expenses. The aim of the Council was to undertake work and make representations for and on behalf of the local community on matters of local interest and concern including planning, to Local Authorities, National Agencies and the Government. For the past six years the Precept Tax has remained unchanged at £6,000; the Precept pays for administration (including the Clerks salary) 39%; professional fees (such as Auditing of the accounts) 14%, Parish works 19%; and Parish amenities 28%.

The most consuming time and effort and difficult parts of the work the Parish Council faces is when dealing with planning applications. The Chairman explained the Parish Council do not 'approve' or 'refuse' planning applications, they simply express "support" or "not support" and advise local concerns. All new planning applications are posted on the Village Hall Council Notice Board with details of the dates of the meeting at which it will be reviewed (normally held on a Tuesday evening) at least 3 days in advance. The public are always invited.

At the 2006 Parish Meeting a member of the public asked Council to consider Affordable Housing for local needs. The Council had organised a public meeting and agreed for a housing needs survey to be undertaken. The results of that survey were expected to be available around June this year and a presentation will be given by *Community First* in July 2007. (Post Meeting Note: the presentation will be held on Tuesday, 17th July 2007 at 7 pm).

Much of the Council's work during the year had been in support of needs of the children and young people and in particular, sport and recreation equipment. In 2006/07 activities completed included installation of the new slide in the children's play area; chip bark; repairs to recreation ground high fence; recreation ground scrub clearance, and installation of a new climbing frame. The Chairman expressed grateful thanks to local volunteers, John Ring and Lee Shepherd and Cllr Steve Mitchell who had worked together to complete the climbing frame project.

The Council also has the right under Section 137 to make donations in support of local causes; new Village Hall and Council notice boards, refurbishment and erection of a new notice board for the Rainbow Centre, and footpath maintenance and style upgrades. Under the SDC R2 Recreational Grants system, the Parish Council had submitted applications for an electricity generator and power pitch roller for Fovant Cricket Club and it is hoped to provide a white line marking machine in 2007.

It was hoped in the future to re-consider again the possibility of producing a Village Plan to reflect in all aspects what the residents of the parish believe they would like to see happen to their parish in the foreseeable future. This would be a key development and planning reference document which has been adopted by many other parishes in Wiltshire.

The Chairman thanked Mr Bernard Allnutt for his diligent work carried over 4 seasons of the year in planting the village flower tubs and the beautiful display at the A30/High Street triangle, Helen and Mike Barrett for introducing fund raising support for the village children, David and Rachel Davies for their continued efforts in gathering information, data and making submissions to WCC Highways in order to introduce a 30 mph speed restriction at the A30 junction. He also thanked Cllr Mrs Story for allowing the recycling centre at the Cross Keys, and especially to Margaret Mackenzie for keeping the village litter free and to Frank Dicker for keeping the waterfall at Brook Street clear.

Open Forum: there being no questions from the public, the meeting closed at 8.50 p.m. Mr David Davies expressed his thanks to the Chairman for the Council's work during the year.

Issued by:

Nigel Knowles
Chairman of the Council

List of Attendees:

Tisbury Community Police	PC Mark Steele (Apologies)
Wiltshire County Council	County Councillor Tony Deane (Apologies)
Salisbury District Council	District Councillor Mrs J Green
Fovant Parish Council	Councillor Nigel Knowles
Fovant Badges Society	Mr Adrian Matthews
Fovant Relief in Need Charity	Mrs J Coombes (Apologies)
Village Hall	Mrs B Caverhill
Fovant Youth Club	Mr Peter White
Footpath Representative	Cllr Mrs A Harris
Fovant History Society	Mr M Harden
Neighbourhood Watch/PCG	Cllr R Bell
Parish Council	Cllr A Leppard
Parish Council	Cllr Mrs C Hunter
Parish Council	Cllr K Grant (Part-time)
Parish Council	Cllr S Mitchell
Parish Council	Cllr Mrs P Story
Parish Council	Cllr A Weston
Clerk to the Parish Council	Mrs Elizabeth Young

and 7 Members of the Public