

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY HELD ON 7 MAY 2014 AT 7PM IN THE READING ROOM

Present: Chairman: Cllr P Boyles, Cllr M Lennard, Cllr E Jack, Cllr L Taylor, Cllr Kevin Hawkins, Wilts Cllr B Wayman.
Public Present: 4

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Patrick Boyles welcomed everyone to the meeting and accepted apologies from: Cllr Sir R Packer and Cllr E Pelham.

2. Appointment of Chairman

Patrick Boyles was proposed by Cllr ML and seconded by Cllr LT.

3. The Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 15 May 2013 were proposed by Cllr ML and seconded by Cllr EJ, agreed and signed.

4. ANNUAL REPORTS

The Chairman

Welcome to our Annual Parish Assembly for 2014.

I can report that your Parish Council is currently at full strength with seven members following the co-option of Kevin Hawkins last July. Your vice-chair, Mike Lennard, is planning to relocate to Salisbury in the near future - but I am pleased to say that he has agreed to remain a member of the Parish Council for the time being.

Mike initiated the monthly Saturday morning Parish Council drop in sessions at the Reading Room to give people the opportunity to keep in contact with the PC on matters of interest or concern. Although a few people did attend it was felt that there was insufficient interest to continue on a regular basis. However Mike has agreed with the Reading Room that the PC might be able to man a desk/table during other events from time to time.

During the year your Parish Council made several representations on a number of planning matters within Chilmark and Ridge. We respond to applications as a statutory consultee - In some cases we supported and in others we recommended against the application. However the final decisions on these matters are determined by the Local Planning Authority, in our case Wiltshire Council. In the event of rejection by the LPA then the applicant has a right of appeal to an inspector appointed by the government's Planning Inspectorate.

The most contentious this year being for a proposed development in Cow Drove, opposed by your PC following an extraordinary meeting to consider the matter last month. This application was withdrawn prior to determination by the LPA but may well be resubmitted at some future time.

I mentioned in last year's report the excellent clearance and maintenance work carried out by riparian owners of the Winterbourne downstream of The Cross. I am sure that this work helped protect many properties from the devastating effects of flooding. However, the combination of high groundwater levels and surface water flows this winter overwhelmed the Winterbourne upstream of The Cross and along Hindon Lane where the culverts and roadside ditches were unable to cope. This resulted in the sewerage system overflowing, significant damage to the road surface and the need to deploy sandbags and Aquasacs to protect properties along The Street for some considerable time.

Special thanks is due to local residents Neil Pattenden and Rob Snook for the work involved with the deployment of the sandbags and for the kind help and support they provided to neighbours effected by the extreme conditions.00000

A long term solution needs to be found to overcome the recurrent flooding problems in this part of the village and your Parish Council will continue to push both Wiltshire Council and Wessex Water for action on the matter.

Requests for grants from the precept were made by both The Reading Room and the Claybush Playground Management Committee during the year and your Parish Council were pleased to continue support to both organisations that contribute so much to the well being of our community.

Finally I would once again like to give thanks to Mr Jeremy Oswell for acting as our internal auditor and to our Parish Clerk, Jenny MacDougall, for the preparation of accounts as well as the excellent work in organizing our meetings and attendance at several Wiltshire Council events on our behalf during the year.

The Reading Room Report

The Reading Room committee underwent a number of changes at its AGM in November when seven members, including the chairman Mike Lennard and Secretary Mary Boyles stepped down. Our thanks go to both Mike and Mary for their hard work during their time on the committee, and for the impetus provided by Mike that resulted in the Reading Room having a new kitchen installed at the end of February. A Village Tea Party to celebrate the kitchen is being held in the Reading Room on Saturday 17th May, 3-5pm, and we would be delighted if some, or all, of the Parish Council could join us on the day.

Prior to the AGM, a number of successful events had taken place including a Bingo Night, a one-man play about Winston Churchill and a joint Macmillan Coffee Morning and Autumn Produce sale that combined well with the Parish Council Drop-In. During the summer, committee members joined forces for a spring clean of the Reading Room patio-garden and shed, and villagers were invited via a questionnaire to submit their thoughts on best future use of the Reading Room. The results enabled us to focus on improving facilities and providing a range of events to appeal to as many people as possible.

Two new members joined the Committee at the November AGM, including our current Secretary Jenny Gavin, and an additional member (Catherine Quaile-Leahy) was co-opted in January to represent the village school.

Fund-raising events since the AGM have included the Christmas Bazaar, a Bric-a-Brac sale, a stage version of Great Expectations, another successful Bingo Night and most recently a sell-out performance by a Folk duo from Lancashire. Weekly Bridge lessons proved a popular new booking and two 10-week courses took place from September through to March. A St John Ambulance First-Aid course was also well attended, and another one is planned. These were in addition to our regular lettings for the Art Group, Social Stitchers, the PCC and Slimmer's Support Group.

We were delighted to be successful in our Area Board application for a Grant for £2,475 which represents half the cost of the new kitchen. Thanks go to our Treasurer Krysia Kirkpatrick for processing this. And finally, an impressive single-handed fund-raising initiative by Reading Room Trustee Patrick Middleton means that we will soon have a new set of 50 comfortable padded chairs! The existing chairs are to be kept for hire purposes.

We wish want to thank the Parish Council for its continued support including its generous annual grant, part of which this year helped finance the new kitchen, and for its ongoing use of the Reading Room. Thank you.

The Playground Committee Report

The accounts for the calendar year of 2013 show that the Playground Committee had a good year financially in 2013. The closing balance shows that they are in credit to the tune of £1985. Although there are two grants listed from Chilmark Parish Council, the one appearing in January relates to 2012, which didn't actually appear in our bank account until January 2013.

As well as the Parish Council grants, we also received £346 from the Wiltshire County Council Community Grant which paid for the installation of a small bench in the playground, a donation from the George Young Trust and a donation from Waitrose as a result of being selected for their Green Token scheme. We held two fundraising events in the year, a duck race in the spring and a Pimms stall at the village Flower Show.

We have paid our usual expenses for the playground inspection and public liability insurance, and we also paid for wood preserver, which was applied in the summer, and for repairs to the tower unit. The tower unit had suffered some wood rot, but thanks to a great deal of help, hard work and expertise, particularly from Paul Burt and Jim Betts, a wonderful repair has been carried out which will ensure its survival for some years to come. The repair was completed early in 2014 and cost a total of £140, which is a tiny cost compared to the price of replacement of the item. So far this year, we have held one fundraising event and applied weed killer to the weeds in the playground. We are grateful as always for all the help and support that we receive to keep the playground going and particularly the grant awarded by the Parish Council.

Sally mentioned that the bark needs topping up about every 5 years which is an ongoing expense. The Chmn commented on how well the tower looks and what a lot of volunteer time and effort has been involved. They are to be congratulated.

Wilts County Cllr's Report

Cllr. Bridget Wayman, Nadder & East Knoyle Division.

2013/14 has been another difficult year for the Council, which is still having to deal with the large cuts in government grant, but the Council is also aware that many people are also still facing a tough time, which is why we voted for no increase in Council tax for the fifth year running.

There were local elections in May last year and I am pleased to be representing this division and your parish for the next 4, now 3 years. After the election the Council published its business plan that set out the focus and the plan for delivery for the next 4 years.

The overarching aim or vision is to create stronger and more resilient communities and to do that council will continue to protect the most vulnerable, support and boost the local economy and work with people and organisations to support local communities to do more for themselves.

There are 12 key actions to help deliver the three priorities. Perhaps of huge importance in this area is the investment of an additional £52m over the next 6 years which means that we will spend a total of £21m a year to improve the 2,765 miles of road in Wiltshire that we are responsible for.

Wiltshire's growing population of elderly and vulnerable adults means there is a corresponding growing demand for social care. We are committed to providing care for people in their own homes wherever possible and are adding a further £3.6m in our adult frontline care. Wiltshire has a high proportion of retired people in the county and an even higher proportion in this area. Besides helping people to live at home we have to try to help them cope with modern day life and the digital literacy scheme is one way of providing extra help.

I am currently sitting on a parking review task group looking at parking charges across the county. Revenue from the car parks has been used to subsidise bus services, especially in rural areas. One of the questions we are pondering is whether we should continue to do this. Do people still need to travel by bus into Salisbury, say, to do their shopping? Are more people doing their shopping on-line? And if we help people to live at home longer, is one way of doing this by giving them the skills to do their shopping on-line?

The council will also be spending £44.9m over the next 4 years in modernizing our council housing plus a further £2m a year building more affordable council housing. One way of continuing to help people stay in their communities is to build more older people's accommodation so that they can move into more suitable homes, as well as perhaps freeing up larger council houses for younger, larger families.

The creation of community campuses is part of the focus on helping communities to become more resilient. The campus in Tisbury will serve the Tisbury community area and beyond. I have brought the plans here tonight for anyone to see and comment on and am happy to explain the detail if anyone wishes. In essence, the campus in Tisbury will make good use of the old Nadder School and will include a larger library, a new and larger sports and leisure centre, multi-purpose spaces to be used by anyone in the community for meetings and events, learning space (and we hope to be able to provide localised training and education for young people and adults) business incubation units, the Sure Start Children's Centre and the local kindergarten. The police will also be based in the campus and the youth will once again be based there, which will give them good access to all the sport and leisure facilities, including a renovated motorcycle project building. There will be a café and kitchen facilities. If anyone locally needs to meet with council officers they can do so at the campus, rather than having to travel into Salisbury or Trowbridge; the services will come to you, rather than you going to them! It is for your use too, not just Tisbury residents.

It is anticipated that planning permission will be applied for shortly and the building works will be completed by the end of 2015.

With the appalling wet winter that we have had, several villages along the Nadder Valley, including Chilmark, have been affected by the flooding and high water table. Although Somerset has received most of the press coverage because of the flooding of the Levels, it is worth remembering that Wiltshire had more homes flooded than elsewhere. There were over 400 homes flooded in Wiltshire, 320 in Dorset, 180 in Somerset and 100 in Hampshire. Wiltshire residents, Wiltshire Council and its partners, Town and parish councils have all pulled together to limit and deal with the effects of flooding and have done this stoically and with the minimum of fuss. I know your own parish council have worked very hard to resolve the problems. Wiltshire Council has diverted an additional £.5m towards helping with flood alleviation works and an additional £2m towards repairing the roads damaged by the water.

A new contract for all road and streetscene works was awarded earlier last year to Balfour Beatty Living Spaces. The intention was to join up many of the smaller contracts to provide a cohesive service, but I'm afraid it has not gone as well as expected, particularly with the streetscene services. The council and BB are working hard to rectify the situation and I hope that the parish council can report on progress that has been made in respect of cleaning the High Street.

There is a lot more I can tell you about the work of Wiltshire Council, but will leave it there as I am conscious of time constraints.

As always, I am happy to help and take up the cudgels to help your community wherever I can. You know what you want better than I do, but I will lobby and fight for that if you feel you are hitting a blank wall.

Cllr Jack asked if Ridge is still on the CATG issue agenda. She has been in contact with the Parish Steward, Lee to check that the local tasks for Ridge are carried out. The Chmn mentioned that the potholes below Rock Cottage have been repaired and ones along the Street do not meet the criteria. The Chairman is the designated Flood Warden for the parish and will be attending the S Area Flood Risk Meeting.

4. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 2013/14

The Clerk explained in detail the breakdown of the accounts for the FY 2013-14 as per attached summary. As at 31 March 2014 the total expenditure was £6,649.83 and the total receipts £15,766.88. After the final Bank Reconciliation this leaves a balance of £9,117.05. There were no unrepresented cheques.

Of note, last year were the grants of £500 made to Chilmark Reading Room and £500 to the Playground Committee. Funds are ringfenced for Forbes Field at £2,660 and the Millennium Cross at £1,400.24. These are held in reserve for maintenance requirements so in fact there is approx. £5,000 reserve in the PC funds.

Grant Thornton are the new National Auditors and the accounts will be audited on 23 June and will be available to the public for inspection as publicised on the noticeboard.

A member of the public commented on the increase in the cost of grass cutting. The Chmn explained that when the PC had put out the contract for tender, Mr Pat Newbury had supplied the lowest quote. Next year the PC will go out to tender again. Under the Section 106 Agreement the cost of maintaining the grass area at Fricker's Paddock falls to the PC whereas the grass beside the road and the footpath is Highways' responsibility. They cut it less frequently for a different requirement, that of providing good visibility along the verge for drivers.

5. AOB

A suggestion was made for a defibrillator to be purchased by the PC and held at the Reading Room. This was considered a most sensible idea and the Clerk will invite St John's Ambulance Representative to the next PC meeting to give a presentation with a view to purchasing one on behalf of the parish.

The date of the next Annual Assembly will be Wednesday 6 May 2015 at 7pm in the Reading Room.

Date:

Chairman_