

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY HELD ON 13 MAY 2015 AT 7PM IN THE READING ROOM**

**Present:** Chairman: Cllr P Boyles, Cllr M Lennard, Cllr E Pelham, Cllr L Taylor, Cllr Kevin Hawkins, Cllr Sir R Packer, Wilts Cllr B Wayman.

Public Present: 6

### **1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

Patrick Boyles welcomed everyone to the meeting and accepted apologies from: Cllr E Jack.

### **2. Appointment of Chairman**

Patrick Boyles was recommended and proposed by Cllr Sir RP and seconded by Cllr LT.

**3. The Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 7 May 2014** were proposed by Cllr ML and seconded by Cllr KH, agreed and signed.

### **4. ANNUAL REPORTS**

#### **The Chairman**

Welcome to our Annual Parish Assembly which will be followed by our Annual Parish Council AGM.

Our Annual Parish Assembly is an opportunity for local organisations and the Parish Council to report on their activities over the last year as well as drawing attention to any plans for the coming year - as well as drawing attention to matters which may be of interest or concern to our residents.

On this subject of local organisations, I can report that requests for grants were received from The Chilmark Reading Room Committee, The Playground Committee, Chilmark Cricket Club and The PCC in support of The Church and Village Newsletter. All of which were approved by members of your Parish Council from our precept income - recognising the benefits that these organisations provide to Village life. As always, members will give careful consideration to future requests for grants from local organisations subject to funds available to us.

We were fortunate that the adverse weather conditions experienced during the latter part of 2013 and early 2014 were not repeated this year. The centre of the village, lying at the bottom of a steep sided valley, can be at risk of flooding during periods of high groundwater. Work carried out by Wiltshire Council has significantly reduced this risk by the clearance of vegetation, silting and other restrictions to flow upstream of The Cross where they have highway responsibilities. However, the Senior Drainage Engineer from Wiltshire Council has advised that this risk could be minimised if riparian owners downstream of The Cross would carry out similar clearance of vegetation and silting from their own sections. The Parish Council will shortly be reminding landowners with properties that abut the Winterbourne of this.

The Parish Council has been active during the year in the matters of Rights of Way, Highway Safety, Planning and the provision of First Aid facilities within the parish.

Our Area Board's Rights of Way improvement initiative has led to the installation of a kissing gate at the Barbary end of ROW CHIL3 and a hard surface from The Hollow to The School along ROW CHIL1. Particular thanks to Elizabeth for co-ordinating and getting this work done. In addition your Parish Council has committed for regular maintenance of ROWs CHIL8 and CHIL8A to make it easier for residents to use these routes through the village all year round.

We are also in the process of obtaining improved 30mph signage and road markings along the B3089 through the village in conjunction with The Community Area Transport Group.

Particular thanks to Mike Lennard for work with Wiltshire Council Highways Engineers for pushing this forward.

We have considered a number of planning applications and made observations and comments to provide a Parish Council view as statutory consultees on how these should be resolved and determined by Wiltshire Council Planning Officers and Councillors. Following suggestions arising from the last Annual Assembly we have purchased an Automated External Defibrillation device which, with the approval of the committee, has been installed in the porch of The Reading Room. The Chilmark Response Group headed by Tony Harrison has been formed to oversee the project and with further first aid training financed by our Area Board and carried out by St John Ambulance it is hoped that Chilmark has become a more resilient community as a result.

Finally, as in previous years I would like to give thanks to Mr Jeremy Oswell for acting as our internal auditor and to our Parish Clerk, Jenny MacDougall, for preparation of the accounts and her sterling work supporting us during the last year.

I would be happy to take any questions or observations at this time.

Cllr LT mentioned that the Winterbourne appeared to be clogged at the lower end. The Chmn replied that the riparian owners would be asked to clear their stretches towards the end of the autumn when there is no regrowth. WC Highways should clear upstream of the Cross and downstream of the Cross is basically the responsibility of Riparian Owners. The PC will be sending out a modified Wilts Council letter as a reminder.

### **The Reading Room Report**

The Reading Room has had a busy and successful year since the installation of its new kitchen in February 2014, and the subsequent purchase of new chairs last summer that was funded by generous donations from villagers. Complete internal (and some external) redecoration was carried out in December and while it involved a sizeable financial outlay of just over £3,000, the fresher look has been well-received and appreciated by everyone. We are grateful to Paul Burt for having kindly provided us with a ramp suitable for wheelchair access, as well as making us a new Reading Room sign. Likewise, thanks to the Parish Council's initiative, we are pleased to have the St John's Ambulance defibrillator situated in the Reading Room porch.

A wide range of fund-raising events and entertainments have taken place including stand-up improvised comedy, a folk music performance, a cheese tasting evening and a talk by the teenage winner of the Mongolian Derby. These were in addition to more regular diary events such as the Christmas Bazaar and Village Supper & Quiz, plus the Chilmark Amateur Dramatic Society's performance of a Stourhead Soiree. It was good to see a terrific turnout of Chilmark's younger residents for the Halloween Disco, kindly put on by Reading Room Committee members Shaun & Fiona Rawlins.

We're delighted to have the continued support of our regular users including the Parish Council, the Parochial Church Council, the Social Stitchers and the Friday morning Art Group. In addition to these, a number of weekly exercise classes – run by Chilmark residents – are proving popular.

At the AGM in November, we were sad to say farewell to committee member and former Reading Room Chairman Chrissie Eden. Meanwhile, we were pleased to welcome on board Johan Denekamp who has taken on the role of Treasurer, following five years' sterling service by Krysia Kirkpatrick.

Our target for the coming months is to raise funds to cover the cost of the Reading Room redecoration last December, which has left us with a deficit of income over expenditure of £632 for the first two quarters of our financial year.

To this end Sarah Miller, the Chairman said they are particularly grateful to the Parish Council for its continued support, including its generous annual grant, which is so crucial in ensuring the Reading Room is in good functioning shape for use by everyone in the village. Thank you.

Patrick Boyles thanked Sarah and the Committee of volunteers for looking after the Reading Room so well and for encouraging more functions.

### **The Playground Committee Report**

Last year was a good year for Chilmark Playground Management Committee. We have seven committee members, four of whom are parents of young children. We are very sorry that Jim Betts left the committee due to poor health and are very grateful to him for the work he did for us.

We had a good stream of income and no excessive outgoings.

Our income came from three fundraising events, a game at the Reading Room sale, a photo quiz/treasure hunt in the spring and the Pimms stall and games at the Flower Show. We also received two grants, one from this Parish Council and one from the George Young Trust and a donation. (The George Young trust fund is managed by the church wardens; its terms stipulate that the profit from the fund should be given to an organisation that is run for the benefit of children in the village.)

Our outgoings were the playground inspection and public liability insurance, some costs associated with the tower repairs and also a swing seat which had to be replaced. Looking forward, the playground is in need of some more bark as the safety surface is looking rather thin again, and the weeds need another dose of weed killer. The baby swing seats are showing signs of wear, so we are conscious of the need to replace those. We are also looking at investing in a new piece of equipment possibly to replace the large climbing frame. We will be applying for a Community Area Grant to help with the purchases of the larger items. The grant will match funding up to a limit, so our current buoyant funds will quickly be reduced.

This year our spring fundraiser was the village duck race, which was very well supported and raised just over £200.

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. Patrick Boyles thanked the Chair, Sally Butcher, and the Committee for all their efforts and commented that the playground at this end of the village is very much appreciated.

### **The Cricket Club Report**

Edward Leatham, Chairman of Chilmark Cricket Club reported that 2014 was another excellent year for our Club, with a growing membership, a flourishing Junior Section and a degree of financial stability.

With this Parish Council's full support we attained a matched grant from the County Council for a new, secure storage unit on the Ground, and now the Club is in a fine position to tackle many future seasons.

Sadly, this, our 14<sup>th</sup> year, is my last, and I step down leaving a robust Committee who will ensure the Club's continuing success.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all our members and supporters, to thank this Parish Council for giving its unstinting backing, throughout the Club's history, to a village amenity that, I believe, has a very real value to our small community. Thank you.

Patrick Boyles thanked Edward for his considerable contribution to the Cricket Club which has done a tremendous job bringing everyone together over the years.

### **Wilts County Cllr Bridget Wayman's Report**

In Feb 2014 Wiltshire Council approved the budget for the year with no increase in the council tax, which at that time was for the fourth year running (The Council has since approved the budget for 15-16, again with no council tax increase, which makes it the fifth year running).

Included in the budget for last year was the first tranche of the additional funding for highways investment set at £21m per annum for 6 years. This was decided in response to the public consultation where roads maintenance was something a huge majority of people wished to see. Do not forget that the winter of 2013/14 was extremely wet and all that water did considerable additional damage to the roads. Over 2014/15, 85% of the road surfacing programme was delivered – 15% have been deferred pending public utilities works and other difficulties, such as access to sites and the availability of diversion routes.

I think there has been a definite improvement in the roads already, but bear in mind that this is a 6 year investment programme – Rome wasn't built in a day! In the short term repairs will be carried out to ensure the road network is maintained in a safe condition. In the longer term a preventative approach will be adopted. This means investing a greater proportion of the budget to treat roads in the early stages of deterioration. A preventative approach targets assets that are not in need of full structural renewal and proposes to extend the life of the assets by arresting or delaying deterioration.

Litter has increased; there has been a 20% increase in reports nationally which is reflected in Wiltshire. BBLP have been tasked to clear up the trunk routes and the Council will be supporting community action groups throughout the summer.

The Wiltshire Core Strategy was finally approved in January this year and now provides a strong plan-led base for development of housing and employment across the County. The smaller villages will see little development except infill or on exception sites. I think that the planning application at Cow Drove was seen as an important test of the new Core Strategy; it is interesting to note that a similar application in Teffont has been withdrawn following the officer's recommendation to refuse.

The Area Board has been at the forefront of supporting the development of new council housing for older people in the rural villages. We need to keep villages sustainable and we need to support older people to remain in their communities. This is also the major part of the Older People's Strategy to support them to remain in their homes. We are hoping that the first sites will be in East Knoyle and Mere on Council owned land, but progress has been a bit too slow for my liking! If there are any exception sites locally that you may have identified where new affordable housing could be developed, I would be interested to know and to help. Might Fricker's Paddock be an opportunity?

I sit on the Environment Select Committee and have also been involved with various Task groups; the Car Parking Review, Community Infrastructure Levy and the Adoptable Estates Task Groups. I am also part of the Corporate Parenting Panel (as councillors we are all corporate parents of any looked after children) and I sit on the Safeguarding Children Task Group which was monitoring the progress of children's services after the poor Ofsted review of Safeguarding in the Council. I am pleased to

report that the Council is now out of intervention and there have been significant improvements, not least by the employment of a large number of social workers which will reduce their case load and enable them to spend more time on each case.

Locally, I am the lead member on the area board for Youth and have been attending the 3 Local Youth Network (LYN) meetings in Wilton, Tisbury and Mere organized by our new Community Youth Officer, Nicola Sage. With the rather abrupt closure of the youth service last year and our youth worker, Jaki Farrell having to take part-time employment elsewhere, the development of youth services on the back of the Seeds4Success charity, that was set up to run the Leisure Credits scheme, is taking longer than I hoped. However, I am hopeful that by this autumn Jaki will be able to work for the charity full-time and will once again provide open access youth provision across the area with a view to helping young people becoming engaged with their communities and helping them towards employment.

There is provision 2 nights a week in Wilton and also in Tisbury at the Café in the square in Tisbury and at the sports centre. Once the campus in Tisbury is open early next year there will be further opportunities.

I am always happy to try to help resolve any problems or issues, so please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Patrick Boyles thanked her for her hard work on behalf of the parish of Chilmark. We are getting a quicker response from the new parish steward scheme. We appreciate the assistance Bridget gives us on planning. Apparently certain parts of the Core Strategy are to be reviewed. Bridget will check if this will affect small villages such as Chilmark.

#### **4. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 2013/14**

The Clerk explained in detail the breakdown of the accounts for the FY 2014-15 as per attached summary. As at 31 March 2015 the total expenditure was £8,302.41 and the total receipts £16,439.81. After the final Bank Reconciliation this leaves a balance of £8,137.40. There were no unrepresented cheques.

Of note, last year was the purchase of a defibrillator for the parish costing £2,070.00 with training for volunteers. Grants were made to the Children's Playground Committee of £500, to Chilmark Cricket Club for £250, to Chilmark Reading Room for £500 and to the Church and Village Newsletter for £200. Funds are ringfenced for Forbes Field at £2,853.00 and the Millennium Cross at £1,400.24.

Gerry Oswald has very kindly agreed to undertake the internal audit again this year and Grant Thornton are the National Auditors and the accounts will be audited on 15 June and will be available to the public for inspection as publicised on the noticeboard from 12 May – 15 June 2015.

Cllr ML proposed the accounts for adoption and Sir RP seconded and all agreed.

#### **5. AOB**

None.

**The date of the next Annual Assembly will be Wednesday 5 May 2016 at 7pm in the Reading Room.**

**Date:**

**Chairman\_**