

WHITCHURCH VILLAGE COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH OF WHITCHURCH HELD IN THE WVCA HALL ON WEDNESDAY 3rd APRIL 2019

Present: Cllrs: N Kirk (Chairman), T Griffin (Vice-Chair), R Chandler, M Dury, M Godwin, C Lewis, P O'Leary, V Perry, Mrs S Dyer (Clerk) & Mrs M Watts (Clerk Assistant), two members of the public and District Councillor Paul May

2019/01 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING 11th APRIL 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th April 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting by Mr N Kirk - (Chairman)

2019/02 WVCA REPORT – Chairman Mr Roger Cole

The report by Chairman, Mr Roger Cole, was read out by the Clerk.

I am sorry that I am unable to join you at the annual meeting this time. So here are just a few words to let you know how things are going in the community centre this past year.

The hall is used on average for 9 hours every day for community activities with regular bookings. On top of this we have adhoc children's birthday parties and other community events e.g. Whitchurch Art Group event.

We do not let out either halls for private functions as we wish to keep the halls for community events only. Children's parties or adult family gatherings are permitted during the day but only in the small hall. I would point out that the premises are not licensed to sell alcohol.

At our AGM, and to promote more regular community events (dances) the committee agreed to reduce the weekend evening hire rate from £100 to £50 per night for regular users offering a community event, this was put into action in November 2018. At the same AGM, the committee introduced a charity scheme for any event. Hirers wishing to make charitable donations will be helped, whereby the committee will also make a donation directly to the named charity subject to certain criteria being met. This needs to be signed off by the community.

Mr Griffin stated what a fantastic resource the village hall is and thanked Roger, Phil and the rest of the Committee members for all their hard work in keeping it this way.

2018/04 CHAIRMANS REPORT - Mr A Broad

The last 12 months has once again proved to be a very busy year Council wise, confirming a continuing steady rise in Village Council business. As usual planning matters took up a lot of time but I am pleased to report that our Neighbourhood Plan was completed and accepted. I would like to thank all members of that sub committee for all their hard work and time in putting it all together and producing an excellent final document. Following on from that is the JSP and JT which will again mean some considerable amount of council time in dealing with it, but the Planning & Traffic report will have more details.

Delegates from the council attended a number of meetings throughout the year. These included the Keynsham and Chew Valley Forums and the Clerk and I also attended the Parish Liaison meetings which we always found to be very useful. We also attended the BANES area ALCA meetings. From talking to other councillors it is apparent that there are common problems for all parishes, but I would surmise that Whitchurch has bigger matters to wrestle with than some of the councils.

The Have a Field Day was again blessed with good weather and a good number of people enjoyed this informal event. I feel that this is a good public relations event as is the lights switch on in early December when a large crowd assembled for the ceremony and were appreciative of the council's effort. We will not mention the episode of the drainage pipe.

During the summer the village was visited by a deputation from the travelling community which on the second occasion cost the council a large amount of money, although the bailiffs acted very quickly and efficiently. I would like to thank the clerk for being "on the ball" for this one, and also to Tony Griffin for dealing with the matter whilst I swanned off on holiday.

Our tiny office has again been very well run and my thanks to both Sue and Maureen for keeping things running along smoothly and making my job that bit easier. I look forward to the next 12 months with interest.

2018/05 FINANCE REPORT – Mr Griffin gave a report in the absence of Mr Kirk Chair of the Finance Committee

Finance Report for the Year to 31st March 2018

The total receipts for the year amounted to a very healthy £111,811.72, at the same time expenditure came in at £57,671.28. As a result the balance in hand has increased to £116,738.95

Cemetery income rose by £6,000 over the previous year to a final figure of £40,560.00, which is a much higher figure than anticipated and has kept the office very busy.

The cemetery income continues to be a contributing factor to the improved finances but other contributors to income include the CiL funds received totalling £37,269.98, which need to be spent within the next five years.

Looking to the future it would be unrealistic to expect cemetery expenditure to remain consistently at this higher level.

Included in the expenditure figure and not budgeted for were, security measures implemented at the Playpark and costs incurred due to the unauthorised encampments.

As part of our continuing focus of retaining a viable financial position, it was agreed that we should raise the precept by £2,000 to £31,000, we were able to do this without incurring any increase to residents' contributions.

Finally the financial committee has complied with requirements to meet at regular intervals throughout the year to monitor expenditure against budget.

Cllr Colette Lewis & Ward Councillor Paul May joined the meeting at 7.20pm,

2018/06 FIELD AND CEMETERY REPORT – Mr A Broad – Chairman

With an income in excess of £40K the Cemetery continues to be a valuable source of revenue for the Parish. Space in the main four squares is beginning to shrink but the restored areas on both sides will still give the VC a large number of plots for the next few years. Work on felling and replacing the trees was undertaken during the year, which allowed the benefit of more light. The council will shortly be looking at repairs to the side paths and some remedial work on the main drive. The cemetery is kept in good order due to the work of our contractor and I would like to thank him for keeping all the grass areas in the village cut regularly. I would also like to thank Anne Leach for looking after the flower borders at the cemetery and in the centre of the village.

The play area at Norton Lane continues to be well used, especially on a fine week-end. The VC are looking at ways of spending some CIL funds on new equipment but some matters have to be resolved first. As mentioned in the previous report a successful Have a Field Day was held, attended by locals and non-locals. As

a result of visits by unauthorised parties the council spent a considerable amount of money beefing up security. With the advent of all the new houses in the village it is envisaged that the field will be well used in the future. Finally thanks to The Secret Garden for maintaining the Millennium Garden which always attracts favourable comments.

2018/07 PLANNING AND TRAFFIC REPORT – Mr T Griffin – Chairman Planning

Key points over the past 12 months

- ❖ **Core Strategy – Horseworld site** – work well underway to build c200 houses. Flooding due to subterranean water sources has become a huge problem for the site & neighbouring properties. Authorities alerted.
- ❖ **Neighbourhood Plan** – NOW FINALISED. (forms a separate report for AGM purposes)
 - The amount of work undertaken by the steering group should not be underestimated & the Village Council is indebted to Paul May & a small team of local people who have given up many hours of their own time to complete a forward looking & village centric plan, in liaison with the authorities.
 - The Plan looks to keep the village as a village & retain the Green Belt buffer
 - The Plan was formally accepted by BANES on 6th Dec, & was acknowledged as an excellent document.
 - The Referendum in Nov saw a huge 96% voting to accept the Plan & a turnout of over 38%
 - **We need to refer to the NH Plan when considering planning applications**
- ❖ **West of England Joint Spatial Strategy – Housing & Transport**
 - The past 12 months has seen more detail released, and it has become quite clear that the authorities always had Whitchurch earmarked for significant development. (Initially 2500, now 1600 houses)
 - We have made it very clear that we do not want this scale of development because
 - We do not want further incursion into Green Belt
 - We do not want to become an urban extension to Bristol
 - We want to retain our village culture & identity
 - We think the emerging Transport Plan is seriously flawed & not joined up to the Housing plan
 - We believe that other areas around Bristol & Bath should take their fair share of development rather than Whitchurch Village be destroyed to make up BANES housing numbers. We have formally objected.
- ❖ **Other applications**

- There have been many applications for smaller style development & extensions etc.
- There has been an increasing number of infill applications which gives us cause for concern about overdevelopment of sites, adequate parking & further erosion of green belt.
- BANES approved an application to replace the car show room on the A37 with 10 houses despite our refusal on grounds of overdevelopment.
- Business as usual applications are now paperless & usually completed electronically.

Key impact areas

- ❖ Time – The JSP & to some extent the Neighbourhood Plan has had an unprecedented call on the time of our V/C team, and that of the Clerk & by implication a significant budgetary impact.
- ❖ Traffic – the A37 to both sides of the village is under constant strain at all times of the day & huge concerns remain over the safety on the A37
- ❖ Pollution – reports have shown some parts of A37 within the village have at times exceeded acceptable levels.
- ❖ Flooding – Sleep Lane area remains a concern & is highlighted to developers & BANES regularly.
 - The Horseworld site has caused unprecedented flooding to neighbouring properties & fields

Other Comments

- ❖ BANES officials have stated that the largescale development will not proceed without infrastructure support (IE a ring road between Hicks Gate & Whitchurch plus other improvements). However we cannot be certain about this if the developers have other ideas & force plans through. Given the Government's current stance on pushing through large numbers of housing this village is in dire jeopardy of being destroyed & we must do everything we can to protect it.

Traffic

Key points over the past 12 months

- ❖ Traffic & parking in & around the village remains a problem - especially but not uniquely at peak times
- ❖ Commuter parking continues to upset residents.
- ❖ Parking on double yellow lines at school times, & by the garage constantly causes complaints / concerns.
- ❖ Speed of traffic, especially on A37 & Staunton Lane is a major concern
- ❖ The Horseworld development & developments in Keynsham will have a major impact, especially around the Sleep Lane, Woollard Lane / A 37 junction.
- ❖ These issues are constantly flagged up to BANES.
- ❖ We have flagged up major concerns about the JSP where we believe the Transport part of the strategy is seriously flawed & no tangible evidence that it is joined up to the housing aspect.

Key impact areas

- ❖ A37 North & South.
- ❖ Junction of A37, Sleep Lane, Woollard Lane - chaotic & dangerous especially at peak times, with no tangible plan from BANES to alleviate.
- ❖ Safer routes – many concerns especially with the Horseworld development.

Other Comments

- ❖ There is a key relationship between housing development in our local area & traffic problems - both existing & potential. We need to manage this closely & do the best we can for the village to create the best infrastructure possible. We MUST focus on the JSP & make sure we get what we want.

2018/08 ALLOTMENT (COMMUNITY GARDENS) REPORT- Mr T Griffin Chairman Site

- All plots rented out 2017 / 2018
- 2018/2019 Tenancy letters have been sent out to all plot holders by the Village Council
- Quarterly H&S inspection reports submitted to WVC with appropriate actions taken.
- Effective communication between Chair of WVCG & Clerk to VC to discuss plots & site issues
- Problems with travellers in June & August caused temporary shutdowns & some plots suffered from theft with sheds vandalised & human waste left in sheds and on approach path.
- Trees on both sides of site have been reduced thanks to WVC.
- Safety fencing around pond – replaced by WVC

Matters to note

- Container – the roof is rusting. Previous actions taken to reduce speed of corrosion seem to be working
- Entrance to the old A37 from the play park – pathway now laid with regular maintenance by WVC
- Pathways around site – will need a top up with chippings soon
- Pathways - some plot holders do not clear weeds & Chair & Clerk do all they can to 'encourage' this.

Produce

- 2017/2018 – most plot holders reported a productive year.
- Produce offered from all plots to provide 3 baskets which were raffled at WV Fete with a few plot holders running a stall. All proceeds - £55 given to the Fete.

Working Parties

- Several working parties held throughout the year to enhance & maintain the site.

Social & Financial

- We held 2 well attended social / fundraising nights.
- We hold a small surplus of about £200 & have used our limited funds wisely to maintain & enhance the site & purchased a brush-cutter to replace the old one which was stolen.
- Accounts independently reviewed by a former plot-holder.
- Monthly meetings held at RBL are positive & well attended with minutes copied in to WPC.

Plans for 2018

- Maintain good appearance of site via working parties & regular reviews.
- Top up pathways with chippings
- Ensure all plots are rented out.
- Ensure all plots are maintained in accordance with agreements & take action when considered necessary.
- Continue regular open positive relationship between WVCG & WVC

We are, as ever, very grateful to the ongoing support of Whitchurch Village Council

2018/09 WARD COUNCILLORS REPORT – Mr Paul May

Introduction.

This has been an absorbing year for my support for the parish.

...The key issues are the completion of writing and processing the village neighbourhood plan.

... negotiating and consulting with the community to prepare a comprehensive objection to the JSP

...supporting the community re the Horseworld development.

2. My councillor duties.

During the year

...I completed a budgetary review of key services in the area as the assistant cabinet member for resources.

...I was appointed as the cabinet member for children and Young people.

...I am the council representative on the WECA Skills advisory board focusing on the future arrangements for the devolved adult education budgets to the sub region and the regional skills strategy.

...the budget process has been stressful for my brief because it has seen pressures of 2.8 m growth during the year and has now been rebated by 2.3 m for next year.

...the government granted the area a 3.7% schools budget growth and after considerable political challenge I agreed to use the money to benefit over 80% of children in the area.

3. Village issues looking forward.

...the big issue remains how we fight the expansion plans to promote a reasonable growth over the next twenty years.

...scrutinising any transport plans and unfortunately working with council planners over the master plan for the village if and only if we lose the fight for reasonable growth.

...I will keep the pressure on re the promised road improvements and in particular re the safe routes to school from the new horseworld development.

4. Banes issues.

...the next elections are in May 2019 so I will be trying to keep contacts with the community and if reselected hope to be able to represent them more in the future.
...the village council have been helpful and supportive so, of course, I will continue working as effectively as I can with them.

5. Recommendation

I would request the parish to note and agree my annual report.

2018/10 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REPORT - Mr Paul May Joint Chair

Included in above report.

2018/11 POLICE REPORT

The Clerk read out details of a Police report received for the Chew Valley and surrounding areas. The Clerk to request a report from the police who cover the other areas of the village.

2018/12 QUESTIONS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A member of the public asked if posters could be put up in Church Road/Church Lane encouraging residents to clear up after their dogs and take the bags home with them. This is also a problem in Staunton Lane and several other footpaths in the village. The Clerk will contact B&NES Council to request posters/signs.

Meeting Closed at 7.40p.m.