

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
OF THE PARISH OF OGBOURNE ST GEORGE
HELD ON THURSDAY 14 MAY 2009 IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7:30pm

Those Present: Mr M Grove (Chairman)
Mr P Rouse
Mrs C Manos
Mrs C Mudge
Mr R Smith
Mr K Wallace
Mr P Willis
Mr C Freeman (Clerk)
Mr C Humphries (WCC)
Mr D Hunter (KDC)
Mr Martin Cook attended on behalf of the WCC Highways Dept
9 Residents or visitors were present

Minutes: The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting were signed.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Chairman's Report: During the year we have arranged for the clearing of debris in the Bell Field which was left over from last years tree pruning activity. We reviewed the clerk's hours and brought them closer to the nationally accepted standard for a Parish of our size. We lent our support to this year's new village creation - The website www.ogbournestgeorge.org.uk. The credit should go to Paul Scott and his team of helpers. They are finding a hit rate of some 16/ day very encouraging. The future and ongoing maintenance of the cycle path along the old railway line was reviewed. Its status was brought to the attention of Wiltshire County Council and the Parish Council has received satisfactory reassurances as to its future. In the mean time we are liaising with Sustrans over its maintenance and have been offered aggregate if required by a well known local earth moving company! In the play area, new swings and a climbing net were installed by a volunteer force, they know who they are, thanks, and a satisfactory RoSPA safety report was achieved. In line with Roger Smith's commendable report into the issue of speeding in the village, the first phase of the village gateways have been purchased and installed. Arguably the most noteworthy of the twenty Planning applications considered by the Parish Council was for the new School Hall. The Parish Council held a specific meeting to determine the its response and the outcome of the application would appear to be generally acceptable. We invited the Environment Agency and Kennet to inspect the foul water which had been bedeviling one of our footpaths. They declared it not to be a problem. For a period in the autumn the council was troubled by an internal dispute. After much careful consideration, time, effort and diplomacy these issues are now laid to rest. The fallout from this is that: Keith Wallace stepped down as Chairman but has remained as an enthusiastic Councillor. We have undertaken a review of our aging standing orders. They have been replaced by a new set which embrace new procedures for the consideration of planning applications, made gender neutral, modernised our complaints procedures and take the

Freedom of Information Act into account. We reviewed our internal procedures including the roles of the Chairman and Clerk and considered them satisfactory. Consideration of the clerk's contract is currently ongoing. We reduced the precept as a token gesture in the current financial climate. Net expenditure exceeded income reducing the Parish Council's reserves by approximately £500. As usual we arrange the village grass mowing contract, we pay for the electricity and maintenance for our distinctive village lighting and we liaise with the parish stewards on sundry maintenance issues. I would like to thank our clerk for another year of service. Like my father before me I have found his familiarity with village issues and knowledge of procedure invaluable in my short time as chairman. Councillors are volunteers so I would like to thank all my colleagues on the council for their time and effort dedicated to village issues. Finally we say thank you and goodbye to David Hunter and Chris Humphries who as our elected Kennet and Wiltshire County Council representatives have kept us wise on a wide range of issues from proper procedure to local politics and we look forward to a new era in the Ward of West Selkley under the unitary authority.

Questions on the
Chairman's report:

An elector asked about the changes in the planning consideration procedures. The Clerk read out the appropriate standing order. It was suggested that details of planning applications could be displayed on the Council noticeboard or possibly on the website. These suggestions could be considered in future although it was difficult to determine how much information should be displayed. It was pointed out that each applicant was obliged to display details of the application at the site and that neighbours were notified.

Financial Report:

The Clerk reported that £4512.46 was brought forward from 2007/2008 which, together with a precept of £5000, VAT refund of £498.18, footway lighting grant of £288 and bank interest of £84.64 meant the total available for the year was £10,383.28. Expenditure of £6477.20 represented the basic costs of services within the Parish such as grass mowing and street lighting together with tree felling, new playground swings, village gateways and costs associated with the establishment of the village website. £3906.08 was carried forward to 2009/2010. There were no questions on the financial report.

Charity Reports:

Ogbourne St. George Village Hall
Report follows

Ogbourne St George Poor's Land or Poor's Gorse
Report follows

Poor's Gorse Trustee:

In response to a question Tim Frost advised that a new Trustee would probably be required later in the year.

Area Board:

Alison Sullivan reported that, as the new Community Area Manager, she would be helping Parish Councils obtain funding for projects. Parishes would look at their parish plan and feed into the community plan. She was keen for members to get engaged with this decision making forum –

which would not be town centric - with each PC electing a representative to attend area Board meetings. If a representative and deputy were elected then there would always be a village representative in attendance. The Implementation executive recently released the report of the pilot area board which was available on the Wiltshire website and further information on Area Boards can be found at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/communityandliving/areaboards.htm>

Police Report:

PCSO Polly Ritchie reported that the local community officer, PC Michael Bayliss, had conducted a community policing survey in the village. The issue of speeding, mainly on the Old Marlborough Road, would appear to be the only issue raised. In terms of crime, the Rural Watch showed there had been little in the area recently. The issue of parking at the junction was brought up and PCSO Ritchie said that without double yellow lines the only offence that could be realistically considered was that of obstruction, which could be difficult to prove.

County Information:

Cllr Humphries distributed the annual reports of the nine cabinet groups on the activities of the County Council. He said this would be his last attendance at this Parish Council as he was standing for the new Aldbourne & Ramsbury Ward in the unified council. Cllr Humphries was thanked for his significant contributions to the Parish Council.

Highways:

Mr Martin Cook outlined Highways department priorities for the forthcoming year. He reminded all present that the first port of call for all highway matters was the freephone line, Clarence, 0800 23 23 23. The Highways department has a matrix of parameters by which all work required is scored in order to prioritise the limited budget. He said he would put the large potholes on the slip road on the list. It was noted that the Parish Steward had been able to repair some of the potholes in the Bytham Road. An elector mentioned the inferior quality of repair of a hydrant cover in the main street and it was suggested it should be reported to Clarence as the Council would take it up with the repairers. Parking problems were again mentioned but the only effective solution would be double yellow lines for which there was no appetite.

Bell Field:

An elector requested improved facilities in the Bell Field so that organised sports especially football could take place frequently. The issue was on the Agenda for discussion at the following Parish Council meeting.

There being no further business the Annual Parish Meeting closed at 20:32.