

PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Parish Meeting was held at Pulborough Village Hall
on Thursday, 8th May 2014 at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs Qusted (Chairman), Clarke, Dale, Ellis, Gill, Henly, Lawson,
Spillane, Tilbrook

In Attendance: Sarah Norman (Parish Clerk)
County Cllr Pat Arculus
District Cllr Brian Donnelly
18 Members of the Public

1. INTRODUCTION BY CHAIRMAN

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Buck, Kipp, E Wallace, J Wallace and Walsh. Dist Cllr Roger Paterson had also advised that he would be unable to attend.

3. REPORT ON ACTIVITIES 2013/2014

The Chairman referred all those present to the Annual Report which is attached as Appendix 1. This included reports from the Chairman of each Committee plus the Income & Expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2014.

The Chairman stated that 2013/14 had been a frustrating year with the refurbishment of the Sports Pavilion unable to progress further until Horsham District Council confirms funding that they can provide. The submission was made to HDC in December 2013 but a response is still awaited.

Other projects that are under way but not yet reached fruition include the Trim Trail in Cousins Way Rec, Memorial Garden and completion of the street lighting in Lower Street, which are now awaiting the installation of the hanging basket brackets.

The other major project under way is the Neighbourhood Plan. This is an exciting opportunity for all residents to get involved in the community's future and there will be much more engagement over the coming months.

Cllr Clarke then referred to the report from the Finance & Policy Committee. The earmarking of reserves to fund specific future projects was noted and the future of the Youth Club highlighted, the Lease for which is due to expire in 7 years and it is not known whether this will be renewed.

Finally, Cllr Tilbrook spoke regarding the activities of the Planning & Services Committee and referred to his report within the Annual Report. In addition, Cllr Tilbrook reported exciting developments at the Brinsbury Campus including the arrival of Architectural Plants and the approval of the application by Hepworth Brewery. These businesses, which compliment the courses offered at Brinsbury, will offer vital jobs and training for younger people in the area of which there is a shortfall at the current time.

There were no questions from the attendees on the Annual Report which will therefore be passed to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 15th May 2014 for acceptance and formal approval.

4. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Cllr Tilbrook spoke to those assembled in his capacity as Vice Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and referred to the handouts provided attached as Appendix 2 and 3 to these minutes.

Cllr Tilbrook posed the question “Why do we need a Neighbourhood Plan?”

Firstly, there are financial benefits arising from the increased level of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which will be payable on all homes built in the future.

However, and arguably the more important, is the ability of the community to shape its own future taking into account the specifics of our own Parish. It is a new way for communities to decide the future of the places where they live and work; to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built and to have their say on what those new buildings should look like.

Cllr Tilbrook highlighted a specific area of concern to Pulborough which is the implications of an increasing over 65's age group.

Currently, 1 in 5 residents in Pulborough are over 65. Central Government statistics predict that this will increase to 1 in 3 by 2031. However, during the same period, the population is due to increase generally by 20% which in the case of Pulborough equates to an additional 1000 residents. Therefore, it can be estimated that of these additional 1000 residents, 800 will be over 65's. This disproportionate increase of one age group will influence all the services provided within the Parish from health and wellbeing to housing provision.

On this latter point, Cllr Tilbrook reported statistics that show many over 65's have an income below the level of that of a working person earning just the minimum wage which directly impacts on their ability to afford housing in the Parish.

Cllr Tilbrook finished by stating that this is just the start of the journey for the Plan. It is up to the community to influence the outcome and Cllr Tilbrook encouraged as many people as possible to get involved to ensure that the plan was as inclusive as possible.

Cllr Quedstedt then requested all attendees to complete the circulated forms and also indicate on the large map where they lived with a yellow pin.

5. QUESTION TIME

The following questions were raised by the floor:-

Q1 Was there any news on the application by Harwoods for the felling of trees in Pocket Park?

Cllr Tilbrook advised that a response to the Parish Council's letter had been received and the Committee is looking to arrange a meeting at site to discuss the matter. There was concern on the Council that the high water level, resulting from poor drainage/maintenance of stream, was impacting on the stability of the roots.

Q2 What about the Harwood's trees that were posing a risk to properties in New Place Road?

Cllr Tilbrook advised that he would be happy to meet any resident to look at this specific issue and that where trees are posing such as threat to property, the necessary steps taken.

Q3 Was there any sign of improvements to the eyesore of Swan Corner, with the dilapidated properties on the roundabout?

Plans have been submitted to Horsham District Council for the demolition and rebuilding of these properties to provide numerous dwellings but this has not progressed as there is an ongoing dispute with neighbours to the site regarding access to the rear of the properties for the construction traffic. Therefore, whilst all

on the Council agreed how terrible this was as the “gateway” to the village, unfortunately this eyesore will not be solved quickly.

Cllr Tilbrook also reported that West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Highways are now looking at the whole Swan Corner area as a matter of priority to ascertain what can be done to improve safety, as all acknowledged that the area is very dangerous, especially for pedestrians. Cllr Arculus stated that whilst WSCC will try to make the area safer, they are limited by the surrounding private land ownership.

- Q4 Can the illegally posted signs placed on signposts be removed as these can result in restricted visibility?

This point was noted and would be passed to WSCC Highways for action.

- Q5 Can the Council comment on the estimated 64 HGV movements every day resulting from the Broadford Bridge oil site?

Cllr Tilbrook suggested that the comments from West Chiltington Parish Council on this issue be sought and then the issue discussed by the Planning & Services Committee.

- Q6 What is a Trim Trail?

This is a series of 10 to 15 pieces of equipment that may be used by all ages as outdoor “gym” equipment.

- Q7 Was Cousins Way the right location for a Trim Trail as there is no parking and is out of the way?

Cllr Quested reported that the Cousins Way Rec had been selected in an attempt to bring this under-utilised area into use. The equipment needs a large area to be spread out effectively and this is not available on the main recreation ground, the space on which is being more squeezed as a result of both the change in orientation of the cricket square and Football Association changes to pitch sizes for junior players. A resident suggested that any visitors to Horsham should look intot Horsham Park where a similar installation exists.

- Q8 Are there any plans for improvements to the dangerous pavements in Lower Street?

Cllr Tilbrook reported that the Parish Council is working in collaboration with the Pulborough Community Partnership (PCP) and the Lower Street Traders to improve Lower Street. One meeting has already been held with WSCC Highways, at which they were advised of the desired outcomes; increased definition of pavements, raising of pavements where currently level with the road and more on street car parking. Another meeting is due to be held on 18th June to receive WSCC’s suggestions for attaining these outcomes.

- Q9 Can any action be taken to restrict the ever growing number of cars parked on the verges to the west of the railway bridge?

Cllr Tilbrook reported that any restriction would adversely affect residents of that stretch. However, investigations by the Planning & Services Committee have highlighted the underuse of the station car park which can only be attributed to the cost of parking. As a result, a request was made to Southern and Network Rail to trial a reduction in, or removal of, charges to see if this would have an impact. Unfortunately, although this was initially agreed to at the meeting, the agreement was subsequently withdrawn. Cllr Donnelly also commented on the continued need for access to the northbound platform of the railway and this has been muted

for many years but would be controversial as it would involve development of industrial space and housing to the west of the train station.

Q10 With the closure of the grocers in Lower Street, will this not spell the demise of the retail area?

Cllr Tilbrook noted that this will close in its current format in August but the PCP is looking at ways it could get involved to assist with the continued provision of this vital facility.

6. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman closed the meeting and invited all those present to join the Parish Councillors for tea and coffee, all of which are Fairtrade as the Parish Council supports the Fairtrade Group.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

..... **Chairman**

..... **Date**