

Minutes of the Worton Annual Parish Meeting held in Fives Lanes School, Worton on Wednesday 24 May 2018

Welcome and apologies: Councillor Barry Devine, Chairman of Worton Parish Council welcomed Councillors and members of the village to their Annual Parish Meeting.

Apologies had been received from: Councillors Mark Fisher and Philip Salaman, and Giles Collins, The Bridge magazine.
There were 14 attendees.

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15 May 2017: It was agreed that the minutes were signed as an accurate record.

Matters arising: There were no matter arising from the previous meeting.

Report of the Chairman of the Parish Council: Councillor Devine reported that 2017/2018 had been a busy year for the Parish Council. There was a sudden and substantial change in councillors about a year ago and during the past year the council has endeavoured to work as a team and they have come a long way in the last 12 months. Strengths and weakness have been looked at and some of the areas of responsibilities have been changed.

The main aims of the council have been:

- Form an effective team
- Listen to the community and find out what they want (the Parish Survey was instrumental in this)
- Support the community in a cost-effective way
- Improve communication between the Parish Council and the village
- Support local groups and causes

The budget has been looked at and savings have been made and it is believed that this has been done without a reduction in services.

Councillor Devine praised the work of Liz Starling as the new Clerk. He thanked everyone for coming and for supporting the various activities in the life of the village.

Reports from members of the Parish Council: Each individual councillor has taken on a responsibility and they introduced themselves, gave a short summary of what they have done to date and plan to do in the future.

- Councillor Richard Slack - primary responsibility to represent the Parish Council at the Community Area Transport Group (CATG) meetings. It is recognised that both the volume and speed of traffic is an issue in Worton especially on the approaches to the village along the C20. Parish Council have identified the best way of slowing traffic through the village (there is not the belief that the village would support speed bumps):
 - The school is applying for 20mph zone in their vicinity during the beginning and end of the school day.
 - It has been agreed by CATG and Wiltshire Council for a reduction in the 60mph limit to 40mph at the western end of the village from 400m west of Agra Farm to just before the bends. This is expected to happen in the next year; Parish Council are expected to contribute a maximum of 25% of the cost.
 - To work with Poulshot, Bulkington and Seend to make the C20 road safer. Next priority will be the Poulshot and Bulkington junctions.

Cllr Slack is also working with Wiltshire Council and the Woodland Trust on the WWI Commemorative Tree planting. He explained that there will be trees planted nationwide to commemorate the centenary of the end of WWI. The Parish Council are proposing Sandlease Bank for the siting of the trees. There is a possible patch on Back Lane but if any parishioners also have suitable land, to let Parish Council know.

- Councillor Robert Goss - Flood and winter Weather Warden. On behalf of the Parish council, Cllr Goss holds a supply of salt, sandbags and gel bags and is on call over the winter to provide help if needed.
- Councillor Malcom Powell - looks after contracts, the main one is the grass cutting. Also vice-chair of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Cllr Powell has also been working on the Parish Plan following on from the survey that was sent out earlier in the year. The main issues to arise from that are:
 - Traffic
 - Broadband
 - Village facilities and village organisations
 - Community bus
 - Community shop
 - Community shed (tools supplied by local and Parish Council; to be used by volunteers to maintain the village).

In connection with the latter, volunteers have already done some work on Sandlease bank and cutting the hedge in the Sandlease field.

The website provider has been changed and the parish council is looking to see how it can improve the website for example with the addition of photos.

- Councillor David Johnson -
 - Speed gates and planters: Cllrs Johnson and Fisher have maintained them throughout the year. Still awaiting Wilts Council approval for the wording to go on them.
 - Is also member of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and has attended most meetings and helped with the drafting and distribution of the 2017 village survey.
 - Parish Steward: Cllr Johnson has held site meetings with the past and new Steward. Agreed set placed to clear and maintain. Also agreed one-off tasks to be undertaken.
 - Broadband upgrade - campaign to get the remaining 35+ houses upgraded to Fibre To The Premises (FTTP) had almost been completed. There remained a few houses in the High Street and Gaisford Chase that had not been connected, however some of these had not yet requested that their service provider to upgrade them. Most of the connections to telegraph poles and groundworks / ducting had been completed.
 - Community Speed Watch: team of volunteers had undertaken an intensive shift pattern during the last year (92 weeks on and two weeks off) in many cases, as well as a joint session with Poulshot CSW team. Cllr Johnson gave an example of a session he had held by the Village Hall two days earlier, where from 8am to 9am he had recorded 592 vehicles passing through the village. 34 were above the 30mph limit, however only 4 were speeding fast enough to report them.
- Councillor Dicky Parsons - Main role is Chair of Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Steering Group which has seen 3 new members this year which has taken the total to 14 and decreased the proportion of parish council members to around half. The survey carried out in August 2017 revealed much about the village and will provide part of the foundation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Several meetings have been held with Wiltshire Council NP officers and other parish neighbourhood planning groups.
An open information session was held in the village hall in February and this was well attended on the second day by parishioners.

The steering group is seeking funding of up to £9000 to carry out the more specialist parts of the Neighbourhood Plan including use of a consultant who has worked on similar local plans and has been highly recommended.

Cllr Parsons also has responsibility for the defibrillator. The cost going forward was to be around £600 a year but by purchasing our own we can reduce the cost to around £200 a year.

- Councillor Nick Stokes – has been involved in the Parish Survey and managed the project. It was felt that it should be conducted independently and so the services of a consultant was used to deliver it.
Also responsible for the Parish Steward. This is a Wiltshire Council service whereby the village receives a visit for 1 ½ days a month for discretionary highway works identified by the Parish Council; for example he has cut back the sides of the road leading into the village so that the speed sign and village gates are clear of vegetation.
Another responsibility is footpaths – various individuals have cleared part of Back Lane for which the Parish Council are grateful. Dog mess is an ongoing problem and the Parish Council are considering extra litter bins. Issues with residents and new owners of the field adjacent to path of Back Lane – Parish Council are looking for a compromise.

Cllr Devine added that two councillors had given apologies for the meeting and they were Councillor Philip Salaman whose main role was liaison with the school and with Marston Parish Council, and Councillor Mark Fisher who is responsible for the playgrounds, does various jobs in the community and liaises with the village hall.

Report from Wiltshire Councillor Richard Gamble:

Councillor Gamble provided the Parish Council with a hard copy of the Annual Town and Parish Councils report from Wiltshire Council which provide information about the whole spectrum of activities with which the council has been involved. (*This has been scanned in and is available on the Parish Council website*).

Cllr Gamble said at the County level, the year again was one where financial pressures were challenging and they have had to make further savings. The pressures on staff have been relentless and they have tried to ensure minimal reduction in services and while largely achieved, the following are noted:

- The Outdoor Education Centre at Braeside in Devizes is to be closed or transferred to another provider.
- Boarding provision for special needs children at Rowdeford School is to cease and the school itself may be merged with others.
- Free parking in the Market Place in Devizes is under threat.

On a more positive note, the waste collection team is introducing new recycling rules in July that will make sorting your recycling less challenging.

Cllr Gamble has been given a new role as Portfolio Holder for Arts, Heritage and Tourism – top issues this year have been the Stonehenge Tunnel, the need for more museum storage and the Salisbury poisoning incident.

He has also been involved with:

- Planning – has supported the production of Neighbourhood Plans and has been involved in a number of interesting planning decisions as a member of the Eastern Area Planning Committee. The Settlement Boundary is due to be changed in association with the Housing DPD (Development Plan Document) – you have until 11 June to comment.
- Devizes Area Board – the Area Board has given capital grants to many projects in the area and has supported services for young people with substantial revenue funding. Mike Challinor is the Older People Champion. Local road schemes have been supported by the Community Area Transport Group (CATG) and Cllr Gamble is aware of continuing concerns about safety on the C20.

- Transport – Cllr Gamble is supporting the case for a railway station at Lydeaway to service the Devizes area which might be deliverable in the early to mid 2020s. He has been encouraged to see that bus services in Wiltshire have, for the most part, been sustained in strong contrast to other counties on the South West. The TransWilts rail service continues to improve but is much disrupted by engineering works and diversion associated with electrification works. Still an ambition to extend the service through Salisbury to Southampton.

Cllr Gamble finished by saying that it had been a privilege to represent this area and this parish on Wiltshire Council. He is grateful for the support he has received from the Parish Council. The Area Board meets every two months and everyone is invited to attend.

Reports from Local Groups and Organisations:

Link Scheme:

Alun Newman said that the Link Scheme is associated with taking people to their GP and to hospital. It is however not necessarily a medical service but for any important journeys. Research commissioned by Community First showed that for every £1 invested in the scheme produced £16 worth of benefit. It is not just transport – it is also a social system as well. Last year 118 journeys were undertaken including 57 to hospitals. The scheme has 15 named drivers on its books but with holidays and illness there are less than 9 drivers at any one time.

Worton and Marston Ladies Group:

Pam Woods reported that the Ladies Group had been going since 1968 and may still have two of its original members. Currently 14 ladies meet on the last Wednesday of the month where they have various speakers, craft evening and last month went to Devizes Museum which was really enjoyed. Topics have been 'Wills and Probate' delivered by a couple of solicitors, and 'Funerals' which was made to be a fun evening. Each October there is an exchange with the Poulshot group and this year it is Worton and Marston's turn to entertain Poulshot. The group helps out at bazaars, jumble sales and is hoping to do a combined bric-a-brac sale with the church with proceeds splits between the two groups.

The Ladies Group is a social gathering and it would be nice to have new members.

Five Lanes Women's Institute (WI):

Jane Loveys reported that the WI is similar to the Ladies Group. Among their topics have been 'Tales of Jack the Ripper', 'Italian Passion', 'Life at Erlestoke Prison' and 'Discoveries at Stonehenge'. The WI has approximately 20 members but finds it difficult to recruit new ones. The group does craft activities, belongs to the skittles league and lunch club. It is a friendly group and new members are welcome.

Christ Church:

Peter Witcher thanked the Parish Council for their invitation and the opportunity to explain what the church does. Strictly, not a village "organisation" but the local branch of a national/international organisation and part of a global movement which has existed for 2,000 years. Christ Church is not the only Christian organisation in the village, nor are those who attend the only "Christians" (many Catholics, Methodists etc). Nevertheless, the Church of England is the national church.

Peter said that when he moved to the village the church was thriving. Anyone who was anyone went and services were well attended; now the numbers are declining and funds are under pressure. This is a common problem across many parishes. Going to church is not "cool" nevertheless, it is there for everybody.

Christ Church feel that they play significant roles in many different ways, in and with other organisations and generally in village life:

- Major support of the Worton and Marston Family of Churches which welcomes newcomers

- The Bridge magazine
- There for the population at large – funerals, weddings, pastoral work
- Keeping alive the Christian message (on which the whole of Western Civilisation is based)

These are the things which they have been involved with this past year (as every year). They value their links with the schools, the Village Hall and pub and they actively support most things which take place in the villages.

The current focus is on how to afford the substantial repair expenditure which is required; and how to rebuild the substantial “hit” to their reserves, at a time of declining numbers and declining income. They are enormously grateful to the two Parish Councils, both of whom have committed generous sums.

Looking to the future, Christ Church would like to encourage more people to come to church and/or to support them financially and in other ways (flower arranging, brass polishing, cleaning etc!).

They have the enormous opportunity of an enlarged Benefice (with Seend etc) with the potential to share resources and learn from each other; also have the fresh approach of a new vicar in Revd. Ali Bridewell – young, enthusiastic, sincere and committed.

Above all they need to encourage families with children to come to church. There are plenty of ways now for children to hear the Christian message and learn more about the foundation of the culture of this country.

The Bridge Magazine:

The Clerk read a report from Giles Collins who was unable to attend:

Little has changed with the Bridge of late. 18 months ago it switched from being printed and collated by a team of volunteers, to getting it photocopied in Devizes (in what used to be known as The Stationery Cupboard). This saves time, eliminated a rather tedious task, and is not any more expensive.

The price of the annual subscription has remained low (£2.50 for 12 editions or 25p for a single copy) so that it is accessible to all. Subscription money effectively pays the 'Stationary Cupboard' bills.

The cost to advertise in The Bridge remains low so that it is affordable to a wide range of mostly local businesses. The advertising raises money that is effectively returned to the community via the church. The increase in ads this year is because Giles quite enjoy finding more advertisers, and so that more money can be raised.

With a bit of a built in delay, the magazine appears on two websites: Worton and the church. There is no plan to go fully online just yet; many like the hard copy and some don't use the internet.

Material comes in each month mainly from the same community groups and this is very much appreciated by all.

Any 'padding' takes the form of, for example, Sudoku, internet silhouettes, quotes, jokes, anything of topical interest, info on TED talks (brilliant organisation), extracts from the Bridge of 30 years ago (courtesy of Tony Walker). Ad Hoc contributions are rare but are (nearly) always welcome.

Giles does very little actual editing, just 'adjust' some spelling when I spot it.

Sally proof-reads it, Christine oversees its distribution, Louise is in charge of finance, and Peter organises the annual Pimms party.

All runs reasonably smoothly and, aside from the occasional blip, they all get on swimmingly!

Community Speedwatch:

David Johnson reported on behalf of the Community Speed Watch team. The team had a dwindling number of volunteers. Most of the team lived at the east end of the High Street and Gaisford Chase. There were no members west of the Rose and Crown, except two living in Cedar Close. As there seemed to be greater speeding issue at the western end of the high street, he appealed for more volunteers from that end of the village.

Community Events:

- Community Craft Day - David Johnson reported on behalf of Christine Johnson. The Craft day held in the village Hall in April had been a great success, with over 40 people attending to make bird boxes, cakes, cards, silk paintings and learn knitting. Thanks was given to the Parish Council for its financial support.
- Monster Trail – David Johnson reported on behalf of Jo Banks and Christine Johnson. Forthcoming monster trail will be on 27 and 28 of October. Proceeds will go to the Age UK, Five Lanes school and the Village Hall. Volunteers would be needed to help marshal the event or make monsters / scarecrows.
- WWI Exhibition – David Johnson reported on behalf of Christine Johnson. WWI exhibition

in the Village Hall 10-11 November. Quite a few personal accounts of relatives who had been involved in the conflict had already been collected and more would be welcomed. It is planned to hold an exhibition of information and old photos, plus an artefact session. There would also be a session organised in the school. Christine applying via the local church for a covenant trust grant to help with costs.

The ladies Knitt-Natt group had also surpassed their target of knitting 1,918 poppies. These would be positioned around the village hall in conjunction with the exhibition.

Gardening Club:

Nick Stokes reported that the Gardening Club is re-invigorating; they have a new committee which is chaired by David Loveys.

They are holding an Open Gardens event on 22/23 June and are looking for people to help with parking and stewarding.

Flower Show in the Village Hall to be held on 1 September.

The chairman thanked everyone for their reports and invited anyone who had any questions to raise them during the final agenda item.

Public Forum:

There were no questions raised and the chairman closed the meeting.