

**Minutes of the Worton Annual Parish Meeting held in Worton and Marston Village Hall on Wednesday 1 April at 7.30pm.**

**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:** Wiltshire Councillor Richard Gamble and Giles Collins, The Bridge magazine.  
There were 9 councillors and 15 parishioners attending.

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24 May 2018:** BD proposed and RS seconded that the minutes were signed as an accurate record. Agreed.

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

**Presentation from SSE Network:** Representatives from SSE Network gave information on their Priority Service. Residents who may need extra support during a prolonged power cut can sign up to be on the Priority Register. Examples of those needing extra support may be the elderly, families with young children or those who are disabled. Examples were given of the support that can be provided. This will be publicised in The Bridge and on the Parish council website.

**Report of the Chairman of the Parish Council:** Councillor Barry Devine said that before he gave an outline of what the Parish Council have been doing on behalf of the village over the last year, it would seem appropriate to mention the sad loss of so many loved and respected members of the community. Each loss is a blow the community and the fact that we all feel that loss so intensely is testimony to the strength that we have together. It is that which enables us to carry on in spite of such adversity. He said that if there was an overall theme to the year it would be just what can be achieved by co-operation, compromise and supporting each other.

One important achievement should reach fruition any day now and that is the change of speed limit on the western approach to the village. Traffic and its speed have long been an important issue for the village and this change will back up the ongoing sterling work by Debs Mackay and her Speedwatch team. Councillor Richard Slack is to be commended for his work in this area, as well as the changed road markings on the approach to the nearby Poulshot junction.

Richard should also be commended for leading the planting of commemorative trees at Whatleys and also on Sandlease bank. There are ongoing plans for the bank which was previously an unknown resource to most of the village population. It was particularly pleasing that the work on this project and other maintenance was achieved by "self-help", thus putting community spirit into action and saving money into the bargain.

This was one of the ways that Parish Council managed to keep the precept at the same level as the previous two years, against a background of steep rises in other aspects of what makes up the council tax bill. With this in mind, it's important for the community to realise just how small an amount of money is left to spend after the essentials have been dealt with.

This is a particular difficulty when requests are received for financial support, which are invariably of merit. The Parish Council will, whenever possible, use whatever means possible to support community projects - the Solar Fund is especially important in this respect, but there are rules that must be obeyed and there is very little funding which is not already allocated or ring fenced.

The Neighbourhood Planning steering group deal with an issue that is often controversial and open to abuse. Events at a regional and national level have seemingly overtaken the groups work, such that it would appear that there is a risk of falling into a black hole in terms of funding. It has been decided that the best policy is to watch this space until things are clearer. With regard to the year ahead, it is anticipated that the Neighbourhood Planning

process may well become a priority again. It has however provided a stimulus for a fresh view of village priorities which the Parish Council will respond to as appropriate. This may well involve further measures to respond to concerns about traffic and its speed. It is also expected to see progress in the transformation of Sandlease bank into a useful resource.

**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 David Johnson – *Devizes Area Board/Internet and broadband/Road Safety/Speed Gates/ Speed Indication Displays (SIDs)/Speedwatch*  
New Rights of Way leaflet has been issued and additional local map. Distributed via the Bridge magazine and copies placed in Rose and Crown and Village Hall.  
Two sub-committees were set up:
  - Monster trail organised by Jo Banks and Chris Johnson, raised over £400 for local causes and 28 houses participated.
  - WW1 centenary event organised by Chris Johnson and knit Nat volunteers. Over 600 people attended and in conjunction with Royal British Legion raised over £1,000. 30 local family histories were displayed plus many WW1 artefacts.Parish Council Risk Assessment forms have been updated.  
Parish Council is investigating costing options for the different types of speed indicator devices. It is hoped that the Worton Community Speedwatch group could take ownership and apply for one via the Solar Farm fund.  
Speed gates and Flower tubs - the Parish Council is investigating the options and costs for warning signs for the tubs, now that Wiltshire Council have granted permission.  
Broadband - there are still some houses in the village which have not opted to be connected to Fibre To The Premises (FTTP). David will put a reminder in a future Bridge article of how to go about this process.
- Councillor Nick Stokes – *Footpaths/Parish Steward liaison*. Parish Council try to maintain footpaths as much as possible. Volunteers will clear the footpath between the church and the bridge. Had been hoping to get Five Lanes cleared which runs around the back of the village.  
Also responsible for the Parish Steward who has either been off sick or not available.
- Councillor Richard Slack – *CATG/Footpaths/ Marston representative/ Road Safety/Speed Gates/ Speed Indication Displays (SIDs)/Website/Neighbourhood Planning*. Richard reported on the speed reduction at the western end of the village. Work should be carried out during April /May; waiting for Traffic Order to close (or partially close) the road, reduce the speed limit, remove red tarmac and resurface the road.  
Wiltshire Council Community Area Transport Group (CATG) carries out low level highway changes. Flag any issues to the Parish Council who will put them to CATG. Devizes Area Board has considerable funding available for community projects. The Parish Council can help village groups access these funds. Worton & Marston Village Hall have had a grant of £5,000 for the outside of the building and a further grant for the toilets.
- Councillor Dicky Parsons - *Defibrillator/ Neighbourhood Planning/ Road Safety/Speed Gates/ Speed Indication Displays (SIDs)/Speedwatch*.  
Neighbourhood Planning is a long and complicated process; a lot has been learnt and thanks is given to those on the steering group.  
He highlighted various changes within Wiltshire Council e.g. Housing Needs Survey.

Funding is available – up to £17,000 but some communities have overspent as they have run not problems late into the process. It may be better to have a policy based Neighbourhood Plan.

➤ Councillor Malcom Powell - *Contracts/ Neighbourhood Planning/Parish Plan/Village Hall/Website*

Councillor Powell explained that the government have launched a new initiative – Community Led Housing. This is where a community lead on the types of houses to be built and are in control of selling or letting them. He is meeting with the project manager at Wiltshire Council to find out more information; also looking at a possible site in Worton.

It is important that the Neighbourhood Plan looks at the community as a whole for the future health of the village.

The following issues were raised with the Parish Council:

- Concern regarding traffic; especially large lorries now using the width of the road where there is a risk that pedestrians will be clipped by wing mirrors.
- Hedges overhanging pavements reducing the width – the Parish Council will address this where there is a problem.
- It was noted that wide loads have to apply for movement permits but wide agricultural tractors don't. There is a need to lobby for agricultural vehicle to need a permit as well.

### **Reports from Local Groups and Organisations:**

#### **Worton & Marston Link Scheme:**

Alun Thomas, Chairman of the Scheme reported that volunteers in Wiltshire Link Schemes carried out almost a million miles in supportive journeys in 2018. Of that, Worton & Marston Link undertook 162 journeys, which included 59 to district hospitals. The other trips involved visits to various local surgeries, dentists, other hospitals and other essential trips.

There are 21 on the books to carry out driving duties but with holidays, illness and other commitments, at any one time there are only less than 9 available to be telephoned. It can be difficult to fulfil their obligations so are on the lookout for more drivers. It only entails on average an hour or two a month, petrol costs are reimbursed at 45p/mile. The Link Scheme likes to help people not to worry about reaching medical facilities when ill and ensure older people do not need to move away from home due to transport difficulties.

This year an application was made to both Worton and Marston Parish councils for a grant to help with public liability and driver excess insurance costs. Both councils graciously contributed so that the cost was covered in full - thanks to both councils for their help. Also indebted to Wiltshire Council for their support of Community First who assist with the back office requirements and keep the scheme within their legal requirements. Community First is essential to the scheme operating in a safe and efficient manner.

The Link telephone is now a mobile device 07413912828. This has saved a lot of money over the past year.

The annual fund-raising Quiz Night was held on Sunday 17th March in the village pub with great help from John & Jackie and raised over £300. The full year accounts with all the details are available from Hazel Rennie who is contactable via the Link telephone.

Any comments regarding improvements and problems will be gratefully received in order to make next year's fund raising and driver recruitment better.

#### **Worton and Marston Ladies Group:**

Pam Woods reported that the Ladies Group meet on the last Wednesday of the month. They are a small group of 17 in total, 3 new members this year. They get involved with helping at

the Village Hall Jumble Sale, Christmas Bazaar, Village Fete and any other time help is required.

The group have a variety of speakers and visits out, for example last year they had a trip to Bath for the 'Bizarre Comedy Walk' which was very entertaining and great fun – recommended to anyone who has a sense of humour. Last year the Ladies Group celebrated their 50th Anniversary and still have 4 original members. For that evening, they were entertained by Dee Dee of Pans People those of a certain age will remember her from Top of the Pops - this had to be the best evening so far.

This year's programme has already had the Potterne Pantomime and last week 'Teddy Bears Picnic' was a talk by local Devizes business Moonraker Bears on how the 'Teddy' came to be. They have bears from all over the world sent to them for restoration; examples were brought along the oldest dated back to 1902 owned by a local lady and in need of complete restoration. Over the next few months visits to Trowbridge Catering College for lunch prepared by the students, and to the Caen Hill Community Farm, and a Ghost Walk in Devizes later in the year. On the 31st July the Bobby Van speaker is coming and a notice will be in the Bridge magazine inviting non-members who are interested to come along. The Ladies Group is a social gathering and it would be nice to have new members.

### **Christ Church:**

Ali Pratt reported (on behalf of the church wardens) that Revd Ali Bridewell has been in post for nearly 18 months and has worked tirelessly, with enthusiasm and energy, to create the new Wellsprings Benefice, bringing together the churches and communities of Potterne, Worton and Marston, Seend, Bulkington & Poulshot.

Revd Canon Dr Joshva John was appointed to Associate Priest for Seend, Bulkington and Poulshot in September and he and Revd Ali cover services in all the five churches, together with a dedicated team of retired priests and Lay Ministers.

A part time Administrative Assistant has also been appointed to the Benefice, largely funded by a local charity.

Health & Safety and Safeguarding are taken very seriously and all training is up to date and current Policies can be found on the Church noticeboard.

During last year work was carried out to the cupola, which included restoring the bell to working order. This specialist work was carried out to a very high standard, and the church are grateful to the two Parish Councils for their donations, along with other donations and grants, which covered a large part of the cost.

As with all churches, maintenance is ongoing and you will have seen in the February "Bridge" magazine that more regular giving to enable this to be carried out, as the congregation, from whom most of our income is generated, has dwindled over the last few years and expenditure now exceeds income. Help is requested: a regular monthly donation, however small, will help lessen the gap. This deficit cannot continue if we all want to keep our church in good repair.

All households will shortly be receiving an invitation to an Open Day at Christ Church on 25th May. The purpose of this is to come along to meet Revd Ali and some of the church officers, to chat about what the church can do for the community and what members of the community can do for the church. Lots of things go on behind the scenes, and there are lots of ways people can be involved to keep the church running efficiently.

Several fundraising events were held during the year, including the Fete, sharing this with Five Lanes School as usual, hosting the teas for the Open Gardens, a Jumble Sale shared with the Ladies Group, and the Quizzine meal in November, the latter being very popular, and it is hoped to hold it again later this year.

As part of the Family of Churches, the Annual Newcomers Party was held, the Hunger Lunch on Good Friday, The Open Air Service following the Benefice Pilgrimage in July (which unfortunately had to be held in church due to the very unseasonal weather), Marston Chapel Carol Service, and Beer & Carols in the Rose & Crown, which was very popular. It is always a joy to see children in church, and Five Lanes School held their Easter service, Harvest Service and their Christmas play in Christ Church. The Toddlers as usual spent a

morning just before Christmas, making Christmas decorations, decorating the tree, and singing Christmas Songs. The Brownies and Rainbows attended several services, including Mothering Sunday and Remembrance Sunday.

Christ Church is open every day of the year and Revd Ali and the Churchwardens will always be ready to help with any questions anyone has.

### **The Bridge Magazine:**

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

Not too much has changed with the Bridge this year.

Still using the same printers (used to be known as The Stationery Cupboard), with whom a very good deal has been negotiated.

The quality of their photocopying is variable, and has been complained about, but for now will continue to use them. Quotes obtained from two other printers - one was twice the price and one would have cost nearly four times as much.

320 copies are printed, of which 300ish are distributed with the remaining 20 made available at the back of the church during the month, for visitors.

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. The subscription money collected effectively covers the printing/paper costs.

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 number of adverts has been increased (and consequently pages) this year as more people want to advertise and also it means that a greater surplus can be made.

With a bit of a built in delay, the magazine appears on two websites: Worton and the Christ Church.

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, quotes, anything of topical interest, and extracts from the Bridge of 30 years ago (courtesy of Tony Walker). Ad Hoc contributions are rare but are (nearly) always welcome.

This year, the magazine network has distributed Rights of Way booklets and maps for the Parish Council.

Also included was a list of useful contacts, produced by the Family of Churches.

It is planned to include in the magazine, the Village Show booklet for the Gardening Club; this should hopefully generate show entries from a greater number of families in the village. Very little actual editing takes place, mainly just 'adjustments' to spelling when noticed.

Sally proof-reads the magazine, Christine oversees a great distribution team, and Louise is in charge of finance.

All runs reasonably smoothly. New ideas and contributions are welcomed.

### **Five Lanes Women's Institute (WI):**

Sarah Devine reported that this year was one of great sadness for the group with the loss of two committee members Jane and Sheila. Thoughts are with their families – they are greatly missed.

Sarah shared the following highlights:

March – talk from Ian Hailstone about his long and varied career in the Wiltshire police force.

April – topic was 'Stonehenge through the ages' by Romy Wyeth.

May – representative from the Freewheelers Emergency Volunteer Service.

Annual outing was to Bath, including a visit to the Holbourne museum and lunch out.

July – garden meeting hosted by Babs and Arthur. The Regional advisor attended this meeting and remarked upon the friendliness of the group.

August – Sean McCormack, member of the Queen's bodyguard, the Beefeaters.

September – Ann Orr spoke on legal matters.

November – Dan Allen spoke on 'women in the army during WWI'

December – annual Christmas dinner held in Rose and Crown.

January – first meeting of new year was a friendly game of skittles held in the Rose and Crown.

The WI see themselves as playing a useful part in the life of Worton community, for example helping out at Christmas fairs, jumble sales etc. Also support for each other in the group. Next year's programme includes a film night, TV game shows – an insider's view na dan outing to the American Museum in Bath.

The WI group are a friendly bunch and would welcome any ladies to the meetings on the second Tuesday of every month at 8.00pm.

### **Village Hall:**

Veronica Franklin reported on behalf of the Village Hall Trustees. She said that the Trustees exist to ensure the provision and maintenance of the village hall. They are a charity and all are volunteers.

They undertake regular tasks such as booking out the hall, showing prospective hirers around, ensuring the hall is in a fit state for hirers, responding to any complaints when it is not, and managing the cleaning which is undertaken by a freelance cleaner. Also responsible that the hall is safe for hirer and so arrange the regular safety checks such as emergency lighting and fire extinguishers.

Also responsible for regular repairs and maintenance of the hall, which they undertake themselves to keep costs down. Last year the lobby, toilets and main hall were completely refreshed. A lot of this work is undertaken by a small group of three comprising the Trustee with responsibility for maintenance and two other villagers who volunteer to help him.

Maintenance days are also run when villagers are invited to come along and give a hand.

Having spent the last few years undertaking the vital and quite extensive internal and external improvements, a survey was carried out in 2018 to find out what further improvements villagers would like to see. The result was that internal fabric needed further improvement and this has been carried out. This year will see the problem of not enough storage addressed and the flooring in the storeroom will be tackled. Also investigating funding sources for new curtains and chairs. People also keen for a new and if possible, enlarged kitchen. This will require major funding and grant sources are being investigated.

The above show that a lot of the work is about fundraising. Sources of income are from hiring and fundraising events that the Trustees organise. Thank you to everyone who support these events. Applications have also been made to the Community Funds of Worton and Marston Parish Councils.

Annual General Meeting will be held on May 7<sup>th</sup> at 8.00pm in the Village Hall. All welcome.

### **Community Speedwatch:**

David Johnson reported on behalf of the Community Speed Watch team. Currently have 18 volunteers. Two from Poulshot have joined. Could always welcome more volunteers – contact Debs Mackay. During the past year approximately 120 sessions were organised.

### **Gardening Club:**

Dave Loveys reported that the Gardening Club is going well. The Open Gardens event was a great success as was the Flower Show.

The club meet on the third Monday of every month. They are planning a Village Show this year to include crafts, cooking etc. Possible Open Gardens again in 2020.

New members always welcome.

### **Worton and Marston Toddlers:**

Hilary Hams reported that the Toddlers group meet from 10 to 12 on Wednesdays during term time and are open for children age 0 to 4 years. New mums are encourage to attend so they don't feel isolated and to socialise the babies.

Toddlers has had another successful year with current attendance now regularly exceeding 20 children and several babies. A weekly craft session is held and photos are regularly

posted on their Facebook page. This includes 'Mr Potato Head' which was made for the Monster Trail.

Two year 6 students from Five Lanes School have helped out with the activities this term. In the last year £22 has been donate to Children in Need and £34 to Comic Relief.

Christmas is a special time and two events are held – a Christmas party with a visit from Santa, and the annual visit to Christ Church where the children make Christmas decoration and decorate the tree. This is followed by a telling of the Christmas story.

### **Worton and Marston Family of Churches:**

Ali Pratt explained that the Family of Churches is made up of the Anglican, Methodist, URC and Roman Catholic churches that serve Worton and Marston.

Events that have been held are:

Good Friday – Service in Marston Chapel followed by a walk with 'moments of reflection' carrying the cross from Marston to Christ Church and finishing as usual with a Hunger Lunch of soup and rolls.

July 29th – Open Air Service. Last year the service followed the 'Wellsprings Benefice Pilgrimage' Unfortunately the weather was very wet and windy resulting in the service having to take place in Christ Church for the second year running which was very disappointing considering the wonderful weather we experienced for most of last summer!

July 30th – Healing Service held in Marston Chapel. These services are always very well received. The next one will be on May 12th 2019 in Christ Church.

December 3rd – Beer and Carols held in the Rose and Crown. A new event for 2018. There was a huge spread of food with Jackie providing savoury snacks and mince pies and Family of Churches members providing Christmas biscuits. A very successful evening.

December 14th – Marston Chapel Candlelit Carol Service. A lovely service as always.

January 18th – Newcomers Party. Another very successful event.

A Newcomers Booklet (updated annually) is proved for all newcomers to our villages giving information about all village organisations and activities/events being held throughout the year.

Following collections taken at these events, donations have been made to Wiltshire Youth for Christ, Devizes Food Bank and Open Doors.

The Clerk reminded everyone that the Parish Council have a website and a Facebook page that are updated with Parish Council news and community items of interest.

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.