

## SOUTH LENCHES ANNUAL PARISH MEETING.

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| <b>Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 12th May 2014 at 7.03pm in the Village Hall, Church Lench.</b> |
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| <b>Present:</b> | Cllr. Mr. Shore (Chair of the Parish Council), Mrs. N. Holland (Clerk), Dist. Cllr. Mrs. Steel and 18 parishioners. |
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| <b>1.</b> | <b>Welcome</b> , apologies received from PCSO Kathryn Fellows, County Cllr. Mr. Holt, Carol Tookey, Tony Pitt, and Ann Freer. |
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| <b>2.</b> | <b>Minutes of the meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2013.</b> Resolved that the minutes were of a correct record, duly signed by the Chairman. |
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| <b>3.</b> | <b>Matters arising from minutes - nil.</b> |
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| <b>4.</b> | <p><b>Report from Chairman of the Parish Council:</b></p> <p>There have been a number of changes to the membership of the Parish Council since the 2013 meeting.</p> <p>At the last Annual Meeting, Councillor and Chairman Roy Caldwell resigned, Mel Shore was elected as Chairman, Councillor Richard Shepherd was elected to serve as Vice Chairman, and Jennifer Fletcher was co-opted on to the Council. Mike Worton was subsequently co-opted to complete the compliment of seven members.</p> <p>We say goodbye to Roy who served 7 years as a Councillor including 3 years as Chairman. His leadership steered us through the tribulations of one of the most difficult periods for the Parish Council, the planning application by Scottish Power for 5 wind turbines. This culminated in him giving evidence to the Planning Committee, which subsequently rejected the application by a considerable majority. Roy moved to Harvington but continued with the Council in order to see through the successful renaming of the Council to the South Lenches Parish Council.</p> <p>The Parish Council would like to thank Roy for his dedicated service and commitment to the local Community and to wish him and his family the very best for the future.</p> <p>Projects for the year included:</p> <p><u>School Parking.</u> The Council continue to monitor parking near the Church Lench Village School. Since the placement of zig zag lines outside the school, motorist had taken to parking on the bend. This presented a danger to other uses and caused an obstruction. As a result the Council requested a survey by Worcestershire Highways Department, which resulted in the placement of double yellow lines prohibiting parking on the bend.</p> <p><u>The New Homes Bonus Scheme (NHBS).</u> This enables Wychavon District Council to pass funding from the Government to the Parish Council based on new homes built in the Parish, and empty homes brought back into use. In August last year there was a move by the Government to award this part of the grant to the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership. This would have deprived the Council of valuable funding. As a result of collective reports by Councils this decision has been partly reversed. The fund is available for local projects and has a wide interpretation for</p> |
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|           | <p>its use. Applications can be made through the Parish Council.</p> <p><u>Wychavon District Council Diamond Jubilee Community Recognition Award 2013/14.</u></p> <p>Mr. Yates was put forward as a candidate by the Parish Council in recognition of the hard work he has put into the community. He was invited to attend a Special Reception held at the Civic Centre on Thursday 6th February 2014, to receive a Certificate of Commendation.</p> <p><u>Playground refurbishment.</u></p> <p>The Village playground has now entered its 14th year and showing signs of age. Both the swings and climbing towers have undergone substantial repairs. The Council continues to monitor the condition and safety of the equipment.</p> <p><u>Village Pond.</u></p> <p>Western Power intends to locate a transformer on the Village Pond adjacent to the car park. This will require cables being laid under the car park. The Council are in the process of negotiating with Western Power to re-surface the whole of the car park as opposed to a re-instatement as currently planned.</p> <p><u>Litter Pick.</u></p> <p>The Annual Litter pick was undertaken by the Lenches Cricket Club with a donation to the Club by the Parish Council.</p> <p><u>Parish Plan.</u></p> <p>Questionnaires have been finalised by the Steering Group and will be distributed to every household in the Parish shortly.</p> <p><u>Planning.</u></p> <p>A planning application has been submitted for 5 dwellings situated in Evesham Road on the southern entrance to Church Lench. The Parish Council and a number of residents have raised objections to the development which would have a significant visual impact on the village and a potential safety issue at the proposed location. A decision by Wychavon District Council Planning Department is pending.</p> <p><u>Telephone Kiosk.</u></p> <p>The little used kiosk situated in the centre of Church Lench is to be adopted by the Parish Council for a nominal sum. The intention is to use it as a village facility by providing a centre for information. Suggestions for re-locating the kiosk are under consideration.</p> <p><u>Village Hall.</u></p> <p>The Council sponsored a successful grant application from the NHBS which was used to install a sound system at the Village Hall for future functions.</p> <p>During the year the Council held 6 full Council meetings, 3 planning meetings and 3 extra meetings. Council members also attend meetings of the County Association of Local Councils (CALC) and the Evesham Market Town Partnership (EMTP) in order to maintain knowledge of the rapidly changing role of Parish Councils.</p> |
| <b>5.</b> | <p><b>Superfast Broadband (Cllr. Mr. Ernest, Abbots Morton Parish Council).</b></p> <p>Worcestershire County Council together with BT are using local and Government funding to roll out a new Broadband Fibre based network to Worcestershire. This should provide fast Broadband speeds for 90 to 95% of the population and businesses.</p>   |

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The basic information re Broadband super fast roll out is contained on the Super fast Broad Band web site hosted by the team at County. Please refer to the website....<http://www.superfastworcestershire.com>

There are several major issues relating to this situation.

Whilst the map on the website showing the deployment of the new network is only for indicative purposes and is not particularly detailed, it is clear that there is a large area of the County that will not be covered by the new Fibre network. Basically the County has striven to meet its objective of 90-95% coverage by focussing on dense population clusters and thus rural areas have less priority. This has been confirmed in various conversations with County and BT. There is a large area stretching from (approximately) south of Cookhill in the north to the Lenches in the South and towards the M5 at Peopleton that will not be covered by the rollout so they will not be upgraded. Within that area there are a few pockets that will be upgraded (e.g. some parts of Inkberrow, Bishampton).

There are no current plans to reach the 5%-10% properties that are currently excluded from the rollout plan. My efforts to include these areas have been resisted. It seems that everyone is hoping that this gap will be plugged by future additional Government funding but there are no guarantees. This 5- 10% figure represents thousands of people and hundreds of businesses in Worcestershire. I have contacted Airband who provided a County funded project for satellite type broadband in the Feckenham/ Hanbury area. At this time they are not interested in a feasibility study in our area. In any case I personally believe that the solution may not be cost effective and is not necessarily appropriate for businesses and heavy users of broadband.

There are profound implications for properties that will not be upgraded, analysts have mentioned a devaluation in property values; also without any substantial upgrade to a house or business it is likely that the existing Broadband service will become increasingly unreliable, lower speeds and unusable over the next few years as websites (iplayer through to shopping etc) are optimised for faster broadband. The government promises a minimum speed of 2 mbps (Abbots Morton is currently 1.5mps), however that will not support Internet and other streaming services such as i Player.

I had deferred inviting the interested Parishes and residents to a central meeting until I had the meeting with the Government minister, (scheduled for June) so I could provide some update. My concern is that there are no plans to assist the thousands of people and many businesses who will not be included in the plan and who in a couple of years will have an increasingly unusable internet service.

As a Parish Councillor and resident I am lobbying County and BT. In reality the only way forward for a resilient long term fix is for all households to be connected on a Fibre Optic cable. Oxfordshire County Council has recently announced a partnership with a company for such a cabling project to the 10% disenfranchised. I am currently urging County to talk to this company about a solution for Worcestershire. I will be keeping your Parish Council up to date on the situation.

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| <b>6.</b> | <b>PC Carter, Community Police Officer:</b> |
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|  | We are happy to inform you that no significant incidents have occurred in Church Lench over the past month. |
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| <b>7.</b> | <p><b>County and District Councillor reports.</b></p> <p><b>Dist. Cllr. Mrs. Steel reported:</b></p> <p>The last year has seen some difficult decisions having to be made by Wychavon District Council particularly in terms of planning and services that the council has provided in the past. The funding which central government has provided has been cut drastically and so the Council has had to do the same. The numbers of staff has been reduced - much of which has been by natural wastage and retirements, what the future holds is not certain - some services are open to sharing with other authorities and the council has already made office space available to Civica for which the remunerations are welcome.</p> <p>Planning has been even more difficult for several reasons Wychavon has no local plan in place and is short of a 5 year land supply so developers in areas which they would not normally ask to be considered. This has led to some very difficult decisions having to be made and which have caused much distress in the area, both towns and villages. Many of these decisions are due to central government telling planning authorities that more houses are needed especially affordable housing, so unless there are really strong planning reasons to refuse the Council is bound to approve. The other reason to refuse could mean that the developer would go to appeal which in some cases means that costs against the Council adds to the cost of running the Council.</p> |
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| <b>8.</b> | <p><b>Role of the First Responder for the village and surrounding area.</b></p> <p>Richard Shepherd has been trained as a Community First Responder (CFR) and has been working in the local vicinity and surrounding villages.</p> <p>By having a CFR it should improve the response time for 999 ambulance calls to the area. In cases of life threatening "Red 1" category calls which are time critical; having a local resource able to intervene quickly may result in a more successful clinical outcome for the patient. In the event of cardiac arrest, having a rapidly deployed defibrillator can significantly improve the clinical outcome and the potential for survival. Certain medical conditions, such as cardiac arrest, require a rapid response from the ambulance service. In rural areas a CFR can often be nearer to an incident than the closest ambulance. Therefore, they can arrive on scene and commence medical intervention, more rapidly than would otherwise occur. They can therefore increase the likelihood of a successful outcome.</p> |
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| <b>9.</b> | <p><b>Lenches Sports &amp; Recreation Club (LSRC) given by Dave Burns:</b></p> <p>The main thrust of the LSRC activities during the past year has centred on establishing with the Environment Agency the most appropriate safeguards for the importation of material to complete the expansion of the playing field. This is now established and we are operating under an approved code of practice to do this. To complete this project there will be significant truck movement through the villages. We are constrained by planning conditions (no movements during the time when</p> |
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|            | <p>parents are dropping off and picking up children). The intensity of the activity will depend upon the availability of material. The LSRC apologises in advance for any disturbance that might be caused, but this work is essential in order to provide the additional playing space that is needed. Should any 106 money be available to the parish the work on this project complies with the requirements for 106 allocations and if possible we would be grateful for the PC help in obtaining any cash assistance from this source towards this project.</p> <p>A grant application was submitted to the National Lottery fund for £23k towards machinery shed to house the new mower and training and groundwork equipment. This application has been returned for further work. In the meantime we have bought a shed to store some of the equipment on a temporary basis.</p> <p>The Cricket Club completed construction of two cricket nets during the year. Sadly these were damaged by the storms, but work is almost completed to rectify the damage.</p> <p>37 natural cherry trees, 11 silver birches, and 80 metres of hedging have been planted. Work has started on a small wooden pavilion and viewing deck cut into the bank down to the tennis club at the northern corner of the courts. This will provide shelter from sun and rain for tennis players and spectators. This is funded by the Lenches Tennis Club.</p> <p>All sports are thriving, but sadly the Lenches Lions folded last year due to lack of funds. Despite this, and the appalling weather over the winter the use of the facility has not only remained stable, but will grow once the expansion plan is completed. Football annually is still estimated at 12000. The facility continues to host two Summer Coaching schools, the LSRC Summer ball, and the annual FRAME festival. These events are important components of the LSRC fundraising activities as well as providing general recreation opportunities for all sectors of our community.</p> <p>We are conducting a survey to see if enough demand exists to provide internet and PC training facilities in the pavilion tea room on days and times when it is not used. If there is such demand we will be seeking grant funding to complete this project. Of particular interest is the chance for provision a 'drop in' service for those in the community who require internet access for government services etc. but to not have either the facility or the skills to do this.</p> <p>We continue to be financially viable for the day to day running of the facility; we rely very much on volunteers. We know that a major capital investment in court resurfacing is due fairly soon, and are in the process of trying to build up the sinking fund for this purpose.</p> <p>We would like to thank the South Lench Parish Council for their valuable support over the years. We think that together we have created a community asset to be proud of.</p> |
| <b>10.</b> | <b>Neighbourhood Watch. Email report received from Carol Tookey:</b><br>A lot of new members' have joined but few wanting to take on the role of mini co-ordinator. Emails from the Police are being circulated on a regular basis but if anything happens in the village please contact Carol so that she can pass it on immediately.  |

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| <p>11.</p> | <p><b>Village Hall Committee:</b></p> <p>The last twelve months have been successful ones for the Village Hall thanks to the support and generosity of many of the local community. The money raised from our various functions together with two generous donations and an unexpected cheque from VVASP have enabled us to pay off our loans and also to build up a healthy bank balance. Our thanks go to the hard working "Big Breakfast Team" who again gave all their profits to the Village Hall and added greatly to the local community spirit.</p> <p>Now that we are no longer in debt, the running expenses of the Hall such as the repair of an underground water pipe last summer and the replacement of ridge tiles that blew off the roof have been less of a worry. We have been able to make several improvements including a new loft ladder and a wonderful shelving system in the loft. A successful bid for funding from the New Homes Bonus has allowed us to install a sound system and a hearing loop which we believe will be of real benefit to both the Hall's regular users and for wedding receptions, parties etc.</p> <p>Pre-school is, of course, our most regular user and is pleased to report an increase in the number of children attending. The WI, yoga class, junior tennis, private parties and Parish Council meetings make up most of our other lettings.</p> <p>We, the Management Committee, have organised several events during the year including a musical evening, a talk by Terry Waite, a one-woman play, a pig roast, a performance by Vale Connection choir and our popular Village Hall dinners. These activities would not have been successful without the support of many people - those who buy the tickets, of course, but also those who run the bar, make delicious desserts, erect stages etc. We are very fortunate to be able to count on so many people for their help.</p> |
| <p>12.</p> | <p><b>Parochial Church Council:</b> report was circulated to all those present.</p> <p>The established service pattern continued to operate with the service on the first Sunday in each month being a Sung Eucharist. On the second Sunday the service is lay-led. The lay team was also responsible for 'Carols in the Club' at the Lenches Club. On the third Sunday there is a said Communion from the Book of Common Prayer and a Family Service on the fourth Sunday. A Eucharist Service on that day is an exception rather than a rule. We are pleased to report that the family service planning team which includes Mrs Anne Freer, the School Head Teacher, continues to organise meaningful events. During the summer months we also introduced a monthly Evensong at 6.30 p.m. this seems to have been quite popular. If there is a fifth Sunday we have a Benefice Eucharist.</p> <p>There were three services last year, which were not held in All Saints Church due to the closure for there-decoration. On Remembrance Sunday the Reverend Steve Jordan led the service in the hall of Church Lench First School, the Carol Service led by Jane Powell the Church Warden, was held in the Village Hall and the Christmas Eve Family Service led by Reverend Richard Thorniley was also held in the Village Hall. All three of these events were well attended and enjoyed by all.</p> <p>Richard Ball continues to play the organ on a regular basis and arranges hymns for the majority of services. The PCC remains grateful for the valuable contribution</p>  |

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that he makes to the life of the Church.

The PCC has continued to maintain the fabric of the church and the upkeep of the churchyard. Some urgent minor works have been attended to. In July it was brought to our attention that one of the lintels in the Bell Tower needed replacing and also repairs to the chimney in the vestry needed to be done immediately. The faculty that was granted for the redecoration for the interior of the Church was therefore unfortunately delayed and the extensive project eventually started on October 28th 2013. For safety reasons the building was completely closed to the general public whilst work was in progress, we reopened on Sunday 2nd February 2014 with a celebration service. The PCC would like to thank everyone for their understanding and loyalty whilst work was being carried out, and what a wonderful turnout there was to clean the church, so many thanks to all our parishioners. At this point we would like to put on record our thanks for the hard work and enthusiasm of our church inspecting surveyor, Mr Peter Rhodes and to Mr Tony Knight who has been involved with many of the minor works undertaken this year.

The annual Flower Festival opened with a memorable concert in the Church organised by Anne Logan. There was also a scarecrow competition with many excellent entries, a craft exhibition and teas in the village hall, our thanks go to all the organisers and everyone who took part in any way. The whole event was a huge success and we appreciate everyone's hard work. We cannot conclude this section without expressing our gratitude to all our flower arrangers for their inspired work at this time and on other occasions during the year.

The Arch Messenger continues to be published ten times a year as a joint benefice-wide enterprise. It is distributed to every household in the Benefice. We must also mention our excellent Benefice website which was set up in 2012.

Other fund raising events that took place during the year included the Tree of Light, a Coffee Morning to raise money for the Flower festival, and the production of village Christmas Card. Thanks once more go to the individuals who give freely of their time to organise these events, especially to Anne and John Logan for putting on a superb evening of music and supper to raise money for the bell tower repair. We would also like to record our thanks to the faithful servants of the Church, such as the bell-ringers, coffee providers, cleaners and people who tidy the church yard also those who help maintain the building in other ways, and go about their work almost without being noticed. The Church would be a poorer place without them.

We continue with our 'Open Church Policy' and are very grateful to the people who are on the rota who make sure the Church is opened and locked again every day.

The accounts this year have again been produced in accordance with the requirements of the Church Accounting Regulations 1997 to 2001, to comply with the Charities Act 1993. They clearly differentiate between unrestricted and general funds, which may only be used for the purpose for which they were given, also Endowment Funds, the capital value of which cannot usually be used at all and whose income is usually restricted as to its use. We refer you to the Financial Report for details of our expenditure and income. Our thanks go to Mr Peter Fraser our Treasurer for taking on this role and preparing the financial Annual Report, copies can be obtained from Mr Peter Fraser 01386 870151

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|     | <p>Report on the "Way Forward"</p> <p>In an attempt to provide us with a focus for our Church activities we established a Mission Statement. The idea being that our agreed Mission Statement would provide a plumb line through which we would judge whether current or planned church activities were in keeping with our goals.</p> <p>This was achieved with Revd Steve Jordan facilitating a small group comprising Revd Fran Battin, Gill Thorniley and Revd Richard Thorniley drew up a draft Mission Statement. This was presented to an open meeting to which all Church Members were invited on Saturday 11th May. This meeting narrowed down the Mission Statement to two phrases. On the 27th July we had our final meeting which distilled our Mission Statement to: "To show our Love for God and You". This is now included on our weekly notices, Website, annual reports and other Arch Documentation. We are grateful for all those who took part and for Steve as our facilitator.</p> |
| 13. | <p><b>Church Lench First School:</b> email report received from Headteacher, Ann Freer:</p> <p>I have heard that it is likely that 4 village schools will be closing within Worcestershire but Church Lench is safe on two counts:</p> <p>a) Received an 'Outstanding' Ofsted report.</p> <p>b) No deficit budget.</p> <p>We are just coming through a very 'lean' year but the budget is looking much better this year (2014-15) due to increase in pupil numbers and a teacher retiring.</p>  |
| 14. | <p><b>War Memorial project:</b></p> <p>A proposal has been made by the AGM of the PCC and Church, to have the war memorial cleaned and refurbished. We are also looking at the possibility of making the area between the memorial and the retaining wall above the road level and firmer to stand on. Quotations are being obtained and meetings are being arranged with Wychavon District Council and the Diocesan Advisory Board before the detailed specification is prepared. It is hoped grants may be made available from various bodies; the total cost looks like being of the rough order of £4000.</p>   |
| 15. | <p><b>Lenches Social Club.</b></p> <p>Sarah Roberts and Jane Timpson gave a report as follows:</p> <p>The Lenches Club is a part of the community whose membership numbers are increasing. The Club is well used and the accounts are in a healthy position. It is a not for profit organisation and is not a private business.</p> <p>The fabric of the Club and its décor is giving rise to concern as it is very dated and a massive project to carry out which is why funding opportunities need to be looked at. The club is for all the family and is used for Darts/Bridge Clubs/ Pool etc and has increased in use by the Lenches Sports &amp; Recreation Club. The kitchen is open most days except Mondays and Sunday lunches are provided</p>  |
| 16. | <p><b>Tree Warden:</b> no report received.</p>  |
| 17. | <p><b>Matters raised by Parishioners:</b></p> <p>a) Vehicles speeding along the Evesham Road. Request that the 30mph limit be</p>   |

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|  | extended to Handgate crossroads and further 'Slow' signs are put in place. |
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| <b>Meeting closed at 8.15 pm.</b> |
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