

At the Whittington Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 24th April 2012 at 19:30 Hrs. at Whittington Village Hall.

2012.00 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone present including guests.

2012.01 Attendance.

29 Parishioners and 5 guests were present.

Apologies had been received from P.C.S.O. Ben Allchurch and, at the last minute, County & District Councillor Rob Adams (due to a family situation).

2012.02 Minutes of Parish Meeting Held 26th April 2011.

Copies of the preliminary draft Minutes had been distributed to participants immediately following the meeting and any appropriate comments thereon had been incorporated. Copies of the final draft Minutes were provided for those present. Their adoption was proposed by the chairman, seconded By S. Cottam and agreed without dissent.

2012.03 Matters Arising from item 2012.02 - not dealt with elsewhere on agenda.

None

2012.04 Whittington Parish Council - Chairman's Report.

S.L. Brooker reported on the main aspects of the parish Council's work over the last year or so making especial reference to the Parish/Neighbourhood Plan and Highways matters. He remarked on the small number of houses (c250) in the Parish and the resulting effect of the Precept on the Council Tax. The Council would hope to maximise income from grants and initiatives such as the New Homes Bonus.

He indicated the Council's routine methods of communication via notice boards and the Church Magazine, noting the intention to investigate expansion to e-mail text & broadband. He closed by thanking fellow Parish Councillors for their support, and inviting applications to join the Council to fill vacancies. He thanked the Clerk for his work and commitment and County and District Councillor Adams for his support and advice throughout the year.

Parishioners commented regarding the flimsy barriers at the Swinesherd Way roundabout asking what action the Council had taken. The Chairman advised that this had been a longstanding source of complaint which WCC had not addressed in a manner accepted by the Parish Council, which considered this a disaster waiting to happen. Public support was canvassed and would be welcomed.

A question was asked about illegal use of Old Road for daytime parking (in breach of the Access Only Order). The Chairman explained that the Council, residents and PCSO were all active in this area but only bona fide police officers could issue fixed penalty tickets and their coverage was limited.

2012.05 Police Report.

Sgt. Di Summerton was present and explained that she was standing in for pc Sean Woods who was engaged elsewhere. She remarked that there were now only two Local Police Officers based at Pershore one for Pershore Town the other (pc Woods) for Pershore Rural which comprised 45 Parishes. Hence the use of PCSO's was targeted to those areas where they could do most good although she acknowledged that in some cases police officers needed to be present.

She presented a crime report for 2011-2012 which compared favourably with that for the previous year.

In response to a question about powers of PCSO's she accepted there were limitations which she thought might be addressed by the new Chief Constable - especially as with close co-operation with Warwickshire Police there would need to be a review to ensure conformity across the two forces. She responded to a question from a parishioner about response to a non-urgent call which the questioner deemed excessive, indicating that despatch was controlled from the Communications Centre and would depend on the availability of resources in the area and other commitments.

2012.06 Presentation of Village Charities Accounts.

L.R. Wiltshire reported on the nature and financial situation of the historic Fanny Clifton and Elizabeth Stephens Charities noting their minimal capital and limited income. There were now 4 Trustees, and although some might feel the charities should be closed he did not consider this appropriate, but any decision would be for the trustees in the future.

2012.07 Village Hall - Report by Chairman of Village Hall Mgt. Committee.

R.A. Phillips reported on progress with the replacement of the existing Hall thanking M. Brown for his help and assistance which had resulted in a grant of Planning Permission for a new Hall. There now remained the task of obtaining the necessary funds and sources were being investigated to try to raise the required £300,000.

Despite the current economic situation of "flat" hire income and increasing costs the hall had been able over the last year to cover its running costs. He thanked those responsible for the Hall's accounting and upkeep, and looked forward to a new "dance group" user in the coming year. He closed by thanking all regular users and supporters and members of the Committee, noting the retirement of two members.

2012.08 County & District Councillor's Report/s.

Councillor Rob Adams regretfully could not be present due to a family situation.

2012.09 Whittington Church.

Caroline Mayfield, Churchwarden reported the appointment of Revd. Clare Griffiths as Vicar of Whittington and St Mark in the Cherry Orchard, she would be licensed on 13th May.

Support had grown with new members attending and a full programme of events; close ties with the School had been maintained.

The church remained physically in good order but ongoing work was needed - currently involving renewal of the lighting of the gallery. A planning application had been submitted for a permanent replacement for the (temporary) Jubilee Room. Upkeep of the Churchyard continued (including - last year - some tree works) and more help was sought with its upkeep. She closed by offering a welcome to all at Whittington Church.

2012.10 Whittington School.

Gary Richards, Head Teacher, reported on the School's progress over the last year noting it was a popular medium size school potentially having 7 classes of 30, and working almost at capacity.

At the last OFSTED inspection the school had been disappointed to be considered only "Satisfactory" despite receiving a "Good" grading in all but one area, that of rate of progress, which was being addressed.

The School was still active in many areas including music and sport, maintained an outward looking environment supported by numerous visits to museums etc., and retained its close ties with the Church. It hoped to continue to foster good relations with the community by way of events such as the School Fair (21/6/2012) run in collaboration with the Church, and by establishing more links with other local bodies.

In response to a question regarding the proportion of children on roll coming from within Whittington Parish he was unable to provide details but advised some 60% of the pupil roll was filled from within the school's catchment area. He acknowledged the concern of parents living in Kilbury Drive about safety of children en route to school.

2012.11 Any Other Business.

The Chairman explained that there were two items of particular interest which he intended to take first; after which others would be invited to submit any items of other business.

The first of these was the matter of Jubilee Celebrations in the village: Lyn Hulme (a member of the "steering group") outlined the group's proposals for the 3rd June and sought assistance in many areas notably funding, provision of prizes and supplies, and help on the day. A flyer had been distributed to all homes in the village but response was so far slow. Attractions would include a pig roast, a bouncy castle, garden games, tombola, raffles, a fancy hat competition, stalls and sideshows.

The second item to be dealt with related to a submission brought to the Parish Council only two weeks earlier by N. Hodgetts, which the Council had felt should be aired to the public at the opportunity offered by this Meeting. The Chairman explained that the item was being aired for information but not comment or approval. Further consultation would ensue during the drafting and ratification of the Neighbourhood Plan and in the Planning Application process. A query was raised as to whether the Chairman considered it appropriate to reveal such information in these circumstances, no specific item having been tabled. He did, which view was shared by others.

The proposal was explained to the Meeting by M. Brown, and it was emphasised that these were preliminary ideas and were open to comment and alteration. In response to ideas emanating from the Neighbourhood Plan Survey results and involving the provision of required facilities (Church & Hall Car parking, new Village Hall, village green/sports field/playground, and allotments) N. Hodgetts had put forward a proposition to use land he owned, forming part of Pond Farm for such facilities. To enable such development he sought to build a number of dwellings on the land and on the present Village Hall site, these would include a number of affordable homes for parishioners.

The Chairman then opened the floor for Parishioners' items: there were none.

2012.12 Presentation by Laura Synnuck on the work of the Pershore Volunteer Centre.

Laura Synnuck spoke to the Meeting outlining the status and work of the Pershore Volunteer Centre which was based in New Road, Pershore but served villages and communities outside the town itself (including Whittington). It sought to recruit and place volunteers and act as a broker to advertise and direct volunteers towards schemes suitable to their interests & wishes. It sought via an outreach programme to build a network of local volunteers, to assist Community Development ideas to bear fruit by offering support and advice, and to provide help via transport schemes involving volunteer owner/drivers, and vehicles (self-drive or driven) owned by the Centre.

2012.13 Date of Next Annual Parish Meeting.

The proposed date was Tuesday April 30th 2013 subject to availability of venue.

CLOSURE: The Chairman thanked all speakers, and others present, for attending and closed the meeting at 21.17 Hrs.