

Bredon, Bredon's Norton and Westmancote Parish Council

Minutes from Bredon Annual Parish meeting held at Bredon village hall on Monday 14th April 2014 at 7.30 pm.

Present

Cllrs Mr Stuart Bird, Mr Matt Darby, Mr Kevin Falvey, Mr Phil Handy, Mr Andrew Rhodes, Mr Declan Shiels, Mr Andrew Woodward (Chairman) and Mr Adrian Hardman (County and District). Ms J Shields (Clerk), Mrs Bates, Mr and Mrs Masters and Mr Malcolm Dunn.

1. Apologies For Absence.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr's Mrs Alison Palmer, Mrs Gail Whiting, Mr Rob Sly and Mr A Darby (District Councillor),

2. Minutes Of Annual Parish Meeting Held 1st May 2013.

The minutes having been circulated were agreed and signed as a true record.

3. Chairman's Report.

Good Evening ladies and gentleman another year has passed by and what a busy year it has been.

2013 has been a very eventful year one in which we have seen two long standing members of the Council stand down after many years serving the Parish. I would like to pass on my personal thanks to Allan Frampton and John Masters. John in particular who served the community for over 40 years.

In no particular order I just want to run through a few key areas and we will be happy to answer any questions. These are just highlights of the work the Council has carried out over and above our normal meetings and deliberations.

- Negotiations with the Rugby Club are now complete - a new lease has been signed and the work on their new permanent home is about to commence.
- Following discussions with the Football club - the Council was very pleased to be able to support them in their desire to re introduce youth football and we monitor the ongoing developments with real interest.
- Following real problems with the grass cutting contract and a number of complaints we have once again reviewed the awarding of new grass cutting contracts. I am pleased to say that the fields contract has been awarded to one of our own local residents and we will be considering the parish grass cutting contract in the coming months.
- The organising and running of the new homes bonus process the Parish went through. This led to many worthy causes in the community being supported through the new homes bonus scheme and I am really looking forward to seeing the results over the coming months.
- PCSO Williams - a huge thank you for all the work Simon did for the Parish and I wish him well in his new career as a regular officer with the Warwickshire force.

- This year has also seen Malcolm Dunn recognised by Wychavon for all of his hard work on the development of the Playing Fields Project, when he was awarded the Diamond Jubilee Community Recognition award.
- Planning - what can I say.. The Parish does seem to be under regular attack by developers at present with a number of planned housing developments being put forward. This has taken considerable time and skill in considering and replying to many of these applications and our submissions to Wychavon. I would like to pass on my personal thanks to the Planning sub group for some truly outstanding work this year.

I have to mention the council and the Clerk themselves - as you know we are all volunteers and the past 12 months has seen some fairly long meetings. As chairman they have certainly made my job easier and I am grateful that we have people who are willing to get take the lead.

Andrew Woodward
Chairman Bredon Parish Council

4. County And District Councillor Mr A Hardman's Report.

Dear Fellow Parishioners

It gives great pleasure to be able to give you an annual report that is based along 5 principle themes during the course of the year for both County and District.

1. Scorching Austerity – this was clearly the year that both Councils struggled with the issues that the reduction in Government Grant to us to help erode the deficit but not the debt really started to bite since in the past year the County Council has had to save some £20m and Wychavon District has had to adjust its spending by some £2.1. But for both Councils the current financial year which has just started is a challenge of even greater magnitude since the County Council will need to reduce its spending by some £29.3m and Wychavon will have to reduce its spending by some £2.6m. But be assured that both Councils have firm and strong plans to deliver these savings. It was also a year where both Councils decided to raise their Council Tax by some 1.9%. In the case of the County Council this was to deal with the pressures that had arisen in the budget for looked after children. When I first joined the County Council we had under 400 children in our care which was some 11 years ago. We now have in excess of 675 and the number appears to be rising and the budget is under pressure to the tune of an over spend of some £6.2m. So the £4.2m that was raised in Council Tax from the people of Worcestershire and the people of this Parish has been targeted at dealing with this one problem. At the same time the County Council has found ways of focusing its spend around the areas that really matter and consistently are fed back to us which is around vulnerable children, our increasingly frail and elderly population and the roads, and the County was able to find another £3m to keep it's Adult Social Care budget stable and to increase its Highways spend by some £1/2m and also last year we managed to, at long last, secure a viable efficient and green way of disposing of our waste in the long term with the resolution of the Hartlebury Waste to Energy Plant. But it has meant that both Councils are preparing to change the way that they operate to face up to the future by Commissioning out a lot more of our services and this will mean a reduction of head count at the County Council over the next two years of some 1500 members of staff so we will shrink to being an organisation that employs some 2000 people and the trick of

this will be to retain the front line services while delivered possibly by different providers in a standardised form that the people of Worcestershire would recognise.

2. Planning – I am sure that the Parish Chairman will have spoken at some length about the planning issues that the reform of the planning laws by the coalition government has brought down upon the village. Currently we are in a position where we have applications in the pipeline for some 180 extra houses, this is a figure which is considerably in excess of what was recommended in the South Worcestershire Development Plan but sadly the Inspector is of the view that we need some 4000 more houses in Wychavon and due to the District Council not having an adopted plan at this time, it has meant that a planning free for all with, under the NPPF Framework, a natural presumption for development being in place, this has meant that villages which are popular like Bredon are suffering from an absolute rash of ruthless cowboy style developments which in a more normal time, we would never contemplate or indeed accept. I continue to do everything I can to stop this happening. As some of you will know the development which the Parish Council approved is at the back of my house and I had to declare a personal and prejudicial interest in this. But I remain impeccably opposed to the Brensham Development and also determined that if this goes to appeal, the District will do its best to defeat this rogue application. The same applies to the extremely unwelcome Gladmans attempt to build some 97 houses backing onto College Road and at the same time we have an application that is going to Committee, I suspect in May, from a well known local developer attempting to cut down a lot of trees and scrub and remove a planning barrier which was to separate industrial land from residential and build houses on it. This same cowboy developer is the one who decided that the act of desecration of chopping all the trees at the back of Perwell Close would be a good idea, and I understand that despite a forestry restocking order, which I hope he will carry out in the Autumn, I anticipate him seeking Planning Permission on this site during the Summer and I will also oppose this, since without doubt this scale of development is having an effect, not only on the way that Bredon looks but also on our quality of life. Bredon has now grown to a position where it is a bigger village than some of our Worcestershire towns and is now if all this building goes ahead, bigger than Tenbury Wells which has a Library, a Fire Station, a Police Station and a range of other facilities, and if this development goes forward, I think it is time that we started to press for facilities that would be suitable to a small town.

3. Roads – during the course of the year we have been able to make some progress on the issue of roads and the infrastructure that surrounds the village and I was delighted to be able to partner the Parish Council in the upgrade of the footpaths that connected the Parish car parks and the Village Hall and the Doctors Surgery. And I was also delighted at the same time on the other side of the road we hopefully were able to resolve the long standing issues that some residents have had over the footpaths by the bus stop flooding every time we had some heavy rain. Also by partnering with the Sailing Club who bore the majority of the cost, we were able to improve the road down to the Sailing Club back to being a tarmac surface which it was some 40 years ago, but I do realise there is still considerable amount of work to be done in Westmancote and in the road between Kinsham and Bredon and I still have a long term aspiration to have a metalled footpath going on the right hand side of the Eckington Road to connect with the footpath half way up the Hill. But at the moment this ambition is some way off.

4. Flooding – this was a year of an unprecedentedly wet winter when the disruption to the life of the county and indeed with the closure of Eckington Bridge for some 28 days between December and February led to a lot of disruption to the residents of Bredon's life since the detour is so long going through Great and then Little Comberton down to Pershore

to go back around and I am trying to press at the County Council that we do try and find a solution to the issue of this medieval bridge but the real problem is not that the bridge is not sturdy enough or high enough but that the access to it on either side floods for such a long length that it would be a very expensive scheme indeed to raise up the road but I feel that if rainfall continues to increase as Climate change intensifies, this will have to be done at some juncture. But the changes that we have made and the improvements that the Parish Council and the County Highways and our Lengthsmen have done over the past few years have improved the position in the Parish but I willingly acknowledge that we still have work to do in Kinsham and hopefully this year we will finally finish off this scheme and we have further work to do in Queensmead to ensure that the residents are not afraid of being flooded again.

5. The 540 Bus Operation – As members of the Parish Council will know, earlier in the year as part of our Budget Consultation process we had a zero based budget review of the bus subsidy that we were putting into the County system to ensure a wide range of services continued. The County Council was subsidising the bus operations in the County to the tune of some £2.5m and by having a zero based budget review we did hope to really flush out from the bus operators, the services that needed subsidy and those that didn't and we had some 8500 to 9000 responses to your consultation. Because of the weight of the consultation we have maintained in this year's budget the subsidy at £2.2m but will anticipate that there will be a further reduction and the County Council will be coming forward with proposals in June for implementation in September. While I remain reasonably convinced because of the role that the 540 plays in getting school children to their schools and because of the high numbers of passengers that travel on it, the service will survive. I do advise parishioners to look at the County Council's proposals in due course and comment back to me when they become public in June since I expect there will be some reduction in services but I am hopeful we can reach an agreement with Astons or another provider to substantially reduce the subsidy from its current level to a much lower one while maintaining a service.

Thank you

Adrian Hardman

5. District Councillor Mr A Darby Report.

Report by Wychavon District Councillor Adrian Darby (Westmancote Ward).

Two issues have dominated the Council's agenda during the past year.

Finance

Wychavon published its business plan Grow, Save, Charge. This was its proposal to cope with a reduction of £4m of central government funding between 2010/11 and 2017/18, which represents 59% of our budget. Of this gap, we aim to save £2.1m in 2013-15 and a further £1m in 2015-18. There is still a further £1.2m to be identified for the second half of the plan period. As the title suggests this response comes in three parts.

Grow: involves a rise in Business Rates, changes to New Homes Bonus, service insourcing and better use of business assets to produce £550,000 in 2013-15 and £295,000 in 2015-18.
Save: will be achieved by cutting costs, changing staffing levels and management to achieve £1,389,000 in 2013-15 and a further £601,000 in 2015-18.

Charge: includes an extra £205,000 in 2013-15 through changes in Council Tax support and £120,000 in 2015-18 through rent reviews from property assets and raising fees and charges. Council Tax will be raised by 2% per annum.

Planning

When I reported to you last year I was still reasonably optimistic as to how the regime set out in the Government's new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) would work out. That framework gave councils a year to finalise their development plans and I said that I hoped the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) would be in place by now. Unfortunately, Wychavon had seriously underestimated the time the whole process would take.

The Government's Inspector did not start his examination until the autumn, and it was not until the beginning of this month that he produced his recommendation that 28,370 homes need to be built in the SWDP area by 2030. This figure is higher than the 23,200 in the Plan that was submitted to the Government last year, and a slight increase on the 27,300 proposed by the three partner councils in January this year. It is 2,200 fewer than would have been required under the old West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy.

Each of the three councils preparing the Plan - Malvern Hills District Council, Worcester City Council and Wychavon District Council – will be asked in the summer to formally accept the Inspector's recommendation.

This leaves a shortfall in the number of sites where the additional homes could be built. A substantial database of sites already exists from earlier work on the Plan, and more have been proposed by local people, organisations and developers in a recent formal call for sites. Those sites will all be assessed for a range of factors, including access to infrastructure, transport links and whether they are prone to flooding. A preferred list of sites will then go to the three councils in the summer for approval. A six-week consultation will then be launched to give the public the chance to have their say on the new proposals. The consultation will be concluded by the end of September.

After that, the Inspector is expected to hold a second stage of his Examination, to consider the proposed new sites and a variety of other vital aspects of the Plan. It is expected that the SWDP will be adopted by the three councils in 2015.

In the meantime, a recent planning decision into a site at Offenham found that Wychavon could not show a five year housing land supply. Under the NPPF, this means that our saved housing policies from the old Wychavon Local Plan are no longer valid, and that any development that can be deemed sustainable will be allowed, either until the new development boundaries are adopted under the SWDP, or until enough sites come forward to demonstrate a five year supply. This means that the developments in Bredon on the Cheltenham Road at Benshams and on the Tewkesbury Road at Chains Corner may be ultimately difficult to resist, though the Parish Council should continue to lead efforts to ensure that the Bredon Village Design Statement is followed.

Cllr Adrian Darby.

6. Police Report.

None received.

7. Bredon Community Play And Recreation Report.

It is great to confirm that we have again made real progress in the last year. Much of this has only been achieved because of the valuable on-going support given to us by Bredon

Parish Council. We would like to thank all councillors for this support. In particular your backing in ensuring that we successfully completed the skate facility. Thank you again.

List of actions in April 2013 report

1. Work with Bredon Bowls Club on the boundary enhancements
2. Run Bredon Fun Day and holiday activities
3. Develop and support a 'Junior Park Reps' group with Bredon Hancock's First School
4. Enter Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association's annual competition
5. Review progress with the 2009 'playing fields vision'
6. Work with the parish council to complete a quality skate facility
7. Run monthly volunteer work parties to support the maintenance of the playing fields
8. Continue to strengthen the links with Bredon sports clubs and other local community groups

Achievements as at April 2014

- New boundary completed around Bowls Club
- Bredon Fun Day 2014 – involved over a dozen community orgs (including new ones – Bredon Bridge Club and Bredon Outward Bound) and attracted many new volunteers
- Play and activity days in summer and October school holidays – hundreds benefited
- 'Junior Park Reps' group started – ran 'playing field' event at school; produced brochure for October 2013 activities and took part in playground maintenance training in March 2014
- 2009 vision reviewed and proposals submitted to Parish Council
- Skate facility completed
- Monthly work parties completed – core group of dedicated volunteers
- Continued close work with sports clubs and other community groups
- Awarded 'Community Project of the Year' by Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire in November 2013
- Membership of 180 'Friends of Bredon Playing Fields' and close to 100 followers on Facebook
- Supporting Upton Play Association with their development plans

A big thank you to BCPR committee members and all other volunteers for their ongoing and valuable support. Thanks must of course also go to our funders over the last year – Big Lottery Fund; Coop Bank; and Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association

The 2013 'Circus Themed Fun Day' was a great success with contributions and support from across our community. We had fantastic weather on the day and this encouraged hundreds of people to come along and stay all afternoon!

All this, plus the action of our sports clubs and many other volunteers, means that the playing fields afford a growing list of fantastic opportunities year round for all ages. The community receive many great compliments from others who use the playing fields, eg families from other local villages & towns and visiting sports teams. This adds to the feeling of ownership and pride in our community. We now need to ensure we maintain the facilities to a high standard in the coming years.

If anyone would like to get involved in any way then do get in touch at bredon@live.co.uk or call me on 773 633. We can always do with more ideas, energy, enthusiasm and people!

Thanks again. Malcolm Dunn on behalf of Bredon Community Play & Recreation.

8. Questions From The Floor.

Mr Falvey suggested that a means be found to display trophies in the village hall.

Residents are concerned at the condition of the play area at Cherry Orchard.

The following items will be addressed by the Parish Council:-

Trophies in the village hall.

Cherry Orchard Play area

Grass cutting.