

Honeybourne Annual Parish Meeting 2013

Annual Report of the Parish Council 2012-13

Changes on the Parish Council

In May 2012 the Council welcomed Peter Brookes, who was co-opted to the Council and took his seat at the Annual Meeting.

Council Tax/Parish Precept

The Parish Council was very aware of the continuing current economic climate and the need to be prudent when it considered the annual precept for 2013 /14. The Council has therefore agreed a small increase in the precept which amounted to just 2.12%, mainly to assist with the cost of developing the Recreation field and the new Community Centre project. This is a total increase of £1,100, which represents an increase of just 51 pence per year for a band D property.

Planning and Major Development Proposals

Three new sites came up for consideration during the year.

Grange Farm – Taylor Wimpey

Suggestions were made by Wychavon District Council to increase the size of the Grange Farm site by 25 Units in the emerging South Worcestershire Development Plan and this was subsequently agreed by WDC.

Taylor Wimpey gave a presentation relating to their proposed development which included a site for a new Community Centre.

Outline planning permission was granted by Wychavon District Council.

Subsequent consultation took place on the reserved matters, when Taylor Wimpey met with the Council to discuss the details. The Council suggested some layout amendments, together with design matters to make the development fit in better with the village surroundings. Also detailed discussions took place regarding the replacement of the old barn with a small substation and a wall built from the old barn stone.

Field adjacent to Station Road/ Dudley Road – Lioncourt

An extraordinary meeting was held in May last year to consider the Lioncourt application, about which the Council raised concerns with the local planning authority. The application was refused but later granted on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate.

The Council has recently entered into discussions with the developers to make the houses more relevant to the village location and to express concerns over flooding, drainage and sewage issues.

Sheep Sales Field, Station Road – Sharba Homes

This application raised an unprecedented amount of concern from residents and was strongly opposed by the Council, Wychavon planning officers and the Wychavon Planning Committee, which unanimously refused the application on several grounds. Sharba Homes appealed the decision and at the appeal hearing the Chairman of the Parish Council, District Councillor Alastair Adams and Kenny Graves, a resident of Station Road, gave evidence to the Appeal Inspector.

This application was subsequently granted on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate, despite the strong local opposition.

It is understood that Sharba Homes will not be developing the site and a new developer has come forward with, it is believed, a less intensive development. However, the Parish Council has not yet seen any plans.

The Council received a letter from Peter Luff MP offering support to the Parish Council regarding both the Sharba Homes and Lioncourt planning appeals.

Neighbourhood Plan

The public response to a request for volunteers to produce a neighbourhood plan attracted only two responses. The Council is therefore not proceeding with a neighbourhood plan at this time. It is likely that the lack of interest stems from the amount of development which has been imposed on the village in recent months.

Vicarage Nurseries

The Council has submitted a detailed objection to an application by Vicarage Nurseries, Bretforton for a change of use of agricultural land for the permanent storage of 56 static caravans for use by seasonal workers, because of the impact this could have on Honeybourne and its services.

New Sports and Recreation Field

In March 2013 Mr T Bury, the Council's Architect, presented plans for the re-designed recreation field.

The project to deliver the facilities at the field has now been taken over on behalf of V.I.S.A. Ltd by a working party led by Steve Bullen under the banner of "Sport Honeybourne".

The Parish Council has made a grant to V.I.S.A. Ltd to cover the cost of the first year's rent of the field to offset the costs of the initial stages of development.

New Community Centre

The Council is working in partnership with the Village Hall Trustees to progress a project to replace the existing inadequate hall with a new purpose-built Community Centre on the Grange Farm development site.

Cotswold View Balancing Pond

The Council, after some negotiation, accepted Taylor Wimpey's offer of a commuted sum for the balancing pond maintenance. The necessary legal documentation to conclude this agreement has still not been supplied to the Council.

Jubilee Party in the Park, June 2012

Despite the rain, the event went well and we thank the organisers for their sterling efforts. A follow up party at the Gate Inn Field was held in September which was well attended and had the benefit on this occasion of good weather.

The profits were split between V.I.S.A. and the Village Hall.

Speeding

In an attempt to curb speeding on village roads the Council consulted with Worcestershire County Council who agreed to sell the Council a second hand Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) for £750. The VAS will shortly be placed at the first of various sites around the village.

Quiet Lane

The Council supported a request by Steve Bullen to have Gloster Ades designated as a “Quiet Lane” for the benefit of cyclists and walkers. This request is currently being processed by Worcestershire County Council.

Heart of England Forest

In July Ms Carole Longden of the Heart of England Forest project gave a presentation to the Council on the proposed planting of the 300 acre forest between Honeybourne and Pebworth.

The Council expressed many concerns over the proposal including the scale of change in the rural landscape between Honeybourne and Pebworth, the loss of countryside views, the changes in the local ecology and wildlife habitat and the loss of high grade farmland.

We are still waiting to hear the decision on this proposal.

Allotments

The Council was asked by the Allotments Association to take over the general management and administration of the plots and the tenancies. Cllr David George is taking over the management responsibilities on behalf of the Council

Public Rights of Way

Councillor David Cowan is taking over the role of Public Paths Warden and will be working to keep the public rights of way in the Parish in good condition.

Honeybourne Station Footbridge

As the result of an initial approach by resident David Dunbar to Network Rail, a meeting took place which resulted in the Council requesting improvements, long and short term, to the visual impact of the bridge. A detailed response is still awaited.

Flooding

This matter has again been raised with Worcestershire County Council, specifically in relation to the Gate Inn crossroads and the double bridge on the Pebworth Road.

The water at the latter builds up quickly and remains for several days due to the road gullies being blocked with silt. The road surface has also deteriorated because of the flood water.

In January this year Parish Council representatives met with a District Council Engineer to look at flooding issues.

The Council also requested Flood Warning signs, depth indicators and gulley cleaning by County Highways and these have all now been provisionally agreed.

Highways and the state of Bretforton Road

County Councillor John Smith and Mr Roy Fullee, the County Highways Engineer attended the Council's March meeting to answer highway related questions, covering the state of Bretforton Road and flooding issues.

It is hoped that Bretforton Road will be resurfaced in the 2013/2014 financial year and Cllr Smith advised that extra funding has been made available for highway repairs.

The response to the flooding issues is noted above.

Litter along Weston Rd/Station Rd

Complaints continue to be made about the litter in Weston Road and Station Road and the inadequacy of the litter pickers. Recently the contractor was sent back to do it again.

The situation will continue to be monitored, but it has to be said that ultimately litter is the responsibility of those who drop it, although the cost of picking it up is borne by all of us.

Broadband Feasibility Report

As reported last year Honeybourne Parish Council has joined Pebworth Parish Council and Wychavon District Council in contributing towards the cost of a local Broadband feasibility study to be carried out as soon as possible. However, the interest in high speed broadband currently being shown in Honeybourne falls far below the level required to obtain funding. More residents need to go online and register their interest. There is no commitment needed at this stage - just expressions of support, and for more information residents are invited to contact Cllr Peter Brookes.

Council Meetings

The Council held twelve Ordinary meetings during the year, together with two Extraordinary Meetings and one Finance Group meeting. Some members also attended other meetings of outside groups as Council delegates. Cllr Alastair Adams has been a regular attendee at Parish Council meetings.

Members Attendance at Full Council Meetings 2012-13

Cllr A Attridge	12		Cllr S Kendrick	10
Cllr P Brookes	8		Cllr S Matthews	13
Cllr G Clelland	13		Cllr M Powell	10
Cllr D Cowan	11		Cllr P Probert	13
Cllr D George	13		Cllr A Simmons	13
Cllr B Johnson	13			
County Councillor			District Councillor	
Cllr T Bean	0		Cllr A Adams	12

Cllr Brian Johnson

Chairman