

Minutes of **Malvern Wells Parish Meeting 2015** held on **Wednesday, 22nd April 2015** in **The Village Hall, Wells Road** commencing at **7.00 pm**

Attendance: Mrs H Burrage (Chairman), Mrs A Bradshaw, M Victory, J Black, B Knibb, N Johnson, S Atwell

Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer: David Taverner

Apologies received: Cllrs P Buchanan, S Freeman, Mrs C O'Donnell, K Wagstaff, P Hurst, A Hull

- 1 Welcome:** The Chairman, Cllr Mrs H Burrage, welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 2 Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 30^h April 2014:** The minutes of the Parish Meeting which had been held on 30th April, 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of that meeting.
- 3 Matters arising from the minutes:** There were no matters arising from the minutes.
- 4 Annual Report of the Chairman of the Parish Council**

Cllr Burrage presented the following review of the Parish Council's activities during the previous year: -

"Firstly, I would like to extend my very great thanks to Cllr Simon Freeman who has given me great support during the last year in his role as Vice Chairman of the Council. Simon has had a busy year as he has also become our new Elected Conservator. Our previous and long serving representative, Mr John Tretheway, having had to stand down due to poor health. The Council wishes to thank John for his excellent service on behalf of us all and sends best wishes for his return to better health.

This year has seen the successful completion of the long awaited drainage scheme for Assarts playing field. A new Maintenance Contract, that assures our wonderful Gas Lamps will remain in peak working order, has now been signed, and the Contractor has recently completed the lamps first annual maintenance cycle.

This year we've mourned the passing of our District Councillor, neighbour and friend, Chris Cheeseman who passed away unexpectedly in July. Chris was a committed servant to the local community and we shall be honouring his memory with the provision of a defibrillator at the northern side of the Parish and the planting of a cherry tree.

The resulting District Council by-election, which was held in August, was won by our very own Parish Councillor - Mrs Chris O'Donnell. Chris is now enjoying her new role at District whilst still continuing to fulfil her duties within the Parish Council.

The highlight of the summer was undoubtedly the Parish Summer fête which took place on the first Sunday in September. The event took place in place on Sunday 7th September in glorious sunshine and was a tremendous success. Many thanks to all who came along to enjoy the fun and games and to the stallholders who brought

excellent food, ice creams, tombola, reptiles, the WI, the Wells Club and Messy Church and a Tug of War for our enjoyment.

Particular thanks must go to Sylvia Miles who provided a wonderful light refreshment stall on her lawn, serving delicious Pimms, cakes and tea, with members of the Inner Wheel Club of Malvern, who were raising funds for their chosen charity.

Highlights of the fete also included musical entertainment from The Wells Singers and the Worcester Ukulele Band. The Parish Council was pleased to be able to send a donation to the Stroke Association from the proceeds of the fete.

The weather was extremely kind to us and we will be running another first-Sunday-in-September fete in 2015, hoping for more of that lovely settled weather.

The ever popular Christmas carol concert, featuring the Wells took place a couple of weeks before Christmas in the Village Hall. This event was once again very well attended and is always a lovely start to the Christmas celebrations period. A retiring collection was taken with the funds that were raised being contributed to "Positive Thoughts" - a local mental health support group.

In terms of the local environment a fine new Christmas tree was planted on Fruitlands Green, during the summer, which was illuminated with Christmas Lights during the festive period. Grateful thanks go to all those people, residents and contractors for the Council who kept the tree watered during the scorching weeks that followed its planting.

We are looking to introduce a similar Christmas illumination scheme in the Jubilee Fountain Garden, during 2015.

We shall also be looking to continue with the restoration and development of the Garden. This summer, with the help of a team of volunteer gardeners, we planted some wonderful new plants and entered the Garden for part of the RHS Britain in Bloom competition. Much to everyone's surprise we won an RHS it's Your Neighbourhood Award (Level 2- Improving). Thank you to everyone who took part as organisers, advisers and planters.

Our two part-time outdoor contractors, Steve Maund and Martin Thomas, have continued to maintain the Parish Cemetery, the Assarts Road Playing Field and St Wulstans Village Green to their usual excellent standard. The volunteer team of assistant parish paths wardens, led by Norman Nimmo-Smith, have again done much to ensure that all of the various footpaths and bridleways within the Parish have continued to be easy to access. Indeed those in Malvern Wells have been acknowledged as amongst the best maintained in the whole of Worcestershire.

We continue to attract interest from developers who wish to build housing developments on local green fields. We are now awaiting a planning decision on the full application for 46 houses by CALA Homes at the former Abbey Playing fields in Hanley Rd. There has recently also been a large Outline Application for 95 houses on land in the parish of Welland & Little Malvern. As this site adjoins our own Parish we worked closely with Welland & Little Malvern Parish Council in a successful fight to have this application refused. We shall need to remain vigilant as

further such speculative applications unfortunately seem certain to continue to be made.

We have recently been involved in attempting to purchase a parcel of Amenity Land at Holywell Park, Wells Road. An Extraordinary Council meeting which was called to consider the matter was extremely well attended. We have sent an offer to the vendors' agents which we have asked them to keep under review should no other bids for the land come to fruition.

As the life of this Council draws to a conclusion, on 7th May, we are sadly faced with saying a fond farewell to four of our current parish Councillors.

Peter Buchanan has been a Councillor for more than 10 years and has played a key role in the Chairmanship of our Planning Committee. We shall very much miss the skills and knowledge he has brought to that role.

The Deputy Chairman of the Committee, Arthur Hull, is also unfortunately standing down as he has moved away from the Parish. Arthur has been a willing and able deputy to Peter and has also helped to undertake a lot of unseen work on behalf of the community.

Anne Bradshaw is also retiring from the Parish Council after many years sterling service, not least of which was her position as Vice- Chairman of our Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Kevin Hurst has also decided not to seek re-election after serving as a Councillor for the last two years.

We are now actively looking for new Councillors to help us to continue with all of the work that the Council undertakes on behalf of all of its parishioners

No review of the PC's activities would be complete without again recording my thanks for the help and support given by County Councillor Lucy Hodgson and our District Councillors Chris O'Donnell (who was elected in August) and Jill Campbell who have all carried out a great deal of work on behalf of the Parish at their respective local authorities. The Parish has also maintained its close working relationship with the local policing team, particularly Sergeant Susan Parr and CSO Karen Watson, whose help has been invaluable when dealing with any issues of concern that has been raised with them.

- 5 Report from the Local Policing Team** (PCSO Kevin Tudger presented a report which set out statistical details of incidents and recorded crimes which the Priory Policing Team (PPT) had been involved with during the year.

During 2014/15 there had been 441 recorded police response incidents in the PPT area of which 63 were crime related.

The crime figures had included:-

- 22 vehicle crimes
- 13 thefts
- 4 dwelling burglaries
- 3 drug related crimes
- 9 cases of criminal damage

9 social order incidents
3 other crimes

The comparable figures in 2013/14 were that there had been 479 police response incidents in the area of which some 75 were crime related

PCSO Tudgerr reported that crime levels in the area were showing a decline over the medium to long term thanks to the results of the various crime prevention and other policing initiatives which had been undertaken. The Policing team were pleased with the results both within the Ward itself and Malvern generally, which had encountered a lot less problems when compared to many other areas in the County area and beyond.

6 Charity Accounts

a) To Receive the accounts of Great Malvern Relief in Need Charities

The previously distributed financial statements were noted and accepted. The Charity had made 17 grants during 2014/15 totalling some £1,321.

b) To Receive a Report from the Parish Council Representatives on Hanley Castle Almshouse & Relief in Need Charities (Cllrs Bradshaw & Wagstaff).

The 2014/15 Statement of Accounts was noted.

Cllr Wagstaff advised that the all of the Almshouses were currently fully occupied and in a good state of repair.

7 Annual Report from the Worcestershire County Councillor

Cllr Hodgson had tendered her apologies for being unable to attend the Meeting but had submitted the following written report:

"This past year seems to flown by during which some very difficult decisions have had to be made around funding issues. This included the remodelling of the mobile library service down to one bus which meant reducing the routes available across the county.

The county Budget that we have set for this year sees an increase in spending on children's care, highways and footways has been approved as part of a £327 million budget for the county council in 2015/16.

The budget package agreed includes a 1.94 per cent increase in council tax to raise £4 million which will be spent directly on supporting children under local authority care. This is to cope with increasing demand on services over the past year.

The council tax increase will put up the bill for an average Band D household rise by about £20 to £1,079 per year – although this is still amongst the lowest council tax rates in the country.

The budget includes £23.8 million of savings as the council continues to address a significant reduction in funding from Central Government. Councillors also agreed to freeze their allowances for the seventh year running.

Key investment was confirmed around the County Council's four corporate focus areas: Open for Business, Children and Families, Health and Wellbeing, and the Environment.

This includes:

- An extra £500,000 for improving county highways
- A further £2 million for a local members highways fund to enable all County Councillors to fund improvements in their areas – equivalent to £35,000 per division.
- £400,000 invested in county footways, a 50 per cent increase on current spending.
- A £2 million boost for Adult Social Care provision.
- There is £900,000 for the Welfare Assistance Scheme from central

government, allowing the districts to work with agencies to help the most disadvantaged.

Measures backing the council's Open for Business priority include putting £6 million into a 'match funding' bid to the Government for highways cash which could result in double that figure being spent on roads improvements.

The County Council is also pressing on with schemes such as the £33 million upgrade of the A440 Southern Relief Link Road as it seeks to improve infrastructure and boost the local economy.

Though my divisional fund I have been able to help a projects across the parish including help to provide defibrillator, grit bins, Fruitlands Christmas tree and also the summer fete. Can I remind the council that my divisional fund for 15-16 started at the beginning of April.It has been a pleasure working with the council and you have been most supportive in my role as County Councillor. I wish all you that are standing for election luck and I look forward to working with new council."

8 Annual Report from the Elected Conservator

Cllr Freeman had tendered his apologies for being unable to attend the Meeting but had submitted the following written report:

"The remit of the Malvern Hills Conservators is to "preserve the natural aspect, protect and manage trees, shrubs, turf and other vegetation: prevent unlawful digging and quarrying: keep the hills open, unenclosed and unbuilt on as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public: conserve and enhance biodiversity, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Scheduled Ancient Monuments on its land". The Malvern Hills Acts 1884 to 1995 ("the Acts") regulate what Conservators can and cannot do or permit.

The significance of the Acts has been highlighted in recent months by the proposal to construct a cable car from Great Malvern to the Worcestershire Beacon. At their Special Board meeting on 12 February 2015 the Conservators had no choice but than to reject the proposal because, irrespective of its merits or demerits, the building work involved would have been in contravention of a number of specific provisions in the Acts.

The publicity surrounding the cable car proposal has to some extent detracted from an appreciation of the work that the Conservators staff routinely carry out as part of the land management programme. The Conservators are responsible not only for the management of the Malvern Hills but also the Commons on the east side of the Hills and other areas of land in the vicinity. Lack of grazing livestock and a reluctance to depends on mechanical means of clearance presents a challenge to effective land management in a number of locations and the Conservators have taken significant steps in the last 12 months to encourage an increase in the number of livestock on their land. Evidence of recent land clearance to preserve open spaces and enhance wildlife habitats can be seen on many parts of the Hills. Maintenance work on the original Victorian drainage system has also been carried out in a number of areas. Volunteers play a significant and vital role in helping the Conservators staff with clearance projects as well as litter collection and other maintenance projects.

Forthcoming projects include completion of the review by a working group to examine how the Acts might be updated and consultation on the use of the Hills by cyclists and riders as well as continued land management to restrict encroachment of trees and other vegetation onto traditionally open areas."

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7-40 pm.

Approved

Cllr Mrs H Burrage- Chairman -27th April,2016