

KEMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of Kemerton Annual Parish Meeting held at Victoria Hall on Tuesday 15th March 2011 at 7.30pm.

Present.

Cllrs Ms C Allen, Mr A Darby OBE (Chairman), Mr G Long, Mr J Van den Broek, Mr P James and Sir D Logan. CSO S Williams, Mrs A Marsh (Chairman of the Village Hall Committee), Mrs P Latham Development Worker – Older Peoples Service, Rooftop Housing Group Limited. Mrs L Hemsted, Mr P Truscott, Lady Logan, Mr and Mrs Ford, Mr N Coleman, Mrs J James and Ms J Shields (Parish Clerk).

The chairman thanked everyone for coming.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr M Walker, Cllr A Hardman and PC Shepherd.

2. Minutes Of Annual Parish Meeting Held 23rd March 2010.

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

3. Mrs Philippa Latham Development Worker – Older Peoples Service, Rooftop Housing Group Limited.

“The Independence at Home”, support service at Rooftop Housing Group provides services designed to support older vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes regardless of whether they live in private rented accommodation, social housing or are owner occupiers. The service is free to those in receipt of certain benefits.

The type and frequency of support is agreed, at an initial visit with the customer and our trained and experienced staff. The support covers areas such as home adaptations, safety, financial security, telecare, wellbeing, moving home, affordable warmth and health to name but a few. Our service encourages older persons to take control and maintain their independence and through this to achieve the maximum enjoyment from their homes, their lives and their community.

We are well aware that life can have its ups and downs. If you feel you want know more about what we can offer please call us on 01386 420861 to discuss your needs and aspirations. There may be a concern about a relative, a friend, a neighbour or a carer, if so calls us on the same number and talk to us.”

4. Report From Pc Shephard, West Mercia Police.

CSO Simon Williams reported the following crime figures for 1st march 2010 to 1st May 2011:- 3 x burglaries (2x dwelling, one shed), 3 vehicle crimes, 2 x theft, 1 x criminal damage, 1 x assault and one other.

Crime statistics are available on www.police.uk.

The mobile police station will be in Bredon on 13th April 1.00-3.00pm and 27th June 10.00-12.00 am.

Anything suspicious should be reported to 0300 333 3000.

5. County Councillor's Report.

Dear Councillors and Parishioners,

I am sorry I am not with you tonight but I have been called away rather unexpectedly.

From the County Council's point of view, 2010/11 has been a difficult year since without doubt all political parties acknowledged at the General Election last May, that there was going to need to be some realignment in funding. This has meant the County Council's budget that we set in February is going to see a reduction of some £39.5m in this current year, which is a considerable change. Approximately two thirds of this will be achieved through efficiency and reform but I am afraid to say that there will be an element of straight forward budget reductions which will probably total somewhere in the region of £9m. I have looked through the impact that this could have on Kemerton and its surrounding villages and I have come to the conclusion that the most vulnerable services that we provide to change will be the frequency and regularity of the 540 bus service and I am determined that I try and keep this valuable service with its connections to Evesham and Tewkesbury intact as much as possible. But it must be remembered by Parishioners that currently the service is subsidised to the tune of over £100,000 a year and the County Council is not in a position to be able to afford this level of subsidy.

It has been a very challenging winter yet again. December was probably the coldest month that we have seen for some length of time and I am afraid to say that we can see the effect of yet another very hard winter on the

KEMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

surrounding roads and their condition. But I am lobbying Government as hard as I can go, for extra funding for the County, since on 2 nights in December and 1 night in January Pershore amazingly was the coldest place in the country with a temperature of minus 19.5degrees. I have been approached by the Parish Council to see if we can get some work done on Kinsham Lane which was a reminder of a promise that I made to the Council last year and I understand that the work is to start imminently and I hope that Parishioners will find it satisfactory. This of course was the year when finally at long last we managed to resurface Bayliss Road and I am glad that this long, and I have to say, rather sorry saga has finally been brought to an end.

I am also aware that through PACT, a Kemerton resident who walks her children to the school of Overbury, is concerned about the state of the footpath between Kemerton and Overbury. I would like to reassure the Parish Council that this issue has not been forgotten and despite the cuts the County Council has increased its spend on footpaths in the forthcoming year and I will see if I can get some work done on this valuable link. But it is very hard to make a cogent case for footpath repairs between rural areas, since unfortunately urban areas, with their higher usage, tend to have a higher rating but I will see if some money can be diverted to at least do some of the repairs that residents feel would be helpful to them.

I have had no social services cases raised with me this year or indeed educational cases and while the Parish Council quite rightly concerns itself with matters that it can deal with, I do think that this is a positive feature to remember.

And finally, just a point to conclude with, I am aware that the issue of flooding is still not been resolved to all residents satisfaction. We still have further work to do with on this item and I think that it will take us some time before we reach a satisfactory conclusion. But the County has put money in the budget for the next 3 years for capital spending on flooding and I will do my best to divert some of it Kemerton's way.

I am sorry not to be with you again tonight but best wishes, Adrian Hardman County Councillor.

6. District Councillor's Report.

The two principle areas in which I have been active during the past year have been finance and planning.

Over the last two months Wychavon has been fixing its Council Tax and Budget. The government has given extra money to councils who freeze their council tax, as Wychavon has done, but are nonetheless making very substantial cuts in their grant over the next four years. Wychavon needs to find savings of nearly £2m and this has to be done over two years – as the cuts are ‘front-loaded’.

In the light of this the Senior Management Team proposed the following savings:

Efficiencies and Joint Working £537,000

Increased Income from Assets £130,000

Management and staff savings £600,000

Increased Income from Services £510,000 (of which £400 k is increased car parking charges)

Service Reductions £174,000. (of which £40k is stopping free bulky waste collection)

Against this they are proposing additional expenditure of £160,000.

They also proposed the principle that we should keep the use of our revenue balances to an absolute minimum.

However the management board decided not to implement the officers' proposal to raise £400,000 by an increase of parking charges or save £40,000 by cutting free bulky waste collection, but to leave this decision to the new council which will be elected in May. This is of course means abandoning the principle and allowing revenue balance to fall seriously. I suspect that these charges will be reappear next year.

Planning Policy

After the general election the new government announced that it was abandoning Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS). This had obvious implications for the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy (SWJCS) which was being prepared jointly by Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon Councils and which interpreted the West Midlands RSS in South Worcestershire. I sit on the Joint Advisory Panel of Councillors, which is overseeing the production of this strategy, as the reserve Wychavon member.

The three Councils now have to write a plan without the framework of the RSS and are free to choose their own housing numbers so long as the evidence base supports them. To mark this change we have now abandoned the

KEMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

SWJCS and replaced it with a new South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP). This means starting again to some extent although all the village consultations which took place last year are still relevant, and we are free to argue that the housing allocated in the plan should be what the village actually wants as identified in the Parish Plan and the Village Design Statement. Indeed officers have been using these ever since the received drafts of them from the Parish Council and before they were formally adopted by Wychavon – so all the hard work in producing them should prove worth while.

Overall officer are now expecting some 1400 houses to be built in villages over the period 2006-2026. Sites will be identified in Category One, Two and Three Villages and no village will be expected to provide more than 10% of its existing housing stock. (This would mean a maximum of 20 for Kemerton). I was successful in having Kemerton reclassified from Category Two to Category Three. We are still likely to be allocated some housing but I hope only on those sites supported by the Parish Council in its response to the SWJCS consultation on site allocation.

At its meeting on 4 January Wychavon's Development Control Policy Committee approved the timetable for the production of the SWDP. The three councils should be presented with proposals for Preferred Options for housing in towns and villages at the beginning of July. There will be public consultation in September and October. Once this has taken place there is a further period of consideration by officers and preparation of the final Submission Document which is to be examined by an Inspector in December 2012.

The SWDP should finally be adopted in April 2013. Until it comes into effect planning decisions will still be judged against the existing Wychavon Local Plan and the Worcestershire County Structure Plan. These Plans have an end date of 2011, but most of their policies have been 'saved' until the new SWDP takes over.

7. Parish Council Report.

Last year we reported that the Parish Plan had been completed and accepted by the Parish Council. In the autumn we prepared a report on actions taken under this plan, which included an appeal for volunteers to carry out some of the proposed activities.

One of these actions had been the preparation of a Village Design Statement, by a working party chaired by Sir David Logan.

The council's report on the Parish Plan actions and an outline of the proposals in the Village Design Statement had been circulated for comment to every house in the parish before Christmas. In the light of comments received the Parish Council had approved the VDS at its January meeting, subject to final adjustments approved on 1 March. The VDS had been referred to Wychavon D.C. whose Development Control committee had forwarded to the Executive Board for final adoption on 22 March.

The Parish Plan had previously been adopted by Wychavon on 11 Jan 2011.

Both of these documents will now form Local Information Sources and are to be material considerations to the relevant departments of Wychavon DC.

In each case Wychavon commended the Steering Groups, the Parish council and residents for the preparation of these documents.

Andy Hull, the parish lengthsman, had given notice after a disagreement with Worcestershire County Highways. This was greatly regretted by all residents and I had tried unsuccessfully to persuade him to change his mind. The new Council will now have to consider finding a replacement.

The bad weather during last winter had shown us how much we needed someone to help with snow removal and it had been suggested to the council that we find a local farmer who could acquire the necessary machinery and contract with the PC to carry out this work. I have not so far found any one, but have hopes that it may be possible to make such an arrangement.

We had asked for an extra Grit Box to be installed near Daffurn's Orchard but were told by the County Council that not enough houses (50) would be served to meet its criteria.

We had examined the case for joining with other parishes in buying a Vehicle Activated Speed Camera. However it seemed likely that Worcestershire Highways might not let us install it, and councillor had been concerned about the cost.

We had responded to Worcestershire County Council's consultation about reducing bus services through the village. We argued that we needed a better service, rather than a reduced one.

KEMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

We have considered a number of planning applications. Two of these, Bardon House and Saltwood, were originally refused by Wychavon but revised versions of each were supported by the Parish Council and subsequently passed. The original application for Bardon House was subsequently approved after appeal. Six other applications were approved after there had been no major objection from the Parish Council.

The new localism bill is likely to affect the power and influence of the Parish Council, although we will have to wait for it to be enacted to see its full effect. This makes it particularly important to have a vigorous and engaged parish council and I would encourage anybody who has the time to stand for election. This is especially necessary because we are losing at least three of our present councillors who find that they cannot stand again. I would like to pay tribute to Cllrs Gordon Long, Martin Walker and Caroline Allen and to thank them for all the work they have put in to supporting the council. I would of course like to thank the other councillors who intend to carry on after May if they are elected, and to thank those of you who have come to this meeting.

8. Chairman of Victoria Hall Report.

My tenure as chairman so far has been interesting if not challenging since I believe I'm the first lady to take on this particular role here in Kemerton.

I am immensely pleased that our financial outlook is healthy thanks to the 2009 summer Fair, the 2010 Car Boot and the Grant from the PC. The income has allowed us to be able to repair the floor, swing doors, and fit a new double glazed window to the kitchen. There will also be enough money to fit secondary glazing to the Committee Room which is essential for all who use it. Thanks to wonderful volunteers our work party held in Oct 2010 was successful in that we were able to clear drains, gutters, over hanging trees and hedges. The memorial bench has been restored and so has the flag pole. I am hoping that the income from Kemerton Country Show of which we are truly thankful to Mr Darby, will allow us to purchase new modern heaters which in turn will lower our bills and to modernise and re- decorate the kitchen.

We are short in numbers on the committee despite numerous appeals however I am very pleased John Phillip will join as Treasurer at our AGM on 19th April.

As chairman I feel it is my duty to bring to the attention that the Village Hall is not as well patronized as it was years ago. It is common knowledge that most people agree the Hall is in the wrong place. To have a good community centre we need safe well lit parking spaces for the young and old. A new hall will bring in more revenue by producing many varied and interesting projects. It can provide a small Library, Coffee Shop/meeting place and a private room designated for the Police. There are many ways it can improve the lives of the community.

Although we have done all we can with our resources I fear the support in the future will reduce dramatically as happened a few months ago in that we had to cancel our Quiz Night. In some conversations I have had over the last 12 months with a number of villagers there is the feeling of wasted money spent on a building that is of little use. New people coming into the village have little choice open to them to meet other villagers. Unless we do something about it Kemerton will be left in the past while other villages thrive to the future. There is another aspect to consider in that our committee, although at the moment are happy to continue to raise money may also lose interest in the very near future. The Hall was recently valued for insurance purposes of £400,000. I was informed by the assessor that the site would be interesting to many developers.

I feel deeply that this important and social issue be considered carefully by all concerned without delay.

9. Questions from the Floor.

Mrs Latham.

Is the service in place of Social Services!

They often work together; social services are the providers of personal care.

Is there a cost!

Depends on your financial circumstances, funded by central government grants.

CSO Williams.

Are Cyclist required to have bells!

KEMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Simon will report back with answer!

Mrs Marsh.

Could the building be converted rather than rebuilt!

Committee will look into this!

Cllr Darby

Could you provide land for new Village hall!

I don't think I have anywhere suitable!

Concern regarding the light pollution at the new barn at Ashbury Farm.

Will look into the planning application and confer with notes taken at site meeting to see if they are in breach of use!