

The minutes of Kemerton Annual Parish Meeting held at the Victoria Hall on Tuesday 20TH March at 7.30pm.

Cllrs Mrs K Cartwright, Mr A Darby OBE (District), Mrs C Ford, Sir D Logan (Chair), Mr S Papacostantinou, Cllr Dr C Renfrew and Mr A Hardman (County), Mr and Mrs Long, Mrs A Marsh (Chairman of the Village Hall Committee), Mr P Truscott, Lady Logan, Mrs K Maber, Dr and Mrs Phillips, Mrs A Webb, Mr and Mrs Gill, Mrs D Attwell, Mr and Mrs Witt and Ms J Shields (Parish Clerk).

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from CSO S Williams and Mr and Mrs R Workman.

2. Minutes Of Annual Parish Meeting Held 15th March 2011

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

3. Report From CSO S Williams, West Mercia Police.

My apologies for not attending this evening, however I will be attending the Neighbourhood Watch meeting to be held on the 27th March.

Crime Figures: Kemerton Village

Burglary Dwelling - Four crimes reported

Burglary Non Dwelling - One crime reported

Theft - One crime reported

Vehicle Crime - Ten crimes recorded

Criminal Damage - One Crime recorded

This compares with 14 in the previous year.

As you can see there have been a few vehicle crimes. This has been down to people walking up the hill and leaving Handbags, and laptops on show.

4. County Councillor's Report.

Dear Councillors and Parishioners,

It has been a very difficult year for the County Council since as many of you know, I became Leader of the County Council some 18months ago in rather unexpected circumstances and this sorry tale has finally reached a conclusion but despite this, the County Council has made good progress with the new Corporate Plan, a new direction and a fresh approach to the problems that it faces. But against this positive news, the overwhelming issue at the County Council at the moment is managing the budget, since we have having to reduce our expenditure over the length of this period by in excess of £75m.

In the financial year that is just closing we have reduced our expenditure on target and in line with the plans that we laid out at the start of the year by some £30m and in the forthcoming year – year 2012-13, we will have to reduce our expenditure again by some £21m but we have been trying to do this through a relentless drive on efficiency, innovation and a desire not to see frontline services affected. I believe most strongly that we are able to do this by working differently and so I remain confident that Kemerton residents will have seen, despite lowering our budget by nearly 10% in the year, little change to the services that they have received in the past year and indeed hopefully, some improvement in them.

A key issue to the Parish and indeed to the Parish Council was the future of the 540 bus service and while not exactly running as it used to, we have been able to maintain a considerable level of service to and from Tewkesbury and indeed, a slight improvement because of course now the bus does go all the way through to Cheltenham and I am told that usage on this service has started to rise which is very good news. But I am aware that some residents are not keen to use the bus when the school children are on it in the early morning and coming back just after 4pm, but it does mean that the service gets much more usage and by integrating the two systems we have been able to save considerable sums of money, because we used to subsidise the bus services in the County to the tune of nearly £5m per year and now subsidise them to the tune of just over £2m per year. We have only had to withdraw service from some 24 routes across the County.

It has been a year when the Parish has received a considerable amount of road maintenance and I was pleased to see that the work the Parish Council had been lobbying for on Kinsham Lane was done to a reasonable standard with it being resurfaced and re top dressed so that is now a better road than it was before and the County Council has also been able to improve relay and re-curve the footway to Overbury so that school children now have a decent surface and hopefully improved safety when they walk to school during the summer months and I hope that those children from Kemerton that use this footway will appreciate it.

I am aware that we haven't resolved all the flooding issues in the village and we are continuing to work at this issue. I can reassure the Parish Council that the capital flood alleviation budget remains in place and we still have some £4m to spend on flood alleviation work around the County in due course. Major work will be starting in Overbury to improve the size of the culvert during the summer school holidays and I apologise for any delays that will occur while the road is closed to replace and resize this drain. It seems odd to be talking about flooding at a time of drought.

I was pleased that the Parish Council took up my offer of a grant to help provide it with a speed sign for the village and during the course of the year I look forward to seeing it in operation and applaud the County Council for their imaginative use of the New Homes Bonus.

I have worked closely with your District Councillor on the emerging Tewkesbury local plan, and I am concerned that this will have more impact on the infrastructure of the County than it will on Gloucestershire.

To close with I feel compelled to acknowledge that my attendance sadly this year has not been golden since I think I have managed to attend 40% of the meetings that I could have done. But I apologise since I find my time is more thinly spread than it used to be. Knowing the vagaries of politics it is entirely possible that normal service will be resumed sooner than I anticipate.

Yours as ever, Your County Councillor

Adrian Hardman

Q. Is it worth while commenting on large developments or are they forgone conclusions.

A. Yes it is worthwhile to comment, notice is taken from Parishioners. It is very important to distinguish between developer led and authority led (ie District Council) consultations.

5. District Councillor's Report.

As well as my responsibility for the villages in my South Bredon Hill Ward, I am the Council's Heritage Champion, covering both the built and natural heritage and am a member of the Planning Committee. I am also one of Wychavon's representatives on the Joint Advisory Panel which is

overseeing the preparation of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) by the three district authorities of Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon. As a Liberal Democrat in a Conservative controlled council I cannot sit on the Executive Board, but I am happy to say that my views are listened to.

My main concern over the past year has been with planning policy, both in response to the government's proposed National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and, at a local level, the development of the SWDP and Wychavon's response to the Cheltenham, Gloucester, Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (CGT-JCS).

NPPF

In July the government published a draft of its new planning policy framework for consultation. Wychavon had many problems with this. My particular concern was the sweeping away of national protection for all but the most highly designated heritage assets and for the wider countryside. I was involved in the drafting of our response in so far as it involved these issues.

SWDP

Most of you will have been aware of the public consultation on the Preferred Options for this plan which took place last autumn. The response was most impressive, with many more comments than was anticipated. As a result it has taken longer to process these than expected and the whole process has been set back six months. The revised version of the plan, taking account of the representations will be presented to the Councils in July, with further targeted partial consultation following that to cover any new proposals. The final version should be approved by the councils in October, although it has to undergo further scrutiny for soundness before it is actually submitted to the Secretary of State in Feb next year. After that it still has to be reviewed in a public hearing before being finally adopted at the end of 2013.

At the moment Wychavon is vulnerable to unwelcome planning applications which were not in the preferred options, such as that at Mitton Bank, because it cannot show that it has a five year housing land supply. The situation should be much better after October 2012 when the final version of the plan has been approved for submission, although we will not be entirely safe until the plan has completed all its stages a year later.

CGT-JCS

The Gloucestershire authorities have just carried out their own exercise. 'Developing the Preferred Option consultation Document 2011-20'. Wychavon and the other South Worcestershire Authorities have made a response to this, emphasizing the problems that development to the north of Tewkesbury and Ashchurch would have for the Worcestershire villages.

Kemerton planning

I requested a site visit into the application for hard standing at Ashbury Farm and referred it to committee, to give all parties a chance to express their views.

Localism and New Homes Bonus

Under the Localism Act neighbourhoods will be able to produce their own neighbourhood plans which will be able to overrule the local plan (the SWDP). However the procedure for this is likely to be long and expensive and Wychavon is trying to write into the SWDP flexibility to enable parishes to achieve more housing than the plan provides for if villages really want it. However it should be noted that a neighbourhood plan **cannot limit the amount of development to less than that provided in the local plan.**

The government is now paying part of its grant to local authorities in the form of a bonus for new homes occupied. Wychavon has agreed that its share should be divided with the Parish Council – and indeed Kemerton is already hoping to receive its first slice.

Finance

The district council approved its budget at its meeting of 21 February. There is to be no increase in Wychavon's council tax, and the government will compensate us by a special grant for one year only. This means that next year when we increase the council tax in line with inflation we will be doing so on a smaller base, with the result that in all future years there will be a permanent loss of income for which we will receive no central government compensation.

AMGD

6. Parish Council Report.

As the Council has four newly elected and a co opted member, the Chairman asked the Councillors to introduce themselves.

South Worcestershire Development Plan.

You have heard the District Councillors report, the Parish Council has commented in detail on it, which is available in the minutes of the meeting held on the 17th November.

Lengthsman.

The Council and indeed the parishioners are delighted that Andy Hull has resumed his Lengthsman duties, on a new contract of services, employed by the Parish Council. The Parish Council is still able to recuperate this cost under the County Council Lengthsman Scheme.

Planning Applications.

The Council has not received any controversial applications this year apart from Ashbury Farm. Wychavon approved the application for extended hard standing, although the Parish Council objected.

Ashbury Farm has been a concern of many parishioners and these concerns have been brought to the Council. The District Councillor and the Chairman met Wychavon Planning Enforcement Officer and the Chairman met the Overbury Estate Manager. Two useful visits have been carried out by Ms T Ainscough, the Environmental Health officer, most recently on the 1st March. It is the Chairman understanding that Mr G Hussell is sensitive to village concerns and aims to restore a good working relationship with the village.

The MOD have recently announced proposals for the redevelopment of Ashchurch Camp, which the Council will monitor closely, please note the consultation day on 29th March, 2-8pm at Northway Parish Office.

Speeding through the Village.

This is a longstanding issue; the Council is purchasing and installing its own side Vehicle Activated Speed Sign. The Parish Council is also looking into other measures such as 'white wooden gates' and planters at the entrances to the village.

Police

The parish is grateful to the work of CSO Simon Williams, however last year we were informed by West Mercia Constabulary that PC G Shepherd was to be detached for a six month period to Worcester City, to return in the Autumn, to date he has not returned. The Parish Council is in regular contact with West Mercia regarding his return, including inviting Inspector Kent to this evenings meeting.

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

The scheme is now up and running, a Village Meeting will take place on the 27th Of March; the Parish Council has made a modest contribution including the hire of the Village Hall.

Jubilee/Kemerton Show.

Kemerton plans to celebrate the Jubilee on the 2nd June, with a family event in Jobs Lane, this is being organised by a Committee chaired by Christina Darby.

The Kemerton Sow will coincide with a visit from the crew of HMS Kemerton on the 23rd June.

The Chairman thanked Martin and Karina Walker for their contribution to the Village on their retirement.

Q. How many signs are the Council buying.

A. One sign which will moved around the village, in positions approved by Highways.

Q. What will the sign say?

A. Slow Down.

7. Chairman of Victoria Hall Report.

The Country Show & Fair held on June 25th 2011 was a great success that enabled the purchase of new efficient heating and to refurbish the kitchen to a very good standard. We are especially pleased that 95 per cent of the work was carried out during the October Half Term thus resulting very little disruption to the Pre-School schedule.

With profits earned from the Country Show of June 23rd we hope to make further improvements to the hall. At present our thoughts include refurbishing the floor, interior painting and decorating, and improved outside lighting. Secondary glazing to the front elevation has been mentioned and interior door replacements to include a fire door for the committee room. A supplementary electric heater on the east wall of the hall has been discussed for use in extreme winter conditions. We noticed frost damage to one of the exterior stone pillars that will need restoration at some point. In order for this massive project to be completed and to allow for any mishaps, we will suspend any hiring of the hall during the school summer holidays.

The Chairman of the Parish Council Sir David Logan and I had an informal meeting early this year to discuss 2 queries. The first regarded Victoria Hall hire charges in relation to other neighbouring village halls. A second enquiry brought forward was that the Trustees of Victoria Hall have not organised many social events last year. As with all matters concerning Victoria Hall we give serious consideration to any issues brought forward.

Regarding the hire charges our Treasurer, Dr John Phillip and Secretary Beth Phillip, conducted a detailed and comprehensive survey of hire charges of neighbouring villages and reported our findings to Sir David Logan. The survey had shown that KVH is not the most expensive despite the lack of parking or bar facilities on offer at some establishments. Clients from surrounding areas have booked our hall including Conderton, Bredon, Bredon's Norton and Westmancote giving a clear indication that KVH had been their preferred location.

In 2009 our hire charges had been capped, and we see no reason to raise the charges in the near future. The Trustees concluded there is no justification to lower the existing hire charges.

Regarding the second enquiry, it is not the responsibility of the KVH committee to organise every function. Our mandate is to ensure the building be maintained to the best of our ability so that

anyone who wishes to use the facilities whether it be for social, private or public functions would be welcomed to do so. It is perhaps worth reminding ourselves that a Quiz Night planned by KVH some time ago was cancelled due to poor support. However, we have planned another Quiz Night for Friday October 12th and a Winter 200 club draw for Friday December 7th.

There has been an enormous amount of improvements already carried out over the last 2 years at Victoria Hall mainly due to hard work and enterprise supported by the KVH committee. In April, I will, if re-elected start my 3rd and final year as chairman and plan to remain as an ordinary member in 2013. Whatever the future brings, a village hall is a vital element in sustaining an ever changing community.

Mrs. Ann Marsh. Chairman.

Q. Mrs K Maber stated, as an Entertainments Committee is not part of the KVH remit, she would be happy to start one.

A. Mrs Marsh stated that the KVH would welcome this; however the hall would have to be paid for by the event.

The meeting agreed that the two would need to co operate with each other.

Q. Before spending large sums on the interior of the hall, would it be worth getting some professional advice on lowering the ceiling or making it more user friendly!

8. Questions from the Floor.

Q. Could Parish Councillor details be placed on the notice board.

A. The Council will pursue this.

Concerns were raised at the condition of some grass verges in the Parish, damage caused by vehicles. The council will address this issue at its next meeting.