

**KEMERTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT THE VICTORIA HALL ON TUESDAY
18th MARCH 2014 at 7.00PM**

Present

Cllr's Mrs K Cartwright, Mr A Darby OBE (District), Mrs C Ford (Chair), Sir D Logan, Dr C Renfrew and Mr A Hardman (County). Mr N Coleman, , Mr P Truscott, Lady Logan, Mrs D Attwell, Mrs Witt, Mr and Mrs Warner, Mr B Ford, Lys Hempstead, Mrs McLeish, Mr Yerburgh, Mr Davidson, Mr and Mrs Carver, Mr R Workman and Ms J Shields (Parish Clerk).

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Cllr's Mr S Papacostantinou, Mr R Withnall, and Mr and Mrs Long, Dr and Mrs Phillip, Mr Witt, Mrs J Workman and CSO J Pardoe.

2. Minutes Of Annual Parish Meeting Held 19th March 2013.

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

3. Report From CSO J Pardoe, West Mercia Police.

Just to let you know I will be going in to hospital tomorrow (if a bed is available!) for major surgery and will not be returning to work for a number of weeks, probably June at the earliest.

Please be assured that the area will still have coverage from Pc Sean Woods together with assistance from the Pershore Town PCSO's Dave James and Lucy Morris and of course response officers. I am told that there will also be a new member of staff arriving hopefully within the next 8 weeks once they have completed their training, who will be permanently allocated to the area.

Obviously during this period attendance at PC meetings will be very limited as we need to prioritise and deal with any criminal offences but be reassured that if there is anything major to report then one of the team should be in touch.

If any of you have any enquiries please email the team at pershorerural.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk and if there are any incidents or concerns to report please call 101 immediately.

4. County Councillor's Report.

Dear All

I am delighted to be able to be with you again this year but I am afraid to say that my attendance at your Parish Council meetings has been, even by the shoddy standards of previous years, at a new low level and I will endeavour to do better.

As I highlighted in the last report, the County Council has now reduced its spending by some £70m over the past three years but has managed to deliver improved services like raising the educational outcomes of our pupils and promoting more independence for older people. The budget reductions have led to us finding innovative solutions in our Early Help, Libraries, Outdoor Education Centres, reforming our Terms and Conditions and really improving our Social Care Transitions between the children we have in care and adulthood. We have also streamlined management over the past year by removing two layers of management and the number of management posts by 19% but this is an ongoing process. We have had

extensive engagement with residents and businesses and this has given us very clear priorities on which to focus which is caring for the most vulnerable both children's and in adults, trying to improve our road network and improving our environment. But to tackle the financial challenge we do have more change coming and we do have a plan.

Next year will see the County Council move to Strategic Commissioning of the majority of its services, this will mean the loss of up to 1500 directly employed jobs at the County Council and involve some £50m of spend and we do believe that by Commissioning intelligently we can ensure quality services and better outcomes. We still have £20m savings to be found by 2014-17 and I am determined that we don't lose our focus on the remaining £300m of budget that the Council has. It is vital that we change our skills and behaviours at County Hall while at the same time listening to all the things that the residents of Worcestershire, and indeed more importantly of Kemerton, say as they are important to us.

On a more local level, as part of the budget reductions we had a zero based budget review of bus subsidies and while the press have labelled this as being a U turn, we did not expect to be able to run a bus service in the County, mindful of our obligations under the 1985 transport act and our equality and diversity duties, without any subsidy at all. Due to the enormous response we received of nearly 9000 individual responses it has been necessary to delay the implementation of this while we consider the way forward, but there will be changes to the 540 service starting from September. But I expect the changes to be that we will probably no longer subsidise it to run through to Cheltenham and residents will have to change and we would probably lose some of the frequency in the middle of the day. I am keeping a very close eye on this. We have had a meeting of the cross authority Kemerton Flood Working Group but I suspect that our efforts have been slightly restricted by the way that management capacity has had to be directed into dealing with an extremely wet Autumn and Winter, which saw, for the first time in my memory, the Military being deployed inside the County. This was always going to be a long term piece of work for the Parish Council and ourselves but we remain committed to ensuring that flood mitigation remains close to our aims and objectives and the County Council has reinforced the budget for capital works for the next two years.

Highways Maintenance is always a popular topic with most correspondents but by and large apart from footway reconstruction, the roads in the Parish remain in reasonable fettle and I was delighted with the work that we were able to do last Spring/Summer on the Kemerton to Kinsham Road. While one resident did comment to me that I have created a better race track for some of the community!

I remain as always your obedient servant.

5. District Councillor's Report.

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 inspector did not start his examination until the autumn, and then threw back the whole plan to the three councils requiring them to look again at the housing numbers. This has now been done and we are awaiting the inspector's decision on what Wychavon needs to produce. We will certainly have to identify more sites which will entail more public consultation, with the result that we will have to wait at least another year before the plan is finalised. 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, until the new development boundaries are adopted under the SWDP. This means that the developments in Bredon on the Cheltenham Road at the Benshams and on the Tewkesbury Road at Chains Corner will be difficult to resist.

6. Parish Council Report.

(Chairman's report enc).

Q. Can the lengthsman be supplied with more equipment?

A. The lengthsman does all he can do within his remit and has the necessary equipment.

Q. Would it be possible to have a traffic Count.

A. The council has asked for one and is on the waiting list.

Q. Chicanes and speed bumps.

A. Street lighting is a requirement for both.

Q. Will the grass verge be cut in Church Lane.

A. Yes.

7. Chairman of Victoria Hall Report.

In April, 2013, Ann Marsh resigned as Chairman of the Board of Trustees and in January 2014 resigned from the Board. Her tireless efforts, over several years in office, ensured that the hall continued to provide a facility worthy of a vibrant community.

The Trustees elected John Phillip as chairman and Deb Manns as Treasurer. Di Atwell (Vice Chairman) and Beth Phillip (Secretary) continued in their roles. During the year Cathy Ford replaced Chris Renfrew as the representative of the Parish Council, Mary Yerburgh replaced Hilary Pennington as representative of the Women's Institute and Richard Bennett was co-opted to the committee as the representative of St Nicholas Parish Church.

The financial status of the charity remains healthy. As of February 2014, all accounts are well funded and the total cash in hand amounts to £12,081 with outstanding debts of £3,500. The 200 Club was fully subscribed and raised £1,000. A Village Fete, organised jointly with the Friends of St Nicholas Church, was very successful and raised £3,000, which was shared equally.

There were no major disbursements during the year but various upgrades were made to the electricity system, external lighting and committee room floor. A water heater was replaced in the male toilets. The committee agreed to upgrade access to the terrace and paddock at the rear of the building and, after the evaluation of competitive bids, awarded a contract for the work. The replacement of the notice board is in hand.

The committee has considered the possibility of extending the hall in order to better accommodate the space requirements of organisations wishing to use the hall and the Pre-school. Following consultations with architects and surveyors it concluded that a single-storey extension to the rear of the building would best satisfy requirements. Accordingly, a Pre-application will be submitted to the Planning Authority in the second quarter of the year seeking opinion and guidance. Given a favourable response, a plan will be offered to the community for consultation and feedback later in 2014.

John Phillip
Chairman

Mrs D Atwell read out the above report and also informed the parishioners of the Hall website which it is hoped others will contribute to Kemerton.org.uk.

8. Questions from the Floor.

See above.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.