

**CROPTHORNE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Monday 16th April 2012 in
Crowthorne and Charlton Village Hall at 7.30pm**

Present: R Annis (Chair) WDC Cllr T McDonald
T Meikle (Cllr) WCC Cllr E Eyre
M West (Cllr)
J King (Cllr)
E Stoodley (Cllr)
T Hardy (Cllr)

In Attendance: R J Coles (Clerk) 5 Parishioners

Copies of the Agenda, last year's minutes, the provisional Receipts & Payments Account for the year ended 31st March 2012 and John Ayliffe's charity report were available to all present.

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Apologies received from J Segar (Cllr), David & Su Miller, John Ayliffe and the Police Team.
3. The minutes from the meeting on 11th April 2011, were proposed for signing as a true record by Cllr West, seconded by Cllr Stoodley and agreed for Chair's signature.
4. As there were no matters arising from the minutes the meeting continued.
5. The clerk took the meeting through the 2011/12 Parish Council Accounts which are heavily affected by the near £100,000 projects being managed for the Sheppey. They reflect a decision taken a few years ago to return free balances to parishioners, with less than £200 remaining, which has now run its course. Cllr Stoodley proposed, seconded by Cllr Meikle, and the meeting agreed that these accounts were in line with expectations and would be put forward for internal/external audit and full adoption by the Parish Council in June.
6. Chair Annis reported that it had been a fairly busy year, especially for the clerk with management of the two large Sheppey play projects and the three parish meetings organised for the affordable housing planning application in Field Barn Lane, both of which are still underway. We have kept the precept down over previous years to reduce any free balances to a minimum; this will have to rise to reflect basic spending whilst any approved request for funds will have a direct bearing on any specific yearly precept. Planning in general has been slow reflecting the general construction economy nationwide. Once again we have to thank Cllr King in her role as Chair to the Village Hall/Sheppey especially for the on/off refurbishment of the Hall and Cllr Segar for raising considerable funding for a modernised Sheppey.
7. Hillary Hall, WCC Footpath Warden, reported that the paths in general were in a reasonable state with the exception of the Patty's Farm footpath through to the main road

mainly due to landowner ploughing and also a bridge, needing repair, and crooked style near the Carroll's stables. The new gate at Meikle's was a welcomed addition. Hillary indicated that due to advancing years she would have to step down from this position. Chair thanked her for her many years of service and a replacement will be advertised for using Five Alive.

The following report was filed by John Ayliffe on behalf of The Randolph Meakins Patty's Farm and the Widow Lyes Charity Annual Report 2011-2012:-

Unfortunately, this year the Charity lost the last original member of the Randolph Meakins Patty's Farm and the Widow Lyes charity with the very sad passing away earlier this year of Mary Elizabeth Blizard, 'Maime'.

Along with Gordon Cropper, Melville Hodges, Gwyneth Bearcroft, Iris Frost, Frank Mance, and Rose Cornell, Maime was at the formation of the trust since its inception in 1982. Over the years she was always at the forefront of the charity, as well as many other activities in the village. Her knowledge of the village and the village folk will be very hard to replace.

Over the past few years I have reported that the charity has also been affected by the financial problems throughout the world and as a small village charity it becomes harder to try and provide funding at the same level as previous years.

However, I am happy to report that with shrewd investments we have managed to achieve some stability despite the problems, and nearly maintain the level of funding as in recent years.

Over the past year we have again provided Tesco Christmas vouchers for senior citizens the main outlay has again been the senior citizens Christmas vouchers, which came to £1975.

We helped 13 students who were in full time higher education with grants for books etc. which came to £520. Also we provided funding of £400 for the junior school's Laptop project.

Welfare donations were £279 this year and it included small appropriate gifts to parishioners who were unfortunate to have been hospitalised and were convalescing at home.

This brings me on to an appeal to the parishioners of Crophorne.

For years the trustees have struggled to find out when parishioners have unfortunately been in hospital for a few days and we would ask if any one hears, or knows of someone who has had to go into hospital for a period of three days or more would they be good enough to inform the trustees please, so we can give them an appropriate gift, as it is becoming increasingly difficult to know when this happens.

People can contact any of the trustees, Sheila Smith, Sheila Castle, Megan Bruce, Garth Woods, Roger Hutchings, and John Ayliffe if there is any information.

To heighten the awareness of the Charity within Crophorne we will be also sending flyers out with the Five Alive and on notice boards to try and help.

Mr Harris, on behalf of the church wardens, reported that there was a delay in proceeding with the continued rebuilding of the church wall due mainly to funding, with current priority the modernisation of facilities at Fladbury. The next stage of the church wall

would be bigger as it would require partial closure of the road so it made sense to do as much as possible all at once giving a project cost of around £15k, recent Vat proposals on churches would prove a serious additional burden. There were some internal ways of manoeuvring funds around.

It was reported that Holland House would not be available for the Walkabout.

Cllr King, chair of Village Hall/Sheppey reported that it had been a busy year. There were now 7 trustees down from 12 but also a specialist of volunteers who did not want to be trustees also totalling 7 members. The Hall refurbishment finally finished at the end of July 2011 and snagging had almost been completed.

The defunct boiler and cost of oil had resulted in a ground source heating system being installed with first year running figures indicating a drop of expected costs of £3k to £1k with the new system. Additionally PV is being considered, finance permitting. Bookings are picking up and the website is up and running. One of the Lottery funding outcomes was for a village shop but lack of interest and volunteers had prevented any action. The Lottery has request that alternatives should be explored and this will be carried out in conjunction with the Parish Council in due course. Junior football, Swifts, is well supported but a 'match day buffet fund raising service' fell through due to lack of volunteers. The senior team, Anchor Harriers, continue to use the pitch on a fair rental basis. Parking and Anti-Social behaviour complaints had decline hopefully indicating an actual improvement. Volunteer mowing was working well apart from some stone issues with the new heating trenches. Signs preventing dogs off leads are to be introduced to protect the larger number of children using the Sheppey. Hedge removal had improved visibility and path usage. The final phase 3 of the Sheppey started today and includes steps, ramp, paths and lighting for the walkabout and a roundhouse. Two stolen skateboard metal ramps will not be replaced. Fund raising continues and the support of all is sought. There will be a barn dance September 15th and a quiz December 1st.

The Village Hall is prepared to offer its facilities free for any Jubilee weekend events, the only ones of which to date appear to be a Sunday Lunch at Holland House and a Saturday Churchyard Lunch which could require the hall if the weather is poor.

The Cycle Path from Jubilee Bridge to Charlton which has a possible three route are experiencing problems with each and is not expected in the near term though is still being considered.

There appears to be a specific speeding problem in Smokey Lane which will be leafleted by the police warning of the dangers of excessive speed on rural roads, pedestrians, children, horses, animals, farm vehicles etc.

WDC Cllr McDonald thanked the parish for its support. WDC had made major strides in reducing staff (now back to 1974 levels) and all costs in general. In line with cost cutting must be increased economic activity and the Worcester Bosch Technology Park at Junction 6/M5 is welcomed with jobs particularly for the young a priority. High technology farming is also being introduced in the area with hydroponics and anaerobic

digesters. Evesham bridge replacement traffic worries have been addresses for the expected 10 week closure next year. Evesham in particular is in a state of transformation (NOT DECLINE!) and initiatives on parking discounts, marketing, business grants and development are all underway to help the move into the future. Support for play areas in the three local villages will be added to by support of modernising facilities at Fladbury Church subject to future approvals.

- 8. The first round of new homes bonus totals £614 x 6 years £3684 and should the eight affordable houses go ahead a substantial additional bonus could be due thanks to WDC's countrywide leading initiative to share bonuses with Parish Councils.

Following the recent Affordable Housing exercise the Parish Council has concerns that unless there is a local (Localism Bill) initiative then continued inappropriate development with no upgraded infra-structure will only get worse particularly with reference to the main obvious area of the croft. Parishioners will have to face up to having to lead the action with all its implications or be subject to piecemeal applications continuing in the area.

- 9. WCC Cllr Eyre raised the issue of WCC trying to divest itself of non core assets/activities. This could affect Crophorne as all the countryside services are being looked at from the country park at WCC to the picnic area at Crophorne Jubilee bridge. The issue will be addressed by the Parish Council in consultation with parishioners starting with the Five Alive magazine.

Hillary Hall thanked the Parish Council for their efforts over the past year on behalf of parishioners.

As there was no further business raised Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.55pm

Signed: **Date:**

Chair