

Rous Lench and Radford Parish.

Draft minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 15th March 2010 at 7.30 pm in Rous Lench Village Hall.

Present: Mr. J. Whitfield (Chairman of the Parish Council), Mrs. N. Holland (Clerk to the Parish Council), PCSO Jenny Hawkins, County Cllr. Mr. Holt, District Cllr. Mr. Lee and 13 members of the public.

1. Welcome – the Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting,

2. Apologies: County Cllr. Mr. Holt, Dist. Cllr. Mrs. Steel, P C Tony Carter, Brian and Fran Herdman.

3. Minutes: of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 16th March 2009 were agreed as a true and accurate record and duly signed.

4. Matters arising: nil.

5. Roy Fullee, Highways Engineer from Worcestershire County Council gave a brief report on the conclusions of the Speed Monitoring Report carried out along the Alcester Road. The report shows that there is an issue that needs resolving. The County Council has no enforcement powers and resources are extremely limited. There are engineering solutions such as speed humps but this is a high cost and adequate signs and lighting would be required. Vehicle Activated Signage can be used to highlight the speed of the vehicle.

Q. Excessive traffic is travelling through the Parish. Are the Police involved?

A. Speed monitoring through the Parish can be carried out by the Police.

Q. Concerns over parking around The Green and cars that park on footways.

A. Parking in the road causes a safety issue. Suggest that perhaps the speed limit close to 'The Green' be 20mph. County Cllr. would need to be involved to get the speed limit reduced as a Traffic Regulation Order would be required. There is a speed limit review being carried out on A, B and C class roads. There is no accident history in the vicinity. Parking on a footway is an obstruction. The Police would have to be notified.

Q. What would make drivers slow down?

A. If money was available engineering works but very often rural communities do not want to be urbanised. Other suggestions would be welcome signs and insertion of gates to show that drivers are entering a village area. Highways will consider a project but it needs to be consistent with policy and in agreement with the County Council.

Q. Can the Parish Council carry out the work?

A. The highways authority would still have to be consulted. The County Council is governed by legislation and restrictions are only out on roads that have a record of a speed related accident. Speed cameras would not be considered unless there is sufficient accident history i.e. a black spot.

Q. Following the bad winter weather and the resources put on the County Council would like to thank the highways department on dealing with the problems of potholes. Why can they not be mended more efficiently?

A. 99% of work carried out by the contractors is of a good standard. Some are not filled in correctly. Two methods to repair them are used.

- Reactive pothole repairs to make the road safe. An Inspector will visit and decide whether further planned work is required. Due to the freezing weather funding has had to be directed from other projects, already dealing with a reduced budget.

- This year 6 -7 extra gangs have been employed to deal with potholes.

Q. What is the policy for gritting in the Parish?

A. 'A' class roads are dealt with on average 6 times a night. 'B' and 'C' class roads are then dealt with, unclassified roads are not gritted. Highways Department are at present carrying out a grit assessment programme over the summer programme. There have already been over 400 requests for grit bins. Residents do abuse the system by placing them on their driveways.

Q. Problems with ditches at Court Hill and water running off roads along the Ab Lench Road.

A. Will arrange for them to be inspected and perhaps get the Parish Lengthsman involved.

Mr Fullee was thanked for attending and was asked to thank the highways department for the work completed

Rous Lench and Radford Parish.

along the Alcester Road.

5. Parish Council – The Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr. Whitfield gave the following report:

The Parish Council comprises 7 elected members and is supported by our Clerk, Nicky Holland, who does a very thorough and professional job for us. This year Cllr. Mr. Dufty resigned and was replaced by the co-option of Mrs Marsha Fernihough in May 2009. I was elected Chairman in May 2009 replacing Cllr. Mr. Dudley who had led the Parish Council very successfully for many years.

The Parish Council has sat for six full meetings, two special meetings and two planning meetings during the last year. We have dealt with a wide range of issues, many of which are long-standing and will take some time to resolve. These are just a few of them:

We have renewed our contract with the Parish Lengthsman who amongst other duties has maintained grips and gullies. I believe that this work has reduced the amount of surface water on our roads during heavy rain. If you know of any work that can and should be done by the Lengthsman please contact Nicky.

Flooding at Radford however remains an issue. Although some excellent work has been done, an excellent survey by the District Council has concluded that the reopening of covered and culverted ditches is the only action likely to reduce flooding in the long term.

The Parish Council remains concerned about the speed of vehicles driving through the Parish. The Police have assisted by having several sessions with the hand held radar. We will also be having vehicle activated signage for a period during 2010 in order to help assess its effectiveness.

Last year the Parish Council initiated a survey to identify specific housing needs within the Parish. The survey was conducted by Nigel Potter, Rural Housing Enabler and a report presented to the Parish Council. The report identified potential housing needs within the Parish. The Parish Council has not yet adopted this report and is currently exploring the experiences of other Parish Council's who have taken this route.

Lastly I would like to extend a warm welcome to any Parishioner who would like to attend our meetings. The meetings are normally held on the third Monday of January, March, May, July, September and November in the Village Hall commencing at 7.30pm. Time is allocated at the discretion of the Chairman at the start of the meeting for Parishioners to give their views and ask questions. We hope to see you at future meetings.

6. PCSO Jenny Hawkins:

- Both Tony and Jenny are training on the use of speed cameras so they can carry out enforcement.
- Both are in attendance in a mobile unit every Wednesday between 12 MD to 1pm in Inkberrow.
- Crime is relatively low, advised to remain vigilant and report any suspicious vehicles.
- Parking on the footway will be monitored.

7. Church Lench First School: Mrs. Freer introduced herself as the new head teacher to the school. She has been at the school for the past 9 weeks; there are 60 children who attend. Rev. Thorniley visits the children on a regular basis. She has received a lot of help from Worcestershire County Council, visited the Pre School group and is planning to visit St. Egwins Middle School. Various club activities take place e.g. Art, Netball, Tri golf, singing at lunch times and after school swimming classes take place on a Friday, cycling proficiency and many more. School Nurse has "drop in sessions" for parents. The school has also collected money for donation to the Haiti appeal and for Sports Relief.

8. County and Dist. Cllrs. reports:

Report read out on behalf of County Cllr. Mr. Holt:

- Budget for the County has been agreed with an increase in the Council Tax element of 2.5%.
More cuts have been thrust upon the Council by Government especially in regard to adult services.
BOLD (Better Outcomes Leaner Delivery) is a group that will be looking at the way processes work in order to get the best out of the Council.
- Cuts in spending will commence in 2011. 45 million will be cut over the three year period.
- The County Council have joined with the District Councils to form WETT shared services programme. (Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tiers).

Rous Lench and Radford Parish.

- Regulatory services to include Trading Standards, Licensing and Environmental Health from the County Council will be the first to be joined together with District Councils departments to save costs. They will be based in Bromsgrove; this will be in place sometime this year.
- Potholes are a problem at the moment following the severe winter weather. Please inform the Clerk if you notice any.

Dist. Cllr. Mr. Lee reported:

- Council of the year in 2008, second nationwide in 2009.
- Wheelie Bins have been in service, 43% of the District has recyclable bins.
- New Evesham Leisure Centre opened.
- Wychavon District has the lowest Band D Council Tax charge in the County.
- Increase in revenues has been increased due to research into the number of people claiming single occupancy falsely, over 1200 properties involved.

9. Village Hall Committee report: read out by the Chairman.

Another busy and successful year for the Village Hall which remains at the centre of the community, providing a much needed place for residents to meet.

Main achievements this year:

- Paid off loan for refurbishment works a year early.
- Held several successful fund raising events including quizzes, Xmas Ball, Shindig events which bring arts to rural areas and are very popular with all age groups.
- Continued improvements to the Village Hall e.g. window blinds fitted, porch floor tiled, dishwasher, fridge and freezer installed in the Kitchen, notice boards fitted.
- Increased hire of the Hall for parties/events by local residents reflecting the improvements made to the Hall.
- Keep fit class started.

10. Parish Paths Warden: Mrs. Jones reported that all paths are in reasonably good order. Four stiles have been reported to the Countryside Services for repair.

11. Parochial Church Council: Mrs Wild gave a report on behalf of the Parochial Church Council:

Our Church has had a busy and productive year:

You will have noticed that the Ann Pearce memorial gate is now in place and looks splendid.

We have had a generous allowance of £200 from the Parish Council towards the upkeep of the churchyard. Also, after heavy rainstorms last year, we were given £1000 flood damage towards the repair of the church path. For this we are grateful.

During the year we have had a charity box in the church and have made several donations to the "Caring Hands" appeal in Evesham for the homeless.

The church is constantly in need of funds towards its upkeep, and a fund raising evening garden party generously given by John and Flavia Philips raised £800. The Flower Festival in June was well attended and appreciated by many visitors. Carol singing on the Green (Actually in the Village Hall due to inclement weather) raised a little more money and was well attended.

The monthly lay-led Family services have continued to be very well attended and villagers participate with prayers, readings and musical contributions. In January we were fortunate to have a representative from the Children's Society come to speak to us and help each child make a Christingle candle. Many stay for refreshments after the service and children as well as adults, get to know each other by socialising informally.

The monthly coffee mornings continue to be popular also, especially in the cold winter months when we can sit round the log fire and catch up on the news. The raffle held at a card-making evening run by Tracy Brown here in the Village Hall, paid our heating bill for these winter months. I believe half of the money raised at this evening was donated to the church.

We now have a "Key Rota" which enables the church to be open every day. If by any chance you should find it

Rous Lench and Radford Parish.

locked there is a key kept at Holly Cottage on a permanent basis.
The PCC would like to thank all those involved in keeping these church activities running so efficiently.

12. Lenches Sports & Recreation Club: no one in attendance.

13. Matters raised by Parishioners:

Q. Asked why a notice for the Annual Parish meeting was not out in the Arch Messenger last year?

Q. It was asked if another Litter Bin could be sited by the old Post Office and a further one by the Notice Board.

Q. Litter along the roads in the Parish. A Litter Pick can be carried out voluntarily in the Parish.

The Chairman thanked all the speakers and parishioners' for attending.

Meeting declared closed at 8.56 pm.