

Rous Lench and Radford Parish.

Draft minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 23rd March 2015 at 7.33 pm in Rous Lench Village Hall.

Present: Mr. C. Dudley (Chairman of the Parish Council), Mrs. N. Holland (Clerk to the Parish Council), Mr. D. Ernest, Dist. Cllr. Mrs. Steel, and 7 parishioners.

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

2. Apologies: County Cllr. Mr. Holt, Dist. Cllr. Mr. Lee, PC T. Carter, PCSO Kathryn Fellowes, Mr. Herdman (Village Hall Committee), Mrs. Fernihough, Ann Freer (Head of Church Lench First School), and Mr. D. Knight (Footpath Warden).

3. Minutes: of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 19th May 2014 were signed as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters arising: Nil.

5. Parish Council: Cllr. Mr. Dudley, Chairman of the Parish Council, gave the following report:

The Parish Council holds 6 scheduled meetings each year for general business and has additional meetings when planning applications are submitted.

It has been a quiet year in the village this year. Speeding remains an issue. Dave Perridge from Safer Roads Partnership attended one of our meetings and gave a presentation, which was informative. We have also had several enforcement checks.

The Annual parish meeting is earlier this year because of the elections in May. The Parish is looking for new councillors so if you are interested in standing please ask Nicky for the appropriate forms.

The Village Green is always kept mown and well cared for and I would like to thank David Knight for once again organising the mowing rota.

I would like to offer my thanks to the parish councillors for all the hard work that each of them put into the village. This is of course done voluntarily and we are lucky to have a Council who feel passionately about the village.

Finally my thanks to Nicky our clerk who is a real asset to the Parish Council and even manages to keep me organised most of the time.

6. Police report: Email received – no incidents to report.

7. Superfast Broadband: Mr. Ernest reported:

For the past 2 years superfast broadband is being put in place in Worcestershire. The area in Rous Lench is not scheduled for any work.

The current situation is as follows:

- Government set targets for Worcestershire for 90% of the area to have superfast broadband by the end of 2016, 95% by 2017.
- The remainder 5% - it is not known what will happen to those areas. Important graded lines have been updated along with Exchanges at Peopleton and Upton Snodsbury, and to parts of the supply from Radford and Harvington from the green junction boxes.
- Meetings have been held with the County Council, Communities Minister. 5% additional funding has been made available. 5 megabytes should be the normal speed.

Should know within the next 2 years what is happening in this area, options available are likely to be:

1. Cabling.
2. Satellite service.
3. Microwave service, similar to EE, trials taken place.

If the residents are allowed a say would recommend that you go for cabling.

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8. Church Lench First School: email report received:

Church Lench is a small first school, with Reception to Year 5 children, in the heart of a small village. It serves a wider community of hamlets. Of the 70 pupils on role, the majority are white British; 8.6% being from local traveller families; 27% (19/70) of the children are on the SEN register; 37% (7/19) of the SEN list did not start at the school in September of their Year R; 8.6% (6/70) of the children are either LAC or adopted and another child is due to start in Jan 2015, which will make 9.8%. The present Headteacher has been in post since January 2010. Presently, Church Lench is a good school with many outstanding aspects. Strong Christian values underpin the work of the school. This has a profound influence on pupil's personal development and good behaviour. There are 3 classes in the school: Reception/Year 1, Years 2/3, and Years 4/5.

KEY STRENGTHS:

- All staff safeguarding and educational visit training is up to date.
- First aider training is up to date.
- A new teacher has been appointed for Years 4/5, 2 new teaching assistants for Early Years and 2 new dinner supervisors (due to retirement and reorganisation)
- UIFSM (Universal Free School Meal) money has been used to purchase new dining tables
- Relationships in the school are very positive and both staff and children show high levels of care and consideration for each other.
- Children demonstrate an excellent ability
- SEND (Special Educational Needs) intervention groups are specific and targeted
- All children enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in the high levels of attendance (96.8% 1.9.14 to 9.11.14). Whole year attendance 1.9.13-31.8.14 was 94.4%. White British was 96.5% and Gypsy/Roma 75.5%. The Gypsy/Roma girl, who had an attachment disorder, is now happily attending full time school without her parent.
- The Head Teacher has made a good evaluation of the school and together with subject leaders, has written a focused SDP (School Development Plan) which shows what needs to be done to move it from "Good" to maintain the "Outstanding".
- Children are happy, safe and well motivated.
- The teaching is at least consistently "Good", and there are examples of 'Outstanding' practice.
- Whilst pupils find the curriculum engaging, the school has recently audited the curriculum to inspire, motivate and enthuse the pupils to higher levels of achievement within the new 'National Curriculum' (September 2013).
- Behaviour is exemplary now, but it has taken input from the Behaviour Support Team to work with two individuals. They have been brilliant! Many of the recent new children have needed input from us to help them with anger management and other problems.
- ICT hardware has been updated with a new server, laptops and ipads. Staff and children now have up to date equipment to work with.
- Updated website
- Moderation of EYFS and KS1 were 100% accurate.
- New pupil progress tracking system purchased
- Music lessons provided by WYM (Worcestershire Youth Music) for flute, violin, clarinet and oboe, which take place weekly.
- Funding, which is about £3k to £4K per year from the PTA known as 'Church Lench School Friends', helps the school greatly, and has been used recently to purchase a new stage, mobile CD player and sound system in the Hall.
- The school provides hot meals at lunchtime and also a small Breakfast Club.
- Out of hours activity clubs include cookery, tennis, multiskills and Imagineering. Lunchtime clubs have included gardening, knitting and sewing.
- Learning outside the classroom takes place at the nearby Forest School and in the school grounds. A bi-annual residential takes place at Malvern or Kingswood Outdoor Centre.
- There are many links and events organised with other schools in the 'Cluster'.
- The Head Teacher organises the Governors to visit the school during the school day as 'Governor of the month'.
- Reverend Richard (also an active and supportive governor), together with Reverend Steve, visit fortnightly to take Collective Worship using 'Open the Book' with the children and Staff, in Church.

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- Policies continue to be reviewed on a three yearly and annual cycle.
- There is a good link with Birmingham City University and Worcester University and the school enjoys having the benefit of working with their students.
- Our global link is with Dumila Primary in Tanzania and this is mainly through St Egwin's Middle School, who brings the teachers here to visit.
- Other charity work includes 'Children in Need', 'Red Nose day', 'Chernobyl 2000' and 'Caring Hands'
- There is an active School Council, Eco-Council and Children's Church Council.
- The children have grown their own vegetables this year and these have been given to the school cook to use in our dinners
- Excellent community links, which is presently organising a 'Lunch Club' for elderly residents to join us. Up to 20 elderly local people will join us for lunch and this will be fortnightly.
- French is taught from Year 2 to Year 5.
- Strong and flexible links with Church Lench Pre-School. The Headteacher attends all the meetings and Pre-school use our ground for Forest School and Sport's Day. The school would like to help run the Pre-school eventually.
- Attendance at Parent Consultation meetings have been 100%
- The school is presently in the process of joining the Prince Henry's Multi Academy Trust and become an Academy in September 2015

9. County and Dist. Cllrs. reports:

Dist. Cllr. Mrs. Steel - reported:

Has been mainly quiet throughout the year.

Would like to thank Cllr. Mr. Lee for all his support over the years.

Mr. Wilkinson is in the audience tonight, he will be standing for a Dist. Cllr. post in the May elections.

10. Village Hall Committee report: Mrs. White read the following report:

The village hall is in very good shape.

After 10 years of focussed fundraising and improvements the Committee is delighted to report that we are on the last leg of our journey to create a community venue capable of providing facilities for many different uses.

To remind the Council, 10 years ago the village hall was run down, cold, unused (other than the few events that the committee hosted to gather basic running costs) and talk of closure was in the air.

After 10 years, raising around £250,000 along the way we have a beautifully restored, functional gothic Victorian hall for the whole community, which is actively supported because it is a really nice place to come to.

In headline terms,

1. The roof is new
2. All the windows and doors have been sympathetically replaced with hardwood double glazed ones identical to the originals.
3. The heating has been changed, upgraded with a new external boiler and zoned to heat areas effectively.
4. Disabled access is easy.
5. Lighting has been changed to create atmosphere.
6. Carpets renewed
7. A new walkway from the main hall to the bar area.
8. Industrial standard kitchen equipment.
9. Various plumbing improvements to safeguard the hall from flooding
10. Fully Insulated.
11. Completely refurbished toilet area and the creation of a disabled toilet.
12. Completely redecorated.
13. New furniture in the bar area.

I would also wish to thank the Parish Council for various grants provided over the years which have helped the improvement programme immensely.

The bank account is also healthy which is a direct result of the greater use being made by the village and visitors to the village and the committee has become a "well oiled machine" when it comes to organisation and delivery

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of events.

The team is now engaged in grant preparation for the final stage of this phase of the hall's life, ready to hand it over to the next team in fine fettle for the future.

So, the last phase will deal with:

1. The creation of an external storage facility – already in hand.
2. A completely new and re-equipped kitchen.
3. Professional sound and lighting equipment including a HD quality projector.
4. A new LPG burner in the bar area and some more furniture

Plans for future events will continue to meet our original objectives which were to provide high quality and diverse experiences for the whole community and the hall is now viewed as a core venue for the wonderful events brought to us by Live and Local and, of course, GLADS.

Our ability to network with other local venues and work together to ensure that events do not overlap has also improved choice for the wider community.

My personal thanks go to all my colleagues on the Committee, who I hope will continue to work together to bring the objectives we set to a very satisfactory conclusion.

11. Parish Paths Warden: Mr. Knight submitted a written report which was read out:

The summer of 2014 and the following winter have, so far as public paths are concerned, been largely uneventful. Most of the work required has involved the clearing of bramble and briar from the sixty or so stiles and hand gates on our 17 kilometres of paths and the replacement of waymarkers. These tasks have been eased considerably by the increased usage of the paths as walkers and riders to some extent clear their own passage. (I know several walkers who routinely carry secateurs). Most farm hedges are now flail trimmed which did lead to the destruction of a number of the roadside finger posts but since the County Access Team has responded to request to replace the old wooden signs with metal ones, we have lost far fewer of them to flail cutters.

I am pleased to report that the troublesome Handgate on path 527, the Wychavon Way leading NE from the Ab Lench Road, finally broke altogether and has been replaced.

The deep ditch at the Bishampton Road, end of path 532 continues to worry me but no-one complained of falling in so far and a new growth of blackthorn has begun to form a neutral deterrent.

In one or tow places the overgrowth of domestic (garden) hedges has encroached on paths. I regret that I have not been able to see everyone concerned but hope that the spring gardening season will solve the problems anyway. If you are the proud owner of a thriving hedge alongside a footpath, please can you cut it back.

The only other unresolved problem concerns the point where paths 513 and 536 cross the Kington boundary or, more accurately, do not do so because there is neither gate or stile to be found. I think this is a problem for the county Access Team, and have spoken to our area officer about it on one of the useful drop-in days provided for P.P.W.

Meanwhile all the other paths remain safely passable and I hope continue to provide a pleasant and healthy local amenity.

12. Parochial Church Council: no report received.

13. Tree Warden: no report received.

14. Matters raised by Parishioners: Nil.

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

Meeting declared closed at 7.45 pm.