



**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
held at 8.00pm on Wednesday 9 May
2012 at the Friends' Meeting House,
Sandhills Road, Barnt Green**



The Meeting was chaired by Mr John Jagger, Chairman of the Parish Council, and was attended by 20 residents of the parish. District Councillors Deeming and Dudley were also in attendance.

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed those present and thanked them for attending.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Susan Whitehand and from Jan and David Southall.

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 4th May 2011

These were read out at the Meeting and approved by those present as a true record. They were signed by the Chairman.

4. Report of the Chairman of the Parish Council

The Chairman reported on the activities of the Council during the last 12 months and its aims for the forthcoming year. These can be found in the Chairman's Overview section of the Annual Report. The main features were the election of three new Councillors in May 2011; the retirement of Cllrs Diane Carr and Tom Gray whom the Chairman thanked for their years of service to the Parish Council; the campaign against the development of housing on the site on Fiery Hill Road; the eviction on two occasions of travellers from the Bittell Road playing field; and the extremely successful Sport Relief Mile held in March 2012 which was organised by Cllr Hotham and the Barnt Green Chuggers whom the Chairman thanked for their hard work.

The Chairman advised the meeting that the Council's Executive Officer, Roger Westbury, would be retiring at the end of May 2012 after seven years' service to the Parish Council. He thanked Roger for his hard work and advice over those years and confirmed that the Council had appointed Paul MacLachlan to replace Roger with effect from June 1st.

5. Financial Report of the Parish Council

The accounts for the financial year 2011-12 were circulated at the meeting. The Parish Council's Responsible Finance Officer, Roger Westbury, explained the reasons for any significant variances between the figures for 2010-11 and 2011-12. The Parish Council had reduced its reserves during the year to around £59,300 and had confirmed its target of having at least one year's precept (currently £56,000) as a prudent minimum figure for its reserves. In view of the prevailing low interest levels available on deposit accounts, the Parish Council had continued with its investment of £45,000 in short term bonds in Lloyds TSB. Principal items of non-recurring expenditure were the costs of holding the elections in May 2011; legal costs associated with the eviction of travellers; donations to charities made from income from the Barnt Green Festival; the cost of engaging a panning consultant to advise on the Fiery Hill Road development and the purchase of commemorative Queen's Diamond Jubilee mugs for every household in the Parish.



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6. Questions on the Reports

Former District Cllr Brain Fuller informed the meeting that Bromsgrove District Council had been given conflicting advice when designating the land on Fiery Hill Road in 2004 as a result of which the District Council had spent £50,000 in trying to keep the land as green belt. He stated that the Parish Council needed to define a policy relating to land owned by British Telecommunications at the rear of the Tesco block of shops on Hewell Road and that this should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan for Barnt Green.

In response to a question regarding the purchase of commemorative Queen's Diamond Jubilee mugs, the Chairman stated that there had been some minimal opposition to this decision, but much support in favour of it. It was a unanimous decision of the Parish Council to purchase the mugs as it was felt that residents would treasure such a gift and that it would be a lasting reminder of a significant historical event.

7. Neighbourhood Plan

The Chairman advised that an initial meeting had been held with Ruth Bamford, Head of Planning at Bromsgrove District Council, to discuss the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Barnt Green. The meeting had concluded that the first priority was to define the area to be covered by the Plan and then to set up a working group to represent the diverse interests in the Parish. The Group would gather information and draft the Plan. The Chairman stressed that a Neighbourhood Plan is primarily a Development Plan although infrastructure and amenities issues could also be covered. He estimated that it would take 18-24 months to draft a plan which would then be submitted to the District Council for adoption as part of their Core Strategy. Cllr Whitehand would lead for the Parish Council on this. Simon Gompertz informed the meeting that a recent survey of traffic on Bittell Road had shown an average volume of 4237 vehicles per day using the road, of whom 1 in 6 or 7 had been shown to be exceeding the speed limit. This statistic could be included in the Neighbourhood Plan to support a call for traffic calming measures on Bittell Road, although Brian Fuller said that in his experience the figure was not high enough to justify such measures.

8. Any Other Issues

Mrs Joy Anchor advised the meeting that the property at 26 Sandhills Lane had been empty for 15 years and was in a bad state of repair. Despite correspondence with our MP Sajid Javid and Kevin Dicks, chief executive of Bromsgrove District Council, no action had been taken. District Cllr Richard Deeming promised to look into this matter and to report back to Mrs Anchor and the Parish Council.

9. Close of Meeting

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.55pm and those present were invited to collect their Queen's Diamond Jubilee mugs.

John Jagger
8 May 2013