

SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

20th MAY 2013 at 7.30 pm in Suckley Village Hall

Present: 34 electorate, 7 Parish Councillors,
Sarah Ransome Williams – West Mercia Police
Co Cllr Paul Tuthill, Dist Cllr Anthony Warburton

In Attendance: Mrs Diana Taylor, Clerk

The Chairman, Cllr A W Huband welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies: District Cllr D Hughes, Parish Cllrs Peter Whatley and
Liz Devenish. Mrs Rosemary Harward, Mr Matt Meckin (Head
Teacher Suckley School), Mr A G Duncan, Mr A Holmes,
Mrs B Price, Mrs J Hammond

Suckley Primary School - Cllr Barry Kearley gave a report to the meeting sent in by Mr Matt Meckin. The School was continuing to flourish, with 70 children on the roll at the moment, increasing to 82 children in September. There will be 13 new reception children starting in September which will be the largest intake ever known. The forecast for 2015 is 85 children. The building work for the construction of a new classroom was nearly finished, secured by a grant of £250,000 from the Department of Education. This will mean that the school will be able to cope with the increasing number of pupils and put it in a very secure place for the future. The School “Real Life” curriculum, based upon practising skills to help pupils in real life, was going from strength to strength. Projects included securing sponsorship to make mini beast top trump cards, (sold to other local schools); the creation of a huge model of the Titanic and science experiments. Art has been a real focus in the school with artists visiting the school to work with the staff and children. Each child produced a felt leaf which contributed to a life size model tree in the school reception area. Mr Bancroft continues to attain very high standards with the children in violin playing, with the children winning a music competition in Herefordshire. The school football team finished 2nd in the District League and the netball team were crowned champions. The school tag rugby team reached the quarter finals of the county tournament competing with over 40 teams. They played brilliantly and looked incredibly smart in their new rugby kit sponsored by Mr & Mrs Griffiths. A recent Ofsted report recorded the School as “Outstanding.”

County Councillor’s Report - The newly elected County Councillor Paul Tuthill introduced himself to the meeting. As the elections were so recent, he was still finding his way, but should there be any problems he could help with, he would be pleased to hear from parishioners. The main problem area brought to his attention by a number of residents was that of potholes, and the very low standard of workmanship in repairing them. Potholes had been filled in, but in a very short space of time needed to be refilled.

Co Cllr Paul Tuthill agreed that this was a county wide problem, but it was basically down to budget cuts in Highways and many other departments. He and other County Councillors would be looking at ways and means of delivering a better service despite less funding.

District Councillors - Dist Cllr Anthony Warburton reported on the South Worcestershire Development Plan which set out building development over the next 25 years. He voiced his opposition to the Joint Core Strategy which had been agreed between Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District Councils, as without infrastructure improvements this development would be a catastrophe in his view. Further hearings would be taking place and he would be challenging the decisions made. He had also opposed the introduction of wheelie bins in the Malvern Hills area, especially in the way this scheme had been pushed through. Because of this, he had now resigned from the Conservative Group.

Chairman's Report - this report, covering the work of the Council over the previous 12 months, was circulated to all present.

West Mercia Police - Sarah Ransome Williams reported that there had been a slight increase in reported crime during 2012/13, but Suckley remained a very low crime area. The situation regarding Police cover was changing, with CSO's having to re-apply for their jobs together with a general reduction in personnel. However, the aim would be to respond within the hour for burglary offences and other serious incidents. Unfortunately, the police cars did not have sat navs and sometimes found it difficult to find exact locations in a rural area they may not be familiar with.

Community Group & Plan - Cllr Andrew Grieve reported that the Community Group/Plan was continuing to develop. Main achievements in the year were the Suckley Newsletter (now self financing), the Health & Wellbeing Group (including the Good Neighbour Scheme) and the very successful Jubilee Celebrations in June 2012. A Parish Survey had been carried out to find out what the community felt was important for the Parish Council to support. The findings revealed that the main areas were - the Post Office/Shop, Improved Broadband, Footpaths, Facilities for children in the village. The Parish Community Plan Group was working behind the scenes to look at localism initiatives, but would be looking for direct involvement from people in the parish.

Good Neighbour Scheme - Cllr Anne Lewis reported on the success and popularity of this scheme, with 19 calls over the last 12 months, mainly transport problems, form filling and care advice. Plans were in hand to link up with St Richards Hospice to help with visiting and transport, and to develop the Good Neighbour website. Thanks were due to the Parish Council for their part in funding the scheme.

Heart Start - Cllr Anne Lewis also reported on the possibility of installing a defibrillator at a suitable location within the village. An organisation called HeartStart was prepared to give their time and resources free to train up volunteers in the use of the defibrillator, but we needed 10-12 volunteers. A team from Defford was also prepared to come and train up anyone who was interested in basic first aid skills and resuscitation skills. The cost of the defibrillator would be in the region of £1,400.

REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS & TRUSTS

Footpath Wardens - Mr Richard Harward reported on the work of the Footpath Team of Harward and Markins. The chief occupation of the year had been clearing windblown trees which had been blocking the Worcestershire Way. Some of these trees were potentially dangerous and would be seeking help in locating the owners of woods in the area so that action can be arranged. A new bridge had recently been built replacing the old plank one which crosses the brook forming the boundary between Joe Roper's over House Farm and John Lewis' Low Yearsett farm. The Chairman thanked Mr Harward and Mr Markins for all their hard work and commitment to keeping the footpaths open for local people and walkers visiting the area.

Suckley History Society - Cllr Andrew Grieve reported that the History Society had closed down a couple of years ago, but had been reformed last year. Since then it had been steadily growing, with a programme of visits and talks concerned with local history. These included the Local Railway, Population Change in the County, Suckley School, a visit to Worcester Hive. Future Events – a field trip to The Gaynes, Evolution of housing over the last 300 years, History of hopfarming at Stocks Farm. Everyone was welcome to come along to meetings which are open to non-members. Details of all meetings could be found in the Suckley Newsletter and the Sphere.

Suckley Church & P.C.C. - The Revd Andrew Bullock reported growing numbers of attendance at family, young children and Songs of Praise services in the Church. The Community Choir was also flourishing. Links with the School were also very good, and he felt it was important to invite the school into the church. The Palm Sunday Service was enhanced by the donkeys plodding through the snow and ice to the church. Cllr Anne Lewis reminded the meeting that the church needed a cleaner plus volunteers to wind the church clock. The SPACE Spring Newsletter had been distributed throughout the parish, showing revised plans for the use of the building.

Suckley Playing Fields - Cllr Carol Luton reported that football was now back on the Agenda with a programme of training days for children. Unfortunately there was an ongoing problem with rubbish dumping on the field. The Playing Field Committee had therefore decided to install a collapsible bollard at the entrance to the car park. Keys would be available for all users of the field. A year long battle with Severn Trent Water over leaking water was now finally coming to an end. The leaking pipes had now been identified and repaired. Thanks were due to Cllr John Green for his weekly risk assessment inspections and general maintenance of the equipment, also to Duncan Reynolds for mowing the Playing Field over the last 12 months.

The Hill Trust - Mr Steve Boughton reported on behalf of the Hill Trust/Village Hall Committee. The situation was very perplexing as the Parish Survey had showed the village hall as being very much wanted in the community, yet the support for fundraising events was extremely poor and some had been cancelled. A recent table top sale attracted ten tables, but only four people turned up. The village hall was used more by people outside the village i.e. a cycling group from Ledbury. Funding could be found to refurbish the hall, but the Trust had to prove that the hall would be used. He appealed to the meeting to support the hall – either use it or lose it.

Public Questions - Speeding issues were discussed, with the Clerk confirming that the Parish Council had agreed to an upgrade of the VAS camera. This would show details of all speeding vehicles, time and date. It was hoped that with this more detailed information the Council could then persuade the Road Safety Partnership (West Mercia Police) to set up official speed monitoring and enforcement.

Broadband improvement - Mr Red Peel from Airband gave a short presentation to the meeting of the improvements to be gained from using their high speed internet system. There was an initial £150 installation charge, with a radio device fitted to the outside of the house which picks up the signal. 20 Mb can be obtained for a monthly fee of £22. In some areas local Councils were subsidising the network for the benefit of the community. Around 20-30 households were needed within the parish before a survey could be done and a network installed. Interests could be registered on the Airband Website.

The Chairman thanked the Parish Councillors for their support to the Council over the last year with special thanks to the Clerk Diana Taylor for all her hard work. He then closed the meeting and thanked everyone for coming. All were invited to stay and have a glass of wine or fruit juice with nibbles provided by the Parish Councillors.

The Minute Book & Audited Accounts for 2011/12/The Parish Council Accounts (unaudited) for 2012/13; the Annual Accounts & Reports for local Charities and Trusts were available for inspection.

