

Minutes of the West Malvern Annual Parish Meeting held at 7.45pm on Monday 13th April 2015 in West Malvern Village Hall

Present

Six members of the Parish Council, District & County Cllr. Prof J Raine, Robin Whittlestone (Footpaths Warden), Mark Haslam (Camra), Mr D Sharp (Clerk) and thirty members of the public.

1. Introduction By The Chairman

Cllr. Shearer, chairman of the Parish Council, welcomed members of the public and introduced the guest speaker.

2. Apologies For Absence

Parish Cllr. Mr L Unsworth, District Cllr. Mr J Roskams, Mr C Rouse (Malvern Hills Conservators).

3. Minutes Of The Annual Parish Meeting Held On 12th May 2014.

These were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

4. Presentation by Mark Haslam from Camra

Making the most of your Community Assets

Mr Haslam is the public affairs officer for the Herefordshire branch for the Campaign for real ale, and was able to confirm to the meeting that the Brewers Arms in West Malvern had just been awarded 'Asset of Community Value' status. This had been achieved following an application by members of the public with the support of the Parish Council. The significance of this status meant that the public would have six months to raise funds to purchase the pub should it be put up for sale and run as a community owned venture. It also meant that the property now had no 'permitted development' rights.

The current landlady of the Brewers Arms was to retire in September and the whole meeting agreed that she and her late husband Trevor had made a great success in making the pub a focal point in the village and she would be greatly missed.

Mr Haslam outlined the benefits of running a community owned pub; total control how the pub was run and developed, ability to invest in the building, and not being dependant on the whim of a landlord. Of course there were disadvantages, notably the need to raise money and to form a committee to run and appoint a manager. But he gave examples where this had been achieved successfully.

It was agreed that a further meeting take place next month with a formal presentation and speakers who had experience in running community owned pubs.

5. County And District Councillors Reports

County & District Cllr. John Raine reported that WCC had been dominated by Highways issues over the past year. A home for young people had been opened in Old Hollow and he was pressing for a new primary school to be opened in Malvern Vale to relieve pressure. On a District level he hoped the SWDP would be adopted by the end of the year. He also reported that a number of services, including the running of the 'hub' had been transferred to the company Civica. Wychaven and Malvern Hills now shared a chief executive and he expected that all senior managers would soon be appointed this way. Finally he reminded residents that he was still holding a surgery on the last Saturday of every month at the Sugarloaf Cafe.

6. Reports From The Parish Council

Chairman's Report:

Cllr. Shearer gave a brief summary of the past year's activity which included improvements to the track leading to the playing fields courtesy of WestFest volunteers, a new piece of play equipment in the playground, the clearing and seeding of a 'glade' within the woodland and the exposure of some rare purple alluvial sandstone by the old football pitch. There had been sixteen planning applications considered, one of which was the final application to redevelop the Lamb Inn site which had been approved by Malvern Hills District Council. Looking ahead he hoped the success of the Brewers Arms would continue by whatever means. WestFest this year was to be held on 4th July but a series of VE and VJ day concerts had been cancelled.

Finally he thanked the Clerk and Councillors for their work over the term of the Council, particularly to Cllrs. Harnden and Alison who were not standing for re-election on 7th May.

Tree Warden's Report:

John Nixon and Robert Eyre's report was presented by the Clerk. They had been able to offer guidance to several residents with queries and had aided in the clearing of the 'glade'. Work was continuing on the community orchard which had been planted by the church. Ash Dieback was continuing to spread across the UK as was Acute Oak Decline.

Parish Paths Warden's Report:

Robin Whittlestone submitted his final report before retirement and was pleased to announce that two volunteers had stepped forwards to take over. As always he had tried to keep the frequently used paths clear although two paths in the parish were now impassable.

Following Mr Whittlestone's report the Chairman made a presentation in recognition of his hard work over the past twelve years.

Clerk's Financial Report:

The Clerk presented draft accounts for the Parish Council. There were no queries.

7. Questions & Comments From The Floor Regarding Other Parish Matters

Concerns were raised over cyclists riding down the Lower Dingle, often at speed. The Clerk was to investigate the possibility of signage and to ask the local police team for advice.

The problem of hedges growing over the footways was mentioned and the Clerk was to contact some homeowners and also put a request in the Hills Echo.