

**CROPTHORNE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Monday 6th April 2009 in
Cropthorne and Charlton Village Hall at 7.30pm**

Present:	C Whittington (Chair)	WDC Cllr T McDonald
	A Hughes	WCC Cllr E Eyre
	M West	Nigel Potter – Comm 1 st Rural Housing
	J King	Kate Stephenson – WDC Housing
	J Meredith	Denise Duggan – WDC Planning
	T Meikle	Ian Thompson – V/chair Hanley Castle PC

In Attendance: R J Coles (Clerk) 15 Parishioners

Copies of the Agenda, last years minutes, Rural Housing exception sites identified and the provisional Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st March 2009 were available to all present.

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Apologies were received from V/chair Annis and Sue Miller.
3. The minutes from the meeting on 10th March 2008, having been previously circulated and corrected for minor spelling mistakes and surnames, were proposed for signing as a true record by Cllr Hughes, seconded by Hilary Hall and agreed for Chair's signature.
4. As there were no matters arising from the minutes the meeting continued.
5. The Pplan had indicated an Affordable Housing requirement for a few (4-6) units over the next few years, this had been considered slightly low by WDC following their own concurrent survey and inputs from other sources (waiting lists etc). Nigel Potter (Comm 1st) stated that his role was to ensure that all interested parties had been allowed to participate in the process. Kate Stephens (Housing Officer) and Denise Duggan (Planning) were representing WDC, and their partners, in getting affordable housing delivered. They indicated that to date they had known of no major problems with the allocation of completed units and that any S106 agreement to protect local people had been of a standard wording and had worked. Eckington in particular was mentioned as having been so successful that they would be back for another tranche of units if possible.
However Chair Whittington and V/chair Thompson of Hanley Castle Parish Council said that they had either received less than encouraging reports, especially from Bretforton PC (allocations to people unknown to locals), or in the case of Hanley Castle a failure first time around in the process.
To date Cropthorne Parish Council has supported the process and 14 potential sites around the village have been identified for investigation by WDC and WCC, with early indications that a final list would be reduced into lower single figures with one site in particular already having been earmarked by a housing association. Currently the parish council is concerned over the potential number, especially as there is usually an economic minimum building number, and also the fact that they all come on stream at the same time where requirements have been identified as phased over 3 to 5 years. The potential for existing tenants in the village to be given priority, thus releasing a non-S106 protected unit, could also dilute the exercise.

Following an extensive exchange of views from all concerned the Chair carried out a 'straw poll' of parishioners and councillors present who overwhelmingly shared the view that they felt that the real recipients requesting the units would be pushed out by the more needy with less than a real local affiliation. It was mused that as the survey was filled in by parishioners and was based on an aspirational need, rather than the final allocation that will be based on an immediate social need, this mismatch may cause a problem. HCPC V/chair Thompson suggested that those setting the demand in the survey should be those getting the new units. Cllr Meikle asked if the Parish Council could redefine 'local' in the S106. WDC representatives said they would take these issues back for on going study and prepare a response in due course.

6. Cllr Hughes presented and explained the annual accounts for 2008/09. The precept now represents a mix of about half in administration and half to the Village Hall and Sheppey. It was proposed by David Miller and seconded by Geoff Shaw that the Receipts and Payments Provisional Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2008, having been previously circulated, be approved for onward auditing and finalisation at the Parish Council Annual Meeting on Monday 11th May 2009. The meeting agreed. David Miller raised and the clerk gave details of the WCC Lengthsman, detailed reports of which appear on the notice board every two months. The clerk will send a copy of the contract and the last year's reports to David Miller.
7. The Chair reported that Cllr Meikle and the Pplan committee were due thanks for completing the recently published document on the website after considerable efforts. Sample results had indicated street lighting confused and in general no change to most things, a 'keep as is' policy. A small affordable housing requirement is covered above. More village spirit and sense of community was required especially after the village shop closure. Chris Hall was thanked for his efforts in keeping and expanding the village website. The recent March 2009 newsletter had entailed considerable effort from Cllr Hughes who was thanked. The main organisations in the village (junior football, walkabout, village hall, parish council etc) need to cooperate to get the best results for the village. The walkabout's recent planned way forward is encouraging.
The parish council acted as consultee on planning applications as usual and coordinated with WDC and others over 2007 flooding issues. The issue of what to do near Patty's Farm is being followed up by Cllr Meikle. Drains at the top of Main Street do not appear to cope well with the rain and the clerk will investigate. Chair indicated that he was moving to France in the near future and wished the parish well on his last official meeting.
8. Footpaths – Hilary Hall (860212) reported, "As in previous years, the Parish Paths have all been walked to assess maintenance requirements. Way marking is an on-going problem with damage to markers. I went to the annual gathering of PPWs in this area in Evesham and we were given a talk on Bridle Ways and were asked to be made aware of the importance of the width of paths used by riders. There was a complaint about a Crophorne bridle way, but I was unable to identify it and think it may be part of the old Wychavon Way. Cases like this need to be identified to me so that I can take appropriate action. With the best will in the world, I am unable to be everywhere all the time and would encourage people to contact me if they find any problems.
I have asked the local Access Officer – Fiona Argyll – to visit sometime, but so far have not heard from her.

I led a Parish Plodders walk in November and about 15 people plus dogs enjoyed an excellent morning walk. I hope to lead another in the future. I hope you will all enjoy walking our Parish Paths.”

Charities – John Ayliffe reported, “Randolph Meakins, Patty’s Farm & Widow Lye’s Charity Annual Report 2008-09. AS most of you are aware the Randolph Meakins Patty’s Farm and Widow Lyes Charity is a small village charity for residents of Cropthorne.

- As in the previous few years, Tesco vouchers at a cost totalling £1750 were purchased at Christmas and distributed by trustees for senior residents. This has always been popular and very gratefully received. (To qualify for the vouchers residents must be over 70 years of age and have lived in the village for five years.)
- Some residents were unfortunate to be hospitalised over the year and were given an appropriate gift either during their stay in hospital or recovering at home. This welfare was also coupled with another grant and totalled approximately £550.
- 14 Students, which is I believe is possibly the highest number who have come forward to the charity, benefited when they each received £30 to put towards books/stationery to help with their studies as they go through further full time education. This totalled £420.
- As mentioned in other years reports the Senior citizens trip has been cut to a bi-annual event and so last year a trip was not organised.
- However, it was decided to have afternoon tea and cakes at the Village Hall provided by the Charity and this proved popular and well received by those who attended.
- The Junior School also received a grant of £500 to help with redesigning of the school grounds, which we hope will benefit the children for years to come.
- Finally, as everyone is aware, there are financial problems in the world today and the Charity is not immune to them. The assets and interest are obviously affected but we will endeavour to carry out and distribute grants wherever possible for the coming year, where we feel we can help.”

Chair Whittington requested that the five-year qualifying period was potentially divisive and should be reconsidered by the trustees. John Ayliffe agreed to raise it with his colleagues.

Parish Plan – Cllr Meikle reported, “As sated on the Parish Plan, Parish Plans were introduced by the Government in 2002 to help communities explore how they want to develop in future. In line with many councils across the country, Cropthorne Parish Council has prepared such a Plan. It will feed into the decisions of the District Council and have an influence on future development. In particular it will link into and advise Community area plans, Community strategies, Development planning and Strategies of service providers.

The views of the parish were canvassed in 2007/08 in an attempt to identify those key issues that were considered important and which impacted on the life of the parish. Based on this initial survey, expressed views and concerns were turned into questions. From this and in order to find out what everyone else felt about the matters raised, a questionnaire was formulated and delivered to each house in the Parish. Approx 60% were completed and returned. The results were then collated, brought together into a series of graphs as shown within the Parish Plan and Action Points identified by the Parish Council. We can reiterate that this

opportunity to influence the future of Cropthorne was very well supported and we feel confident that the views of the Parish as a whole have been received and are fairly represented. These will be of benefit to the whole community.

In delivering this Plan, a decision was taken to minimise cost at this difficult time, and whilst hard copies are available to any one who would wish to receive one, the Plan is also published on the Cropthorne website for those content to access it in this way.

May I on behalf of the Parish Council take this opportunity to thank all those who freely volunteered their time and ideas to contribute to this process. In particular the dedicated team of Richard Tisdall, Tom Meikle, John Agg and Jacqui and Tony King who showed great resolve, character and persistence in seeing this through to a successful conclusion. The quality of the result speaks for itself. Thank you.”

Church Wardens – It was reported that the builder was not currently available for additional wall work that was still to be fully funded for the length required.

Walkabout – No representation.

Sheppey Junior Football – No representation.

Village Hall and Sheppey – Cllr King reported that due to the very late hour her report would be delivered at their AGM on Monday 20th April 2009 to which all present were invited.

WDC Cllr McDonald lodged a report with the clerk which will be circulated to the Parish Council.

9. As there was no other business raised the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10.10pm

Signed: **Date:**

Chairman