

The last meeting was held on Wednesday 15th October 2009

Here are the minutes

Notes of the Berwick St James Parish AGM held on 15th October 2009 No. 29

Apologies for Absence

George Campbell-Johnston, Jean Hibberd, Ian West, Gabrielle Smith, Margaret Mustill, Ken Woodford.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes were read, approved and signed.

Matters Arising

Wilts Council have stated that 40mph speed limit signs between the village and Stapleford would probably be superfluous – careful drivers will observe them, others may not.

The regulations which apply to Restricted Byways state motorised vehicles should only use them for access and will be printed in the parish magazine.

Appointment of Clerk/Secretary

Tina Woodford who has retired after 12 years as Clerk/Secretary was thanked her for the excellent service. Jacqueline Webb was proposed and seconded as replacement.

Planning Applications

Three applications for cutting down trees were discussed. No-one expressed any objections to:

1. The Woodford's application to take down a tree which is destabilising a wall.
2. Diana Gifford Mead cutting down an acacia which is rotten and dangerous.
3. The Marchants cutting down a tree which they have been advised cannot be pruned.

The fourth application concerned the Simpson-Gees' wooden fence. The planning officer has indicated that the application would be disallowed. The family's original planning application had been to build a wall but this was rejected. They have therefore planted a hedge along the boundary and erected a temporary fence to protect the hedge, prevent egress by their small children and to provide privacy. A letter has been sent to the planning authorities to support the application to retain the fence.

Ian West (local County Councillor) and Richard Brasher intend to meet Brad Fleet, head of the Wilts Council Planning Department, about concerns held by many villagers about planning decisions.

Relocation of Playground

Lou Whiting reported that she had obtained a quote for £3000 to move the playground equipment to an alternative venue and that the idea of moving the playground from the cricket field to the pub garden seemed less attractive than when first discussed. Even if Wadworths agreed there is no guarantee that a future landlord would continue the arrangement and considerable expense would be incurred moving the equipment again. Ian Fisher stated that SWAG (South Wilts Area Grants) would be a likely source of funding for the move but they would only make funds available if the venue was permanent.

Stephen Bush said the best spot for the playground (the venue next to the churchyard having been turned down by the land owner) was behind the Guide Centre on Guinness Family Trust land.

Lou Whiting to write to the Trust to ask if they would donate the land to the village. Sarah Humphreys suggested that Lou write direct to some Guinness family members who use the shoot facility and are no doubt familiar with the village.

Lou Whiting reported that the cost of replacing one of the children's swing seats at the existing playground with a support seat suitable for toddlers would be up to £250. It was agreed that the Local Amenities Fund be made available.

Pumpkin Run Report

Lou Whiting was thanked for organising such a successful event (profit c £460). Lou thanked Charles and Nicky Street for allowing the race to be held on their land and the race marshals for all their help. She reported that there had been excellent feedback about the event in Runners World. It was agreed that it should become an annual Berwick St James event. Lou stated that she will take responsibility for organising next year's race. It will be held on the last Saturday of September to coincide with Pumpkin Day.

Village Fete and Duck Race Report

Chris Lange said, and all present agreed, that the event had been a fantastic success this year (profit £2300). He thanked the Humphreys for use of their garden and said that there was a full list of people to thank on the village website. Chris agreed to head up the team running the fete next year but said it was a lot of work and hoped there would be more volunteers next year. He will arrange a meeting in January.

Wylve Valley Association

A meeting will be held in the Reading Rooms at 6 o'clock Tuesday 3rd November 2009 for chairs of the villages. It was agreed that low water level in village rivers and streams should be discussed.

Neighbourhood Policing

Ian Fisher stated there was nothing to report.

Any Other Business

Community Account Fund For administrative ease the account has been set up in Chris Lange's name but subtitled Village Community Fund account. The village marquee (purchased from the proceeds of past fete) has been borrowed four times, donations have been paid into this fund as has £519.29 of the fete profit. The only money debited from the account during the year was £100 for signs for the fete.

Stephen Bush commented that if the proposed move of the playground does not go ahead the village may find that it has too much in the fund. Chris Lange reported that it was prudent to have a substantial sum in the fund because project funding organisations often ask for match funding and the money could be spent any way that the villagers saw fit. Tina Woodford mentioned that, for example, funds were needed to renovate the Cricket Pavilion.

Low Water Levels Richard Brasher stated that he had followed up a suggestion at an earlier parish meeting to contact the Environmental Agency and Wessex Water about the lack of water in rivers and streams. Wessex Water had told him that the water level was due to a dry winter and empty aquifers.

Charles Street reported that there is still an impasse about how to remedy the problem of the water level being too low to drive his watermill wheel. The mill should create the power to take water from his bore hole for use on his farm. In the absence of enough water to drive the wheel he has to use electricity. Mary Gatling stated that the Environmental Agency had fitted a meter down her well – she was told that the lower the water level gets the more leverage can be put on Wessex Water.

It was agreed that representatives from Wessex Water and the Environmental Agency be invited to the next Parish meeting. A mutually convenient date for the organisations to attend in January or February 2010 will be arranged. Diana Gifford Mead will invite Peter Hayes of the Fishery's Association so that he can share his expertise on the matter and chairs of surrounding parishes will also be invited to the meeting.

Asserton Signpost

The signpost needed repainting. Richard Brasher will follow up.

Garbage Bins

There was a complaint that bins were left outside some of the terraced houses in the High Street. A request to put bins out of sight will be put in the parish magazine.

Village Website

Chris Lange reported that the website gets hundreds of hits. Rotas for locking up the church, church cleaning and church flowers to be on the site. There is now a facility for anyone who lives in the village to have a web name on the village website. Contact christian@berwickstjames.org.uk for more information.