

Minutes of Berwick St. James Village Meeting

Thursday, 16th January, 2014

In attendance: Neil MacDougall (Chairman)

Olivia Marchant (Deputy Chair/acting Parish Clerk)

Bill Hiscocks (Treasurer)

Total in attendance: 35

Summary of issues discussed and decisions made

1. Introduction and Apologies For Absence – Chairman

- a. PC Ivor Noyce was unable to join us; Christian Lange stood in for him.
- b. The chairman expressed thanks on behalf of the village to Stephen Bush for the superb Carol Service, and to Ian Fisher and Nicky Street for organising the carol singing around the village.
- c. The chairman explained a change to the agenda: the Flood discussion had moved to the end, before AOB.
- d. Apologies for absence were received from Lyanne Street, Henry Colthurst, Al Smith, Mary Gatling, Mary MacDermot and Jean Hibberd.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

- a. Waste Bins: these cost £330 each and the council will not fund their purchase with a grant. The Chairman will keep an eye out for other sources but for the moment it is unlikely that these bins will materialise.
- b. Oak tree: Dominic Ridley will prune this shortly.
- c. The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the last meeting.

Dominic Ridley

Proposed: Bill Hiscocks. Seconded: Ian Gibb

3. Election of Parish Clerk

- a. Helen Riding has kindly accepted the invitation to take up the post of Parish Clerk.

Proposed: Veronica Sumner. Seconded: Charles Street

4. Determination of Precept for 2014 – Treasurer

- a. Bill Hiscocks explained the background and financial statement (see attachment 1). The audit fee for 2013 was blank as Grant Thornton kindly did it for free but we cannot assume that for another year. Bill also made the point that we do not know what bills are going to arise in the coming year so we should always have some sort of buffer to cover us; this suggests that keeping the precept at £1,250 for 2014 would be prudent. This motion was proposed by Nicky Street, seconded by Gill Brasher and agreed by those present.

- b. Bill also updated everyone on the Community Fund monies (now kept in a separate bank account) and confirmed that the rather delayed payment of £180 from Devizes Textiles, who run the clothes bank by the Farm Shop, was at last on its way. (This has since been received.)

5. Update on Council Matters and the A303 – Chairman for Ian West

- a. There are widespread concerns about success, or not, of Stonehenge Visitors Centre and its effect on traffic in the surrounding roads.
- b. The campaign on improving A303 is continuing. The recent protest about closure of A344 was of limited value.
- c. There was heavy traffic through the village (including prohibited heavy lorries) due to flooding of A303 under A36, not least because someone put up a hand-painted sign indicating access for A303 through Stapleford and Berwick. Charles Street discovered the sign and removed it.
- d. Campsite: the appeal for two full time wardens was dismissed. They remain on site and, according to Ian West, the council enforcement team will take appropriate action.
- e. Campsite: Lighting amendment application is being heard tonight (hence Ian West's absence). This has since been approved.
- f. Gail Lovett (our rep) has written an addendum to the minutes of this meeting (attachment 2), giving a summary of the work the Stonehenge Traffic Action Group (STAG) continue to carry out, and with guidance as to how to access useful information on the website. She is also encouraging individuals to respond to the letter and attachments from John Glen MP concerning a feasibility study to be carried out on the A303/A30 (emailed to everyone on 17 Jan) as well as to the STAG survey.

Gail Lovett

6. Neighbourhood Watch - Keith Lovett

- a. Keith will shortly deliver an envelope to all households in Berwick explaining the Neighbourhood Watch scheme, and giving details of each member of the team who can be contacted in an emergency or when anything suspicious arises. He has a sufficient number of volunteers to cover the whole village. Household stickers will be included in the pack; it is possible that later funds can be found to support putting up one or two public signs as well.
- b. Following discussion of the recent flooding (see item 12f) it was agreed that Neighbourhood Watch should not just be about crime but also about other village 'emergencies', such as flooding, when for example a list of those willing and able to help fill and move sandbags would be extremely helpful. Keith agreed to add such a list to the pack he is preparing.

Keith Lovett

Keith Lovett

7. Village Fete 2014 – Sarah Humphreys

- a. It was agreed by those present at the meeting that they did want a fete again this year, as it both makes a major contribution to village finances, and is an extremely enjoyable community event.
- b. Sarah Humphreys confirmed that she wished to stand down as lead organiser

of the fete but that she and Toby were happy for Berwick House to remain the site. At this point everyone extended their thanks to Sarah for her hard work over many years, and to the Humphreys for their continued generosity in opening up their garden and surroundings for the event.

- c. Sarah explained that Chris Sims was willing to take the lead in organising this year's fete, the only caveat being that if she moved house before June, someone else would have to take over. Chris was unable to attend this meeting but will shortly be sending round an email in order to establish who would be interested in forming the committee and helping in other ways.

Chris Sims

8. Funding request for Churchyard Beech Tree Reduction – Stephen Bush

- a. A grant of £500 was requested from Community Fund to go towards the £875 cost of reducing the large copper beech in the churchyard by 10%. This tree is seen as a village asset and the motion was proposed by Richard Brasher, seconded by Diana Gifford Mead and agreed by all.

Stephen Bush

9. Speedwatch Update – Marie Perry

- a. Marie Perry gave a short but informative presentation. She said that Speedwatch was supported by Wiltshire Police, Wiltshire Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire & Swindon. All volunteers were trained by the police, and Berwick shares the Speed Camera with Shrewton, Amesbury and Bulford, having it for a maximum of 5 days every 15. The pavement opposite the church and Druids Bank beside North View are the two approved sites. With 13 volunteers to date, each team consisted of 3 individuals, operating for a maximum of 1 hour each session. Three sessions have been carried out so far, with more planned in January. On one of these sessions when the A303 was closed, 291 vehicles were recorded in 1 hour, 13 of which were speeding. A Letter of Authority will be issued to the teams to show to any member of the public who questions what they are doing. It was hoped that more people from the village would volunteer to take part in Speedwatch.

Marie Perry

10. Position of Notice Boards - Chairman

- a. The Chairman explained that the new notice boards were suffering badly from the terrible weather and if they were not moved to more protected positions, they would not last more than another year or so. Mary MacDermot had kindly agreed to have central noticeboard positioned on her wall. The chairman asked for permission from the Reading Room Committee for other noticeboard opposite the Boot to be put on the Reading Room wall – the flint, not cob section.
- b. Nicky explained that the RR committee had already discussed this several times and got advice from Edward Scutt, the builder who worked on the cob section, and the conclusion was that this was not a good idea.
- c. A more general discussion ensued and two other options were out forward as possibilities. One for the central board to go inside the bus shelter, which would give much greater protection than putting it on the Henry's Yard wall;

to do this might necessitate some strengthening of the shelter's back panel. The second suggestion was to explore the possibility of attaching the other board to the RR brick wall, placing it out of the prevailing wind and rain yet still visible. It might be worth creating a bit of a protective canopy at the same time. The Chairman promised to investigate; Keith Lovett agreed to help with bus shelter work.

Chairman
Keith Lovett

11. Reading Room Activities & Village Diary – Nicky Street

- a. The next film night is Great Gatsby on January 23rd; the next coffee morning at the Farm Shop is Sunday January 26th.
- b. Picture hanging system is up and pictures/photos will be hung shortly.
- c. The kitchen at the Boot (but not the bar) will be shut from 1st-13th February during Cathy and Giles' annual holiday.
- d. February 27th Film Night is 'Monsoon Wedding'. 'Chocolat' is one suggestion for March 27th Film Night, but further ideas are welcomed.

12. Street Flooding and Flood Contingency Plan – Chairman and Stephen Bush

- a. The chairman began by pointing that it was important to have our village flooding problem in proper perspective, as other houses and villages had had a much worse time.
- b. He then gave a presentation based on his understanding of the current drainage system, with photos of the recent flooding, maps and plans of the drains etc, pinpointing the part he believed to cause the flooding problem, namely the diameter of the exit pipe. The plan was to hold a meeting on site with the Highways Department, road drainage engineers and interested parties from the village to assess the problem. A further Village Meeting would be arranged sometime after that, attended by the Environmental Agency and these two council authorities, so that they could take on board some of the useful historical information that some of our senior residents possessed, listen to their concerns, and inform the village of their intended course of action.
- c. Levels within the main sewage system had risen to a point where some properties were unable to flush or drain their own systems. This seems to have been caused by groundwater and floodwater pouring into the main system.
- d. The chairman then showed how the levels in the river Till and in the leat were controlled in two places; firstly by the sluice gates at Asserton Barn, controlled by Druids, and at the Mill at Dairy Hill Farm, monitored and controlled by Charlie Street. With the present large volume of water coming down the river, it was a fine balance to try and ensure that adequate land drainage and river flow rates were provided whilst trying to prevent the flooding of village properties.
- e. Stephen Bush explained that we could as a village do a certain amount to help ourselves. One key suggestion is to buy a ton of sand and 50 sandbags, which Mike Doggrell has kindly agreed to store, so that another time we can quickly provide sandbags to those who need them. The cost needs to be finalised but

Chairman

would be under £200.

- f. This proposal was warmly endorsed. Ian Gibb made the point that a list of people able and willing to fill and move heavy sandbags would be crucial as well, and it was agreed to draw up such a 'call-out' list, to be added to the Neighbourhood Watch information.
- g. The original proposal was to hold off buying any sand/bags until the meeting with Highways Dept etc had taken place. However, after some discussion, the general feeling was that we are unlikely to get an expanded pipe or any other flood amelioration measure from the council very soon, and as groundwater levels remain extremely high, we should go ahead with the sand/bags idea asap. Proposed: Nicky Street. Seconded: Ian Gibb
- . (Note: A ton of sand and 50 sandbags have now been purchased for about £76 and are stored in the Druids barns opposite North View.)
- i. Ian Gibb asked whether it was possible to create a map of the springs in the village but several people (Ian Fisher, Gill Brasher) with springs on their land said that new ones had come up this year and that in was in the nature of springs not to be fixed points.

Stephen Bush

13. Any Other Business

- a. Next Village Meeting to be held at the end of April / beginning of May

NEIL MACDOUGALL
Chairman Berwick Parish Meetings

Attachments:

1. Financial Breakdown of Village Funds
2. A303 & Stonehenge Traffic Action Group (STAG) Update

Village Precept (Remaining at £1,250)							
	INCOME		OUTGOINGS	CREDIT	DEBIT	TOTAL DEBIT	
2013	Precept Start 1st April 2013			£928.52			
	Annual Precept			£1,250.00			
		St James Church	Graveyard (Surplus Precept)		£250.00	£500.00	
			Graveyard (2013 Precept)		£250.00		
		Reading Room	(Surplus Precept) - Taken Previous Financial Year		£250.00	£500.00	
			(2013 Precept)		£250.00		
		Village	Community First Public Liability Insurance		£228.00	£283.26	
			Audit		-		
			Wiltshire Association		£55.26		
				Totals	£2,178.52		£1,283.26
		Precept Remaining 1 April 2014			£895.26		
	2014	Precept Start 1st April 2014			£895.26		
Precept Proposed				£1,250.00			
		St James Church	Graveyard (Surplus Precept)		£250.00	£500.00	
			Graveyard (2014 Precept)		£250.00		
		Reading Room	(Surplus Precept)		£250.00	£500.00	
			(2014 Precept)		£250.00		
		Village	Community First Public Liability Insurance (Est)		£223.00	£383.00	
			Audit (Est)		£95.00		
			Wiltshire Association		£65.00		
				Totals	£2,145.26		£1,383.00
		Precept Remaining 1 April 2015			£762.26		
Community Fund							
2013	Community Fund 1 April 2013		Carried Fwd from 2012 / 13	£1,613.08			
			Income	£1,230.00			
			Expenses		£912.80		
			Totals	£2,843.08	£912.80		
2014	Community Fund 1 April 2014	Expected Community Fund Start Financial Year 2013/14		£1,930.28			

A303 And The Stonehenge Traffic Action Group (STAG) Update

The core Stonehenge Traffic Action Group continues to work on behalf of all local communities and is in contact with John Glen MP, English Heritage and local news media re traffic problems around the Stonehenge Visitor Centre. Even at this time of year visitors accessing the Centre are causing problems on the A360 and there have been times when trying to get to Shrewton has been difficult. It is predicted that this will get worse during spring and summer when visitor numbers normally rise. There is useful information on the website, and the best way to access this is to search for Stonehenge Traffic Action Group. A list of related sites will come up, including articles in the Salisbury Journal, Western Daily Press and Daily Telegraph. Gail Lovett, STAG coordinator, is happy to search for information for those villagers who do not have access to a computer. Please contact Gail on 01722 792890.

In response to the request from John Glen MP which included a letter from the Department of Transport and the outline for a feasibility study on the A303 and A30 (emailed to the village on 17 Jan), it is proposed that Neil MacDougall, as Chair of the village meeting submits a village' response, and STAG will also submit one. Villagers are also encouraged to respond individually as well, should they so wish. If so, please copy Neil and Gail who will be co-ordinating views of the village and send them to John Glen. On 24th January there will be a meeting in Taunton to discuss the subject, but due to the date's adjacency the village will not be represented. Copies of the outline for the feasibility study and the letter from the DoT are on the notice boards, and Neil and Gail will continue to keep villagers informed as things develop. There is a survey for people to complete (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/L3RWHP8>). For people who do not have a computer, or are unable to open this site, please could they get in touch with Gail and she will make sure they get a paper copy. If this is returned to me she will see it is sent.