

Melchet Park & Plaitford Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of meeting held at New Forest Post Production Studio on 20th May 2013

Present

K Curtis (Chairman)	J Wright (Clerk)
Cllr RJ Perry (HCC)	Cllr G Bailey (TVBC)
Police Inspector J Wilson	PCSO J Cole
13 Members of the Parish	1 Stranger

Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr A Gentle (TVBC).

The minutes of the May 2012 meeting had been agreed and signed at an earlier Parish Council meeting.

Report by HCC Councillor Roy Perry

The Council Tax has been frozen for the fourth successive year and is one of the lowest in the country the HCC element is the lowest in England. The Council has now shed 1700 staff without a single compulsory redundancy and without cutting frontline services: for example no libraries have been closed. However, it is facing demographic pressures from an aging population (in a year's time 25% of the population will be over the retirement age) and an increase in the birth rate resulting in a need for more places in primary schools, but sufficient resources have been set aside to cope with this latter.

More money has been provided for Youth Services including a joint funding venture with TVBC to provide a purpose built Youth Centre in Romsey.

Members of the public commented that compared to Wiltshire Council HCC repairs pot-holes very promptly, although some of the repairs have only a short life. Cllr Perry asked that instances of repairs failing quickly should be reported to him by email.

The introduction of grit bins for the public to use seems to have been very successful.

Cllr Perry's attention was drawn to the lack of progress in creating a passing-place by the ford in Church Lane (the earth was removed two months ago and then work halted).

Community Policing Issues – Inspector Wilson and PCSO Cole

The new Police Commissioner has an interest in Rural Crime.

In this area dwelling burglary is very low and working with Southampton Police has been effective in reducing them (only 3 since April). These tend to be professional with the main emphasis on stealing jewellery and money; they are usually carried out during the day when the dwelling is empty.

There is still quite a lot of rural crime and there have been problems with teenage parties in an open spaces becoming “raves”, which tend to occur in rural locations.

The Police Station in Romsey is still manned 24/7 but the Police would prefer individuals to make an appointment rather than just knock on the door: the appointment can be either at the Police Station or at the person's home.

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Using 101 can be problematic in this area because of the proximity to the Wiltshire border. It is sensible to begin the conversation by stating which county one is calling from. It is recognised that the Police are not very good at providing feedback to 101 callers.

Policing activity in the area can be found on the website by searching down to Romsey Rural.

Report by Cllr Bailey (TVBC)

Cllr Gentle has retired from being the TVBC representative on the National Park Authority and his place has been taken by Cllr Hibberd.

TVBC has bought the Old Magistrates Court in Romsey and this is now in operation. Most of the staff has moved to the spare capacity in Andover and the Council building in Duttons Road has been closed. A potential buyer for the Duttons Road site has been found.

Since the Blackwater Ward is included with Andover rather than Romsey this area has been spared the house-building targets as most of the development is in the Andover area.

Village Hall Progress – Mrs S Pearce

The old boiler has been replaced and the roof has been repaired.

The Village Hall Committee has been successful in a bid for funding through the NPA LEADER Project and has been awarded £7475.25 towards the cost of refurbishing the kitchen and the toilets. However, further fund-raising is required. Cllr Perry suggested that the Committee should explore the possibility of a grant from Viridor (the land-fill tax).

The last Village Fete was in 1979 and the one planned for July 13th this year aims to mimic it. The Committee needs help with ideas and with resources, and especially with “retro” games. Contributions for prizes are also required.

Presentation to Mr M Bowles

The Chairman thanked Mr M Bowles for keeping the grass at Plaitford Pound neat and tidy for the last twelve years and presented him with a bottle of whisky as a small token of the appreciation of the Parish.

There being no other business the meeting closed at approximately 8.15 p.m.