

**Notes of the Berwick St James Parish Thursday 12 January 2012 No 38**

30 present including Chairman, Richard Brasher, Clerk, Jacqueline Webb and Treasurer, Tina Woodford. Twelve apologies for absence

**1. Wiltshire Council Update provided by Councillor Ian West**

£952,000 of the £3,000,000 deposited by Wiltshire CC with the Landsbanki Bank has now been repaid. The Council should retrieve 98% of monies deposited.

The Boundary Commission's final recommendation to incorporate Berwick St James into a newly created Warminster and Shaftesbury Constituency has to be made by 1 October 2013. Written representations about the changes will be published in Spring 2012 when constituents will have a further opportunity to comment on these submissions.

The A303 will be closed from 8pm to 6am between Winterbourne Stoke and Boscombe Down from 30 January until approx 23 March 2012. Details on the notice board.

**2. Notes of last meeting and matters arising**

Tina Woodford to make minor changes to Parish Meeting No 37 Notes. Chris Lange to await results of Parish Survey to see if there is a demand for a First Aid Course before arranging one.

**3. Accounts provided by Treasurer, Tina Woodford**

Balance currently £544.66. Receipts include £750 Precept paid April 2011 which brought balance to £1537.19. Outgoings have been various insurances, WALC membership, auditors, donations to Reading Room and Parish Magazine and replacing playground gate.

As, this year, there will be no revenue producing fete, income is not likely to cover expenditure. Mrs Woodford proposed that the precept be increased to at least £1250. She will investigate the savings made by reducing the insurance cover for the bus stop and marquee to third party only.

**4. Village Community Fund**

Chris Lange reported that there was currently £2787 in the account. He also made two proposals - votes were taken after a wide ranging discussion homing in on the following points:-

Stephen Bush held up a chart showing the history of village fund raising and where the money goes. The chart demonstrated that monies are available from the Precept for running costs of the Reading Room but not for the Church. He reported that without money from a village fete church expenditure would be more than income. He also told the meeting that the Church Architect predicted that over the next few years £73,000 would be needed to maintain its fabric. He went on to propose that £1000 from the Community Fund be given to the church and a further £1000 to the Reading Room and that the Community Fund be capped at £500. No vote could be taken as Chris Lange's proposals (of which the meeting had due warning) would, if carried, make this suggestion invalid at this meeting.

Tina Woodford stated that auditing costs would not increase if the Community Fund was managed separately but alongside the Village Account.

Susan Grant stated that if the profits of the Fun Run were removed the Community Fund the would look less healthy and she, as a major subscriber to the event, wanted monies to go to the Fund not the Church.

Chris Lange reported that the Community Fund had engendered enthusiasm and thus profits at recent events and both the Reading Room and the Church can benefit from the Fund's success.

Jacqueline Webb felt that the community benefited from having earmarked funds. The fabric of the Church and Reading Room were areas of expenditure which could soak up funds for miscellaneous community projects.

The point was made that it was useful to have a substantial nest egg which could be used for match funding.

The question was posed as to why the only substantial drawing from the Community Fund had been £300 to refurbish the war memorial in the church. The response was that the monies would have been used to move the children's play ground. However, plans were abandoned when no site could be found for the play area so money is still available for alternative projects to benefit villagers. For example, money might be needed to top up the costs of the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations.

Neil MacDougall asked if donations to the Church and Reading Room were customarily promised before the profits of the fete were known. Charles Street confirmed that they were not.

Chris Lange's 1<sup>st</sup> Proposal was that the Community Fund should be kept in a separate account managed by Tina Woodford, Village Treasurer and be audited along with Parish monies. This proposal was passed overwhelmingly.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Proposal was that payments over £500 should be approved by the community at a Parish Meeting and that applicants for funds exceeding £500 should give warning of the request 10 days before a Meeting. The proposal was passed 16 in favour, 5 against with 6 abstentions.

## **5. Community Plan**

The Committee has met a few times and the questionnaire is being trialled in certain homes.

## **6. Planning Application for Stonehenge Campsite – update**

The WCC Planning Committee has delayed a decision to the next meeting on 26 January 2012 to give time for some legal technicalities to be sorted out.

Neil MacDougall was assured by William Grant that the public path beside the campsite has now been cleared of the fence stakes which blew down in the gales.

## **7. The Reading Room**

Ian Fisher stated that Wiltshire County Council have awarded £5000 towards improvements to the Reading Room. A second grant has been applied for to make up any shortfall in capital costs. The grants are for capital expenditure (including furniture and fittings) but not running expenses. The building work is planned to start 23 January when the Reading Room will be closed for a month. The refurbishments include building what is in effect a 'inner room' to hide the damp walls.

Rod Crossley asked what the Reading Room is used for and how often. Ian responded that it is used for Parish Meetings and let out for private events. After the refurbishments it is hoped that it will be used for film shows and 'meet your neighbours' evenings. It also provides a service to the community by renting out its chairs and tables.

Due to the lack of a 2012 Village Fete Ian stated that to cover running costs he would like to request £750 from the Parish Account plus a £500 payment from the Community Fund. The

proposal for a £500 grant from the Community Fund was passed with 28 residents agreeing, one abstaining and none disagreeing.

#### **8. The Village Precept**

The Chairman stated that there was a clear shortfall in monies available for running expenses for the Church and Reading Room. A solution could be to increase the Precept. Tina Woodford, Treasurer proposed and Rod Crossley seconded that it be increased from £750 to £1250. The motion was passed 19 for, 4 against with no abstentions.

#### **9. Jubilee Celebrations update provided by Nicky Street**

There will be no charge for attending the Village Party. The aim is for the event to be funded by a raffle, an auction of promises and a duck race. The committee has applied for a £500 grant towards the cost of the celebrations. It will ask some residents to donate salads, puddings etc. There has been no decision yet as to whether children should be given Jubilee mugs. The cost of hiring a marquee will be £350. The committee will consider Lyanne Street's suggestion of ringing the church bell. Alistair Smith has offered to arrange a fishing trip to catch fish for the barbecue.

#### **10. Any other business**

Mike Bucknell (who used to farm land in Berwick) has died. Charles Street asked anyone who would like to go to the funeral to contact him and he would arrange for minibus if appropriate.

Richard Brasher reported that there had been further complaints about speeding and off-roading. Chris Lange said it was not a pretty solution but roadside car parking reduces speed. Complaints about speeding should be addressed to the Community Speed Watch Team. Rod Crossley said that there was a fine line between appropriate parking and obstruction. The maximum speed allowed between Stapleford and the Berwick is now 50 miles per hour though Diana Gifford Mead and Michael Weismuller felt the limit should be lower. Cllr Ian West stated enforcement is the priority, the speed limit will not be reduced further.

There are continuing concerns about the lack of water in the River Till. Charles Street stated that Wessex Water have finally acknowledged that they are partially responsible for low water levels in Wiltshire rivers and villagers need to complain about the problem to them. He stated however that the water level in his bore hole is rising.

Diana Gifford Mead is concerned about the state of the kissing gate at the top of the footpath leading out of Winterbourne Stoke. The Council may take responsibility to maintain it if the Druids Lodge Estate gives them permission to do so.

Richard Brasher announced that he will be standing down as Chairman after the next AGM. Neil MacDougall volunteered to take on the role for a maximum of two years if elected to the AGM in May.

Jacqueline Webb has had to resign as Clerk, Tina Woodford will take over until after the AGM when a volunteer will be needed.