

Village Meeting.

Thursday 10th January, 2019.

In attendance: Neil MacDougall (Chairman)
Bill Hiscocks (Treasurer)
Olivia Marchant (Acting Village Secretary)

Guests: Vicki Harris (Wiltshire Council Senior Waste Project Officer)

Total in attendance: 31

Summary of issues discussed and decisions made

Welcome & Introduction: Chairman

Action

The chairman opened the meeting at 7pm and extended a warm welcome to Vicki Harris, Wiltshire Council Senior Waste Project Officer. Darren Henry (Councillor for Till & Wylde Valley) was unable to attend. Kate Wood and Marie Perry were also unable to attend due to sickness so their roles were taken by Olivia Marchant and Neil MacDougall respectively

Apologies for Absence were received from Tim Upward & Jane Lock-Smith, Kate & Julian Glyn-Owen, Greville Bibby, Henry & Sophie Colthurst, Mike & Linda Doggrell, Mike & Helen Riding, Marie & Clive Perry, Stephen & Ailsa Bush, & Mary MacDermot.

Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Two points were raised from previous minutes: Did anyone take part in Division of Boundaries consultation? Answer: no. And Legacy and Benefits issues: to be discussed under next agenda item.

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed unanimously to be a true reflection of the meeting: proposed by Janey Campbell Johnson; seconded by Gill Brasher.

Council / A303 Updates: Chairman for Darren Henry

- a. Cross Plains Surgery in Shrewton probably to close. It will be discussed at next Amesbury Board Meeting on 17th Jan. Neil will attend with Janey Campbell-Johnson, who uses and supports the surgery.
- b. Darren Henry holds his Wiltshire Councillor Surgery from 9.30 to 10am on the first Tuesday of the month at the Oasis Coffee Shop in the Shrewton Methodist Church. He will also will have a stall at the monthly Country Markets that take place at the Shrewton Social Club (next one Sat 19th Jan 2019).
- c. Campaign for the Preservation of the Southern Till Valley has now been disbanded as its original function and objectives have been met. Just over 20% of funds remained so each contributor was given back 20% of their original

Chairman

Janey C-J

donation. About £500 remains to cover future expenses etc as the BStJ Community Interest Group (CIG) will keep a watching brief in order to ensure that Berwick does not miss out on any legacy or benefits to which we may be entitled. No village representatives were sent to the last meeting but Neil & Anika Lange will be going to Community Forum meeting on 16th Jan. We are at the early stages of finding out what is available, what this village needs and then see if it qualifies.

Action

Chairman

Anika Lange

- d. Representation at the C.F. also important to ensure that restricted byways within the Parish so designated by H.E. remain in place and unchanged for local farm vehicle access. It would seem that Wiltshire Council have lost the case to make byways AMES 11 & 12 restricted, so motor bikes will be allowed on these byways as from now.
- e. Neil pointed out that two principle phases of the A303 construction programme had been identified. The Winterbourne Bypass section would start and be completed between 2021 & 2023, and the tunnel would be the primary construction activity from 2024 onwards.

Accounts Update & Precept for 2019: Treasurer & Chairman

Background:

The purpose of precept is to raise money through the Council Tax system to cover the monthly and annual costs incurred to run the village and benefit the village as a whole. This statutory annual expenditure presently includes, for example, contributions to the Reading Room and church graveyard, and subscriptions to council organisations, insurance etc. The Community Fund (CF) is intended to cover expenditure that fall outside this, such as funding for village events and entertainment. However, we are currently using CF monies to pay for things that benefit/affect the whole village, for example batteries, pads and running costs for the defibrillator, repairs to noticeboards etc, which could be more appropriately covered by the Precept, as this is generated by a village-wide 'tax'. Some restructuring is required so that the bills are paid for out of the appropriate funds. If the Precept is increased, it would reduce the pressure on the CF and release more CF monies for other projects or items that Berwick needs.

Neil went on to point out that that we urgently require a dry and vermin-free storage facility specifically for village equipment. At present marquees, gazebos and other village equipment are all stored by generous residents wherever they may have some space. Unfortunately some of that storage space is neither dry nor vermin-free and the old marquee has been particularly badly affected. As village assets the two marquees belonging to the village produce income each year, so it is even more important that we look after and store them properly.

Research shows that a 20ft "one trip" shipping container would be ideal for holding all the villages recreational equipment, but the cost (delivered) would be around £2,500. (An older well-used version would cost around £600 less, but much re-painting and re-sealing would be required, and probably would not be the best value for money.) The meeting in general approved the idea. Over the next two months Neil will explore various funding and siting opportunities for the proposed container, Bill to look into insurance and both Neil and Christian will work together and try and source a shipping container that would be the best value-for-money. The village is unlikely to receive extra funding for the container from Amesbury Board.

Chairman
Bill Hiscocks
Chris Lange

Accounts Update & Precept 2019: Treasurer

Precept Account:	Balance at 1st April 2018	£1,017.75
-	Balance at 10th Jan 2019	£ 493.59
Community Fund Account	Balance at 1st April 2018	£1,251.25
-	Balance at 10th Jan 2019	£ 1,298.13

Action

The latest figures for the Community Fund do not take into account the overdue amount of £120 from Devizes Textiles, which should have been paid in October. Bill is still pursuing Devizes Textiles for what they owe.

Bill Hiscocks

Bill recommended that the precept be raised from its present level (where it has been fixed for the past 5 years) from £1,250 to £2,000 citing the arguments given above. A comparison was made against our neighbouring villages. Stapleford, roughly twice the size of Berwick, had a precept of £6,000 in 2018/19 (Band D = £41.03). Winterbourne Stoke, similar in size to Berwick, was over £7,290 in 2018/19 (Band D = £85.55) – so our precept of £1,250 for the same period (Band D = £15.48) was very small in comparison. A monthly increase from £1.29 to £2.06 for a standard “D” band house (£0.77 per month), which raises the annual figure from £15.48 to £24.75 represents a very small increase to that particular council tax band. So a precept increase from £1,250 to £2,000 would amount to very small increases at the individual household level. (A table of comparisons is attached at the end of the minutes.)

In answer to a question from Ian Gibb, Neil confirmed that the £2000 figure has been arrived at by making a budget for the year ahead, and Bill assured the meeting that it would be possible to raise or lower the precept in future years (unless the government imposes a freeze).

Proposal by Bill Hiscocks: to raise the precept to £2000. Seconded by James Hardy. All voted in favour.

Flood & Neighbourhood Watch Update: James Hardy

James sent out a detailed update before Christmas. He reiterated the key points: (a) The council want to pressure test our sewers and drains and deal with any problems but cannot do so until groundwater levels reach the appropriate height. (b) Theft. The area is being targeted by thieves so please be mindful of security, leave nothing on show in vehicles or through ground floor windows, and if you hear an alarm please investigate or call someone who will – do not ignore.

All

Speedwatch: Chairman for Marie Perry

The new sign is working well and is also yielding much valuable data. There were 31 sessions since last report, and 52 speeders identified (4.6%). One car was recorded doing 50mph despite presence of yellow jackets, and data showed that there were many more exceeding that speed when no one there (nearly all leaving the village). However, data does show that once people have slowed down because of the warning sign, they generally maintain that lower speed.

Reading Room Update: Nicky Street

Action

The Christmas Coffee Morning raised £432.30 – thank you to all who participated whether as helper or visitor.

The wall heaters have been checked by an electrician and they are fine. So they can be used, but someone must always be responsible for making sure they are all turned off at the wall at the end of any event.

Nicky Street

Water heater: this has to be replaced rather than repaired (we sought advice from 3 different electricians). We have a date for the installation and the cost will be £430 (exactly the funds raised by the coffee morning).

Building work: we have agreed to go with Foyles and they will contact us at the end of February to fix date to start, ideally March/April.

Village Diary: Nicky Street

Art Appreciation: there will be three sessions of this informative and popular meeting: January 24th; February 21 and March 21.

**Brian
Armstrong**

Nigel Rodgers will give one of his excellent talks on his latest book (on the Coliseum) sometime towards the end of February/early March.

**Nigel
Rodgers**

The Reading Room AGM will take place close to the Village Meeting AGM, sometime in May.

Berwick St James Website: Nicky Street / Chairman

For those not yet familiar with this, it is full of fascinating information. Do sign up for the alerts, which let you know about upcoming village events. There is going to be more on village history. We have some good old photos but are always happy to have more photos and information – past and present - so please get in touch with Nicky or Neil if you have anything suitable. Work has been on-going to make it more user-friendly and the intention is to change the colour of the drop-down menu to make it easier to use and see.

Chairman

Presentation on Recycling in Wiltshire: Vicki Harris (Wiltshire Council)

This was interesting and informative and followed by many questions. Some key points that emerged are that the Council see waste as a resource and its strategy is to get as much value out of it as possible. An impressive 99% of black box waste is recycled; council gets income from recycling so it is in their interests to optimise it. Of household waste, only 20% goes to landfill – the rest is burnt to generate energy. Almost all waste is dealt with/recycled within the county of Wiltshire.

Local and national strategies: Council has new strategy and is working towards zero avoidable waste. DEFRA also has a new 25-year plan, which is very focused on plastic, aiming to phase out avoidable plastic and which is industry-led (ie making manufacturers take responsibility for what they produce). Deposit return schemes (eg for plastic bottles) are being trialled. There is also a commitment to phasing out food waste from landfill – this is a lengthy and complex process. It will ultimately affect

household collections but will take time.

Wiltshire Council: The top priority is to recycle, so single use plastic is a big concern.

Second priority is to re-use and repair (eg furniture, textiles, clothing etc; they encourage people to share skills to do this).

Third priority is recycling and composting. The expanded range of recyclable plastics has been a success. They may move to all recycling being put in blue bin and only glass being separated at household level. (The easier recycling is, the more people do it.)

Final option is landfill. Currently about 110,000 tons of household waste is collected annually. Only 20% of this does actually go to landfill; the rest generates energy and therefore income. No recycling goes to landfill without having been sorted and everything that can be recycled taken out.

How does the recycling work? Contents of black boxes are separated at kerbside and 99% is recycled; anything not suitable left in your box. The recyclables in blue-lid bins are light and bulky so have to be compacted first or it would involve a lot of transport/petrol/pollution. It is then sorted using optical rays and distributed for recycling within Wiltshire but also to some other specialist places in the UK.

What can be recycled? Black plastic: this is very low quality and cannot be recycled (and can contaminate the optical ray sorting process) so - whether plant pots or food containers – please do not put any black plastic in recycling. It goes in household waste. Plastic film off food containers is waste (cannot be recycled). Please clean your recyclable plastic/tin/glass etc. They do not need to be spotless but if too contaminated by food, they can again upset the sorting process (and some of this is done by hand). When is cardboard paper and vice versa? If in doubt put with cardboard (lower quality). There is a plan to increase the information on the website about what can and can't be recycled.

Ian Gibb raised the point about the lack of rubbish bins on laybys etc in Wiltshire. Vicki replied that this was a highways issue and she would pass on his concern that Wiltshire is more litter-strewn than other counties, who do provide bins.

Different counties/different rules: The government is trying to create greater standardisation over recycling policies and methods but councils are often locked into long contracts and it will be a long process to gradually bring all counties in line with one another.

Any Other Business

There was no other business. Next meeting likely in March (Thursday 14th or 21st). People need to give thought in meantime what sort of fundraising event the village wants to hold in 2019, when and who will run it. Neil and Carolyn are stepping down from any organising roles for the next few years.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Neil MacDougall
Chairman Berwick Village Meetings

Attachment 1:

Precept Increase: Chart Indicating Individual Band Charge Increases

Increase in Precept from £1,250 to £2,000						
Band	2018 / 2019 - £1,250		2019 / 2020 - £2,000			
	Monthly Contribution	Annual Contribution	Monthly Contribution	Annual Contribution	Monthly Increase	Annual Increase
A	£ 0.86	£ 10.32	£ 1.38	£ 16.60	£ 0.52	£ 6.28
B	£ 1.00	£ 12.04	£ 1.60	£ 19.25	£ 0.60	£ 7.21
C	£ 1.15	£ 13.76	£ 1.83	£ 22.00	£ 0.68	£ 8.24
D	£ 1.29	£ 15.48	£ 2.06	£ 24.75	£ 0.77	£ 9.27
E	£ 1.58	£ 18.92	£ 2.52	£ 30.25	£ 0.94	£ 11.33
F	£ 1.86	£ 22.36	£ 2.98	£ 35.75	£ 1.12	£ 13.39
G	£ 2.15	£ 25.80	£ 3.44	£ 41.25	£ 1.29	£ 15.45
H	£ 2.58	£ 30.96	£ 4.13	£ 49.50	£ 1.55	£ 18.54