

PARISH OF BISHOPSTOKE

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly 2015 held at the Methodist Church, Bishopstoke on Tuesday 31 March 2015 commencing at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Anne Winstanley, Chairman Bishopstoke Parish Council
Cllrs Harris, McKeone, Mignot, Parkinson-MacLachlan and Toher

Six members of the public and PCSO Mack were present

In attendance: Mr P J Storey OBE, Clerk to Bishopstoke Parish Council
Mrs C Taylor, Assistant Clerk to the Council

1. Welcome by the Chairman

Cllr Winstanley extended a warm welcome to all present at the twentieth Bishopstoke Annual Parish Assembly.

2. Presentation on Dementia Friendly Hampshire

Mrs Jackie Smith, the Dementia Champion co-ordinator for the New Forest and Eastleigh, gave a quick overview of the dementia champion scheme designed to raise awareness about dementia and how to become a dementia champion. She explained that an increasing number of people were living with dementia and how it was the condition that most over 55s feared most. Volunteers were being sought become dementia friends and have a greater understanding of the condition or attend a deeper training session to become a champion able to run their own dementia friends training. Dementia Action Groups were being set up across the county by these trained enthusiastic volunteers who were committed to making their communities more dementia friendly with the overall aim of making a real difference to those with dementia and their carers. More information was available on www.hants.gov.uk/dementiafriendly or from jackie.smith@andovermind.org.uk

3. Presentation on the history behind some Bishopstoke street names

Mr Chris Humby reviewed the history behind many of the Bishopstoke street names drawing particular attention to the link between some of the older names in the area and the great railway pioneers, the naval link and for some unknown reason the West Country link in the newer areas. The talk was supported by old photographs of streets and the manor type houses purchased by those whose names were used locally and proved to be both enjoyable and informative. Similar talks on historical matters relating to Bishopstoke were given three times a year by members of the Bishopstoke Historical Society, these talks being open to all.

4. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Brown, Cossey, Lyon and Roling.

5. Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 1 April 2014

Copies of the minutes were available to those present at the Assembly and were on the Parish Council website. Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded McKeone, **RESOLVED** unanimously that these be accepted as a true record of the 2014 Assembly.

6. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 1 April 2014

The choice of colour (black) of the Riverside railings had been determined by HCC with the railings being repainted as part of the refurbishment currently in hand.

7. Chairman's Address and Annual Report

When I started considering items for this report on 2014 - 15 for Bishopstoke Parish Council, I thought I would be talking about a much quieter year than the previous one, but there was still plenty going on with taking over responsibility for Bishopstoke Carnival as the major event.

In May, long-serving parish councilor, Barry Hansell, was replaced by Vickieye Parkinson-MacLachlan in a by-election. Following an accident, Barry's health had been deteriorating and I'm sorry to say he has been in a nursing home since Christmas. Vickieye is a very active parish councillor, including on the Carnival Group where she organized the arena events for the fete and also a cake for the tea party for the Mayor and visiting queens.

The programme of taking on responsibility of open spaces, including play areas from Eastleigh Borough Council, was completed at the beginning of 2014. Though we do continue to sort out the legal details for Blackberry Drive with the Borough. After the major refurbishment of Stoke Common and Templecombe play areas, the ongoing work of repair continues with replacement of the trampoline at Otter Close with a more robust version and replacement of safety surfacing and matting, as required. Repairs following wear and tear are only to be expected but when vandalism is the cause this is regrettable, both for those residents who are unable to use the equipment in question in the meantime, but also all residents who contribute to the cost of repair through their Parish precept. We did have a spate of bins being damaged in the Summer for which a perpetrator was identified and then made amends through the Restorative Justice programme. Please alert either the police or Parish if you see any vandalism occurring. We know our local contractor, Green Smile Ltd, does an excellent job on maintenance not only of our open spaces and play areas but also the Cemetery, closed churchyards and allotments that the Parish has taken over from Eastleigh Borough.

This year, the Parish Council took over responsibility for Bishopstoke Carnival, led by our excellent Assistant Clerk, Cheryl Taylor, following the last Carnival Group Chair, Glynis Elliot, losing her battle with cancer in November 2013. We had been providing both administrative and financial support for several years before that. This year involved much getting the procedures right for a Parish Council as opposed to a community group which affected some regular events such as the Prize Draw with no advance sales possible. Otherwise the Carnival programme continued much as before with pub quizzes, river float competition and duck race on the Saturday and procession and fete on the Sunday. The procession collection was divided between Age Concern Bishopstoke (Christmas lunches), St Mary's (new heating), Methodist Church (new windows) and New Hope Charity (storage). Work has already started on planning the 2015 Carnival which will be on 12-13th September. The Carnival is managed by a Working Group which includes non-councillors as well as Parish councillors. I'd like to give credit to all the individuals who take on responsibility for individual parts of the Carnival as well as the Working Group Chair and Assistant Clerk who have overall responsibility. Their individual efforts result in an excellent and well-regarded event, providing much pleasure to Bishopstoke residents and their visitors.

In the last year we have had an ongoing dialogue with Hampshire County Council on first the replacement street lighting, particularly about appropriate lamp columns in our conservation area, and also various issues around the Riverside junction including the Channel wall replacement, currently happening, and drainage at the bus stop there.

As well as these new initiatives the usual Parish activities have continued.

We continue an excellent partnership with Eastleigh Borough Council with regular discussions with our Local Area Co-ordinator, Min Partner.

We continue our presence on FaceBook. Notices of our meetings and press releases are posted on FaceBook as well as our website, local noticeboards and local papers.

We have continued our regular support of village groups and other external organizations operating in the Parish with our grant programme. In the last year, these have included Memorial Hall (fire doors), Methodist Church (new windows), Asian Welfare and Cultural Association (Eastleigh Mela), Street Pastors, Victim Support, Hampshire Youth Band & CRUSE (running costs).

We continue our partnership with Hampshire Police to provide a dedicated PCSO to work in Bishopstoke. We have agreed to support a Community SpeedWatch scheme in Bishopstoke and our team of volunteers will soon start training. More volunteers are always welcome. Some of the trained volunteers from Fair Oak will be supporting us. The announcement of a reduction in speed limit along Fair Oak Road and Alan Drayton Way from 40mph to 30mph in the Summer has given an impetus to our participation in the SpeedWatch programme. We were pleased to support the residents' campaign for the speed reduction.

We have continued our support of YZone: the Brookfield Youth Centre, where the Management Committee (BPC, FOHHPC & EBC) have worked hard on additional ways to generate income, including appropriate hirings of the building, to overcome the reduction in funding following the County Council's withdrawal from standard youth work. .

Our Armistice Service at the Memorial at 11am on 11th November has increasing numbers attending every year. Our travel token scheme to assist those unable to use buses and with no access to a family car continues.

A new issue in 2015 will be tree safety in the areas we have taken on responsibility for. A survey has raised concerns about some of the mature trees; particularly one or two in St Mary's churchyard. We will continue to monitor them all; taking action where necessary.

Looking forward, we anticipate an extension to Bishopstoke Cemetery, much needed with an estimate of only 3 years space for new burials, and more allotments, to deal with our waiting list, as well as some more recreation areas from the 2 Local Plan development sites on Church Road and Stoke Common Road.

I'd like to end by thanking our staff, Peter Storey and Cheryl Taylor, without whose dedicated hard work none of the above contributions to the well-being of Bishopstoke residents would have happened.

And finally, may I remind you that all Council meetings are open to the public and we very

8. Presentation of the Audited and Published Return for the year ended 31 March 2014

The key to local government accounting is the Annual Return. This document contains an analysis of the year's accounting together with explanations on significant variations year on year. It goes to the external auditors for examination and signing off. I am required to present to you at this Assembly the latest signed off Annual Return which is for the year ending 31 March 2014 - somewhat historical. However, I have a copy here should you wish to peruse it.

I think a short review of the finances for the year ending today is of more interest and where we go from here financially. We will end the year in a healthy financial position with a cash holding of some £134,000. This is deliberate as much of this has been ringfenced specifically for meeting the costs of upgrading more play equipment, ancilliary costs linked to the conversion of arable land to a new Cemetery as the present Cemetery will become full within the next 3 years or less and the provision of some new allotments where for many years the waiting time has been in excess of 2 years. A full programme of capital expenditure continues around the community. Aside from this, I can generalise

and state that what came into the coffers over the past year went out with in excess of £137,000 going back into the community at large.

The 2014 - 15 Precept and EBC top up grant totalled £144,533. As a result of changes in the way the Government now funds work in the local community, the 2015 - 16 Precept and EBC's top up grant will total £146,701; a modest 1 and one half per cent increase on the current year. This equates to an increase of only £0.63 per annum on a Band D council tax payer and will enable us to meet our obligations and many of your aspirations in the year to come.

My conclusions are that the Council's finances are on a sound footing and that we comply with all statutory and other regulation in their management. Thus we remain well-placed to continue to improve upon the standards of service provided and look forward to the new challenges of 2015 - 16. Thank you.

9. Public questions

Mr Humby asked if the Channel below Scotter Road would be cleared of silt as part of the refurbishment further upstream. The Chairman pointed out that there was a need to conserve part of the natural habitat for wildlife and that quite often a narrower width increased the rate of water flow which, in turn, helped remove silt. However, the Clerk would follow up with the Environment Agency. Mr Humby also pointed out that the Channel split into two further downstream and that for part of its length it was higher than the adjacent Oakbank Gardens. *(Clerk's note – the Environment Agency has said it does not see a need to undertake any work at this time as it is likely the increased water flow once the Riverside bank works have been completed will clear any build up of silt)*

Dr South asked if the broken pavements along Hamilton Road could be repaired before a serious accident occurred and the Clerk would follow this up with Hampshire Highways.

There being no further questions, Cllr Winstanley thanked everyone for attending, declared the Assembly formally closed at 8.45pm and invited all present to enjoy the light refreshments provided.