

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF

### WORLDHAM PARISH

HELD ON THURSDAY 22nd APRIL 2015 AT 7.30pm

AT THE EAST WORLDHAM VILLAGE HALL

#### Present

Cllr Terry Blake (Chairman), Cllr Becky Bagnell, Cllr Thomas Brock, Cllr Tara Goodwyn, Cllr Mary Trigwell-Jones, Mr Robin Twining (Clerk) and 9 members of the public

#### 1. Welcome and Introduction

Cllr Blake welcomed everyone to the meeting. HCCllr Mark Kemp-Gee had sent his apologies that he was unable to come to the meeting because there had been 2 family bereavements and one of the funerals was taking place to-day. The Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council had sent HCCllr Mark Kemp-Gee their condolences.

#### 2. Apologies

Apologies were received from HCCllr Mark Kemp-Gee, Dcll David Ashcroft, Cllr Tessa Gaffney and John and Kate Denyer.

#### 3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2014

Minutes of the Worldham Parish Council held on 10th April 2014 were agreed and signed. Proposed by Cllr Trigwell-Jones and seconded by Cllr Goodwyn AIF

#### 4. County Councillor's Report - HCCllr Kemp-Gee

None

#### 5. District Councillor's Report – Dcll David Ashcroft

The report was read out by the Clerk on behalf of Dcll David Ashcroft  
“The District Council have had a busy year especially in planning. The District plan was approved by the Inspector and formally adopted by the Council. Now follows the task of housing and employment sites in the two parts of the District outside the National Park. The Alton and Four Marks neighbourhood plans are well advanced and will help officers and elected councillors in the task.

Renewable energy installations are high on Central Governments agenda. So far the Council have refused one at Bentley that was allowed at appeal and given permission for another on Gaston Lane. They must be screened by planting and in time will be hidden yet provide a renewable source of electricity. They also provide a wildlife habitat and after installation little disturbance. Properly sited they will help reduce fossil fuel sourced supplies.

The new developments at Bordon are coming to the last stages of the planning system with the major outline application for the Prince Phillip area to be determined on Thursday this week. There will be a large sum of money earmarked and ring fenced for traffic mitigation in surrounding villages that will be affected by the traffic from the additional 4,500 homes. HCC will monitor the volumes speed etc and install measures to control it. The traffic lights on the junctions of the A325 will control flows and count the number using the various routes.

The new town will have an impressive community centre and facilities including sports and education. It will only have 15% affordable housing and for 10 years there are the existing workshops available for rent until needed for housing. It will not happen overnight but the relief road and other parts are already happening.

The District Council are actively looking at revenue streams so as to maintain or enhance services while not increasing the rates charged. The plan is to continue with this with the aim of reducing the District rates charge to nil within the next 10 years if not before. This is being done by co-operating with other councils on administration, offering our services to others, investments in buildings and other innovative ideas.

I thank the community for their support in the last year”.

**6. Chairman’s Report - Cllr Blake**

“As you may have noticed, this is an election year. Not only elections for parliament, but District and Parish Council elections as well. I am pleased to say that, in the case of our own parish, 5 of our 6 parish councillors have chosen to stand for re-election and in the absence of a contested election will be duly re-elected. Councillor Bagnall has chosen not to stand for re-election for personal reasons and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for the contribution she has made during her eight years of service on the Parish Council, including the considerable amount of work she put into revitalising the children’s playground. Thank you Becky. I also wish to thank my fellow councillors for their hard work over the past year in dealing with the essential business required for the smooth running of the parish’s affairs, and for being prepared to continue in this role.

In particular, I wish to thank our Parish Clerk, Robin Twining for his unstinting service to the Council, and for the enthusiastic and professional way in which he carries out his duties.

As you will see from the agenda, we have reports from Councillor Gaffney on the Village Hall and from Councillor Trigwell-Jones on the Parish Plan. We also have reports from our Footpaths Officer, Carolyn Wilson-Webb, our Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, Kate Denyer and our Speedwatch Co-ordinators, Robin Twining and John Denyer. As Councillor Gaffney, and Kate and John Denyer are unable to attend this evening, our Parish Clerk will read those reports. I will be reporting on progress on that long running saga, the Village Design Statement. I would like to thank them all, together with their supporting groups for their hard work and valuable contributions, and all other members of our community who contribute to our parish life.

Apart from the usual run of things which the Parish Council has had to deal with over the past year as part of its routine business, including potholes, highways issues, planning applications and so on, a few things stand out as worthy of mention.

In last year’s chairman’s report, Councillor Brock referred to the prospect of the anaerobic digester and three potential solar farms within or close to the parish. The first of these solar farms, located in Gaston Lane outside of the parish, but adjacent to the parish boundary, is now largely complete. A planning application for the second, on Wilsom’s Farm just inside the parish boundary adjacent to the Alton bypass, was received in January of this year. Due to the significance of this potential development a parish consultation was held to sound out parishioners’ views, and the Parish Council subsequently opposed the application. The applicant has recently informed the Parish Council that, in view of the strength of opposition, they are considering resubmitting their application for a reduced size of installation. The anticipated application for a solar farm adjacent to the B3006 Selborne Road has not yet materialised.

Everyone will be aware of the planned Whitehill/Bordon development which has been ongoing for some years – outside of our parish but with implications for a considerable increase in traffic through our parish. The Whitehill/Bordon Masterplan makes provision for some 4,000 new homes in total for construction in the period to 2028. A planning application for 500 homes plus some commercial development was approved in November 2014. A further planning application for 2,400 homes and a new town centre is due to be decided upon by EHDC’s Planning Committee tomorrow. If approved, work is likely to commence in early 2016.

Another planning development outside of our parish but which could have important consequences for our parishioners is the planned scale of development proposed for Alton under the District Council’s Joint Core Strategy. Already this has resulted in approvals for major housing developments within Alton. Unfortunately, the Alton Neighbourhood Plan has lagged behind these planning developments, and has yet to be adopted by the District Council and so has not been a material planning consideration in these planning decisions. The Parish Council has responded to the consultation on the Plan, generally supporting the Plan’s objectives. A particular concern is the lack of supporting infrastructure to cope with the

increased population, including school and medical services which are already near capacity, and the increased traffic. HCC Highways has appointed consultants to carry out a transport study to make recommendations for road infrastructure improvements for dealing with the anticipated increase in traffic in the Alton area. Although we are still waiting for publication of the final report, we understand it will include a proposal for the creation of a junction between the B3004 and the A31 Alton by-pass adjacent to Worldham Golf Club.

The proposal for changes to the Farnborough airport flight paths which has been ongoing for over a year now, and which, if adopted, would see a significant increase in air traffic over our parish is, as yet, undecided. We understand the decision is now in the hands of the CAA.

A notable achievement over the past year has been the renovation of St Leonard's Church in Hartley Mauditt. This is nearly complete and is scheduled for re-opening for service as usual on the 3rd May. This has been a great community effort requiring the raising of over £200,000, a huge challenge for a small community, and we should applaud all those who have contributed to its success. It will be a delight to see this lovely old church with the covers finally removed, standing once again in all its glory in its tranquil and beautiful setting in the Hampshire countryside.

Finally I would like to mention the Meet the Neighbours party held in the village hall in early March, and initiated by Tessa Gaffney and Mary Trigwell-Jones, and a good band of helpers. Some 62 people attended, a good mix of newer and longer established residents and, I believe, enjoyed by everyone. This initiative arose due to concern that, in the absence of the annual village fete, the opportunities for newer and older residents to meet up were more limited. The village fete has been a long established institution, very popular with residents in our own and the surrounding villages and towns, and a great way for villagers to socialise, as well as a useful fundraiser. The fete was discontinued last year due to the lack of a volunteer to take on the role of chairman to co-ordinate the various activities. There is usually no shortage of helpers to provide support. I think it would be nice to be able to reinstate this event and if there is anybody who would be prepared to take on the role of chairman, please make yourself known".

## **7. Reports from Councillors**

### **a) Village Design Statement by Cllr Blake**

"Drafting of the Village Design Statement was completed in early September last year and, after scrutiny by parish councillors, copies were sent to the South Downs National Park Authority and East Hants District Council for their review and adoption. A copy of the document was also posted on the Worldham Parish website with a notice in the Kings World inviting comments from the public. Due to work pressures at both the SDNPA and EHDC our VDS was apparently not very high on their priority lists and there was some delay before any action was taken. Eventually EHDC submitted the document for adoption to their North West Community Forum on the 27th January and it was duly adopted as a material planning consideration.

The response from the SDNPA was more protracted. We received a detailed critique from the SDNPA's Design Officer late in January recommending numerous changes and additions, mostly of a technical nature for which we would have had to rely almost wholly on professional assistance to implement. We appealed to the head of planning at the SDNPA for a more realistic consideration and he passed it to a different team who suggested only a few, relatively minor changes. We are now working on these and expect to be able to resubmit the amended VDS to the SDNPA shortly. Depending on the scheduling of the SDNPA's meetings it could come up for adoption in May or June, following which celebrations may well be in order".

This will mean that we will have 2 slightly different versions of the VDS, one adopted by EHDC, the other adopted by SDNPA. We expect that we will go back to EHDC and ask them to adopt the revised SDNPA version.

### **b) The Village Hall report by Cllr Gaffney**

The report was read out by the Clerk on behalf of Cllr Gaffney

“As we all know there have been ongoing concerns about the hall for some years and we have tried to tackle the most pressing items as we are able.

### **Roofing**

Several roofing contractors inspected the roof in the early autumn and assured us that the roof was in a satisfactory condition with only minor repairs required to rectify some leaks at the junction of the kitchen roof with the hall wall and some dampness in the north wall. A small area of tiles was replaced, some new flashing installed and the old chimney removed at a modest cost of £990.

### **Heating**

During the year it was necessary to make some further modification to the heating.

### **Lighting**

Lighting of the hall steps was repaired after some difficulties by a volunteer and we thank her and everyone for their patience while the problems were solved.

### **Upgrades**

Each year we try to upgrade the hall in some way. This year the hall sub-committee with the Parish Council agreement decided that a new front door was the most appropriate project. A grant of £1,250 from District Councillor David Ashcroft enabled the project to be completed.

Thanks are again due to Kate Denyer for her excellent care of the hall, to Bill Butt for keeping the steps clean and to members of the committee for all the odd jobs they do and for their advice and also for Mike Walker for dealing with the bookings”.

### **c) Parish Plan – report by Cllr Trigwell-Jones**

“Cllr Trigwell-Jones reported that the Parish Plan sub committee had met on 24th February. Two new members had joined the sub committee, Tim Hayes and Christine Bone. Margaret Whidborne has also been co-opted onto the sub committee. As the Parish Plan was nearly 5 years old, guidance had been sought from EHDC on the need to refresh/update the plan. The idea is to refresh certain areas, including housing, traffic, roads and energy, via a short questionnaire.

The sub committee had looked at the over 40 Action Points identified within the Parish Plan and have asked that the Parish Council look at them including: drainage problem in Wyck Lane; road signs need cleaning and/or repairing; the pavement outside Hill View needs repairing; limited weight restriction notices were requested at both ends of the road connecting B3004 and B3006 ie for the Round House junction and also at Blanket Street.

The Parish Council will discuss again the possibility of village gateway signs for East Worldham”.

## **8. Financial Statement of the Accounts for the year 2014/15**

The Clerk reported on the accounts.

“I have pleasure in presenting the financial report for 2014-15. Last year I ended my report stating:

The Council will continue to actively manage their finances, but we do still need to invest to maintain and improve the infrastructure and fabric of the Parish, and we have to bear in mind that there will be Parish Council elections next year, and if it is contested, there will be potentially be a significant financial cost to the Parish.

As your RFO, Responsible Financial Officer, I have to say that I am pleased that this year’s elections are uncontested, because it means that the cost of running the Parish Council elections will be in the order of £175 rather than if they were contested of £2,000.

To put this in perspective, if we had to pay for a contested election the cost to the Parish Council would have been equivalent to just under 25% of the annual precept.

In November last year when I presented the budget proposals to your Councillors and with my recommendations for setting the 2015-16 precept, because our costs have risen I was projecting a large operating deficit. The only way to meet this deficit was to increase the precept. This is why your Councillors took the decision to increase the precept from £8,497.50 to £9,177, a headline rise of 7.6%. It sounds high, but you may recall that last year your precept actually fell by 4.4%.

To put the precept in context, for a band F dwelling, the cost of this year's precept is £66.44 compared to last year's of £61.75, or in 2008 of £66.51. In reality compared to 7 years ago, the cost to a band F household is a reduction, not an increase, of 7 pence. This is because the housing stock within the parish has increased over the 7 years and the cost of the precept is borne by an increased number of houses.

You should have a copy of the Summary of Income and Expenditure of Worldham Parish Council for the year ending 31 March 2015. As usual I will not go through each item but will highlight the main features.

You may recall that in 2013-14 the Parish Council managed 3 one off projects, the Village Design Statement, the refurbishment of the kitchen, and the upgrade of the playground, which were outside the normal income and expenditure profile of the Council. So in order for parishioners to compare the normal income and expenditure from one year to another, I have shown the costs and grants of those projects separately in the accounts to reflect this.

The Parish Council received a grant of £1,250 from your District Councillor to fund the refurbishment of the village hall door and the notice board outside. The cost of these projects with additional expenditure carried over from last year on the Village Design Statement amounted to £1,606

Firstly looking at the income side, our total income for 2014-15, excluding project grants was £9,524 compared to £9,964 for the previous year.

We are once again, very grateful to receive a donation of £100 from John Baigent towards the upkeep of the village hall.

Turning to the expenditure side, total expenditure, excluding the one off projects for the year increased from £9,286 in 2013/14 to £12,137 in 2014/15. This is primarily due to 2 factors:

Firstly there was an increase in expenditure on repairs and other expenses to the village hall, including repairs to the roof. Secondly the Clerk's salary has increased because the Parish Council increased the number of hours worked by the Clerk from 8 to 10 hours a week. Hence the increase under this heading.

Due to the extension of transitional business tax relief the business rates for the village hall was again zero. The audit fee doubled because the fee is based on turnover, and due to the one off projects, the turnover last year meant that we went up a chargeable band. I am budgeting for this year for the fee to go down a band and for the fee to be halved to £100

Our balances stand at £15,389 compared to last year's end of year balances of £18,359. I am projecting a further deficit for this year as the Parish Council continues to invest in the fabric and infrastructure of the parish".

## **9. Reports from Officials**

### **a) Footpaths report by Carolyn Wilson-Webb**

"There is little to report this year as I have only been informed of a very few problems,

- 1) A broken bridge on Bridleway 30 was reported last April and was assigned Priority 1. No work has taken place since that time meaning that the bridleway is impassable.
- 2) The footbridge on foot path 35, adjacent to Field House was 'resolved to our satisfaction' according to the Rights of Way Team. However the steps on nearby foot path 32 had still not been dealt with and despite a message I received to say that I would be contacted by the Rights of Way Team I was still waiting to hear in September. In October I reported the

problem yet again even saying that it was only a matter of time before a walker fell into the lane but I still have had no response.

- 3) Two minor problems re nettles on the foot path behind East Worldham Church and a water leak on foot path 32 were promptly dealt with. One by me (and a pair of shears) and the other by the landowner.

The good news concerning footpaths is that work is to start on BOAT 40, Water Lane, and BOAT 67 from near Priory Farm towards Wyck Hill Farm. Both of these will be closed from March 2<sup>nd</sup> until September 2<sup>nd</sup>, or until the work is completed. These 2 routes will form part of a circular walk of some 20 miles from Alton through West Worldham, Selborne, Chawton and Beech hopefully to be completed by May 2016 and to be called the Writers Way, as it will pass near to Jane Austens' House. Finally the Clerk and I completed a comprehensive questionnaire last October re Countryside Access and the results of this consultation document, which was completed by all Parish Councils, can be found on [www.hants.goc.uk/row](http://www.hants.goc.uk/row) and makes interesting reading".

#### **b) Neighbourhood Watch report produced by Kate Denyer**

The report was read out by Cllr Blake on behalf of Kate Denyer

"Membership has increased slightly to 87 members, with some former members moving and new ones arriving. There is plenty of scope for more to join.

Reflecting on what I reported on last year, the overall picture remains the same. In addition to details we receive on town crimes, such as in Alton, the general pattern of criminal activity in the broader rural communities follows a similar pattern to previous years: rural/farm crime, burglaries, dumping, damage to cars, theft of heating oil and of tools from outbuildings all feature. Telephone and email scams seem to be on the rise. There have been seasonal differences, crimes tending to rise before and during holiday periods.

Once again our parish has not been totally immune (the theft of a small tractor and power tools from an outbuilding). Wheelie bins were also removed from their rightful owners, thankfully later reunited. In recent months there have been numerous reports of outbuilding break-ins in surrounding rural locations and we are urged to make our property as secure as possible. Many of you will recall the report of a theft from Wyck, involving power tools and a wood chipper, abandoned as the thieves escaped from police. Their route took them through Worldham – a good reminder of how important our vigilance might be in helping prevent or reduce crime: the police were unable to identify neither the vehicle nor the registration. Do report any suspicious activity.

We continue to receive advice about telephone and online scams and of bogus callers, along with general advice concerning general care and safety of those in our community, together with reports from Country Watch and Horse Watch – clearly also of relevance across our parish and relevance to that community.

Some of you will already be aware that Jess Hornsby has replaced Louisa Whatmore as our PCSO. She covers the Alton Rural East area and can often be seen out and about.

I attended a Winchester and East Hampshire Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators meeting in November. An interesting evening including a presentation by Assistant Chief Constable David Pryde on Hampshire Constabulary Organisational Change. The key message from this was how our police are re-organising in the face of funding cuts to help maintain current police support. We also had 'workshop' sessions covering a variety of topics to discuss.

As a light-hearted end: some of the wording in our reports can be quite amusing, including the recent one titled "Ladders Committing Crime". A big thank you to everyone for your support in helping to make our community safer. Please encourage others to join".

#### **c) Speedwatch report produced by John Denyer**

The report was read out by the Clerk on behalf of John Denyer

"Over the last 12 months, we have deployed the scheme in East Worldham on 10 occasions. During that time, we have sent out warning letters to the owners of 229 speeding vehicles.

Our aim is not to catch people out, but to slow people down, and we see about 11% of vehicles speeding; up from 5% since my last report, but still lower than when we started the scheme in 2013. The average speed of those exceeding the speed limit is 41 mph.

We typically measure about 400 vehicles an hour in a single direction, ie about 800 an hour pass through the village both ways. The actual number of course varies at different times of the day but ranges from about 300-600.

The Clerk and his deputy thank our volunteers, who regularly donate a couple of hours of their time to help keep Worldham safe. We stopped operating between September and March due to illness and inclement weather, but are now out on the B3004 again and try to man a speed check at least once in most of the summer months.

The scheme is experiencing some challenges. We need further volunteers to be able to provide a more consistent presence on the roadside to act as a useful deterrent against speeding. There are 12 volunteers trained-up, though most of our deployments are manned by just 6 individuals. This means we are not resilient if someone has to drop out, and places much of the burden on just a few.

If anyone is prepared to volunteer, there is a simple police form to complete, and training is provided. Those who are already on the team would agree that it is both a rewarding and sociable experience”.

#### **10. Open Forum and Public Questions**

The following questions and points were raised:

1. What is the projected increase in traffic through East Worldham as a result of the Whitehill/Bordon development?

It is difficult to obtain any precise figures, and even so there are questions about the authenticity of any figures produced, but a projected figure of a 30% increase in traffic has been cited as and when the town is fully developed.

2. What increase in air traffic is projected with the Farnborough airport proposals?

If the proposals are accepted it will result in a significant increase in the number of aircraft overflying this area and at a lower height. A decision from the Civil Aviation Authority is expected later this year.

3. Chinooks helicopters come flying low over the centre of the village, why can they not fly over the fields instead?

We have experienced low flying Chinooks for many years but the number of flights have diminished.

4. What will be the size of the development in Bordon/Whitehill, is it 3,300 new houses or 4,000 or 4,500.

The original proposal was for 5,500 houses but this figure has been reduced to 4,000

5. A request for the Highways Agency to look into reducing the speed limit on the B3006 between Selborne and Alton. It was noted that the police are considering raising the speed limit through Selborne from 20 to 30 mph

It was agreed that this matter would be put onto the next Parish Council’s agenda.

The meeting closed at 8.28 pm