

PARISH OF BISHOPSTOKE

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly 2012 held at the Methodist Church, Bishopstoke on Thursday 15 April 2012 commencing at 7.30pm

Present: In the Chair – Cllr Susan Toher, Chairman of Bishopstoke Parish Council
Cllrs McGuinness, Pemberton, Shephard, Thornton and Winstanley

No members of the public 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 Susan Toher extended a warm welcome to all present at the seventeenth Bishopstoke Parish Annual Assembly.

2. Presentation by organisations receiving financial support during the year

Mr David Scott-Morgan from ECV Partnerships gave a presentation on the plans for developing The Mount site into a new Anchor care village comprising a nursing home, 30 close care units where a degree of independence could be maintained, 90 apartments for rent or leasing, a small shop, library, restaurant/café bar and a wellness centre with swimming pool. It was also planned for 3 support vehicles to be located on-site for village use. The proposal included retention of part of the Tower and the Orchard. The detailed planning application would be submitted in May and the developers anticipated being on-site towards the yearend and taking a year to build the first phase. In answer to a question, it was confirmed that Anchor would provide assistance when resale became necessary. A public consultation would be held in the BCA on Friday 30 March between 2.30pm and 7.30pm and on Saturday 31 March between 10.00am and 2.00pm.

Kath Jones and Alan Davies from the H.O.P.E. Job Club in Fair Oak talked about their work in helping 16 to 24 year olds organise, prepare and encourage themselves into getting employment and thanked the Parish Council for their grant earlier in the year when they were starting up. They explained there were four volunteers with differing business backgrounds who met on a Tuesday morning in the Fair Oak Library to discuss with eligible young people how best to write a CV, conduct themselves at interview, body language and dressing or just generally direct them towards work experience or a job vacancy. The Club had started in September 2011 and plans were being expanded to include visits to schools and the YZone Youth Facility together with more local advertising.

Police Sgt Sandra Reid, the recently appointed Neighbourhood Police team leader introduced herself and explained the working of her team and the range of crime in the Bishopstoke area emphasising that we were low in crime with the main problems relating to anti-social behaviour. She highlighted the ability of the public to monitor crime in their area by going to www.crimereports.co.uk and also live action via Twitter. Her team of police officers and PCSOs were pro-active in the performance of their duties and they were all keen to continue in this manner.

The Parish Council had made a grant to the Hamble Valley and Eastleigh Heritage Guides to help them meet the costs of producing a souvenir commemorative leaflet for the general public marking the anniversary of the Titanic tragedy and highlighting local connections. Unfortunately, no-one from the Guides was able to attend but the Clerk read out a progress report they had submitted which drew attention, in particular, to members of the Collyer family and Leonard Knight from Bishopstoke who were lost in the disaster. The commemorative events would include a walk around Bishopstoke as part of the Eastleigh Carnival programme of evening walks.

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Bateman, McKeone and Roling and from Mr Roberts.

4. Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 19 May 2011

Copies of the minutes were available to those present at the Assembly and were on the Parish Council website. Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Winstanley, **RESOLVED** unanimously that these be accepted as a true record of the 2011 Assembly.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 19 May 2011

There were no matters arising.

6. Chairman's Address and Annual Report

I would like to begin by thanking all our Parish Councillors for their efforts over the past year. All have worked well together to represent the best interests of our village.

We have continued supporting village groups and organisations and other external organisations, and in the last year grants have been given to Victim Support Eastleigh, the Asian Welfare and Cultural Association, Bishopstoke Methodist Church, the H.O.P.E. Job Club, Hamble Valley & Eastleigh Heritage Guides, and the 12th Eastleigh Scout Group. It remains the Council's intention to continue to provide assistance to groups in or helping our community as funds permit.

We also support Bishopstoke Carnival as a community project to ensure this regular annual feature in the life of Bishopstoke residents carries on. This year marks the 100th carnival in the community and planning is underway to make this a special event in our social calendar.

Our Armistice Service at the Memorial Hall at 11am on 11th November is always well attended and following a request from a local resident an additional plaque on the War Memorial to honour those persons who have given their lives for their country since the Second World War was put in place in time for last year's service.

Our partnership with Hampshire Police to provide a dedicated Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) to work in Bishopstoke also continues, and we have a long-term commitment to the YZone Youth Centre at Brookfield.

As part of the on-going process of transferring responsibility for providing facilities to the local community from Eastleigh Borough Council to the Parish Council, and following on from the transfer of the cemetery and allotments, we have taken over ten more bus shelters in Bishopstoke to go with the four already owned and provided by the Parish Council. Responding to requests from residents we have also installed 2 small bus shelters on Stoke Park Road at the junction with Colchester Avenue and Drake Road and we have a longer term plan to provide more shelters where needed.

From 1st April 2012 we will be taking over the play areas and open spaces at Templecombe Road, Sayers Road, Church Road (Stoke Common) and Otter Close as part of our arrangement with the Borough Council to place responsibility for local assets and amenities at that level of government nearest the user. In the broader context, this is what national government means by the 'Big Society'.

The Parish Council now has responsibility for the maintenance of St Mary's Churchyard now that the churchyard is closed. Repair work has been carried out on part of the front brick wall

together with some tidying up of the side area adjacent to the Stoke Park Road backway. This has exposed headstones which have been laid alongside the iron fence together and a variety of broken stones which we believe were once part of the original burial ground before it was levelled. These have been kept in the form of a rockery out of respect.

On 1st April 2011 we introduced our own Travel Token scheme for Bishopstoke residents who are over state pensionable age and are unable to use a bus. With the withdrawal of the F bus service to the Stoke Common area changes were made to the scheme to allow more eligible people to benefit. It now takes into account the need for a companion and tops up the County's voucher scheme for the disabled.

For those wishing to meet your local Councillor, the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk to discuss your thoughts on our Parish and its facilities please call in to our Temporary Parish Office in the Methodist Church Hall, Sedgwick Road, on Wednesday mornings between 11.00am and 1.00pm. We look forward to seeing you.

7. Presentation of the Audited and Published Return for the year ended 31 March 2011

Copies of the audited Annual Return for 2011 were made available to those present. Mr Storey, as the RFO, explained that the key to local government accounting was the Annual Return. This document contained an analysis of the year's accounting together with explanations on variations year on year in excess of 15%. It went to the Audit Commission for examination and signing off and then the most recently signed off Return is presented to the public at this Assembly. The latest signed off copy was for the year ending 31 March 2011. No observations were raised by either the internal or external auditors.

A short review of the finances for the year about to end was then given. We would end the year in a healthy financial position with a surplus of some £50,000 of income over expenditure. This was deliberate as most of this had been ringfenced specifically for renovation at Shears Mill, the possibility of a new parish office and for the conversion of arable land for a new Cemetery, as the present Cemetery would become full within the next 5 or so years, or for the provision of new allotments. As a generalisation, what came into the coffers went out with some £51,000 going back directly into the community.

This year's Precept of £127,700 included an element to enable us to take responsibility for ten bus shelters not already owned by the Parish Council with a corresponding reduction in the Borough's tax receipts and the new year's Precept of £130,000 recognised the transfer of four of the play areas and open spaces from the Borough Council to us with a corresponding reduction in the amount of council tax retained by the Borough. The net result was that the Parish Council had held its Precept at last year's level yet would still meet its obligations and many of its aspirations.

The RFO concluded that the Council's finances were on a sound footing and that it complied with all statutory and other regulation in its management. Thus it remained well-placed to continue to improve upon the standards of service provided and looked forward to the new challenges of 2012 - 13.

8. Public Questions

There were no questions raised from the floor.

There being no further questions, Cllr Toher thanked everyone for attending, declared the Assembly formally closed at 8.50pm and invited all present to enjoy the light refreshments provided.