

Minutes of Berwick St. James Village Meeting

Monday, 7th October, 2013

In attendance: Neil MacDougall (Chairman)
Olivia Marchant (Deputy Chairman / Acting Parish Clerk)

Guests: Councillor Ian West - Till & Wylve Valley Division
Councillor Graham Wright - Durrington & Larkhill Division
PC Mark Steele - Amesbury Rural Neighbourhood Policing Team
Janice Hassett - S.T.A.G. (Shrewton Traffic Action Group)

Total in Attendance: 38

Item No.	<u>Summary of issues discussed and decisions made</u>	<u>Actioned by</u>
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1. **INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman welcomed the village residents to the meeting. He also welcomed our guests, Cllrs Ian West and Graham Wright, PC Mark Steele and Janice Hassett. He also took the opportunity to thank Stephen and Ailsa Bush, together with Jane Rowe and her team, for a most enjoyable and well organised Harvest Supper.

The Chairman also wished to record thanks on behalf of the village to Jackie Webb and Roland Castlemaine for organising the raffle at the Harvest Supper, and to Sarah Humphreys and her team for all their extremely hard work planning the Village Fete & Dog Show and for making it such a success.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Nigel Rodgers	John Coleman
Mary Gatling	Peter & Gabrielle Smith
John & Pauline Stephenson	Michael Mertens
Henry & Sophie Colthurst	Jane Rowe

3. **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

Apple-Pressing & Barbeque Event: It was reported that those who had volunteered to organise a community apple-pressing event had reluctantly given up the idea, due to too many other commitments.

Litter Bins: The Chairman informed the meeting that he had yet to take action on obtaining two more litter bins for the village, but gave assurances that he would deal with the matter before the next meeting.

Chairman

The Minutes were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. **RESIGNATION AND RE-ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Kate Glyn-Owen had resigned as Village Treasurer, as she and her family have moved away from the village. Bill Hiscocks accepted the proposal for him to take over the position.

Proposer: Gill Brasher **Seconded:** Janey Campbell-Johnston **Decision:** Passed unanimously

Tricia Burke has resigned as Parish Clerk and a volunteer was invited to take over this position. It

was stressed by the Chairman that although the responsibilities of the position were not extensive, the general running of the village without a Parish Clerk would put a greater burden on the shoulders of the other three positions, and the service provided by these volunteers could be affected. Anyone interested should contact Neil MacDougall.

5. **UPDATE ON COUNCIL MATTERS AND THE A303 - Ian West**

Ian West reported back on the well-attended Amesbury Board meeting in Shrewton held on Thursday 19th September to discuss the current problems on the A303. While there was considerable anger and frustration evident at the lack of progress to resolve the bottleneck around Stonehenge & Winterbourne Stoke, the debate was constructive. In general, although all local villages are affected in different ways, all supported the dualling of the A303.

***Note:** A more detailed summary of the matters discussed at the meeting, provided by Gail Lovett and Richard Brasher, is attached.*

Ian also reported back on the private meeting at Janice Hassett's house with John Glen MP, which Gail Lovett also attended. He was disappointed to note that John Glen did not seem to recognise the strength of feeling in the area, or the severity of the problem. Glen's lack of commitment or reluctance to become engaged on the issue, endorsed by others at the meeting, is a concern, as any significant re-modelling of the A303 in this area would be a national decision, requiring the strong support of local MPs.

Ian went on to say that Wiltshire Council had been disappointingly 'silent' on the issue, and were arguing that more time should be given to assess the impact of the closure of the A344 at the Stonehenge end. Both Ian and Charles Street pointed out that pressure also needs to be put on English Heritage and The National Trust (who own the surrounding land), as they do not appear to be supportive of the dualling option or of the general campaign to resolve the traffic problems. Ian urged people to sign STAG's petition, and Cllr Graham Wright said that he would put some pressure on the Durrington MP, Claire Perry. Finally, Ian explained that details of traffic accidents and incidents over the past five years showed that the majority were not at the junction of the A344 and A303 as often suggested, but in and around Winterbourne Stoke. He confirmed that he would be contacting John Glen again, and suggested that individual villagers could also write to him on the issue.

Janice Hassett spoke about STAG, saying that they had more than 900 signatures already and were changing the name to Stonehenge Traffic Action Group to reflect the wider nature of the affected communities.

6. **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH – PC Mark Steele**

Mark Steele gave some background to the Neighbourhood Watch concept, which was started in the USA and adopted in the UK in 1992, where it now has a membership of 10 million people. Every community network has a coordinator, who is the link between the village and the police. But, he stressed, the presence of a coordinator does not mean anyone seeing anything suspicious should not ring the police: if action is required, please ring the police.

There is evidence that visual indications of a NW scheme – for example, the stickers Mark Steele brought along for the village - do deter burglars etc, as they know people are on the look-out and will alert the police.

Keith Lovett, Berwick's NW coordinator, said he had found it difficult to set up a meeting with the police to get the scheme off the ground. Mark Steel explained there had been a change in responsibility for NW schemes due to cuts, and it was agreed that his replacement would contact the village shortly. The Crime Bulletin is already circulated with the village and much

Keith Lovett

appreciated.

The Chairman thanked Mark for his contribution and wished him well on his forthcoming retirement.

7. **SPEEDING ISSUES**

Introduction – Carolyn MacDougall: After welcoming PC Mark Steele and Cllr Graham Wright, who had been invited to talk about various speeding aspects, Carolyn MacDougall gave a quick update on Berwick's position regarding traffic calming solutions. The original proposal for Gateways has been deferred, as per the Speeding Group letter dated 8 August 2013. The fact that Berwick would have had to secure funding, and that doubts exist about its total effectiveness – which Cllr Graham Wright explained later – the Speeding Group was now looking at a more straightforward solution, which would not need financing. The group's proposal was to implement Community Speed Watch in conjunction with the intermittent use of a mobile SID (Speeding Indicator Device) - loaned to Berwick on an ad hoc basis free of charge from Durrington. At a later date the village may want to purchase our own.

SIDs Overview

Hic-Tec and portable device

Easy to install (runs off batteries)

No permission required to use on public places – some restrictions do apply

Alerts drivers of their speed

Raises awareness of local speed limits

Collects data (volume of traffic and speed)

The overall benefit of a mobile device is that it can be moved around the village and installed in various sites for short periods to maximise effectiveness.

Speeding in Rural Areas – PC Mark Steele: PC Mark Steele highlighted that speeding in rural areas is a major problem. Although he has a laser speed gun and has been visiting rural areas, he can't be everywhere as he has 25 parishes to cover. Speeding and volume of traffic through villages has increased recently due to problems on the A303.

Community Speed Watch – Marie Perry: Marie Perry said they had 13 volunteers for the training to use the speed gun – a good response. Two more would be welcome. Training starts week beginning October 14th and will be finished by November 16th. She will give an update on the training after that date.

Traffic Calming Solutions – Cllr Graham Wright: Graham Wright, Councillor for Durrington and Larkhill, then outlined the usefulness of SID (Speed Indicator Device) which Durrington/Larkhill are kindly allowing Berwick to borrow. He gave details of their own research and outlined the various actions they had introduced in Larkhill to counteract speeding. They found that very few measures, including lowering the speed limit and the erection of large gateways at the entrance to Larkhill, had any significant impact. The most effective strategy was the intermittent use of SID, and education of the speeding public, especially where school children were involved to get home the message that speed kills and or injures children like them.

Conclusion – Carolyn MacDougall: Following Carolyn's earlier presentation and endorsement from Cllr Ian Wright, the conclusion was that the combination of CSW and SID was the best way forward for Berwick. Its effectiveness would be monitored and reviewed in a year's time. Diana Gifford-Mead enquired about white gates at either end of the village, but it was pointed out that this had been looked at and there was insufficient verge space for it to be effective.

8. **VILLAGE AFFAIRS**

2013 Village Fete and Dog Show: Sarah Humphreys reported back on June's very successful fete. After expenses and including the Duck Race the total made was £2662.9p. This was £345 more than the last fete (held in June 2011; the Jubilee celebrations in 2012 meant there was no fete last year).

As decided at a January 2013 meeting of the Fete committee, the proceeds were divided three ways, with £500 going to the Community Fund, and just over £1000 each to the Church and to the Reading Room.

Sarah pointed out that although certain stalls regularly produce substantial sums, it was felt that the smaller stalls and games, producing around £20 each, were still very important as they contributed greatly to the atmosphere of a proper village fete. It was also felt that more could be done to cater for the Dog Show entrants, who tended to arrive early to register their dogs.

Reading Room: Nicky Street explained that a picture hanging system had been bought and would be erected shortly. It would allow pictures to be hung at different levels, and its versatility meant it could be used for special displays/art trails etc. The idea was to have a small collection of old village pictures on the walls the rest of the time.

Film Nights were continuing with 'The Great Gatsby' re-scheduled for January 23rd 2014, with 'My Week With Marilyn' on October 24th and 'Kind Hearts And Coronets' on November 28th. The annual Christmas Bazaar will be in the Reading Room at 2.30 on Saturday December 7th.

The Farm Shop is having a Coffee Morning on Sunday 13th October

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Tree Matters: Henry Colthurst had suggested that the young oak tree planted in the centre of the village should be pruned and shaped, and it was agreed that Dominic Ridley would be contacted to see if he could do this. Bill Hiscock also stated that the PCC had agreed that the large Copper Beech in the churchyard should be surveyed and Stephen Bush confirmed that this was in hand.

Chairman
Stephen
Bush

Date of next meeting: It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in January 2014.

There being no further business the meeting was closed.

Attachments:

Summary of report of Amesbury Board Meeting in Shrewton to discuss the A303 problem.

Summary of Reports by Gail Lovett & Richard Brasher of the Amesbury Board Meeting in Shrewton to Discuss the A303 Problem.

Gail Lovett Shrewton village hall was packed and the meeting was very well set out and chaired. The item on the A303 was well managed and people very focused in what they had to say. Parish councils represented included Shrewton, Winterbourne Stoke, Amesbury, and Bulford. The main points to come out of it were:

- There is general agreement that things have got a lot worse since the redesign of the Longbarrow roundabout and the closure of the A344. There are now up to 10 mile tailbacks to the Tidworth turn and beyond for traffic going west and increasing jams going east.
- It was acknowledged that the impact of this situation is being felt widely as some traffic is diverting off miles before Stonehenge to try and find ways round the jams.
- The lane design and markings on the Longbarrow roundabout are wrong and are confusing motorists. The angle of the lanes are also wrong making it more difficult for drivers to stay in lane. The Highways Agency representative agreed, saying lane usage on the roundabout is a problem, and said this was being looked into.
- Some people felt the lights on the Countess road roundabout had not helped.
- Some believed the camber on the new roundabout at Airman's Corner/Cross was wrong and also that there should be two lanes at the roundabout, going north, to reduce Shrewton/Devizes bound traffic being held up by cars and coaches turning right at the roundabout to enter the new visitor centre.
- There has been a significant increase in vehicles, and speeding, going through Shrewton, including heavy lorries which are above the weight limit. This was acknowledged to be very worrying as the road through the village and past the school is narrow and at times difficult to navigate.
- There is a significant increase in traffic through Larkhill.
- Traffic problems on the 303 are exacerbated by drivers slowing down to look at/take photographs of Stonehenge, and this has a real impact on traffic coming off the dual carriage way and going east.
- Suggestions were made to try and ease the overall problem in the short term. These included better signage to discourage people using Shrewton as a 'rat run'; shielding Stonehenge from view to prevent drivers slowing down to look at it; re-opening the A344 (it was made very clear by WCC and Highways that this would not happen); closing off byway 12 so that vehicles could not use it. This has been refused by the planning inspector; from 5th Oct there will be a sign saying no turning. It was agreed that this might help but some people may ignore the sign.
- Highways Agency said that a 'route-based strategy' was being worked on (whatever that is!)
- There is a website being set up, the address will be on WCC site. People can put comments on this website.
- The A303 problem is a priority for Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

The main issues are around the economy and tourism, in conjunction with the local issues for Winterbourne Stoke, Shrewton etc. WCC are now in partnership with Cornwall, Devon and Somerset and are preparing a business case for dualling the road through to Cornwall. The government have also agreed to a feasibility study (I understand that is for

Attachment 1

dualling round Stonehenge).

WCC and the whole meeting agreed that the only solution to local impact, better traffic management and helping to return Stonehenge to its natural landscape, was a dual carriageway north of the existing A303

The meeting was filmed for BBC South today and was on the news.

Richard Brasher

Some background to the meeting:

- The meeting was held to get the views of local people before discussing the problem with the Government and highways Agency.
- The blocking of the 344 was done by English Heritage and the Highways agency after a public enquiry approved the idea.
- Highways Agency has been told that dualling the A303 is the only solution.
- The Government has agreed to a feasibility study after 2016.
- It was emphasised that the A303 past Stonehenge is a local, regional and national problem.
- English Heritage will not apparently agree to screen Stonehenge with trees but may agree to bunding.
- The rat run problem, even after the summer holiday season, appears to be getting worse.

In addition to Gail and myself, Ian Fisher and Peter Crabtree were also present at the meeting, which was chaired by Councillor John Smale, Chairman of Amesbury Area Board.