

PARISH OF BISHOPSTOKE

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly 2007 held at the Methodist Church, Bishopstoke on Thursday 24 May 2007, commencing at 7.30pm

Present: In the Chair – Cllr Anne Winstanley, Chair of Bishopstoke Parish Council
Cllrs Bateman, Hedges, Pemberton, Penson, Roling, Shephard, Snook and Toher
PCSO Liam Porter
Seven members of the public
Guest speakers – Mrs Bev Drage, Ms Leah Mathias and Mr John Silman

In attendance: Mr P J Storey OBE, Clerk to Bishopstoke Parish Council

1. Welcome by the Chair

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

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Davies-Dear, Cllr Sharp and Reverend Richard Wise.

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 25 May 2006

Copies of the minutes were distributed to those present at the Assembly. Proposed Cllr Roling, Seconded Cllr Shephard, **RESOLVED** unanimously that these be accepted as a true record of the 2006 Assembly.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 25 May 2006

There were no matters arising.

5. Chair's Address and Annual Report

Cllr Winstanley reported that there had been a couple of changes on the Parish Council in the last year. Just before Christmas everyone on the Parish Council was saddened by the death of Val Hamilton. Val had been one of the original Parish Councillors in 1996. The new year also saw the resignation of Derek Prince as his work commitments made it difficult to continue. At our Parish Council AGM on Tuesday this week, Cllrs Debra Hedges and Samantha Bateman were co-opted onto the Parish Council to fill vacancies left by Val and Derek. Debbie has a long history of working for Bishopstoke residents on Stoke Residents Association and the Carnival Group and Sam was a very welcome addition from an under-represented part of our village. At the end of 2006, Peter Bulbeck retired after 7 years service with the Parish Council. He had first been Clerk and then Responsible Financial Officer and his contribution to Bishopstoke Parish had been appreciated by all. The Clerk, Peter Storey, had taken on the financial duties.

Cllr Winstanley continued by describing how the Parish Council had continued its day-to-day work to represent the best interests of the village. This had been confirmed by our

achievement of Quality Parish status last Autumn. This award was in recognition of the quality of service to residents and the way the Council is run. We have continued our regular support of village groups and organisations and other organisations, and in the last year we have given grants to Homestart, Bishopstoke Methodist Church towards the rebuilding project for improved community facilities and which you can very much see in progress here, Eastleigh Bereavement Society, Vitalise, Bishopstoke Scout Group, Hampshire Association for the Care of the Blind, which had its offices in Bishopstoke, St Mary's Church for work on headstone safety, Eastleigh Victim Support, Eastleigh Air Training Corps and the Bishopstoke Carnival Group. We are continuing our partnership with the Forestry Commission for improvements to the paths around the Bluebell Trail in Stoke Park Woods and have recently agreed further funding towards this work.

At our Parish Assembly last year, we had Inspector Kelly Whiting from Eastleigh Police Station address us on the plans for PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers). In January, we started our partnership with Hampshire Police to provide a dedicated PCSO to work in Bishopstoke. Our PCSO, Liam Porter, will spend 80% of his time out on the patch, on foot or bike, getting to know the local community and dealing with anti-social behaviour and low-level crime. In return, the Parish Council has promised £6,000 funding each year towards the PCSO, with the remainder of the funding coming from a central Government grant. The Parish Council had funded the addition of engraved Rolls of Honour to the War Memorial at the Memorial Hall in time for the Armistice Service last November. The work had been organised by Dave Stratton, chairman of Bishopstoke Parish Forum, which had preceded the Parish Council, and who was one of the original councillors in 1996, and the materiel and labour for the additional brick and metalwork were contributed by Bishopstoke Working Men's Club. She was very pleased to note that the Armistice Service was now very well-attended with representatives from all churches, British Royal Legion and several village organisations taking part.

It was equally pleasing to be able to report that the Brookfield Youth Centre opened a couple of weeks ago - the culmination of many years work by the Bishopstoke, Fair Oak and Horton Heath Youth Project, and we are told has been well received by the many young people attending, with reports from the police of fewer complaints of youth nuisance on opening evenings. Councillors have continued our regular village litter-picks, mainly around Riverside and the Bishopstoke Channel but recently branched out to work along Old Fair Oak Road and the Brookfield estate.

In conclusion, Cllr Winstanley commented that our major Parish project remained the turbines renovation at Shears Mill, on which we had several guest speakers tonight. We now have planning permission for a new brick building, a report on the feasibility of a mini-hydro power generation scheme at the Mill site and prospects of Heritage Lottery funding towards the old turbine restoration and building work.

6. Presentation of the Audited and Published Return for the year ended 31 March 2006

Copies of the audited Annual Return for 2006 were made available to those present, as were copies of the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2007. Mr Storey, as the RFO, explained the procedure whereby the contents of the Annual Return were somewhat historical but confirmed this was the norm. He then took the opportunity to highlight briefly the surplus of income over expenditure of £16,142 in the year to 31 March 2007 which was accounted for by underspends on planned expenditure on the Brookfield Youth facility and on partnership funding of the PCSO and also the on-going unused provision made in the accounts for any unexpected local election charge. He also highlighted that nearly half of the year's expenditure had been on grants and other aspects of community support. He drew attention to the low Band D council tax charge for Bishopstoke residents, £20.37 in the current year, and

concluded that the financial affairs of the Council were sufficiently healthy to enable the Council to meet its on-going commitments and aspirations.

7. Presentation on Shears Mill renovation plans

Ms Leah Mathias, project manager for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's plans to rejuvenate the Itchen Navigation, gave an overview of progress to date. The Navigation had been built between 1665 and 1710 and was in commercial use until 1869. The Trust believed that rejuvenation of the waterway would improve wildlife, rescue our industrial past, remedy bank collapse and footpath erosion, tackle irregular water flows and bring people closer to their local environment. Renovation of the Shears Mill turbines and a new building enabling people to view the turbines working and producing electricity, as well as information boards explaining the importance of the Mill in Bishopstoke's past, would form a central feature in the Itchen Navigation restoration. It was likely that Heritage Lottery monies amounting to £1.6m would be available in 2008 for the overall project work to be started and of this £28000 was earmarked for the Shears Mill project. In conclusion, she commented that much planning was in hand to bring this exciting project to a successful conclusion.

Mr John Silman, chairman of the Hampshire Mills Group, explained how his members were working on the project plan with a view to satisfying the exacting demands of the Environment Agency before they could actually start the turbine renovation work. He reminded those present of how imposing the old mill building would have been and how the turbines were installed in the mid-1920s but then ceased working in 1928 according to the records. Thus there was very little wear and tear although below the water line there was much silt to be removed before they could rotate again. To his knowledge, they were the only surviving pair of linked turbines in existence and were quite capable of producing power again. His members were pleased to be involved in the project and would do all they could to bring it to a successful conclusion.

Mrs Bev Drage gave an overview of Eastleigh Borough Council's climate change strategy and action plan, emphasising the need to adapt and the Council's declaration of intent to become carbon neutral by 2012. There was a clear determination to increase the amount of energy produced from sustainable sources and Shears Mill presented the Council with the opportunity to have a mini hydro scheme as a working example of its commitment within the urban environment. As a result, councillors had earmarked £25000 from their Green Energy Fund to help meet the costs of the turbine renovation. A recent report into the feasibility of the project illustrated the potential to produce up to 92000kw of electricity per annum which would have the effect of reducing carbon emissions by 1700 tonnes over twenty five years. She concluded this had to be worth the cost and effort and the Borough Council would continue to give its support to this project.

Cllr Winstanley thanked the presenters for their very interesting and enthusiastic talks.

8. Public Questions

Mr Basher asked if there were other potential hydro sites within the Borough and Mrs Drage identified one at Botley Mill but which was privately owned. She emphasised the attraction to the Council of Shears Mill in that the Council owned the land and the building, the site was located within an urban community and the project was wholeheartedly supported by the Parish Council and the Bishopstoke Society. In response to a second question on restrictions on using the Navigation, Mrs Drage explained that the records showed what was thought to be a franchise granted to seven original 'owners' and that to attempt to open the Navigation for pleasure or commercial use could cause lengthy legal proceedings to establish the right to do

this. Cllr Penson sought clarification on the actual position of the old mill buildings which appeared to be across the existing road with the turbine housing located to the rear.

Mr Kemp sought clarification of the Council's views on infill development and was informed that each planning application was considered on its merits with various aspects being taken into consideration. It was also explained that the Parish Council was not a decision making body so far as planning applications were concerned but could only pass opinion. Representations from local residents were taken into account in determining the Parish Council's comments but should also be made known to the Borough Council's planning officer dealing with the application since that was where the decision making authority lay.

Mrs Davies brought the session to a close with a comment that seventy years ago her father had said the turbines in the tin shed should have been used to generate electricity!

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