

**MINUTES OF THE OTTERBOURNE PARISH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY HELD IN THE
BIANCHI ROOM, OTTERBOURNE VILLAGE HALL
ON TUESDAY 17 APRIL 2012 AT 7.30 PM**

Present: Cllrs R Oldham (Chairman); M Acton (Vice-Chairman); R Kelly; C Barton-Briddon; W Doherty; Clerk

In attendance: County Cllr C Bailey; District Cllr G Beckett; Mrs P Wrightson; Mrs P Cole; Mr R Emery; Mr K Smith; PC Don Hagger; PCSO Michelle Gay; D Stirrup; 20 Parishioners; Clerk

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr W Jones; District Cllr J Warwick
2. **Welcome:** The Chairman, Cllr Dick Oldham, welcomed all to the meeting.
3. **Minutes of the 2011 Annual Assembly.**
These had been distributed to those attending. The Minutes had been approved for presentation to the Annual Assembly by Councillors at May 2011 Parish Council meeting. Proposed at the Annual Assembly as an accurate record: Mrs P Wrightson, seconded Mr R Emery, approved and signed.
4. **Chairman's Report for 2011/2012**

PC Matters

The Chairman advised this would be his last meeting before retirement from the Council after six years in office, five served as Chair. During the course of the year there had been several changes in the Council and thanks were given to ex-Councillors Nick Tabor, Anne Morrison and, in particular, Suzanne Hudson who had been Vice-Chair for four years. Councillors Lisa Whitcher and David Stirrup were welcomed to the Council as its newest members. The Committee Chairs: Councillors Mary Acton, Will Jones and Russell Kelly were thanked together with their Committee members. In addition the work of the many volunteers in the village who undertook specific roles was acknowledged: Philippa Wrightson the Tree Warden, Keith Smith for airport matters, Ron Emery as Chair of the Allotments Association, Paul Weir for maintaining the website, Jean Mounter for leading the Neighbourhood Watch team, Suzanne Hudson, Valerie Etteridge and Pam Cole for representing the Conservation Group and the Clerk, Julie Ayre, for her support and advice.

The Village and Village Groups

The Conservation Group which looked after Sponder's Mede Nature Reserve and the Old Graveyard in Kiln Lane required new volunteers to help with the regular working parties as advertised on the Parish notice boards. Details were also posted-up announcing dates for The Sparrowgrove and Oakwood Copse Conservation Trust working parties and new volunteers were always welcome to simply turn up on the day. The village school was thriving and a new green classroom was planned in the natural habitat study area of the meadow to the front of the school. The local toddler group, Mini-Matts, was well supported and family attendance at the historic Church of St Matthew's was increasing. The Village Hall offered extensive facilities for many clubs and there was continued success for the Winter Pantomime and Summer Variety Show events. The Cricket and Football Clubs were well supported and encouraged junior member participation. The village was fortunate to retain a good number of quality inns and restaurants, a hair and beauty salon, plus shop and post office. All of these facilities continued through the active support and involvement of village residents and others from the wider local area.

Projects and Council Work

During the past five years the most major projects had been: construction of the Play Park on the Recreation Ground, the construction of bunds and posts around the open Common, the progressive replacement of bus shelters and parish notice boards and maintenance of benches throughout the village. Work had been carried out on the Youth Area and two swings for older children plus picnic benches had been introduced. Other tasks had been the refurbishment of the pavilion; cleaning of the War Memorial; the introduction of countryside access boards; re-lining the parking bays of the village car parks and improvement to the website. A major achievement had been the freehold purchase of the Recreation Ground from Southern Water to ensure the village would benefit from this space in perpetuity. Also a Village Design Statement had been produced and adopted by Winchester City Council as a supplementary planning document and a Village Emergency Plan had been lodged with Winchester and Hampshire Emergency Planners. With the assistance of District and County Councillors the road surfaces through Otterbourne had been improved and a new central refuge near the bus stop above Poles Lane had been constructed.

Queen's Diamond Jubilee

There were two Jubilee Projects being taken forward. The first was the planting of an Oak tree on the open Common and a date for this event between May and July was still to be agreed. The second project was the improvement of the footpath from the Recreation Ground to the Itchen Navigation. Grants and support work were being obtained and construction planned for an all-weather path with compacted gravel surface suitable for push-chairs and wheelchairs.

Councillor Oldham concluded his report with his personal thanks to the Parish Clerk and by saying it had been an honour and privilege to Chair the Council and be so closely involved in the village life. The next Chair would be decided and elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Council.

5. Report by Cllr Mary Acton, Chair of Recreation and Amenities Committee

Repairs and Maintenance

There had been a considerable amount of repairs and maintenance work during the course of the year. The trees around the Allotments had been pruned back and a schedule of works for the trees on the Common produced by WCC. Work to the bunds on Chapel Lane and Red Lane had been undertaken to protect the Common from vehicles and it was anticipated further measures such as posts would be needed. A trial project at Old Deeds bench involving replacement of timber with reformed plastic wood had been completed and other benches would be considered in order to help reduce maintenance costs. At Oakwood Park Recreation Ground, repairs had taken place to the youth facilities swings and shelter and line marking for the ball court area and replacement of the sleeper wall would take place in the forthcoming year. Repair work to the pavilion had been undertaken and a new hard surface path installed.

Oakwood Park Recreation Ground

The Football Club's dugouts had been agreed on a temporary basis to the end of the season following problems with moving them. The number of dog walkers using the recreation ground was noticeable and all owners were requested to remove their dog waste to the bins provided and encourage others to do so. Play Area inspection was carried out regularly, but damage reports from Parishioners was important. Suggestions for new items of equipment were requested.

Elderfield Cricket Pitch

This project had been delayed, but planning requirements for access off Kiln Lane were progressing.

Cllr Acton recorded thanks to members of the Committee, past and present: Paul Granger, Nick Tabor, Anne Morrison, Chris Barton-Bridson and Lisa Whitcher, as well as Allotment Manager, Ron Emery, Tree Warden, Philippa Wrightson and the volunteer litter pickers. In conclusion, feedback from residents was requested on current projects as well as suggestions for future ones.

6. Report by Cllr W Jones, Chair, Planning and Highways Committee read by Cllr Oldham

Planning Matters

The Committee had viewed and commented on almost 50 planning applications during the year and had made representation at the WCC Planning Committee for two applications. The Village Design Statement continued to be an important tool for this work. Almost half of the applications received had been for alterations and extensions; also notable were five commercial applications, three Enforcement cases and two Appeals. A new project by WCC to provide three or four affordable housing units was welcomed, as was a proposal for a new children's day nursery at Penarth House. At Southern House, plans for a possible office development could bring employment to the village, but also more traffic.

The loss of the lay-by at the Old Churchyard on Kiln Lane had been a major issue and information was being collated from users to send to HCC to undertake a legal challenge. WCC had finished consulting on Part 1 of the District Plan and a favourable response had been given to it stressing the importance of green gaps and facilities within the village.

Endeavours would be made to influence Part 2 of the Plan and ensure the village would continue to develop whilst still retaining its current character.

Traffic concerns

The issue of traffic speed had been raised by several parishioners and agreement had been received for speed roundels to be applied to the four main approach roads to the village. New village gateway signs had been approved reading 'Otterbourne please drive carefully through our village'. The Community Speedwatch programme had been investigated and trial results from neighbouring parishes were awaited. The shared speed limit restriction sign would continue to be deployed and its use had been increased.

Highway Matters and Lengthsman

On Highway matters, the re-surfacing of Main Road had occurred and the refuge island north of Poles Lane improved for pedestrian visibility. Staggered safety railings were being pursued with HCC for the footpaths exiting onto Main Road. A new housing development had been built in the centre of the village and named Charlotte Mede. Many items of highway and drainage repairs had been reported. The coming year would bring the introduction of the Lengthsman Project funded by HCC for 11 participating parishes of which Otterbourne was Joint Lead. The Lengthsman would undertake various small highway tasks as instructed by the Committee.

Cllr Jones thanked fellow Committee members: Councillors Mary Acton, Chris Barton-Bridson, Wendy Doherty and Lisa Witcher for their help during the year.

7. Report by Cllr Russell Kelly, Chair of Finance and Administration Committee

Audited Accounts 2010/11

The accounts for 2010/11 were presented and had been returned by the External Auditor with no recommendations made.

Unaudited Accounts 2011/12

The unaudited accounts for 2011/12 were presented. The main items of income were: the Precept (£29,227); Sports Club rent (£1,356); Allotment rents (£430); Bank interest (£254); the WCC Open Spaces fund (£3,451) and HCC Community Grant (£500) towards the Jubilee Path. A further grant of (£1,385) was also due for this in April. The main items of expenditure after the Clerk's salary were: Insurance (£2,676), Open Spaces maintenance (£2,910); Recreation ground maintenance (£2,854); legal costs for purchase of the recreation ground (£2,291); bus shelter cleaning and repairs (£1,299); dog bin emptying (£1,770); street lighting (£701). The expenditure for the year had finished very close to the budgeted sum.

Spending Plans 2012/13

The Precept had been kept reasonably low at £30,276 which represented a 3.59% increase on 2011/12. This covered regular expenditure and meant a tight budget for the year, but some reserves (£1,450) had been drawn in order to help finance various spending plans. This, together with two successful grant applications and use of the WCC Open Spaces fund enabled the following proposals to be financed: new village gateway signs; the Jubilee Path, a new grit bin for the village hall, refurbishment to parts of the youth facilities area, improvement and planting around the bus shelters. There had been a significant provision into the 3rd year of the sinking fund for future replacement of various items owned by the parish.

Administrative Matters

The Committee had attended to administrative matters including the appointment and monitoring of the auditor and ensuring procedures complied with the relevant regulations. To this end, review of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, the insurance of assets, risk assessment, the internal audit procedures and banking arrangements had taken place.

Cllr Kelly thanked his fellow Committee members.

8. Questions from the floor, Police, County and District Matters

Police Report

Regular Beat Surgeries had commenced. The police were aware of speed concerns and would be carrying out some checks with a speed gun. Cllr Doherty advised Councillors would be examining how the Community Speedwatch project worked in neighbouring Parishes. PC Don Hagger was moving on from his post and a vote of thanks was given by Cllr Bailey for his work.

County Councillor's Report

A report from Cllr Bailey was presented to those attending the meeting. It included matters on: Highways, Lengthsman, drainage, footpaths, grants, road safety, buses, grit bins, National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Development Framework, advice and care for the elderly, childrens' services, Council tax, Councillor allowances, Cllr Bailey's responsibilities.

Note in particular was made regarding: Crossing point at Budgens – a £20,000 HCC budget had been set aside to examine this and sustainable routes to school. Jubilee Path – a grant of £500 had been made and a further grant would be considered for improvement to the kissing gate to allow disabled access. Lengthsman project – a £1000 grant had been made for work in the Parish.

Questions arising from Parishioners

- 1) A question was raised regarding the Speed Limit Restriction sign as to whether the number of 'hits' was monitored. The Parishioner was advised that this had happened but was by special request as it cost an additional sum to record this. It was asked if a place for the sign could be found on Poles Lane in a westerly direction. Clerk to refer to Cllr Jones and approval of HCC Highways.
- 2) A question was raised regarding the operational system of the Police after the base change to Bishops Waltham. PC Hagger advised it was working well and allowed the officers to concentrate on village matters rather than being used for city calls. Emergency calls were dealt with from Winchester.
- 3) Two questions were raised regarding the new entrances on Kiln Lane. Cllr Beckett advised these were both subject to WCC Enforcement Cases.
- 4) A question was raised regarding potential for Affordable Housing within the village. Cllr Beckett advised there was a project being proposed by WCC in Bourne Close.
- 5) Cllr Doherty advised that she had spoken at the HCC Committee meeting for the consultation on the Minerals and Waste Plan.

The Vice-Chair, Cllr Acton, then made a vote of thanks to the retiring Chairman on behalf of all Councillors and Parishioners for his excellent leadership of the Council, together with his hard work and support for fellow members.

The Chairman thanked all for attending and the meeting closed at 8.45 pm.