

**MINUTES OF THE OTTERBOURNE PARISH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY HELD IN THE
BIANCHI ROOM, OTTERBOURNE VILLAGE HALL
ON TUESDAY 19 APRIL AT 7.30 PM**

Present: Cllrs R Oldham (Chairman); S Hudson (Vice-Chairman); N Tabor; R Kelly; M Acton; C Barton-Bridson; W Doherty; Clerk

In attendance: County Cllr C Bailey; District Cllr E Bell; Mrs P Wrightson; Mrs P Cole; Mr R Emery; Mrs J Mounter; 12 Parishioners; Clerk

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr W Jones; District Cllr G Beckett
2. **Welcome:** The Chairman, Cllr Dick Oldham, welcomed all to the meeting.
3. **Minutes of the 2010 Annual Assembly.**
These had been distributed to those attending. The Minutes had been approved for presentation to the Annual Assembly by Councillors at May 2010 Parish Council meeting. Proposed at the Annual Assembly as an accurate record: Mrs P Wrightson, seconded Cllr R Oldham, approved and signed.
4. **Chairman's Report for 2010/2011**

PC Matters

The Chairman encouraged Parishioners to attend meetings held eight times a year as advertised on the notice boards and website. There had been a number of changes in the make-up of the Council during the year with the resignations of Councillors Wendy Andrews and Paul Granger; both were thanked for their dedication and enthusiasm. Three new Councillors: Wendy Doherty, Russell Kelly and Will Jones were welcomed. All eight Councillors had stood for re-election this year and, as no other nominations had been received, all had been re-elected. One further vacancy existed and anyone interested was encouraged to contact the Clerk. The Chairman thanked the Vice-Chair and all of the Councillors who had given their time so willingly to support the village. The Clerk was also thanked for the support and advice given to the Council.

The Village

The facilities making up the village were extensive. The village school was thriving and over-subscribed. It continued to improve and was currently planning a green classroom in the natural habitat study area developed in the meadow. St Matthew's Church held regular services and the attendance of young families was increasing. The Village Hall offered extensive facilities for the many clubs it hosted and its shows continued to be very popular. Three public houses, a local shop, post office and several other businesses also added to the strengths of the village together with an excellent bus service. Otterbourne residents were fortunate in being able to enjoy many open spaces. The Recreation Ground and Oakwood Copse provided for a wide variety of users. These were complemented by the Common, Sponder's Mede nature reserve, the woods above the church and Otterbourne Park Woods. The River Itchen and the much restored footpath along the Itchen Navigation ran through the length of the Parish.

Queen's Diamond Jubilee

The Council proposed to mark the occasion with some sort of permanent reminder. Councillors had put forward a few ideas, but suggestions from residents were welcomed. The Chairman concluded with a request for continued support from Parishioners towards participating in and attending the various events, clubs and working parties, as it was only from continued involvement that the village remained a thriving and attractive place to live.

5. Report by Cllr S Hudson, Chairman, Planning and Highways Committee

Planning Applications

It had been a busy year responding to numerous planning applications. Forty-five applications had been considered: almost half were alterations and extensions, there were two new-build applications, and more issues with trees. The change of use category included an annex conversion to residential use, a residential to office use and an agricultural land to gypsy use. There were fewer Enforcement cases than formerly. Commercial planning applications had raised some issues, including at Four Dell Farm which continued to be problematic, the Brendoncare Shared Care Nursing Home site on Otterbourne Hill and Veolia at the Waste Transfer Site.

Highways

The Committee had promoted the need for a crossing or refuge on Main Road in the vicinity of Williams Garage and would continue to press for this. The frequency and number of Heavy Goods Vehicles continued to cause concern. After the severe winter the incidence of potholes had increased and Councillors continued to report these. The resurfacing of Main Road during the forthcoming year was welcomed.

Consultations

2011 had seen the start of a major change in the planning process by Central Government, the aim of the Localism policy being the decentralisation of the planning process, giving communities led by Parish Councils much more say. Otterbourne was taking part in the many consultations. It had responded to the WCC Blueprint consultation last autumn and at a meeting this spring, commending the Parish Plan produced in 2004, the Village Design Statement of 2008, and the more recent village Emergency Plan. Other consultations responded to included the latest HCC Minerals and Waste Plan. There had also been opportunity to speak at neighbouring Parish Council meetings and work with adjacent Parishes on shared issues. Cllr Hudson thanked the other Committee members: Councillors Wendy Doherty, Chris Barton-Bridson and Will Jones for their work and support.

6. Report by Cllr Nick Tabor, Chair of Recreation and Amenities Committee

Oakwood Park Recreation Ground

After lengthy negotiations the purchase of the freehold had been completed securing the area as a recreation ground in perpetuity for the village. The Play Park had remained very popular. However, damage to the path and rubber wet pour areas had occurred. Repair works had been agreed with the contractor free of charge and these would commence in May. The annual safety inspection for the Play Park had been carried out in February with a favourable report stating it was a credit to Otterbourne. The recreation ground was being well used. To enable all users to enjoy the area a document had been drawn up with new rules of use. A new welcome sign was proposed at the ground and this would display the main activities prohibited such as: golf practice, horse riding, fireworks, bonfires and overnight camping. A full copy of the rules was available on the Parish Council website.

Pavilion and Sports Club

During the bad weather in December, water damage to the ceiling and electrical works in the pavilion had been caused by a burst pipe. Upgrading of the lagging had taken place and repairs completed. Repairs had also taken place to the boiler which had not been controlling the water temperature correctly. Consideration would be given to replacing this in the near future as it was more than twenty year's old. During May, the Otterbourne Football Club would be adding a hard standing area along the pavilion side of the pitch. This area would double up as hard standing for spectators and players as well as providing a pathway from the car park to the route of the Itchen Navigation. While works were in progress, some areas of the ground and car park would not be available, but access to the Itchen Navigation path would remain open at all times.

Elderfield Cricket Pitch

Negotiations with Langley House Trust to enable the development of a village cricket pitch by Otterbourne Cricket Club and the Parish Council had continued during the year. A draft lease had been received. It was expected that cricket would take place at the ground in the summer. As well as the pitch, the development would include a wooden pavilion, car park and secure access. It was also hoped to develop a path from the corner of Kiln Lane to the ground. The Parish Council's role had been to facilitate the lease negotiations in order to get the project underway, the Cricket Club would be responsible for provision of the pavilion, other facilities and maintenance of the ground.

Other Matters

Three grit bins had been installed in the village to help the community maintain public paths and roads during icy weather conditions. These were for public use and not for gritting house drives and paths. Three more bins had been requested. The service of the mobile library had been secured for the village, however due to financial cuts it would be reduced to one visit per month at Coles Mede. Usage would be monitored by HCC and if numbers fell below ten users, it could be subject to withdrawal. Times and dates for the visit would be advertised on the notice boards as soon as received. Cllr Tabor thanked ex Cllr Granger, and Councillors Mary Acton and Chris Barton-Bridson for their hard work and support over the past year.

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

Audited Accounts 2009/10

These had been audited and approved by the external auditor on 5 August 2010. There had been no recommendations made. All of the items planned for in the 2010 report had been, or were about to be, completed the most significant being the purchase of the freehold of the recreation ground.

Unaudited Accounts 2010/11

The main items of income were:

Precept £26,682; Sports Club rent £1,320; Allotment rents £430; Bank Interest £369.

The main items of expenditure after the Clerk's salary were:

Insurance (£2,580); Open Spaces maintenance (£2,880); Recreation ground maintenance (£3,015); Legal costs for purchase of the recreation ground and the lease of the cricket ground (£4,604); Bus shelter cleaning and repairs (£1,887); Dog bin emptying (£1,009) which had doubled since 2009/10. The expenditure for the year had finished close to the budgeted sum, except for a pre-payment made against legal fees, but there had been an allocation made in the 2011/12 Precept and Reserves for this.

Spending Plans 2011/12

The Precept had been kept low at £29,227. This covered regular expenditure and meant that there would be a tight budget for the year. Some reserves would be drawn upon in order to finance various spending plans. Future expenditure proposed included: refurbishment of the landscaping around the war memorial; a fitting commemoration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee; additional picnic tables at Oakwood Park Recreation Ground; additional play/recreation provision which had yet to be decided; legal expenses to cover preparation of the lease for the cricket ground at the rear of Elderfield. A sinking fund had also been started for future replacement of various items owned by the Parish, such as the play equipment, benches, notice boards and bus shelters.

Administration Matters

The Finance Committee had attended to a number of administrative matters to ensure that the Council complied properly with statutory and audit requirements. It had reviewed the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, the insurance of assets, risk assessment, the internal audit procedures and banking arrangements. Cllr Kelly thanked the other members of the Committee for their continued good work.

8. Address by Mr Ted Whieldon

Mr Ted Whieldon, co-owner of Williams Garage addressed the meeting on forthcoming plans. The regrettable decision to cease the sale of fuel had been taken. This was due to the age of the fuel tanks and new regulations for storage on the site. It was planned to enlarge the shop and provide more fresh produce. The post office facilities would remain and it was hoped that a café area would be included. The car maintenance and body shop service would not be affected. A larger car parking area would be provided and it was also hoped a layby for the larger vehicles to pull-in off the highway.

9. Questions arising from Parishioners

- 1) A request was made for the pathway beyond the bore hole to the Itchen Navigation to be improved and to sufficient level for disabled and pushchair users. This footpath was not owned by the Parish Council, but improvement of the path would be investigated.
- 2) A mention was made that Japanese Knotweed by the public car park had been seen. Treatment of some areas of Knotweed on Parish Council land had already been undertaken and this area would be examined.
- 3) Concern was raised about speeding of vehicles on Main Road and also the size of the HGVs. The various islands and mini-roundabouts had helped as traffic calming measures, although this had also meant that the highway had been narrowed along these parts. A shared flashing speed light had been purchased which was used on rotation with neighbouring Parishes. The possibility of purchasing a speed gun had been raised at the April Parish Council meeting and would be considered further. The Planning Committee would continue to respond with objections and representations regarding applications which involved any increase in the number or tonnage of HGVs.
- 4) A question was raised regarding the number of Planning meetings held to deal with applications. Planning meetings took place when there were applications of concern or comment required in between Parish Council meetings and also for consideration of consultation responses. At other times applications were dealt with during the eight Parish Council meetings held during the year.
- 5) A question was raised about the likelihood of resurfacing the M3 with quieter road material. Cllr Bailey advised that the situation had not changed and, due to the cost involved, the quieter surface would only be applied when such parts of the motorway needed resurfacing.
- 6) A request for an 'Otterbourne' sign on entrance to the village from Kiln Lane was made and this would be followed-up with HCC.
- 7) Councillors' ideas for the Diamond Jubilee were requested. These were: i) a memorial bench on the footpath half way up Otterbourne Hill and ii) improvement of the 'kickabout' area on Cranbourne Drive. A request was added for provision of something to make better use of the Common.
- 8) Clarification of the Elderfield cricket pitch facilities was requested. The pavilion would be a semi-permanent wooden structure of traditional design with changing rooms, showers and toilets; there would be no bar. The car parking material proposed was rubber matting enabling grass growth and a natural environment to be retained.

The Chairman thanked all for attending and the meeting closed at 9 pm.