

Minutes of the Mursley Parish Annual Meeting

held at 8.00pm on Monday 19th April, 2010 in the Village Hall, Mursley.

Present: Members of Mursley Parish Council – Kym Bartlett, Neil Coles (Chairman), Wendi Cramphorn, Tim Dolder, Gerry Gallagher, Len Ward

Clerk to Parish Council – Ian Hook

Apology. Garry Ives

Residents: Alison Agnew, Barry Agnew, Jim Crews, Pauline Debbage, Beryl Dickens, Jenny Edwards, John Fellingham, Shirley Fellingham, Susan Gallagher, Cheryl Hawkins, Laura Hook, Elizabeth Jones, Eleanor Robinson, Michael Upson.

Minutes

The minutes of the previous annual meeting held on 11 May, 2009, were approved at the Parish Council Meeting on 3 August 2009 and are available for inspection.

1. Chairman's Report

Received - A report from the Chairman on the Council's activities during the past year. The full text of this report is attached to these minutes.

Received - A response by Barry Agnew to an invitation from the Chairman to provide a review of activities related to the Parish Plan completed two years ago. The full text of that response is attached to these minutes.

Noted - With reference to items contained in the two items above, the BCC documentation concerning the High Speed train proposals and the Village Design Statement were distributed to attendees.

3. Issues Raised by Parishioners

Planning - Liz Jones requested to know what were the legal requirements concerning the publication of planning applications. The Chairman advised that AVDC used three methods; local press for certain applications, a yellow planning notice on or near the application site and notification directly to immediate neighbours to the site. In addition, the Parish Council considers all applications in open meetings the agendas for which are advertised in the notice board. The Chairman advised that the subject would be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting with the possibility of placing all applications on the web site.

Roads and Pavements - Beryl Dickens raised the concern that not only were the roads severely damaged by the weather but pavements were also in a poor state with many loose stones. Also, the grass cutting by BCC sometimes occurs at inappropriate times but autumn leaves remain uncollected. It was agreed that the Parish Council would consider requesting BCC to clear the leaves in November. Pauline Debbage observed that the BCC gutter sweeper frequently had to go around parked cars thus rendering the operation less than effective. Is it possible to receive advance notification of this operation so that cars could be moved to allow a more effective cleaning? The clerk will enquire of BCC.

Speeding - John Fellingham asked whether the speed restriction signs would be moved. The Chairman advised that the matter was still in the consultation mode and a decision was expected later in the year but there was every expectation that the 30mph sign in Station

Road would be moved to the end of the playing field and the one in Whaddon Road moved to be almost level with the water tower.

There being no further meaningful points, the meeting was closed at closed at 8.52pm.

Associated documents: -

Annual Meeting 18th April 2010 – Chairman's Report

Before reporting on the last year I would thank all the councillors for all their effort and time given for the benefit of our community by attending meetings both in the village and sometimes in other parts of Aylesbury Vale. There is often much reading and background information to be looked at and I am grateful for their diligence. All time and travel is given freely without justifiable claim on the precept.

My thanks should be recorded to the Clerk whom I know spends far more of his time on handling that side of our affairs than he is paid for. Also for his patience and persistence in dealing with the ever mounting paperwork and bureaucracy involved in local government.

I said last year that it is external development that has the most far reaching effect on our village and it remains that way.

Salden Chase a development partly on our parish but mostly on that of Newton Longville is now at the stage of public consultation as to its likely format and planning criteria.

This is a development of 5,390 dwellings plus all the supporting infrastructure such as schools, medical facilities, shops, leisure, sports fields and employment areas. Some parishioners thought that this particular consultation was about the concept of the development rather than its implementation but that stage passed probably four or five years ago when we were then actively involved in trying to get it moved to other parts of Milton Keynes but in the end had to reluctantly accept the proposal in AVDC's submission to government and subsequently government's adoption of this submission and its inclusion in the South East Plan. What we are going to get is much smaller than originally intended and on the 'not in our back yard syndrome' is farther away than it might have been when blocks of land starting as close as the top of Cooks lane were under consideration.

We will experience considerable pollution from Salden Chase principally from the inevitable increase in traffic and it was with this in mind that our submission to the public consultation I mentioned earlier requested specific traffic measures to stop our village being used as even more of a rat run and speed cameras – the only effective speed calming influence – to be placed at various positions.

Should there be change in government next month it is generally accepted that Salden Chase has gone too far to be scrapped and will not be influenced by any different planning rules likely to be introduced especially from a Conservative administration.

Whilst on external factors the Greenways project between Winslow Swanbourne and the Horwoods has been rejected and the consortium behind it has decided not to appeal. This dwarfed Salden Chase and at least for the moment is off the radar. The Shipton development of two hundred houses this side of Winslow is at appeal with expectation that it will be granted.

I am sorry to labour outside influences to our parish but the 'High Speed 2' rail link between London and Birmingham may also be a potential concern. Government's proposed route goes just south of Aylesbury to the north of Waddesdon and skirts Quainton. However, there are two other designated possible routes one of which will cross our parish by Thrift Farm then the Wilderness and across the fields very close to the proposed Salden development before skirting Drayton Parslow and down toward Soulbury before running close to the existing West Coast main line at Linslade. Salden will be well on the way in its construction by the time this 250mph rail link gets started, if it does, but it is concerning that the officials at Bucks CC and the four districts favour this route because it does not spoil the Chilterns, a designated 'area of natural beauty', and would cause less upheaval. This is the view of the bureaucrats at Bucks CC and not the view, as yet, of all of our elected representatives at District and County level who have not fully discussed it in open meeting. So far only AVDC's elected cabinet have discussed it and they oppose the suggested

proposals. Whilst this is many years away, probably construction won't start until 2020 plus, people living on or near to any of the possible routes might well find property sale blighted until a decision is made.

On to village topics that have directly concerned us over the year.

Affordable housing, identified in the Parish Plan questionnaire as a most desired wish, is being closely investigated by Bucks Community Action who are looking into the feasibility of building about eight dwellings at the end of Station Road on the left hand side (leaving the village) just past the last house. There are many factors to be considered before this goes ahead and after suitable accommodation is made with Mr Bonham and his Sister design, road safety, pavements and any existing underground services all have to be addressed together with planning being granted by AVDC.

The efficacy of the vehicle activated speeding sign on Whaddon Road was checked during the year and whilst anecdotal opinion considered it to be successful electronic data proved otherwise with the direction the device is pointing showing minimal speed reduction and the direction it is not pointing ironically quite a lot. The data was checked and seen to be correct so the Council decided not to pursue installation of another device in Main Street. They are expensive, each one is an entire year's precept, so they really do have to be effective to be merited.

We have had many discussions with Bucks Highways about the potholes following the very bad winter. This is a problem country wide rather than just our county and after much chasing repairers have made several visits to our village and repaired, not particularly well, quite a few although many remain and are dangerous as has been advised to the authorities. Rather more substantial repair work is scheduled for June which will not be moment too soon.

The bad winter made us change our mind on the installation of further salt bins and two have been added to the village's existing three. One sited at the beginning of Tweedales and the other at the top of The Beechams. These are expensive at about £500 each and now we have paid for them they are the responsibility of the Highways to keep topped up as indeed was their placement.

The Council has awarded a grass cutting contract to supplement that done by Bucks CC and we trust this will enhance the tidiness of the village and keep the footpath alongside the nursery in good order. We decided not to enter the best kept village competition this year but thank the many residents who voluntarily keep areas such as the Playing Field, Village Hall and certain verges so well.

During the year the Council adopted the War Memorial and placed it on its asset register. We were unable to obtain a valuation for insurance purposes despite considerable effort so have left it uncovered.

Considerable work was carried out by our Clerk to see if we could get allotments for the village. Unfortunately after writing to every land owner in the village including the authorities and then chasing many up there is no land that can be made available. The file has been closed for the time being but will be kept under review should circumstances change.

Our Parish Plan under the very capable direction of Barry and Alison Agnew was as mentioned last year a great success. Much more so than many if not most other villages who have published one and has produced many very positive developments identified by residents' wishes. During the year one of these, a Village Design Statement, was produced by a hard working committee under the chairmanship of Sandra Doherty. This document is in the process of being distributed to all residents with back up information available to be seen on the village web site. Bucks CC have recently made a special award of a plaque to Mursley for the fine quality of the Parish Plan and this was collected by the Agnews at a recent awards ceremony with a voucher for a commemorative tree to be planted at a suitable place in due course. The web site was another of the wishes parishioners identified in the Parish Plan and this has been much expanded over the year and our thanks go to Simon Ould and Beth Young for all their efforts. All these people give freely of their time and on behalf of parishioners I thank them.

Planning applications always take our time and interest with about twenty five being considered this year. All applications are discussed in open meeting and are well advertised on the notice board beforehand. There were no applications or appeals that we felt we had to appear and speak about at AVDC meetings. We did make strong recommendations about the three houses at Manor farm which we would not have objected to had the applicant submitted a design that did not to some extent compromise the existing buildings in phase 1 of that development.

The precept for next year is unchanged at £7,350. We are carrying forward sufficient funds over and above our normal needs to meet any likely contingency we can think of. Two benches will be replaced and a new notice board will be procured during 2010.

Should an item of exceptional expenditure arise such as purchase of land for allotments then that would be subject to a specific fund raising exercise that might be supplemented by grants or loans.

That concludes a short but reasonably comprehensive report of the year and before I open the meeting for questions I would ask Barry Agnew to update us on things of a Parish Plan nature which during its compilation identified many parishioners' wishes as to what they want to see in the village.

Parish Council AGM 2010 – Review of activities related to the Parish Plan

Thank you Neil,

Yes, although it seems only yesterday, the Plan was produced it is now approaching 2 years ago. During last year, about a year after its issue, those of the original steering group that were still around, met again to review progress.

If you remember, apart from providing general information and statistics on the parish, one of the main purposes of the Parish Plan was to identify the wishes and aspirations of Parishioners and to encourage the setting up of Action Groups to implement those wishes. As you mentioned in your words only a few weeks ago Alison & I attended a presentation evening that was hosted by Bucks Community Action to recognise the efforts of Parishes who had completed Plans over recent years and I hope we will shortly be agreeing with the Parish Council a suitable location for the tree, (if it survives) and plaque that was awarded. Several other Parish Plans were on display at that meeting and having looked at these, I believe that Mursley's is as good as the best of them, and better than most. What did come out of that meeting was a comment from some of the Parishes that were attending that very little happened after publication of their plans, and that their Plans had been just left to gather dust. It was never our intention to let that happen in Mursley and I know that Neil and the Parish Council have generally encouraged Action Groups arising out of the Plan with a view to implementing as many as possible of those wishes as could be achieved.

Neil has identified two of those successes, the Village Design Statement and the Village Web Site. The VDS could have entitled Mursley to a second plaque as that statement stands in its own right as a community plan. Other action groups have tried to take matters forward such as the Route 51 footpath and cycleway group, making some progress but not, as yet, achieving full success due to the large funding requirements. Other wishes expressed by Parishioners have not come to fruition, and of particular concern here is the continuing lack of provision for a youth club or similar in the Parish, and a lack of sufficient interest in providing some sort of shop, even on a part time basis, both of these were expressed by parishioners as being something that they would have liked, but, as with everything, something only ever happens when individuals or groups of individuals have sufficient interest and drive to make it work. It can be done, at the Bucks Community Action presentation evening another parish spoke of opening a community led shop in the last couple of years, and our next door neighbours, Little Horwood, spoke of a thriving youth club that had been formed and is now flourishing as a direct result of their Parish Plan.

Alison and I have made a point of exploring all of the areas identified for future action in the Plan and encouraged interest where insufficient interest apparently exists. As I have already mentioned, some of those efforts have proved successful, others, to date, have not.

The recommendation for Parish Plans is that they are reviewed every 5 years or so that they can be updated where necessary and remain relevant and reflect the wishes of a changing community and changing parishes. We are still a way off from that timescale, but if anyone has forgotten what was in the Plan, then it can be seen in its entirety, as can the Design Statement, on the Village Web site, and if anyone has lost their hard copy we still have some, and a copy can be provided on request. This will obviously also apply to anyone who is new to the Parish and has never had a copy. If anyone wants to start an action group to progress anything that has not yet been done, then again, let us know and we will publicise that on the web site as well, or indeed anyone can raise their own queries or suggestions by simply posting an entry on the web site forum.