

Mursley Parish Council

Minutes of the annual meeting of Mursley Parish Council

held at 8.00 pm on Tuesday 19th April, 2011 in the Committee Room, Mursley Village Hall.

Present: Members of Mursley Parish Council – Neil Coles (Chairman), Kym Bartlett, Gerry Gallagher

Residents - Alison Agnew, Barry Agnew, David Bartlett, Maggie Coles, Pauline Debbage, Beryl Dickens, John Fellingham, Shirley Fellingham, Susan Gallagher, Laura Hook, Majorie Macdonald, Mark Priest, Lyndon Robinson, John Williamson

In attendance: Ian Hook (Clerk)

1. Apologies

Wendi Cramphorn, Garry Ives, Tim Dolder, Len Ward

2. 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.

3. Issues raised by Parishioners

Parish Council Members - John Fellingham expressed concern that only three people had stood to be members of the council from May 5th. He asked whether if anybody now wished to become a councillor, could they be co-opted. The Chairman advised that was possible unlikely that it would happen immediately.

Best Kept Village Competition - John Williamson expressed disappointment that Mursley had not entered the competition in recent years. The Chairman explained that although there were some volunteers, the last time a village 'clean up' operation had been organized, only six people participated and that the competition would require a better response.

Jubilee Preparation - On a similar theme of preparation, it was acknowledged that a committee would be necessary to prepare for the Queen's Jubilee in 2012. The Chairman said that we already had two volunteers but they would not want to be chairman of the committee. Accordingly, the Parish Council would be publicising the event and requirement for volunteers in the Parish Pump.

Parish Pump - In response to a question of when the next Pump would be issued, the Chairman said that it would be as soon after the election as possible.

Parish Funding - Pauline Debbage asked how much was required to manage the Parish Council's affairs. The Chairman explained that the expenses for the Council amounted to £7000 approximately per annum, which is broadly in line with the Precept received from AVDC. The closing balance for the year is £6000 which is sufficient as a contingency for unexpected events; any more and AVDC would reduce the precept.

Street Furniture Maintenance - John Williamson offered again to renovate the wooden street furniture if the Council provided the materials. The Chairman thanked John for his kind offer and agreed to liaise with him for what materials would be required.

Roads and Pavements - Marjorie Macdonald stated that the roads in the village were in need of repair. The Chairman responded by saying that BCC Highways, in particular Mr. David Hedley,

were very helpful and reacted to our requests. Church Lane had been refurbished in several places but the likes of Whaddon Road were more of a problem but he had assured us that he would continue to monitor the situation. Gerry Gallagher stated that with the start of a new financial year, it was expected that more would be done. Beryl Dickens raised the concern that people were parking on pavements in Cooks Lane, Station Road and Main Street, particularly at school pick-up time and could the Pump include an item requesting people not to do so. The Chairman agreed to include an item in the next Pump. John Fellingham raised the concern of parking adjacent to the recreation ground which at times could prove very hazardous when there was a long stream of cars parked bumper to bumper. The Chairman ventured that if the sports pavilion should be replaced, then perhaps space could be found for car parking but Beryl Dickens thought that that might lessen the space available for recreation. John Fellingham also expressed concern that in the event of Affordable Housing being approved for the site opposite the recreation ground then a pedestrian crossing may be required but that could also prove vulnerable to the traffic problems. The Chairman said that with regards to the Affordable Housing, while it was still being progressed by Community Impact Bucks, any further progress was awaiting the extension of the 30mph speed restriction to beyond the sports pavilion.

Manor Farm - Pauline Debbage enquired about the land behind Manor Farm and what was going to happen to it. The Chairman replied that, if the developer gets permission for three houses on the site, then the farm buildings would be removed and much of the land would be landscaped. Beryl Dickens expressed concern that there was an entrance planned from the site on to Cooks Lane. The Chairman, supported by Gerry Gallagher, stated the entrance was no more than six feet which is insufficient for vehicles and that it was not from the site but the adjoining field. With regard to the planning application, the Chairman stated that the Council had agreed to oppose the application on the grounds that the height of the proposed dwellings was such that they would overlook the existing Manor Close dwellings. However, if the height issue were to be overcome, the Council would be minded not to oppose it. Beryl Dickens then expressed concern at the possibility of contamination from any asbestos in the farm buildings but the Chairman assured her that any such removal would be handled by specialist companies.

Parish Councillors - Beryl Dickens wished to express her appreciation for the work done by the existing Councillors, five of whom are standing down, and for the three who have stood for the next term. Her appreciation was echoed by the villagers present.

There being no further meaningful points, the meeting was closed at 8.44pm.

Chairman's Report -

Firstly thank you to all the councillors who have given so freely of their time not just in the last year but over the last four since the last election. Attending meetings both in the village and at various venues in Aylesbury Vale takes time, effort and often much preparation. No councillor asks for expenses thus no cost from the precept.

The Clerk, Ian Hook, deserves special mention because we are all well aware that he spends probably double the time he gets paid for to administer our affairs and in the exemplary fashion we have become accustomed to.

Last year was a quiet one for Parish Council matters within the village; however, a relatively busy one for Aylesbury Vale District affairs.

The change of government and their immediate scrapping of centrally imposed planning targets and controls has made life very difficult for the county and district. The South East Plan had defined the shape of planning for housing, employment and infrastructure for the next fifteen years. The district, in particular, must now compile a comprehensive local plan within the guidelines of the Localism Bill exact detail of which has not been published as yet. The general tenet is known but there will be changes and then amendment when it goes through Westminster next year. Aylesbury Vale District Council has now started the consultation process with parishes and towns, identified as the basis of localism, in order to assimilate their thoughts and wishes before publishing this new area plan.

Parish and town councils have to declare the amount of development, be it for housing or employment, which they consider suitable for them. The district has to take due note and enter into proper discussion rather than imposing its own views. This Council has reflected the parishioners' observations from the Parish Plan and Design Statement and advised AVDC only very small housing developments are welcomed ideally single infill or slightly larger if the site permits and it fits in with the village.

Whilst reporting generally the two major threats to our already busy roads have, at least for the time being, been withdrawn. Salden Chase and Greenways applications have been pulled by their respective consortiums and given the ideology of the Localism Bill it's hard to see them coming back without government imposition.

No single village topic has been uppermost in our mind this year.

As always planning matters take a time to consider but there has not been an application that the council considered it necessary to speak at a district planning meeting or appeal. However, we would have supported the successful appeal made by the owners of Brook Cottage in Church Lane had we known about it. AVDC were reminded in strong terms by the Clerk as to their responsibility to keep us informed which they failed to do in this instance.

Affordable Housing as reported on last year is progressing if very slowly. We believe the legalities of procuring the land have been finalised but a detailed planning application is unlikely to be lodged until the speed restriction signs have been moved farther along Station Road near to where the pavilion is which would make the possible development within a restricted speed zone. All the planning detail on this is being conducted by Community Impact Bucks and as such is in their hands totally.

Our finances remain in good order with a balance carried forward of about £6,000. This we consider being sufficient to cover unforeseen eventualities and provides ample working capital for day to day needs. The precept is unaltered from the previous two years.

We make available a sum of money to keep the grass areas and parts of some footpaths regularly mown. This, we believe, enhances the tidiness and attractiveness of the village which would suffer if left to the irregular and somewhat slipshod performance of Bucks County Council's contractor. As other years we thank those many people who keep parts of the village mown and tidy either near their property or in areas like the Village Hall and Sports Field.

We thank Barry and Alison Agnew for their on-going work on the village website which was so well set up with Simon Ould and Beth Young some years ago. This is a good way of keeping people informed and we hope parishioners find it useful.

There will be no election for the parish Council this year since only three people put their names forward. It is appreciated some residents have served on the council before or perhaps in other villages so will have contributed to the wellbeing of a community. Nevertheless it is disappointing that only three from four hundred and eighty two electors are willing to stand.