

# **PARISH OF SHIPTON UNDER WYCHWOOD** **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

## **Minutes of the meeting held at the New Beaconsfield Hall, Station Road, Shipton-under-Wychwood on Thursday 19 April 2018 at 7.30 pm**

**Present:** Cllrs: B. Young, B. Pitman, R. Dyer, C. Arnold, J. Mavin, B. Rigby, County Cllr L. Leffman, District Cllr T. Simcox, Parish Clerk: L. Wilkinson, 10 members of the public.

1. **Apologies for Absence** were received from Vanessa Newman (Wychwood surgery), Joseph Rubba (Wychwood Primary school), Mike and Liz Watson, John Barclay

### **2. Chairman's Report**

Cllr Young summarised the annual report:

- this is the final year of this parish council. Seven councillors have stood for election this time round so there is a full parish council again.
- Last May, Liz Leffman was elected as County Councillor. Sadly, Rodney Rose, the previous County Councillor, died recently; he worked tirelessly for the parish.
- The clerk is currently studying for the CiLCA course which when completed will give the PC the power to do anything that reasonable individuals generally may do.
- The Local Plan from WODC is nearing completion.
- Wychwoods Together (which consists of the three Wychwood parishes) are working to support the Villager and the West Oxfordshire Community Transport bus service and have agreed to extend the contract for the library for another two years.
- In regard to the new development in Milton, it has been agreed that all HGVs should come via the Stow Road not through Shipton.
- The highways are still in bad state of repair although Leafield Road has been partially repaired. Residents are urged to report any problems on roads to FixmyStreet.
- Due to concerns over speeding on Station Road, the PC has orchestrated an OCC consultation on reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph. This is currently open for comment.
- The Speedwatch team are working hard to monitor speeding through the village. The PC has had a very generous offer of a donation to purchase Speedwatch equipment.
- A 20mph sign has been installed on the road outside the primary school, with the support of OCC.
- The consultation on the HGV weight limit through Burford is still ongoing.
- A hard copy of the newsletter is still being published but this is being supplemented with an e-mail alert and the website. Due to new General Data Protection Regulations, recipients will have to be contacted to opt in again to this.
- There has been a steady stream of planning applications received this year. Most of them have been uncontroversial. Where there are applications that raise objections, the PC must look at them from the point of view of the whole village and within current planning guidelines.
- Shipton Volunteers celebrated their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in summer 2017 with a barbeque. Over 500 hours have been worked this year which is broadly in line with previous years.
- Green Spaces- the horse chestnut on the recreation field had to be taken down as it was diseased. This has been replaced with three new trees.
- The new tree that was planted on the village green, to shade the light pollution there has been replaced and has taken this time.
- Green Scythe continues with the grass cutting. This is the most expensive item in the PC budget.

Cllr Pitman reported on Transport:

A new bus service has been set up this year. A new timetable is available for the West Oxfordshire Community Transport service. Bus users can follow the progress of the bus if they log onto the WOCT Twitter or Facebook account. During the first seven weeks of the service, there were 842 passengers.

Rail usage during 2016-17 was up by 28%. The recent deterioration of the service through Shipton is due to the improved rolling stock as the platform is too short to take the new automatically opening doors. Any hope of an off-peak morning service is on hold until the line is double tracked and a new franchise agreement is in place in 2020.

Cllr Pitman summarised the PC accounts for 2017-18: Expenditure was slightly up this year due to an extension to the road at the allotments and some major tree work being required. Income was down as not as many grants had been received as during the previous financial year.

### **3. County Councillor's Report – Cllr. Liz Leffman**

Cllr Leffman reported that a good, close working relationship with the PC has been developed. She was elected last May which was a great privilege. Cllr Leffman has been working with the PC to:

- Implement a 30mph speed limit on Station Road
- Get a warning sign put up on the Ascott Road junction of A361 due to the poor visibility on the bend near the Shaven Crown.
- Get Leafield Road sorted out to a certain degree. 333 defects were reported in this ward, which is more than any other ward. There are two dragon patchers now in the County – these repair the potholes much more effectively. £150 million is the estimated amount to repair the roads in the county.
- Put up warning lights outside the Primary school which had been without a safe crossing for two years.
- Support the new bus service. She has been involved from the beginning with community bus projects as she believes that there is need for a daily bus service in the area.

Other news includes:

- The consultation on the Burford weight limit restriction has been postponed as villages off the A361 are concerned that any changes would affect them.
- She has been involved in the project to keep Dean Pitt open. They are currently looking at how to improve recycling across the County, and whether more facilities are required.
- At present, County is undertaking a trial on using recycled plastic to mend the roads.
- County Council has formally agreed it will support dual tracking for the Cotswold line.

### **4. District Councillor's Report – Cllr. Tom Simcox**

The year started with much talk of unitary authorities and bid from the County Council for a County wide Unitary, something that West Oxfordshire District Council strongly opposed due to the potential loss of control of key West Oxfordshire issue, low council tax, free parking etc. Although the bid was submitted it has yet to be assessed by the Secretary of State and looks to remain so for some time.

However the District Council has worked with the other councils in Oxfordshire to secure an initial funding deal. The Housing and Growth Deal which will deliver £215 million over a 5 year period in return for delivering 100,000 homes in the county. These are not 100,000 additional homes. Across the county the various adopted and emerging local plans are looking to deliver around this same number, so it is support for infrastructure in return for homes that were already planned to be built.

This deal is seen as a down payment for future deals as Oxfordshire continues to be a net contributor to the Treasury and worthy of further investment.

Closer to home, the West Oxfordshire Local Plan nears completion and is expected to be adopted in the coming weeks. In January of this year the planning inspector came back with comments that, given the number of houses already given planning permission and those planned in the strategic sites throughout the district; the Burford to Charlbury Sub Area, in which Ascott and Shipton lie, need not have any housing allocation for the plan

period. This removes the onus for the area to provide housing unless there is a clearly identified need, removing the spectre of speculative housing applications.

In September we launched our new waste collection service, which saw changes to collection schedules and gave a higher recycling capacity to residents. With a new service came new contractors and after a slightly bumpy start for the more remote locales the service is running smoothly now.

Finally West Oxfordshire set its budget in February, once again providing a balanced budget with only a very modest increase in Council Tax yet importantly without cutting public services; carrying on our extensive shared services model with neighbouring authorities.

#### **5. Report from Wychwood Surgery from Ms Vanessa Newman, practice manager:**

During the last year the Surgery has seen a lot of changes in staff. During August, Dr Carol Doan, our then ST3 final year GP trainee completed her training and spent 2 months working as a locum for us before settling to work at a practice nearer to her home in Oxford. Dr Rhys Dawe joined the practice for his final year of GP training and Dr James Kennard joined us for 6 months as part of his training programme. At the end of August we said farewell to Dr Matthews, who had been with the practice for 3 years and welcomed Dr Katy Walsh, a former final year GP trainee with us, back on to our team as a Salaried GP. Dr Wan Jauhari joined the practice in February 2018 for her final year as a GP trainee. In the autumn Mrs Kathy Mutch joined the pharmacy and dispensing team.

The practice planned internal building works to help enhance service provision and these changes are nearing completion. The Pharmacy now has a second serving opening which has taken a lot of pressure off the pharmacy team as well as allowing customers better access.

Nearing completion is the work to split the waiting room used by patients waiting to see a member of the nursing team or podiatrist into a clinical room and a smaller waiting area. The extra clinical space will enable the practice to offer accommodation to more visiting services and reduce the amount of the practice team having to vacate their room to allow other service providers access.

The Practice was pleased to be able to offer more mental health services during the year. We now have 2 designated mental health support nurses in the practice two days a week; we have 3 counsellors from Talking Spaces visit the surgery most weeks.

Our current news is that Dr David Nixon is retiring from the Practice at the end of June. Dr Nixon joined the practice in January 1995 and during that period of time has seen many changes including the move to our current purpose-built premises at the end of May 2006. Dr Nixon will continue working as a locum in the practice over the summer.

#### **6. Report from Mr James Walmsley on behalf of the PCC**

Rev Kate Stacey has moved away from Shipton. Kate's last service was on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> December, followed by a farewell lunch in the New Beaconsfield hall. Under Church of England canon law, no action can be taken to recruit a new vicar until Kate had been installed as Rector in the Stroud area which was on 28<sup>th</sup> January.

Two representatives from each parish of Shipton, Milton and Fifield with Idbury drew up the personal and parish profiles for this vacancy. These profiles will be agreed by the six representatives and the Bishop of Dorchester at a Section 12 meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> April. The role will be advertised on 25/26 April. The short listing will take place on 12<sup>th</sup> June with interviews scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> July. The selection panel comprises the six representatives for the three parishes, the Bishop, the Area Dean and the Deanery Lay chair. If all goes well a new vicar could be in post

by September.

During the interregnum, Holy Communion services, baptisms, weddings and funerals are being conducted by retired clergy and some other services such as Morning Prayer are lay led. Although Anne Hartley retired, she has been generous enough to conduct many of the services. The Benefice Administrator, Clare Harper, is acting as the primary point of contact for arranging clergy, baptisms, weddings and funerals. During a vacancy, the churchwardens and the Area Dean are responsible for the maintenance of services and the vicarage.

A faculty was agreed to repair the bells for the first time in a hundred years. To date, some £55,000 has been raised from a requirement of about £70,000. Discussions are underway with the Diocese regarding reordering the church. The emphasis is on a new heating system, an extra toilet and a servery. It is a long process and will need funds to be raised in the future.

In the absence of a vicar there is a pastoral team offering counselling to those who request it. This relates to such areas as bereavement or personal problems.

The PCC in Shipton appointed Victoria Martin as the second Churchwarden and Martin Davies as PCC secretary. Both of these appointments are to be ratified at the APCM.

#### **7. Report from Wychwood CE Primary School from Mr Joseph Rubba, headteacher:**

This year we have welcomed six new staff members to the school including two new teachers. We are not anticipating any further staffing changes this year but one never knows. So obviously the focus for the school this year is to embed our new staff members into the 'Wychwood Way' of working and luckily we have a handful of staff members who have worked with us for many years to help provide a smooth transition.

Our music provision continues to thrive under the leadership of our Deputy Headteacher Mrs Dee Loader. The choir took a trip to London to watch a musical and have competed and performed at many events. They won the choir competition at Kingham Hill School and were awarded £400. They also sang at the Chipping Norton Festival and received a 'Distinction' for their performance. Last Christmas the children revived the Carols by Candlelight tradition and raised £450 as well as recording a Christmas CD. All the money raised is being steered to purchasing a piano and instruments for the school.

Sport is proving to be another success with our girls cross country runners winning third place at the county finals. We have also had success with our kwik cricket team winning the county finals and participating in a national tournament last summer.

Academically the school continues to improve. Our outcomes at the end of Year 6 are above national averages for other schools. Improvements in outcomes for the youngest children in Reception continue as do the number of children passing the phonics test in Year 1.

The governors have recently supported the school with improvements to the grounds. We have added a much need adventure play space on our school playground and the children with the help of volunteers recently erected three willow domes on the field providing much needed shade during the summer months.

Plans for the future include improving the outdoor provision for our youngest children in the Reception classes as the playing area remains muddy for all of the winter months. We will begin to fundraise to repave the play area with soft pore and provide the children with new climbing equipment.

As you may have seen in the news recently, education budgets are tight and we are no exception. At this moment in time our pupil numbers are healthy and last year we were over-subscribed which bodes well for the future.

Many thanks for your continuing interest and support.

## **8. Report from Mr Paul Chantry for Shipton under Wychwood Recreation Field and Village Hall Charity**

The hall had a moderate year in 2017. Use of the hall by our regular users reduced a little compared with previous years and the use of the hall for weddings and parties was still less than we would wish. Last year I reported that Lee had set up a new venture, The Bumblefoot Rock Project, which has been going very well, thanks to his personal efforts, and is making a positive contribution to our income. The 2017 accounts are in the final stages of preparation and they will show that income from hall hiring was 8% down on that in 2016, but the increase in the Rock Project net income compensated for that.

It is unfortunate that several of our regular groups at the hall that serve young people have left us over the last two years, the latest being the Youth Club which has suspended its operation. Set against this, the playing field is used much more than in the past and, of course, the Rock Project is specifically for the young.

2018 has proceeded in a similar way to 2017. Income from hall hiring is at 90% of target for the first quarter, with another of our regular bookings leaving us, but with the Rock Project still doing well.

In 2017 we replaced the treadmill in the gym, bought new fridges and a freezer for the kitchen and purchased some more equipment for the Rock Project. We also were fortunate in that the Day Centre were successful in obtaining a grant for a commercial grade dishwasher.

In 2017 we developed a medium term plan to forecast major expense items and cashflows over the next 10 years. This showed that we can expect the hall's finances to be satisfactory in future years in spite of significant spend being required to keep the fabric and the contents of the hall to a high standard as the hall ages. This is provided we can keep income level at that which we have seen in the recent past, so that has to be our priority.

An essential element in our financial stability is the annual subsidy paid to the hall by the Parish Council. I would like to thank the Councillors for their continued support each year.

The Hall is 20 years old this year and to celebrate this we are organising a family fun afternoon on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July followed by a supper dance in the evening.

On the subject of hall personnel, Lee Wyatt-Buchan has now been our Hall Manager for 10 years. Lee's efficiency and friendly manner have been appreciated by all hall users.

The tasks of payroll, tax and book-keeping have been undertaken by Hilary Bowman since 2014 on a pro-bono basis. I am very grateful to her for doing this work in a very efficient way.

Finally, a word about our committee members: I would like to thank them all; not only for their attendance and input at meetings, but for all the work they do in furthering success of the hall and the recreation field.

Malcolm Cochrane has just stepped down. Thanks were given to him for his many years of service.

## **9. Report from the Community Policing Team**

Crime statistics for the last year:

- Two criminal damages
- Six burglaries
- Three thefts from vehicles
- Three shed break-ins

## **10. Report from Cllr Carole Arnold for Shipton Volunteers**

The Shipton Volunteers celebrated their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017, by having a BBQ at the end of August. This was held in the communal orchard in the allotment, which made for a lovely venue. Old and new members attended and we were blessed with fantastic weather. It was a good turn out and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. The hours for this year are broadly in line with the previous year, with 42 volunteers donating their time over 23 working sessions. There have also been separate sessions at Diggers Wood. I'm grateful to each one of these volunteers for their hard work in maintaining the appearance of our village.

The tasks undertaken this year include: the annual litter pick, cleaning the pavements of weeds in Spring and leaves in Autumn, supporting the Wild Garden, maintenance around the church yard and the allotments and the children's playground.

There have been 4 new members join over the past 12 months plus 2 students doing their D of E service. The Parish Council also continues to provide support and guidance and this is very much appreciated.

If you feel you would like to volunteer, please contact me. You can find a list of dates and activities on the council website. Any help will be welcomed.

It was expressed that the work done is much appreciated.

**11. Report from Mr James Walmsley for the Lady Reade Educational Foundation Charity**

The charity gave out 6 grants last year to students in the community who were going to study at colleges or universities.

**12. Other Matters for Discussion**

Concern was raised about Upper High St which is a Conservation Area. It was argued that the Council's representation has not been robust enough to refute planning dictates from planning officers such as boundary walls not being compliant with planning applications. The chairman advised that WODC were responsible for planning enforcement and asked the District Councillor, who is also a member of the Planning Committee, to note the observation. The chairman also reiterated his previous comment that the Parish Council attempted to represent the views of the entire village and that there would be occasions when such views were not in agreement with those of individuals.

A question was asked regarding the size of the reserve currently held. The chairman explained the views of the Council with regard to restricted and unrestricted reserves but accepted that the current reserves were slightly on the high side.

A further question was asked over rates of interest on said reserves. The Parish Council accounts have recently been moved to a new bank which specialises in local government accounts however the clerk will investigate interest rates available elsewhere.

Thanks were given to the councillors for their voluntary work.

Meeting closed: 9pm

Refreshments were served.