

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF BUTLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.00P.M. ON 9th April 2013 IN THE CHURCH ROOM, BUTLEIGH.**

**PARISH COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** A Carr (Chairman), A Brown, T Hoyle, M Hoyle, R Burdett, T Dodkin

**APOLOGIES:** D Sharland

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mr G de Wilton, Mr Tom Done, Cllr K Maddock, Mrs Marjorie Brunt, Mr David Heeley, Mrs Rachel Wren, Mr Roly Backhurst, Mrs Marilyn Backhurst, Mr Ian Innes.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT; ALAN CARR REPORTED:**

Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting. This occasion gives Parishioners a chance to hear what the Parish Council has been doing on their behalf during the year. Other organisations in the village, supported by the Parish Council, also have their opportunity to update you.

I am glad to say that the Council has been operating with its full complement of 8 Councillors throughout the year. I believe the Council has been conducting business in accordance with their legal requirements and best practice.

When issues have been of sufficient interest a small number of people have attended our monthly meetings.

In a broader context the Mendip Local Plan, which includes Butleigh and Butleigh Wootton was progressing satisfactorily through its various stages until March this year. Issues raised at a local planning inquiry cast doubt on the Council's approach to establishing land supply and housing requirements during the first 5 years of the plan period. The consequences are that applications for new housing development will be assessed primarily against the National Planning Policy Framework which came into operation on 25<sup>th</sup> March this year. This legislation is drafted with a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The submission of the Draft Mendip Local Plan to the Secretary of State will now be delayed until the summer.

During the year the Parish Council have had to adopt new regulations on disclosure of interests. It is now a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest when dealing with Council business.

There have also been changes in the method of calculation of the Parish element of the Council Tax. This has resulted in a marginal increase in the local Council tax for 2013/14, despite our request for a

reduction in the annual precept. These changes were imposed by Central Government without adequate time to make adjustments.

### **Council Meetings**

These are usually held on the first Tuesday of the month and dates are published in advance on the Parish Noticeboard and in News and Views. There has been a 78% councillor attendance over the year.

Our County Council Ward member, Ken Maddock, has attended one meeting this year. Our Mendip District Council Ward member, Nigel Woolcombe-Adams has attended 6 meetings.

### **Planning**

As a Statutory Consultee, the Parish Council received and offered responses to 30 planning applications. Of these, 7 were for tree works in the Conservation Area and 1 was a re-consultation. 21 applications were approved and 1 refused by the Planning Authority. 1 was withdrawn before a decision and at the present time, 6 are awaiting decisions.

### **Highways**

Tony Brown, our Lead Councillor, has continued to put pressure on Mendip Highways to carry out urgent and routine operations for the benefit of the village. Among the successes are:- **Children Playing** signs in Back Town; Large areas of road resurfacing and patching; The stream and grills in St James Square cleared to minimise flooding; The blocked culvert in Compton Street replaced; some road signs cleaned or painted. Villagers concerns about lorries in the village and obstruction of the High Street have been dealt with at site meetings or by correspondence with Mendip Highways.

### **Finance**

The Parish Precept for 2013/2014 was set at £12,000, a reduction of £500 on the previous 2 years. A significant part of the budget goes towards keeping the village neat and tidy by mowing, clearing public footpaths and street sweeping. Financial support has been made possible to Butleigh Playingfields and Play Area. Small donations to Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance, Strode Theatre Development Fund, Mendip Community Transport and Citizens Advice Bureau have been given within the existing regulations.

A fund is being built up to repair the Church Rooms in the future. The Council are also required by law to hold a contingency fund of 25% of annual expenditure.

## **Environment**

A band of nine volunteers under the direction of Brian Marshall have planted 6 new trees this year and rebuilt over 20 protective cages around the saplings in Cedar Walk. A smaller sturdier cage has been constructed which is more economical of materials. Some funds have been provided by the Parish Council and matched by individual contributions from the village and elsewhere. Maintenance on the village green has involved the felling of one tree and the pruning of others.

## **Parish Plan**

Tim Hoyle is leading a separate working group with the aim of developing a village Parish Plan and it is hoped that this will be available later this year. His report will come later in the meeting.

## **War Memorial**

During 2012 the Working Group decided on the using Peter Hayman of Taunton, to restore the Memorial. Having consulted the Principal Conservation Officer, the work commenced in the Summer of 2012, and was split into three phases. The work cost less than the initial estimate, due to restrictions imposed on what could be done by the monuments listed status (Grade II), and in the end cost a total of £2,850. This was paid for by a grant from SPG Ltd, a prize draw in the village shop and the generosity of parishioners.

The work was completed on 1st October 2012, which meant that it was clean, re-mortared and had had several loose stones replaced/re-bedded. To mark the completion, a rededication ceremony was held on 8th November, officiated at by our Archdeacon and several family members of those commemorated.

This year we hope to place gravel/scalplings around the immediate base of the monument, which was recommended to help drainage and its preservation, and check on the effects of winter which seem to have loosened some of the surface fillers.

## **Solar Park Funds**

The village has been allocated £2500 per annum for 25 years by Solar Power Generation Ltd towards specific projects promoted by non profit organisations in the village, subject to an established criteria. As the arrangements are entirely discretionary, the selection of the recipients and amounts they will receive is carried out by SPG Ltd. No funds are held by the Parish Council. Any under spend in a particular year, is carried forward and RPI indexation added.

The bidding process for 2013 has closed and 3 applications have been submitted.

## **Future projects**

In order to keep improving life in Butleigh, the Parish Council are continuing with or initiating the following:-

### Parish Plan

Improvement to public footpath access. This was initiated in 2012/13 with a grant from the County Council Ward member and topped up with practical assistance from County Footpaths. Further improvements are planned for 2013/14 from an allocated budget and community involvement.

The Parish Website project is still alive but awaits a volunteer with suitable IT skills

## **CONCLUSION**

I am pleased to report a number of positive outcomes for the village in the last year:-

The 8 Affordable Houses have nearly been completed and an open day for the village is planned for this month. 25 people on the Homefinder Somerset Register have Butleigh connections and will be considered first for the rented houses. We continue to work closely with the developer, Mr Bridgeman, to get the best result for the village.

The Hospital site is cleared and ready for development to commence.

The Rose and Portcullis has become a thriving pub on our doorstep and is well supported by the villagers.

The War Memorial is looking the best it has been for many years and the commemoration ceremony in November with the School children present, has become a regular feature in the calendar.

A combination of Community Speedwatch, Police checks and Speed Indicator Devices have been operating to reduce speeds through the village.

Replacement of dead cedar trees and protective fences in Cedar Avenue has continued.

Last year saw a very successful Diamond Jubilee Celebration. The community spirit generated by the occasion was proof of its success.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their individual contributions and support during the past year and to Sheila Petherbridge, our Clerk, for helping to guide us through the complexities of running a Parish Council. As I have reported earlier, there are many conscientious volunteers in our village, who do their bit, and they also deserve our gratitude.

**FINANCE** : A comprehensive report of the year end finances (unaudited), was given by the Clerk. The unaudited book was open for inspection.

**BUTLEIGH PCC REPORT : Mr David Heeley reported:**

2012 has been a relatively stable year for St. Leonards Church. Attendances at the various Services during each month have been encouraging though we are concerned that the average age of worshippers continues to increase. There is a distinct lack of those in the 30-50 year age bracket. The implications for the future financing of our various obligations are self-evident.

We had some wonderful attendances over the periods of the key Festivals. A changed format for our Harvest Service was very well received, & as ever we had a very full house for the Crib Service on Christmas Eve: some 140 attended, including a vast array of very contented babies! Café Church, held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of most months provides a basis for a stimulating exchange of views on a wide variety of subjects. We would welcome a discussion in due course on the 2 Remembrance Services so that perhaps we could develop a 'constructive thread' between them.

The felling of the Wellingtonia was achieved at a cost but with great skill. We are in discussions currently with a wood carver to create we hope a lasting memorial seat.

Personnel: we are seeking, so far without success, a new Treasurer, a Churchwarden to replace myself, & we have 4 vacancies on the PCC due to be elected in c.3 weeks' time.

The Church Room is well used & bookings are a good level.

Church finances are in a reasonable state but remain 'fickle' from month to month. We are having to exercise extreme caution in a number of situations. The Church Quinquennial Review takes place this year. We are hopeful there will be no major repairs to undertake.

Churchyard: has been well maintained by Rob Hallett though the very wet conditions have reduced the number of mowings. We are grateful for the Parish Council's support. We have also instigated a twice-yearly Churchyard working party which has proved very useful. The Fairfield Trust is financing repair of three Hood tombs/panels: one has been completed & the remainder will be completed this year.

People: we have many from our community who contribute to the caring of our church as well as participating in Services & special occasions such as Weddings, Baptisms & Funerals. We are immensely grateful for their very willing help.

### **BUTLEIGH PLAYING FIELD ASSOCIATION REPORT: Mr Ian Innes reported:**

The BPFA has had another very successful year with a small dedicated team that continues to develop and promote youth sport and activities throughout the village. This year we have had a fairly quiet year investment wise compared to recent years with the main focus being on the continued development of both the Playing Field and Holm Oaks Play Area.

### **Pavillion and Playing Field Area**

- Football continues to be the main user of our facilities during the winter, with various teams using Butleigh Playing Fields as their home venue inc Butleigh Dynamos plus a very successful Saturday morning football club which has been run by Richard Hughes and Justin Hodge for the past 5 years now with between 20 -30 children attending each week. We have also been recognised by Somerset Football Association as they have held a number of coaching courses at the playing fields due to the quality of the pitch and pavilion and they now hold their regular “elite” girls training at the Playing Fields.
- The high quality artificial cricket wicket installed in April 2007 has allowed the development of cricket for children aged u8 – u16’s plus a number of adult games. This aided by the investment in a cricket net surrounding the pitch has allowed for further use especially for the younger children who do need now need to travel along the busy main road. It is encouraging to see a number of former youth team players now playing for Butleigh 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> teams. No Saturday morning cricket took place this year but may well be introduced next year.
- Tag rugby continued throughout the Summer months with between 30 – 50 children attending weekly sessions. Thanks to Colin Gravett and all the parents for their continued support and enthusiasm.
- Butleigh Multi Terrain Run was again held at the playing fields with in excess of 100 runners participating, this is the highest level for a number of years. Circa 30 youngsters also took part in the junior races. This event signifies the community spirit we have in Butleigh, as we have large numbers of villagers assisting the event throughout the day, special thanks to Nick Foster and Pete Wright for organising the event.

- Butleigh Nursery School continues to use these facilities throughout the year, giving the children an excellent environment to learn in.
- Pilate's classes have continued twice a week held by a local physiotherapist
- The 811 club has also made good use of the new pavilion through out the year during term time and there is now also a Youth Club that uses the facilities throughout the winter months.
- There have been a growing number of parties using the pavilion and the committee have continued to hold regular bingo and fund raising sessions with the quiz night this year being particularly successful.
- We also held a number of events on the sports field to commemorate the Queens Jubilee with the highlight being the Summer Ball held in a marquee with over 200 people attending – special thanks to Rachel Wren \ Rachel Colling and Wendy Jenner for their support in organising this event for the village.
- With the continued investment in the area and most importantly the dedication of Pete Edmondson, we are able to continually offer an excellent facility for the enjoyment of the village. Our thanks go to all those that have assisted throughout the year.
- Investment for this year has included a new Basketball nets and football goals plus further drainage improvements.

### **Holm Oaks Play Area**

The investment in Holm Oaks has been limited this year with the focus being on general upkeep as opposed to anything major however we are now reviewing the central concrete area and how this can be improved.

Significant investment is likely this year with a new fort \ wobbly bridge structure to be developed. Funding is underway with a potential commencement in Summer 13.

The safety matting is now also being replaced by bark to improve Health and Safety in the play area as the old matting was very slippery when wet.

We will also be in discussions with the builders of the new developments at Holm Oaks to see how they can assist in some upgrades required at the play area especially with path around the park.

### **BPFA committee:**

Once again as a small dedicated committee we are very proud of what has been achieved this year, our facilities are admired and complimented throughout the year

From a committee's perspective it was especially pleasing to welcome new members to the committee Rachel Wren, Rachel Colling, Wendy Jenner and Chris Greenwood plus have Dave Sharland and Richard Burdett representing the Parish Council.

The other committee members for the year were: Peter Edmondson, Richard Hughes, Ruth Higgins, Jackie Starr, Donna Adams and myself.

The committee would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued support and encouragement of our proposals.

### **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT: Mr Chris Allanson-Bailey wrote:**

The last 12 months for Butleigh has been virtually crime free. The area covered by our PCSO Tim Richards as a whole has enjoyed very low criminal activity. Apparently the criminal fraternity acknowledges that residents of the village are very good at reporting unusual vehicles, and people to the Police. This does not mean that home security is ignored.

According to Tim this village is one of the best in our area for our Neighbourhood Watch. Bolster Lane is still the main area for fly tipping. Dog fouling in the village has improved in the last year. Information on criminal activities in the area is quickly passed between our neighbouring NHW groups and the Police, which makes for easier control of the criminal fraternity. WEith the ever tightening of money, there are even more chances of criminal activity, so be alert at all times.

### **SPEED WATCH REPORT: Mrs Mary Hoyle reported:**

17 Speedwatch sessions have been carried out by the 13 trained Speedwatch volunteers this year at different times of the day and on different days of the week. Over 450 vehicles per hour travel through the village between 7 a.m. - 9.30 a.m. and 3.30p.m. - 6 p.m. and between 200 and 250 vehicles per hour during the day.

Disappointingly, the percentage of speeding vehicles measured during Speedwatch sessions has not decreased this last year. We still have around 40% travelling over the speed limit and 10% - 12% in excess of 40mph in a 30mph zone. When speeds over 50 mph are recorded the police try to visit those concerned immediately. We have had at least two accidents in Sub Rd this year.

Earlier this month the highest speed yet in Mendip was recorded by a car coming out of the narrow part of Sub Rd towards the Court. An 18 yr old in an MG sports car was doing 59mph as his girlfriend was late for her lecture at Strode College.

The fixed Speed Indicator Device , located at the southern entrance to the village during part of October and February, showed that only around 15% of the cars were keeping to the speed limit as they passed the device and between 5% and 7% were doing over 50mph as they entered our village.

Somerset Police can also choose to set up speed traps where they consider speeding is a problem. Recently the Police Mobile Speed Enforcement Van has decided to attend the Butleigh and Butleigh Wootton area from time to time and carry out speed enforcement checks. They are authorised to prosecute any speeders. They are using the same sites that are authorised for Community Speedwatch.

Finally I would like to thank Terry Drake, the Mendip Speedwatch co-ordinator, for his invaluable support and encouragement and Tim Richards, our Community Police Support Officer, for his continual support both by e-mail and at the side of the road in all weathers.

### **BATS REPORT: Mr Tom Done reported:**

Once again we have had a successful year, having made an average of approximately 12 trips a month which is down two from 2011 of mostly retired members of our community. These trips are mainly of a medical nature being Doctor, Dentist or Hospital Appointments and Journeys to catch Trains and Coaches but also a small percentage of Social trips.

Our membership of the "Mid Somerset Car Scheme Partnership" continues to keep our insurance costs down, and the discussions at Partnership meetings have the benefit of transfer of information between groups.

The most important change we are making is our contact telephone number which will now be 850577 this will make it easier when Tom our co-ordinator is away to transfer calls to another member of our team.

During the last year we have had 3 new drivers join us but 2 have left, we now have 15 Drivers.

We have reviewed our costs but have been able to maintain our charges at last year's level.

The County transport subsidy cuts do not appear to affect us so far, but may in the future.

We have to offer a special thank you to the wonderful team of drivers we have in our scheme, it is very gratifying to receive the many thanks from our members for the care they have received.

**VILLAGE HALL COUNCIL REPORT: Mr David Heeley reported:**

Remains in a moth ball state, retaining communications with the Gane family regarding any land that may become available. Butleigh Cricket Club is currently purchasing the Cricket pitch and the offer of a loan of £15K is possible.

Ian Innes asked if that could be made available for the Playing Field Association if required. This was agreed.

**PARISH PLAN REPORT: Mr Tim Hoyle reported:** At the Annual Parish Meeting last year the Parish Council sounded out people's views on what was liked or wanted and what was not liked or not wanted in Butleigh. Following a good response a small working group was formed to prepare a questionnaire so that a parish plan could be developed. In preparation to distributing the questionnaire to every household in the village several awareness sessions were organised by the working group and were held including collecting further views at displays during the village fete, the Jubilee, from the school and at a village treasure hunt. In the meantime a Big Lottery grant was obtained in order to fund the preparation of the Plan and the questionnaire was drafted and reviewed with the working group.

Over the winter period although further activity was put on hold, primarily in anticipation of the expected imminent receipt of a significant planning application (which has actually yet to materialise), the questionnaire has been reviewed with the Community Council for Somerset who have loaded the final questionnaire into an analysis tool in preparation for us to enter the data from the householders returns.

Irrespective of further significant planning applications the working group will now be going ahead with the printing and distribution of the questionnaires and their subsequent data entry, the analysis and the final plan development with recommendations.

**BUTLEIGH COMMUNITY EMERGENCY GROUP: Mr Tony Brown reported:**

The group met for its inaugural meeting during February 2012 and has held subsequent meetings since then.

A draft Community Emergency Plan is nearing completion and we have received excellent support from several organisations within the parish and Geoff Mackett Senior Civil Contingencies Officer with SCC.

On 18<sup>th</sup> January this year two members of the team carried out checks on numerous elderly/vulnerable residents in Butleigh due to snowy and severe cold weather.

**SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT: Mr Ken Maddock reported:**

It was not his intention to stand again for County Councillor when his term of office ended in May. He had been Leader for 3 of the 4 past years. The grant from Central Government to SCC has been cut by a third and demand for many of the essential services has risen. Council tax has been frozen for the last 4 years. He has given grants to Butleigh Cricket Club, BPFA, Butleigh PC for footpath maintenance. He thanked the Parish Council for its friendly welcome throughout his term of office.

**PARISHIONERS QUESTIONS.**

M Backhurst : Who will decide who gets to live in the Affordable Housing? A Carr replied; Mendip DC will decide who qualifies from those who have registered on the Homefinder Somerset website. They will put forward 3 names to the developer with Butleigh connections for each house and he has the freedom to choose. The developer wants to make it work for Butleigh and local people. The Parish Council has no say in the selection.

T Hoyle and T Brown: Stated that the design and materials have blended well into the village.

D Heeley thanked the Speed Watch group for their work.

Suggested pavement down Baltonsborough Road ? - A Brown replied that it would need the Ward Councillor's agreement and then funding would need to be found.

Could speed bumps be put in the High Street ?. - A Brown reported that the Highways Engineers are reluctant to instigate any further lines and speed bumps in High Street. T Hoyle stated that the Parish Plan had questions to cover this.

Proposals to repair the green where lorries have damaged the turf on the corner ? A Carr replied that this may repair naturally or a parishioner may repair with topsoil and re-seed. Needs to be discussed.

R Backhurst : St James Square exit dangerous onto Sub Road due to vegetation. A Carr replied that it is the landowner's responsibility and he had received a letter from the Parish Council requesting the work to be done.

The meeting closed at 8.13p.m.

Chairman

7<sup>th</sup> May 2013.