

CHARFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 27th April 2010 commencing 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall, Charfield

PRESENT

Parish Councillors Mr M Rosher (chair), Mrs J Law, Mr M Cheskin, Mr R Hancock, Mr P Patterson

Clerk Ms S Bailey (outgoing) Mrs H Saunders (incoming)

Public 8 members of public & 2 South Glos Council Officers (Andy Porter & Jacqui Ward)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Mrs N Newns

1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was proposed by Mr J Acton and seconded by Mr M Rosher and **resolved** that minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 19th March 2009 are signed as a correct record.

2 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr M Rosher explained the workings of a Parish Council and highlighted accomplishments over the past year.

The Parish Council has commented upon more than two dozen planning applications in the past year.

Grants have still been given to local organisations, most notably the Memorial Hall, although these are reducing in size due to other commitments now faced by the Parish Council.

Of these, the major projects have included Play Area Refurbishment, Charfield Burial Ground and Street Lighting Trial.

Mr Rosher wanted his 'Thanks' minuted to Councillors who have volunteered their freetime to work on these projects and also to Mr Toby Jefferies, architect, who has freely donated his time towards preparing the Planning Application for the Burial Ground.

South Glos Council approved the Planning Application for the Burial Ground in March 2009. The Parish Council are currently in talks with the planners to clarify what the wording of their conditions meant and are hoping to progress shortly with the transfer of ownership of land and first phase of development. All updates will be posted on both the Parish and Burial Ground web sites.

Funds are now in place for the Play Area Refurbishment, plans have been approved and order placed with local award winning landscape designer – Jane's Pond. The work is due to commence on Tuesday 4th May 2010.

Mr Rosher informed meeting of the closure of the Toddler area for the duration of the development and urged people to take care and report any problems with behaviour / vandalism both during the development and after its completion.

The Parish Council are dealing with anti social behaviour, Mr Rosher urged people not to tolerate it and to report it to Police or Clerk.

2009 / 10 saw some changes at Charfield Parish Council. In October 2009 Mr Fred Carling retired from the Council and was replaced by Mrs Judy Law. In March 2010 Ms Sue Bailey, Clerk, handed in her notice and is taking on more responsibility at Tetbury Town Council. Interviews were held and Mrs Hannah Saunders has taken over as new Clerk.

Mr Rosher thanked both Fred and Sue for their service and support and wished Sue luck as she starts new job.

Hannah was welcomed and new contact details issued.

Clerks Phone Number – 01454 294960.

3 FINANCIAL REPORT BY THE CLERK

Accounts for full financial year just ended are now complete and signed off by Council and are available to members and the public, along with budget information for the coming year. Please note these are unaudited, internal audit is 13th May and external audit in July.

Of the year's total £38,852 income, the Precept amounted to £23,000, other income was £15,800 and was made up mainly from grants relating to new play area.

Expenditure totalled £39,527 with grants accounting for £3200 (£2000 to the Memorial Hall).

Playing field repairs & maintenance £1970, insurance £922, training courses & subscriptions £914, and just over £8000 covering the cost of an office/stationery and employing a clerk/finance officer.

New play area costs were £15,350 with a further £15,000 being spent soon in current financial year.

The burial ground surveys and expenses have amounted to £3523. These will rise in current financial year as planning has been granted and work gets started. Total earmarked this year is £13,000.

4 UPDATE ON STREETLIGHTING INITIATIVE

Mr Andy Porter from South Glos Council Street Care department outlined briefly findings from the Council's initiative introduced in June 2009 to a part night-time switching trial in Charfield. Charfield has been the first to trial the concept and Mr Porter wanted to thank the Council and residents for bearing with them during the early stages of the trial while problems were being sorted out.

Part switch off is between 12 – 5:30am only and done by a programmable sensor at the top of each light column. Mr Porter stressed that the criteria for switching off lamps is strict and depends on road type, speeds, bends, junctions, locations, accident hotspots, crime & CCTV areas, footpaths, vulnerable housing areas, etc. The main Wotton Road through Charfield remains lit.

Since Charfield have taken part in the trial Mr Porter has been inundated with calls from other Parish's and there are currently 8 on a list being considered for future trials.

The aim of the trial is to save energy, reduce carbon footprint and reduce energy costs. The Council needs to save 3% year on year energy costs. Each year streetlighting alone in South Glos costs £1.1million and energy costs are rising. This cost is 17% of South Glos total energy bill.

More analysis of results will be done following June and the anniversary of the start of switch off – but Mr Porter was able to report that 178 lights were turned off. This will save 9tonnes of CO2 and £1500 in energy costs in a year. The kit installed has a life of 15 years + and they anticipate a ROI in 1.5 years. There has been no increase in crime or problems with road safety. Mr Porter and S Glos Council are grateful for support and believe the savings both environmentally and financially to be genuine and worthwhile. The trial has raised the profile of Streetcare and the Councils commitment to the environment and working towards reducing costs and carbon footprint.

A member of the public didn't agree with the turning on and off. Living inbetween a cluster of 3 streetlights that turn off / on the noise disturbance is distressing. This has been reported and engineers have visited site, kit been checked and tested and found to be okay. Member was concerned about why Charfield and are the Council satisfied that it has been a success and where has this been reported?

In response to question Mr Porter stressed that the year would be up on 6th June and analysis / reports carried out and published following that date. Thorough risk assessment was carried out prior to trial and consultation made by way of last years Annual Parish Meeting and media such as Gazette and Council / Parish Websites. In response to why Charfield was chosen – because Chair volunteered them to take part if trial if met criteria.

Councillor Mike Cheskin took debate back to original issue and offered to go down to 'cluster' and record / report on the noise factor that is causing concern.

Chairman Mark Rosher re-iterated that he didn't want people upset and clarified that the member of public was happy with concept – just concerned about disturbance / noise.

If anyone has any further questions please contact the Clerk.

5 PARISH PLANS

Jacqui Ward from South Glos Council gave an informative and enlightening presentation on Parish Plans, what they are and how they can help. For information on presentation please see Parish Website for Link or contact Clerk.

In summary Jacqui has 5 years experience working with Parish Plans and it is something she believes in passionately. In 2000 it was all about 'Vital Villages' these then became 'Parish Plans' and due to more Urban areas taking the idea on board have subsequently become know as 'Community Led Plans'.

It is all about 'Bottom Up' planning – Charfield saying what they want and where they would like to be in 5 – 10 years time. The 'Plan' can be seen as a vehicle and a way for the community to air problems, views and visions and work to making these a reality.

There are no rules as each community is individual / different – but there is a lot of support available. One of these routes being via the RCC and a gentleman called Dick Whittington.

As well as Jacqui, Karen Whitaker and Michelle Dixon from S Glos Council are able to advise and Alan from Hawksbury (where a successful Parish Plan has been implemented) is happy to help.

STAGES

- 1) Steering Group (shouldn't be PC – and for a village of Charfield size should consist of 8 volunteers)
- 2) Finding out 'What Matters to Parishoners'
- 3) Tailor Made Questionnaire
- 4) Analysis of Information
- 5) Action Plan – drawing up a Community Profile

Jacqui went on to give examples of where it has worked and why she feels it is important.

It does give 'Influence'. It isn't a Statutory Document but Planning Departments and Highways Agencies do take it into consideration.

It can put a community in a better position to attract funders – if they can give evidence of a need. It gives mandate and lets S Glos Council know what communities want.

Case Studies mentioned included Bathford, Doynton and Blagdon.

If anyone is interested in finding out more – please contact Clerk.

6 ITEMS RAISED BY ELECTORS FOR THE PARISH

The problem of boundaries and plans going across boundary were discussed (namely in relation to Cycle Path from Charfield to Kingswood) and question raised how could a Parish Plan help? Jacqui Ward said that talking to other Parish Councils and putting them on Plan as Partners could influence decisions – as has been the case in N Somerset.

The Parish Councils concern and concentration on roads and vehicles was raised – in relation to the Cycle Path out of village and Manor Lane Speed Calming Proposal. Chairman Mark Rosher answered saying that the schemes were presented as a 'Fait Accompli' from the Council – but the Parish Council did go back to S Glos regarding the 'Speed Calming' and significant alterations to original plans have been made. John Acton mentioned that 10 years ago a cycle path out of village was requested.

The issue of the state of roads and pot holes was mentioned and will be taken back to Andy Porter of S Glos Council Streetcare – but Jacqui Ward assured parishioners that they are doing all they can and have done more already this year than in past due to the severe weather in Jan / Feb.

The issue of Core Strategy and future Building proposals and developments for the village were voiced and when public would know more / be consulted. It was clarified that it would be on all websites and that representatives would go out to SSCG meetings to present.

Other items discussed in detail included the proposals in past and no doubt in future to look at re-opening the Railway Station and how village plans in past have had a positive impact on Charfield.

John Acton 'Thanked' Sue Bailey for all her help and hard work over the last 5 years and wished her all the best in her new role.

The Chairman thanked South Glos Council Officers for being present to answer parishioners' queries regarding Streetlighting and Parish Plan and advised that the issues raised would be discussed at the next Parish Council Meeting by Councillors.

This concluded the business of the meeting, which closed at 8.55p.m.

Chairman – April 2011