

# CHARFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2009 commencing 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall, Charfield

## PRESENT

**Parish Councillors** Mr M Rosher (chair), Mrs N Newns, Mr P Birt, Mr R Hancock, Mrs Y Lloyd, Mrs S O'Neill (Ward Councillor)

**Clerk** Mrs S Bailey

**Public** 6 members of public & 3 South Glos Council Streetcare officers

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Mr I Kershaw, Mr F Carling

## 1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was proposed by Mrs N Newns and seconded by Mr R Hancock and **resolved** that minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2008 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 at least two dozen planning applications in the past year most notably the quarry extension. Although recently approved, many compromises from Cemex have been won with the support and hard work of Mr J Acton, who was wholeheartedly thanked for his contributions. 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 revamp of the toddler play area becomes a closer realisation with the donation of £13,500 from South Glos Council Merlin residue funds. The proposed burial ground at Churchend is still very much at the centre of Council matters, with an architect currently drawing up preliminary plans prior to planning permission being sought. Manor Lane corner was planted with daffodils by local school children last autumn, and the bus shelter has recently undergone a makeover with a new seat and paint. Currently Councillors are arranging the litter pick session for next month, are dealing with anti social behaviour by car youths in Woodlands Rd. and considering a streetlighting reduction initiative for certain streetlamps between midnight & 5:30am. There are currently two vacancies for Councillors – please contact Clerk for more details.

## 3 FINANCIAL REPORT BY THE CLERK

Although the financial year is yet to end, copies of preliminary accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 are available to members and the public, along with budget information for the coming year. Of the year's total £21,332 income, the Precept amounted to £20,000 with £918 from interest revenue. Expenditure totalled £19,961 with grants accounting for £4435 (£3000 to the Memorial Hall), playing field repairs & maintenance £1412, insurance £1174, training courses & subscriptions £1002, and just over £7000 covering the cost of an office/stationery and employing a clerk/finance officer.

Replacement toddler play equipment will cost just over £30,000 – currently we have earmarked £11,000 and with the donation recently of £13,500, the total available is £24,500. Hopefully new equipment will be installed soon, as it is usually easier to raise the final few thousand than tens of thousands!

The burial ground costs so far amount to £2676 and have been spent on £800 Tier 1 survey, £980 Tier 2 survey, £690 scrub clearance & well cover, £206 cemetery training. Total earmarked this year is £10,500 and costs incurred so far are £750 land transfer/solicitor costs and planning applications fees shortly. Later building costs cannot yet be estimated until we have a brief for construction.

## 4 STREETLIGHTING CONSULTATION

Mr O Jenkins from South Glos Council outlined the Council's initiative to introduce a part night-time switching trial throughout South Glos with Charfield being the first to trial the concept. The aim is to save energy, reduce our carbon footprint and also 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. At the moment Charfield is the only Parish under consideration for the consultation, although part night switch off is also planned for the ring road around Bristol. Part switch off would be between 12 – 5:30am only and done by a programmable sensor at the top of each light column. 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 would remain lit. On roads which have a 30mph speed limit every 4<sup>th</sup> light must remain on or speed signs need to be attached to posts to enforce the speed limit by law. Maps were available for the public to see proposed switch off areas and views were invited.

A question and answer session followed. Councillor Andrewartha from Cam/Stroud District & Glos CC outlined the experience of Cam when it undertook the first switch off a few years ago. A consultation was deliberately not held with the public as it was felt this would worry people unnecessarily. There were very few complaints in 2 years and only 20 lights out of 493 were switched back on. There was no rise in motoring offences nor a noticeable crime increase. Antisocial behaviour has reduced since there is no clustering by youths due to it being dark. Public concerns raised mentioned, who would be liable if an accident were to occur when a streetlamp was out (this would need to be independently investigated but is unlikely to be the cause of no lighting since cars have their own headlights), the length of the trial & measurement of success (one year, then continue if deemed successful and if Cabinet Members approve), whether the financial gains saved by South Glos CC would be shared with the Parish (probably not!), the technical workings of the switching equipment (the sensor details were explained), decisions behind lighting requirements for new housing estates was explained, insurance bands are measured by crime increases on a historical basis (this would need monitoring to check that crime does not increase and therefore band rates do not go up). Generally it was felt that the switch off was welcomed and anyone with any further questions could contact the Clerk.

#### **5 ITEMS RAISED BY ELECTORS FOR THE PARISH.**

The absence of suitable road diversion signs during the closure of Wotton Rd at Watsome Bridge was highlighted and discussed in depth.

The chairman thanked South Glos Council Officers for being present to answer parishioners' queries regarding streetlighting and advised that the issue would be discussed at the next Parish Council Meeting by Councillors.

This concluded the business of the meeting, which closed at 8.30p.m.

Chairman – April 2010