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**Clerk to the Council/RFO: Caroline Higgins**

**Chairman: Cllr Kieth Keel**

**Draft Minutes of Annual Parish Council Meeting held at 7.00 pm on Monday 22 May 2017 in the Memorial Hall.**

**Chairman:** Mr Keith Keel – Parish Council Chair

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| **Present**: | Approximately fifty residents attended the Annual Parish Meeting in addition to the Parish Councillors and speakers. |
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| **In attendance:** | Caroline Higgins – Clerk; Cllr F Jones, Outgoing Parish Council Chair;  John Campion, West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner (Guest speaker); Cllr T Clarke, (Shropshire Council member) |

The newly elected Chair of Bayston Hill Parish Council, Cllr Keith Keel opened the meeting.

APM01.17 **APOLOGIES –** Cllrs T Lewis and R Miles

APM02.17 **MINUTES –** The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 23 May 2016 were reviewed. Mr P Breeze proposed and Mr Andy Emery seconded a motion that the minutes be accepted as a true record. The motion was carried unanimously.

APM03.17 **MATTERS ARISING** - None

APM04.17 **PARISH REPORT –** The newly elected Parish Chair invited the outgoing Chair, Cllr F Jones to present the Annual Council Report, which had been delivered to each parish property during the preceding two weeks.

There were were no questions arising about the Annual Report and it was proposed by Mr Goldsmith that the report be taken as read.

APM05.17 **POLICE REPORT –** No police officer was available for operational reasons but the meeting welcomed the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner as its guest speaker.

APM06.17 **GUEST SPEAKER –** John Campion, WMPCC introduced his role as Police and Crime Commissioner. He explained that the role is an elected one and not an operational role. It includes a duty to ensure the police force has a suitably qualified chief police officer. He stated that the police are operationally independent but the PCC appoints the senior police team and holds them to account for performance of the force. He is responsible for a budget of £130M plus assets.

As PCC he is responsible for the West Mercia Plan, (copies of which were circulated within the room and subsequently deposited in the Parish Office). He expressed his hope that the force would become known for the care and support of victims of crime. He was also aiming to deliver appropriate response levels. He hoped to reform and modernise the force, which currently has an antiquated system with dated technology, relying on police radios rather than on smart phones and connectivity. The force employs 2,000 police officers and 3,500 people in total, serving a large and diverse community.

He invited questions from the floor but reminded the audience his role is non-operational:

Q1 Mr A Emery asked why did the PCC not mention he is a political party member?

A1 He replied that as they were in a pre-election period he was constrained by the ‘purdah’ rules.

Q2 How / why has the role been devolved down from the home secretary?

A2 Devolution makes responsibility local.

Q3 What is the PCC salary?

A3 £75,000 (set centrally). There is also a cost associated with the office.

Q4 The Chair of the Neighbourhood Watch Committee stated she had great difficulty getting cooperation from the local police. She was unable to obtain regular reports and was suffering from falling numbers of street co-ordinators. She had been told that police surgeries were being discontinued on the basis that every police car would have a phone and a lap top. This differs from the PCC’s statement that technology is outdated.

A4 The PCC stated that lap tops had not yet been delivered. There is an expectation that local police will attend NWG meetings.

The NWG Chair commented that the average age of NWG members is late 70s. She invited younger members of the community to join up and attend the next meeting in October. She also complemented Nick Jones, (Co-ordinator) who always tries to help the group.

A5 The PCC gave details of the local police officer, (David Walton) and how to contact the Safer Neighbourhood Team, (SNT), who were encouraged to attend events such as these. He also indicated where his own contact details could be found.

Q6 Mrs H Jones asked whether the SNT area was too large for the officers available.

A6 The PCC stated that the SNT is supported by 999 officers; detectives; traffic police and firearms police who will assist the local officers as required.

A7 Cllr F Jones complemented the local CSO, Lyn Birch, who was in regular touch with the Parish.

Q8 Cllr Keel asked what Bayston Hill is getting for the money it collects through the Police Precept?

A8 Bayston Hill pays a proportion of their precept to support the specialist units and control / support services even though they may not have been needed locally. The PCC observed that there are value improvements to be found by sharing resources with other services. He recognised that it may not seem very fair.

Q9 Cllr Keel suggested that Police, Fire and Ambulance control rooms could be based in one building.

A9 The PCC has increased controls over the fire service. They are working to build closer relationships with the fire services. The ambulance service covers a larger area (West Midlands Area) and the relationship is not so well developed.

Q10 A resident observed there were 2,000 police officers and 1,500 civilian staff and asked if this was an appropriate balance? Should civilian staff be ‘converted’ to police officers?

A10 Police officers are much more expensive than civilians. Most activities do not require a warranted officer. The PCC is targeting improved outcomes rather than increased numbers of officers.

Q11 A resident observed that some types of crime, eg cyber-crime, affect rural areas as much as urban areas. He asked how the rural areas are being protected?

A11 The PCC agreed that the likelihood of such crime in rural areas is much higher than violent crime. He suggested that the best response is to equip the public to protect itself through awareness of scams but is also working with international teams to tackle criminal. He commented that cyber-crime affects older and younger members of the community disproportionately.

Q12 A resident expressed concern about road traffic accidents and suggested police traffic resources were seriously limited despite the dangerous reputation of the A49 which passes through the village.

A12 The PCC acknowledged that the A49 was regarded as the most dangerous road in the WMP area and is prioritised. He suggested the solution lay in engineering out many of the dangers on this road.

Q13 The resident observed that the Community Speed Watch programme was largely defunct.

A13 The PCC stated that the Community Speed Watch team measures speeds in areas identified by the community. It is only available on roads up to 40mph as it is not safe above this speed. He stated that he had doubled the number of speed watch kits and will use the force to enforce speeds where appropriate.

Cllr Jones thanked Mr Campion for his presentation and reminded the meeting of the need for younger members of the NWG.

APM07.17 **SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL REPORT –** Cllr Clarke reported on the following items:

* **Shropshire Council Budget –** The Council had experienced a difficult year. The administrating group had tried to maintain services in the face of central government cuts. Larger than average percentages of older people live in Shropshire which gives a challenge to fund the care of vulnerable adults.
* The Parish Council has taken up the challenge to protect local services, particularly the library and Lyth Hill, resulting in a sizeable increase in the Precept in 2017/18.
* Shropshire Council’s IT system has been judged as unsuitable for future use and SC is therefore planning a major investment in IT.
* Austerity continues nationally and it is predicted that SC will be £40 – 50M short in its revenue budgets next year.
* There is an ongoing review of the Local Plan which will be watched with interest (for implementation in 2018)

Cllr Clarke invited questions and comments:

Q1 A resident offered his thanks to Cllr Clarke for arranging to tarmac the patch of grass at the bottom of Green Lane after a long campaign, (8 years)

Q2 A resident asked when the Local Plan review would be opened for consultation.

Q3 Mrs Judy Shone spoke to inform those present about the **Community Led Plan** being developed by Bayston Hill residents. She presented a newsletter and invited anybody present to attend the monthly meetings on the 1st Tuesday of each month. She stressed that it was not necessary to become a committee member to get involved. She stated that the plan would become a valuable document for the Parish Council to use. She invited residents to take a leaflet. At this point, Cllr Jones introduced Mrs Lucy Roberts, who is the Community Enablement Officer at Shropshire Council. She supports the CLP group. He said that the CLP is a development of the Parish Plan and is the community’s opportunity to feed the views of the community into the ‘powers that be’, (including police, housing, council services and development).

APM08.17 **BAYSTON HILL COMMUNITY AWARDS –** Cllr Jones invited all members of the Parish Council to come to the front of the room and introduced them to the community. He then encouraged residents to join the Parish Council, which had a number of vacancies.

Cllr Jones then announced the following Community Awards:

**Alan Caswell - Exemplary Achievement Award** – For a longstanding contribution to the upkeep of the Bayston Hill Memorial Hall by raising over £324,000 in grants and fundraising.

(Alan’s award was accepted on his behalf by Anthony Florian, a member of the Memorial Hall Committee)

**Diane Goggins – Exemplary Achievement Award –** For her leadership of Christchurch Preschool which has been rated outstanding.

**Mr Peter Shone – Exemplary Achievement Award –** For longstanding support for village productions and events.

**Mr John Hitchcock – Good Neighbour Award** – Nominated by his neighbours in recognition of his support in defending the ‘gap’ behind Gorse Lane from a number of development threats.

**Blossom Burton – Outstanding Sporting Endeavour Award** for her Equestrian Vaulting success and her support for other young people as a sport leader.

The Chairman warmly congratulated them all and thanked them for their contributions to village life.

APM09.17 **OPEN FORUM** **–** The following general matters were raised with the Parish Council:

Q1 Mr Goldsmith asked about improving access to the amenities bookings and asked whether the council could share availability of facilities on line or on the parish website.

A1 Cllr Clarke responded that he could arrange access to facilities at weekends if required. The Clerk stated that online booking was being investigated but would require community consultation. Mr Colin Lewis offered to provide the Clerk with some details of useful websites.

Q2 Mr Niblett observed that the footpath beside the layby on the A49 on the south side of the village stops short of the Condover turning and should be extended to provide a safe route for pedestrians and cyclists to this quieter road. He requested that the Parish Council take this up with Highways England.

Q3. Mr R Emery observed that the Parish Council needs younger members with IT experience. Mr Goldsmith suggested that if IT is a priority that the Council considers recruiting a modern apprentice or pay someone to manage their website.

Q4 Mr Goldsmith observed that Councillors are permitted to claim an allowance. He suggested that the Council considers paying Councillor allowances. Mr Emery supported him. Cllr Jones confirmed that at present no Parish Councillors claim an allowance.

A number of residents expressed an interest in learning more about the Parish Council and passed their contact details to the Clerk.

As there were no further questions, Cllr Jones called the meeting to a close. He then presented the Chairman’s Chain to Cllr Keel and congratulated him on being elected as the Chairman for 2017/18.

**Meeting closed at 8:25 pm**