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

**Chairman: Cllr Fred Jones**

**9 August 2016**

**Draft Minutes of Annual Parish Council Meeting held at 7.00 pm on Monday 23 May 2016 in the Memorial Hall.**

**Chairman:** Mr Fred Jones – Parish Council Chairman

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| **Present**: | Fifty residents attended the Annual Parish Meeting in addition to the Parish Councillors and speakers. |
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| **In attendance:** | Caroline Higgins – Clerk; Rawden Parslow, (Shropshire Council Library Services Manager) and Kate Garner, (Shropshire Council Community Enablement Team Manager) |

After a brief delay, the Parish Council Chairman Mr Fred Jones welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting and went through the agenda.

APM01.16 **APOLOGIES –** PC Harte, West Mercia Police, (operational demands), written report provided

APM02.16 **MINUTES –** The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 1 June 2015 were reviewed. Mr Glossop commented that line 3 on page 3 (Question and answer session, Q1) could be misinterpreted. It was agreed to delete the words ‘he assumed’ and insert the phrase ‘it could be interpreted that’ in their place.

It was proposed by Mr K Keel, seconded by Mr P Breeze and unanimously **resolved** that the above amendment be approved and the amended minutes be accepted as a true record.

APM03.16 **PARISH REPORT –** The Chairman reiterated the written report published by the Council and recently delivered to each property in the parish. He called for new members to join the Council, including young councillors. He spoke of the continuing changes in the village, the improvements implemented by the Council and the areas of interest within the village. He touched on recent planning issues and encouraged resident to visit the parish notice boards for ongoing information. He expressed his personal thanks to all members of staff for their contributions to the work of the Parish Council.

There were no questions raised about the Annual Report.

APM04.16 **POLICE REPORT –** PC David Harte was unable to attend the meeting due to operational reasons. The Chairman referred to the latest Shrewsbury Rural South and Bayston Hill April 2016 Police Report and confirmed that Bayston Hill continued to be a low crime area in which people look out for each other.

A resident complained that for two years running the police had failed to attend to answer questions. He had a particular question to raise on speeding and was disappointed not to be able to discuss it with the officer in person.

A second resident, (Mr Henney) stated that as a cyclist he had experienced three near misses near the Parade in two weeks.

Mr K Keel observed that the majority of thefts recorded in the parish related to the petrol station.

APM05.16 **SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL REPORT –** Cllr Clarke reported on the following items:

* **Shropshire Council Membership –** Shropshire Council comprises 70+ members across the county who meet every 10 weeks for full council meetings. The majority group of 50 councillors administers the Council. Cllr Ted Clarke sits as an opposition minority member.
* **Austerity Measures –** From 2020 Central Government has announced that all rate support grant will be removed. Previously this has provided 40 – 50% of revenue payments for Shropshire Council, which is now attempting to address a £140M hole in the revenue budget whilst protecting non-essential services such as libraries and open spaces.
* **Development Control –** Developers have been ruthlessly exploiting the sustainability clause in the National Planning Policy Framework whilst the Council obtained approval of its SAM.Dev Local development plan. Prior to approval of SAM.Dev officers and members were forced to keep the costs of appeal against refusal of planning permission in mind when dealing with applications. Since approval of SAM.Dev a lengthy appeal about an application on Gorse Lane was rejected with partial costs being awarded against the appellant. One recent appeal decision in Ellesmere has given cause for renewed concern.
* **Street Lighting –** Shropshire Council has installed new LED lights in Green Lane which will be more efficient and effective.
* **Cardboard Recycling –** This service will be restarted in the autumn.
* **Oakmeadow School –** The primary school has recently been rated as ‘Good’ by Ofstead.

**Q1. P Glossop** asked about the current make-up of the Planning Committee.

**A1 T Clarke** explained that as Bayston Hill Parish is represented by three Shropshire Councillors, (who also cover the Column and Sutton wards), two members of the committee had been required to abstain from planning decisions relating to Bayston Hill in order to comply with the Code of Conduct. Following an objection by the Parish Council the committee membership had been adjusted to ensure that only one of the three local members sits on the Central Planning Committee at any one time. Cllr Jane McKenzie had stepped down and Ted Clarke remained on the committee.

APM07.16 **BAYSTON HILL COMMUNITY AWARDS –** The Chairman announced the winners of the recently launched Community Awards scheme and awarded certificates to the following local people:

**Mrs Jane Memory - Exemplary Achievement Award** - For maintenance of a local and fair trade ethos; high standard of customer service; provision of community coffee shop and support for vulnerable customers). She was nominated by Mrs Christine Crump who said ‘the shop is a lifeline for residents in the west of the village’

**Jeanette Griffiths – Exemplary Achievement Award –** For provision of a support group for parents of children with special needs; She was nominated by Karen Davis who appreciated the opportunity to meet in a social group to enjoy meals walks and an opportunity to talk to parents in a similar situation.

**Mrs Judy Shone – Exemplary Achievement Award –** For the arrangement of numerous community fundraising activities including writing the village pantomime for 20 years, raising thousands of pounds to support the upkeep of the Memorial Hall and giving great pleasure to those who watch and take part.

**Mr Derek Childs – Good Neighbour Award** – Nominated by his neighbour Hannah Breeze in recognition of his assistance to neighbours and generous sharing of garden produce.

**Susan and John Parry – Good Neighbour Award** – Nominated by their neighbour for their kindness and support during a lengthy period of ill health and personal loss.

**Gareth Parry – Young Person of the Year Award –** Nominated by his neighbour for kindness and support including gardening during a period of ill health.

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

APM08.16 **GUEST SPEAKERS – Rawden Parslow** and **Kate Garner** introduced themselves as Shropshire Council officers.

**Library Opening Hours Consultation –** Rawden Parslow described a county wide consultation on library opening times which will run for six weeks from 2 June. The Council is seeking savings by reducing opening hours during quieter times. The changes proposed at Bayston Hill library are to reduce Thursday evening opening hours by 2 hours per week. Saturday openings will not be affected. Residents were invited to give their views by visiting Shropshire Council’s ‘Get Involved’ web page or by visiting the library itself. A decision will be reached by Shropshire Council Cabinet at the end of the six week consultation period. This will be followed by a period of staff consultation if appropriate.

**Transfer of Library to Community Hub – Rawden Parslow** confirmed that the Oaklands/Glebelands development project is ongoing but is a long term objective. The proposal to co-locate the library and Parish Office is still part of the plan but it is a small feature of the overall project.

**Financial threat to museums; libraries and leisure services** – The threat to services arising from Shropshire Council’s financial position was explained. Many libraries face zero budgets from April 2017, particularly those not undergoing transfer to other organisations. Whilst there is a long term vision to transfer Bayston Hill library to a Community Hub, it might be disadvantaged in the interim period if no budget is available. Rawden Parslow explained the options to protect the library:

* **Transfer of operation of the library –** this could be to the Parish Council, a community group or a joint organisation. The library would continue in its present location with some reconfiguration of the building to accommodate a partner organisation. This would need to be set up in a very short timescale but could work well when a new Community Hub is built. If transferred, the library would remain within the wider Shropshire Library organisation and benefit from existing book stocks and other facilities.
* **Local funding by Community –** Shropshire Council would continue to operate the library but the service is funded by a contribution from the community or parish council.

He stated that Bayston Hill library was the only library where book loans had increased over the last year which indicated it had strong local support. He recommended the appetite to protect the service be confirmed by consultation with the community.

Q2 . Mr K Keel asked why Shropshire Council is consulting on library opening hours rather than leaving the decision to a successor organisation.

A2. Mr Rawden replied that the library transfer option is a long term solution, whilst the savings from earlier closure times will be reflected in the current financial year.

Q3. A resident asked what the budget implications would be for the parish council or community group?

A3. Mr Parslow replied that Shropshire Council is seeking a 100% contribution towards the £28,040 budget, but that there might be some scope for negotiation.

Q4. Mrs Hazel Jones asked whether sufficient parking would be provided if the library were to be relocated.

A4. Mr Parslow confirmed that parking provision had been included in the plans for the community hub.

Q5. Mr Keel observed that had Shropshire Council not decided to join up with the Diocese the community hub would have been built by now. If Shropshire Council were to proceed with development of its own land it could be built quickly.

A5. Mr Parslow acknowledged that the project had been delayed but he was still positive that the Oaklands / Glebelands site would provide a good solution in time.

Q6. A resident asked whether the library at Pontesbury was linked to Mary Webb School or managed separately.

A6. Mr Parslow responded that the library is independent but strongly supported by both the school and the Friends of Pontesbury Library group.

Q7. A resident asked whether the jobs of the existing staff were under threat.

A7. Mr Parslow confirmed that if a suitable financial solution could not be found a consultation would be held with staff about their positions.

Q8. Mr Hersee asked if there would be a need for further cuts in the future.

A8. Mr Parslow stated the intention is to put libraries on a firmer footing and protect them into the future; however no guarantees were offered. His experience was that libraries are strongly supported by their communities.

Q9. Mr Keel asked whether library hours could be decided by the Parish Council if it took over the service.

A9. Mr Parslow confirmed that where libraries had been taken over in other areas it had been possible to extend opening hours.

Q10. A resident asked who would be responsible for the upkeep of the library building.

A10. Mr Parslow stated that whilst Shropshire Council remains in the building it would retain responsibility for the upkeep of the building.

Q11. A resident asked whether residents of other parishes used Bayston Hill Library.

A11. Mr Parslow provided some indicative usage figures showing most users were residents of Bayston Hill, then Shrewsbury residents and then Condover residents. Cllr Ted Clarke stated that Bayston Hill Parish Council had made contact with other parish councils whose residents also use the library. He predicted that the approximate impact on the parish precept of supporting the library would be about £1 per month and asked whether those residents present would give some indication as to whether they would countenance such an increase.

Q12. Ms Candy asked whether Shropshire Council had given an undertaking that when Glebelands/Oaklands development comes to fruition the proceeds from the sale of the current library land will contribute to the new library.

A12. R Parslow confirmed this was a commitment.

Q13. A resident asked about the impact of devolution of open spaces, especially Lyth Hill. Is the parish likely to be asked to contribute to that cost on top of the library?

A13. Ms Garner replied that a number of service areas have been identified and these are the ones that are being focused on.

Q14. K Keel asked if Meole Brace Golf Course was under threat.

A14. Ms Garner stated that this was subject to discussion.

Q15. A resident asked about the potential solutions for Lyth Hill and other open spaces.

A15. Ms Garner stated that Shropshire Council is seeking support from Town and Parish Councils but there is no compulsion for them to take on these services. If parish councils do not take on the services they will approach alternative groups such as charities; community interest companies and voluntary groups.

Q16. A resident observe that the time scale is very tight with only three months to make an agreement.

A16. Ms Garner stated that the conversation had started in February. September is the deadline for the agreement in principle with any arrangements being put in place from April 2017. She acknowledged that the time frame is very tight.

Q17. Mrs H Jones asked when the Oaklands site would be developed and what would happen if the Community Hub is not built?

Q17. Mr Rawden responded that Shropshire Council would need to look at other options.

Q18. Mr Keel stated that transfer of additional staff to the Parish Council would require an adjustment to the Council Health and Safety Policy.

A18. Mr Parslow stated that Shropshire Council could support the Parish Council to put those amendments into place as a partnership.

Q19. Mr Hersee asked why Shropshire Council had decided to upgrade its computer systems at the expense of Parish Council services.

A19. Mr Rawden responded that the computers in the libraries had also been updated and now provided free WiFi.

Q20. Mr P Glossop stated that a Parish Vote could cause a problem. The Parish Council should be taking a lead fairly quickly.

A20. Mrs T Lewis responded that a referendum would cost £14,000. This money could be better spent on other services. Consultation would be much cheaper and would be just as effective. Mr Preston stated that there were a variety of ways to consult the village, including the Villager magazine; the websites (of the Village Association and Parish Council) and the Parish Plan steering group.

The Chairman invited those present to show their support for funding the library at the additional cost of £1 per household per month by way of a show of hands and the majority of those present indicated their willingness to fund the library.

Ms Candy observed that there was not a good representation in the room in terms of age profile. Younger people were not represented and might have a different view. Mrs H Jones commented that all residents had been invited to attend. Mr F Jones stated that all residents had received a copy of the Annual Report and should be aware of the issues. Ms Garner remarked that it was good practice to engage widely and that Shropshire Council would support those consultations.

*The Chairman invited those present to give a round of applause to thank the guest speakers.*

APM09.16 **OPEN FORUM** **–** The following general matters were raised with the Parish Council:

Q21. Mr Barlow asked where he could find copies of the minutes of the Stakeholders Meetings relating to the Oaklands/Glebefields site.

A21. Cllr T Clarke responded that a commitment had been made to publish these minutes. Unfortunately the officer responsible had been unwell which had resulted in a delay. There was no intention to hide the facts.

Q22. Mr Barlow requested an update on the scheme progress.

A22. Cllr Clarke responded with the following summary report:

* There are five parties involved in the Oaklands / Glebefields project
* Another meeting is planned in 1 month.
* Officers are developing a draft design for the combined site which has been published in the Parish Office window. No further amendments have been agreed.
* It is hoped the design will be presented to Shropshire Council Cabinet for approval and then the site will be marketed for expressions of interest by developers on the understanding that the plan would be followed by the developer.

Q23. Mr Hersee asked whether wheelchair access could be improved around Holland Close?

A23. Cllr Clarke responded that the site is owned and managed by Severnside. He had recently inspected the site and whilst the slabs were found to be a little uneven, the path was apparently wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair.

Q24. Mr Fyffe stated he was concerned that dog fouling would not be stopped until a culprit was prosecuted.

Q25. Mr Fyffe also stated he was becoming increasingly concerned about speeding on Lyth Hill Road.

Q26. A resident observed that the four week closure of Pulley Lane related to an unwanted housing development. He asked whether residents of Green Lane had been consulted on the diversion route. He observed that traffic queues had developed at the Lythwood Crossroads as soon as the signs for a closure and traffic lights had been erected.

A26. Cllr Clarke responded that the closure was a temporary one. It was not a Shropshire Council initiative but developer request. The developer was entitled to arrange a closure to complete their works safely.

Q27. Mr Hersee asked whether the closure would affect school buses.

A27. Mr Clarke responded that Shropshire Council had a responsibility to coordinate public transport services affected by closures. Ms Candy remarked that it is the responsibility of parents to ensure children can get to school but that secondary schools should be made aware of the closure.

Q28. Mr T Seston observed that the footpath at the bottom of Green Lane needs tarmacking as pedestrians regularly walk across the grass verge. He asked whether the developers could contribute to a footpath improvement.

A28. Cllr Clarke reported he had already approached the Highways Department to request the grassed area be tarmacked without success. He was however hopeful of a contribution by the developer as a public relations gesture.

Q29. A resident asked whether the Hanley Lane development would proceed?

A29. Cllr Clarke replied that he understood outline permission had been granted for market housing development but had not yet commenced. He remarked that the development is subject to approval of reserved matters.

Cllr Clarke expanded on the problems of unwanted developments and reported on a recent appeal decision in Ellesmere which gave concern.

Q30. Mrs Wood asked what action is being taken to improve the appearance of Parrs Pool. She stated that nursery and primary schools no longer visited the pool as the ducks have all disappeared. She reminded the parish council that the pool was supposed to be the next project tackled by the Council in 2016.

A30. The Chairman responded that green duck weed had been a problem for three years. Several solutions have been mooted including cutting back trees to increase the light to the pool. It is an ongoing project for the parish council. Cllr Clarke remarked that the footpath was being damaged by the drainage problem and this had taken priority. He stated that the Council had received varying advice as to the cause of the duck weed problem and that the solution would require the services of a specialist contractor.

APM10.16 **PARISH PLAN** – Mr David Preston reminded those present that a Steering Group had now been formed to develop a new Community Led Plan to replace the Parish Plan published in 2010. New volunteers are desperately needed. Volunteers need not make a big commitment but anybody with specialist skills would be particularly welcomed. Further information was available in the leaflets at the meeting or from the Village Association website. The steering group hoped to prepare a plan for adoption by the Parish Council next year. It represents a good opportunity to say what kind of village residents wish to live in

The plan would be reviewed in four sections:

* Health and wellbeing
* Environment
* Community safety
* Development (Planning)

Mrs Teresa Lewis then presented a spider diagram representing the issues being reviewed by the plan and invited residents to add a comment to the diagram after the meeting.

Mr K Keel remarked that the Parish Council should make decisions on the Parish Plan as it has a legal responsibility for its implementation. Ms Garner responded that any genuinely Community Led Plan provides a strong basis for grant applications and that most Parish Councils are happy to take on board the views of their community expressed through a Community Led Plan.

Mr Preston stated that the next meeting of the Community Led Plan Steering Group was planned for 15 June 2016 and invited everybody to attend.

*There were no further questions and the Chairman made his closing remarks. He reminded those present that any concerns about the activities of the Parish Council should be reported to the Parish Office rather than discussed on social media. The thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting at 9:00pm*

**Meeting closed at 9:00 pm**