Bayston Hill Planning for the Future.

Report from the Chair May 2017

With the outcome of the Elections May 2017, which unfortunately leaves the Parish Council short of 7 members, which will cause certain problems with our present committee structures. Therefore, I believe the Parish Council will need substantial changes in the way we conduct our meetings, I am suggesting that in the first instance we suspend the relevant standing orders for each committee except Full Council, and try to run the council with only monthly meeting of the Full Council.

If the above trial is successful we may decide to suspend standing orders for Finance, Planning and Amenities committees and alter the relevant documentation appertaining to Full Council. We also need to look at the future of the Parish Council where residents can feel that by joining the Parish Council their expertise and experiences will count towards better decision making, which will benefit the Village by new members bringing in fresh ideas and solutions to the wellbeing of the Parish Council

May I suggest the present committees should be reduced to one (the Personnel Committee), and that the Full Council should be able to meet 11 times per year, for the following reasons

**Amenities Committee,** we currently have discussions around certain topics that need Full Council approval and the clerk has to ensure the correct documentation is in place for both Committees, this situation is time consuming and creates large amounts of paper work, which needs to be questioned as to why. By transferring all items associated with this committee to the full Council residents will see that local democracy is working by all members voting accordingly as to the views of themselves and residents.

**Finance Committee** This committee meets around 4 times per year, and we have already identified the need when setting the precept, that the full council meeting is the best way forward, again meaning less Paperwork, and meetings. With the changes a quarterly report can be made by the clerk to full Council meetings where local democracy is paramount.

**Planning Committee,** this committee has been discussed many times in the past and due to continual changes by central government on many aspects of Planning applications do we still require this committee. We have recently along with residents been very critical of the voting format by Shropshire Council, but unwillingly are we doing just the same. We need to change to a situation where we operate the planning system to coincide with Shropshire Council remit. The clerk should be able to use her expertise in planning applications, and where officers of the County decide that member’s involvement is not required, then we should follow the same format with the Clerk to the Parish Council, having the same remit as the leading authority, with one added addition that if Letters are received from Residents about any of the planning applications theses must be brought to the attention of the Full council. However where applications go forward to Members of Shropshire Council then such applications have to come before the full Council committee, where local democracy can be seen at work.

**Personnel Committee,** this is an important issue around the changes being proposed, the present system allows the Chair, Vice Chair, along with the chair of Amenities, Finance, Planning making up the personnel Committee which meets approx., 4 times per year and deals with all matters concerning staffing and their terms and conditions of service.

Do we consider adjusting the format which will be beneficial to the Parish Council and at the same time increase the democracy that is required, during the next few years with many aspects of community life being changed by Central and Local Government. I propose a new approach to running this Committee, with the Chair and Vice Chair, along with three elected members to undertake many aspects of staff management. The Chair and Vice Chair will serve a normal two-year period with the vice chair taking over the mantel of responsibility once the current chair has left the post. The immediate past chair of the Council can then remain on the personal committee bringing his/her expertise and general knowledge to the overall running of the Parish Council, with a two-year term in this post. The other two posts in the first instance will be filled by the chair of amenities and finance committees with a two-year term put in place, this will ensure the workings of the Council are monitored and run as per standing orders. After the first two years these posts will be replaced by Councillors who have been nominated for the positions and voted for accordingly by the full council.

**Parish Plan** The other issue is the way that we interlink with the rest of the village. At present, we are working on policies of improvement, and at the same time we have a Neighbourhood planning committee looking at the same issues. One is run by members voted on a four-year cycle by residents of the Village, the other has formed without being elected. This situation can cause many different problems for a Parish Council we must be involved in the outcomes of the Survey by the Neighbourhood Committee but at the same time juggling the results against the precept raised.

The two sides must work together to ensure this village has the correct infrastructure going forward to this end I propose that we set up a new document between both parties setting out policies and procedures that we both can work to with residents also being involved in the survey of present and ongoing decisions. Closer ties could benefit the whole process but sharing information and using the internet seems to be away forward, but this can also be dangerous as articles may be published without the due care and attention required.

In conclusion I feel that if we are to facility changes in our approach to running of the council we do have to take into account the changes being considered by both Central and local Government, too this end I firmly believe that all members of the council should have the opportunity to vote on all issues that affect the running this excellent Parish Council. I know that some members who have been on the council for a number of years might feel that the present system is working well, but with the shortage of volunteers to take up positions on the council. their views might be challenged, so the changes being proposed are for a limited time only it is then up to the council to see if the changes are the way forward.

It is also worth noting that Symbiosis is a word that is under used, but it does have a significant impact on all local Authorities, in the main it is about showing that many residents and other organisations play a significant part in the overall success of the Parish Council

Chair

Keith

symbiosis