

PARISH OF SOUTHWICK & WIDLEY

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Eisenhower Room, D-Day Memorial Hall, Southwick on Monday 22nd March 2004 at 7:30pm.

Present - Mrs. E. J. Bazalgette – In the chair
Members of the Parish Council, Councillor Ken Carter (Winchester City Council)
14 members of the public

In attendance - Mr. J. P. Whitbourn - Clerk to the Parish Council

Apology for Absence
An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Mrs. F. Hindson (County Council)

Minutes of the Last Meeting
The minutes of the meeting held on the 24th March 2003 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman

Millennium Fund
Mr. Roger Bazeley reported that there was £202 in the Millennium Fund

Reports were then given by Councillor Mrs. Felicity Hindson (read to the meeting by the Chairman)

Councillor Ken Carter on 'Winchester City Council' issues and from the Parish Councillor Mrs. June Bazalgette (Chairman of the Parish Council) Reports attached.

Accounts for 2002/3 (audited) The accounts for 2002/3 were received and adopted.

Any Other Business
MPA West of Waterlooville
It was stated that when the MDA is completed the parish will be the second largest in the District. 2,000 houses are to be built containing approximately 6,000 extra people.

The Parish Council has appointed an Honorary Archivist to look after artefacts etc. of some historical significance including memorabilia from the 50th anniversary of the D-Day Normandy landings commemorations in 1994.

County Council Boundary Changes
Next year will see the boundary changes come into force which will increase the County Council in size. It is likely that the Meon Talley Division which includes Southwick will be divided in two.

HMS Dryad
Dryad will close on the 31st December 2004 and the Chairman paid tribute to Lt. Commander Peter Bailey who had contributed so much in maintaining the good relations that existed between Dryad and the Parish Council.

Crooked Walk - increased traffic and speed; roundabout reconstruction - increased traffic on the B2177; Porchester Road.

Councillor Carter informed the meeting that he would be standing down as District and Parish Councillor in June; when the elections would be held.

Vote of Thanks
A vote of thanks was extended to the Chairman, Parish, County and District Councillors and the Clerk.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT 2004

Bus Services

Another £0.5 million on public transport has been allocated in the budget for the coming year to continue the successful CANGO schemes for rural transport. This is in line with the County Council priority to improve accessibility and mobility in the more rural areas. The tendering process is currently under way for a CANGO bus service between Wickham and Petersfield which will replace Solent Blue Line service 7 which will run only from Southampton to Swanmore. I would support a CANGO service for Southwick which could link with this new Meon Valley service and I hope this can be considered as more funding becomes available.

One Way System for Back Lane

The request for a one way system in Back Lane is being investigated as part of the traffic management work carried out on behalf of the County Council by Winchester City Council. I have sent a note to Corinne Hollis at Winchester City Council so she knows that the Parish Council is keen to have the result of the investigation.

Crooked Walks Lane

I note the complaint that articulated lorries and other large vehicles still use Crooked Walks Lane despite the width restriction order and I have requested the Traffic Management group to discuss enforcement with the police. I understand that Corinne Hollis from Winchester City Council has written to the Parish Council to say that she will investigate the request for a 30 mph speed limit.

Bridge Parapet in Widley Walk

I have notified the Hampshire Highways office in Winchester that the bridge parapet in Widley Walk has been damaged and is a hazard and asked for repairs to be carried out.

Council Tax

For the coming financial year, council tax attributable to the County Council is set to rise by an underlying 4.7%, but on the council tax demand the amount will appear as a decrease of 0.5%. This is because the County Council no longer has to raise the funding for Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority which will set its own precept. When the precepts from the Hampshire Police Authority, district council and parish council are also taken into account, council tax is set to increase by around 6% in total.

A lower than expected council tax increase for the County Council has been made possible by the additional £7.5 million grant provided by the government for the coming financial year. Regrettably this is likely to be a one-off grant which will not be available in future years and for 2005/06 the County Council faces a further loss of grant which could total £26.5 million. Last year's budget did set up the Grant Equalisation Fund to help offset such a massive loss.

The Cabinet are very aware of the burden placed on low income families by council tax, but having taken legal advice it was regrettably concluded that a rebate for pensioners would be unsafe and open to challenge. It is therefore important that all those who are eligible should claim council tax benefit. It is clear that council tax has become a controversial tax following last year's increases in tax resulting from the change in grant formula which moved funding from the south east to the north and midlands. Across England as a whole £18.4 billion was raised in council tax in 2003/04, but it would take an additional 4 to 6 pence in the £ to replace this with income tax. Households with several wage earners could see all of them paying this additional income tax.

Schools and Social Services

The budget proposals will give schools the minimum 4% increase per school pupil which the Government has directed should be paid. It will also raise the Social Services budget to the level set by the government and which is needed to meet ever increasing demands from children and older people and costs which are affected by higher than average inflation levels.

Most other services will have a standstill budget and will have to absorb extra costs and pressures by redeploying existing resources. In line with the outcome of extensive consultation with the people of Hampshire, no cuts will be made in services, but £5 million of efficiency savings have been found.

HCC is Excellent

The Audit Commission announced at the end of last year that the County Council had again been rated as excellent following Comprehensive Performance Assessment. This is the top rating for a local authority and of those top tier or single tier authorities rated excellent there are more shire authorities than any other type of authority.

County Council Boundary Changes

The Boundary Committee for Hampshire has made its first report with recommendations for changes to County Council divisions. All together it is proposing an additional 4 Members for Hampshire bringing the total number of councillors to 78. It is recommended that the Winchester district should have 7 rather than 6 councillors with the Meon Valley Division which had grown over large split in two. Denmead, Southwick, Boarhunt, Wickham and Whiteley would form one new division, with the Meon Valley Division retaining Hambledon, Droxford, Soberton, Corhampton and Meonstoke, Exton, Wamford, West Meon and Shedfield to which would be added Swanmore, Cheriton and Bishops Sutton.

Housing Numbers

The Hampshire County Structure Plan 2001 - 2011 provided for 42,000 new homes to be built during the 10 year period with reserve sites for a further 14,000 homes. At a recent meeting of the Joint Advisory Panel, representatives of Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils and Hampshire County Council agreed that none of the reserve sites should be released at the present time, but the Government Office for the South East which is keen to see more houses built in the South East has to be convinced that target numbers - 6030 per year - are being achieved. Planning is well advanced for 2,000 new homes West of Waterlooville where there is also a reserve site for an additional 1,000 homes.

Accredited Community Support Officers

Research has shown that fear of crime is of great concern to the people of Hampshire. It has been decided to deploy up to 40 accredited community support officers in those areas of Hampshire where anti-social behaviour is a problem. They will be directly employed by the County Council and accredited by Hampshire Constabulary. Their powers will include requiring names and addresses for fixed penalty offences and offences that cause alarm, injury or distress to other people or property. They will be trained and authorised to help reduce anti-social behaviour, confiscating alcohol and cigarettes from under age people and issuing fixed penalty notices for dropping litter on cycleways and footpaths. They will be moved around the county according to need. They will have a similar uniform to police, but with a different badge and will patrol in clearly marked vehicles.

Highways

The additional £3.5 million put into the current year's budget for footways and the rural road network will be continued in the coming financial year. I think we have seen an improvement in our local roads. Information and problems such as broken streetlights, potholes, blocked roads, drains or damaged traffic signs can be reported 24 hours a day by logging on to www.hants.gov.uk/highways. Alternatively they can be reported by telephone using the Hampshire Highways local rate number 0845 850 4422.

Alternative weeks. Additionally there will be a free fortnightly collection of green waste which research has shown makes up to 30% of the contents of the average residual waste bin.

The pilot scheme will last for one year and if successful will be rolled out over the rest of the district.

CPA REPORT

The Audit Commission is in the process of undertaking a Comprehensive Performance Assessment of all local authorities.

The aim of CPA reports is, in the Audit Commission's own words, "to help councils deliver better services to local people".

Councils are scored across all areas and on a large number of factors and Winchester was assessed last year. The Audit Commission, on the basis of the overall score, places councils into one of 5 categories- excellent, good, fair, weak and poor.

Winchester was placed halfway on the scale in the fair category.

The inspectors found that the City Council had some very good strengths notably good quality staff and councillors, financial strengths and good use of information technology. Its partnership investment was also highly rated.

The inspectors found some room for improvement including the council defining its long term goals and priorities, underperformance in urgent housing repairs and tackling the community's perceived fear of crime.

In terms of scores the council was awarded 38 points which was 2 points below the threshold for the next category up.

The CPA report is a very useful tool as it provides an independent scrutiny of how the council is performing and we are already responding to the points raised. Indeed if the Audit Commission came back tomorrow (which it won't) the Council would certainly be placed in a higher category on the basis of the new recycling initiative alone.

It's interesting that several of the councils who were placed in higher categories have in recent years levied higher levels of Council Tax increases than Winchester.

Before I talk about Council Tax, I would like to share with you just a few of the more interesting statistics which came out of the 2001 census as recorded for the Boarhunt and Southwick Ward.

47.4% are single compared to 30.1% nationally whilst 41.1% are married or re-married against the national figure of 50.9%.

In terms of ethnic grouping, 99.2% are white and 0.2% are Chinese. 76.4% said that they were Christians, 17.6% said they had no religion, 0.2% were Buddhist and 0.3% Jewish.

1.6% were unemployed compared to 3.4% nationally and 7.2% were retired.

42.3% owned their own property and 47.5% rented privately whilst 7.9% lived in a council house. And finally - 53.1% of households in Boarhunt and Southwick have 2 or more cars compared to the national average of 29.4%

The Children Bill now before parliament will bring much closer working between Education, Social

Services and the NHS and plans are being made for front line practitioners to work in multi-agency teams around schools.

Fines for Older People Delayed in Hospital have been kept to a minimum with few people delayed for social care reasons. Delays for other reasons still remain too high.

500 New Nursing Beds. Building work has started on the first 2 nursing homes with completion expected by the end of the year.

Affordable Housing Schemes will be funded, in partnership with district councils, from the reduced council tax discount on second homes to help the recruitment of key workers.

GM Crops will not be grown on County Council owned land nor will any genetically modified foods be used in the millions of meals served every year to Hampshire school children and elderly residents of the County's older persons' homes. Furthermore the County Council will press the Government to ensure that farms in Hampshire are kept GM free.

Hampshire's recycling and composting rate stands at nearly 26%, against a national average of just under 15%. This puts Hampshire in the top 5% of all councils in the country.

The Buy With Confidence Scheme operated by Hampshire County Council Trading Standards lists 500 widely ranging businesses from electricians, garages and retailers to cleaners, estate agents and funeral directors that have been independently checked by Trading Standards Officers. Information can be obtained by visiting the website www.buywithconfidence.info or by telephoning 0845 603081.

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 2004

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

I'll begin by updating you on the progress of the District Local Plan. The final draft has now been published and the public enquiry will begin shortly. It's a feature of the planning system in this country that local plans have to follow a laid down process which involves public consultation at almost every stage and it is this more than anything else which makes it a particularly lengthy process. In the case of the current local plan, six years from inception to legal adoption and because of this, no sooner will this plan be adopted than work on the next will commence.

This local plan has to make provision for the major development areas required by the strategic planning authorities which in this part of the world means the MDA West of Waterlooville. That is at a critical stage right now. The master plan is almost finished, that is the plan which will say what goes where on the site, positioning of the infrastructure such as the roads and community buildings and public open spaces and the phasing of the development.

It is anticipated that the master plan will be agreed in mid-april and that will be swiftly followed by a planning application from the development interests.

Southampton University did a study which estimated that the development when complete would generate something in the order of an additional 11,000 vehicle movements a day. On the basis that perhaps up to 2,000 of those will be looking to rat run through Southwick, it's essential that the village gets some kind of traffic calming measures including perhaps what is known as a village gateway on the Denmead road. At the moment I'm working on getting such a scheme included in the master plan to be paid for by the developers otherwise the quality of life for everyone in this village will undoubtedly take a nosedive.

RECYCLING

I talk about this every year but this time I have something positive to report.

The Government sets every Council recycling targets. In Winchester's case it is 36% by 2005. Current recycling rates in Winchester are 18%. At the moment all of our residual rubbish goes to landfill but this can't continue for a number of reasons.

Firstly Hampshire is fast running out of holes in the ground and secondly the local authority has to pay what is known as a landfill tax to the government on every ton it disposes of in this way. At the moment that is £15 per tonne but will more than double to £35 per tonne within the next few years and that tax is of course paid for by you and I - Council Tax payers.

Increasing the amount of waste recycled reduces the cost of residual disposal.

The Council recently decided to go for enhanced recycling. It would have been nice to introduce it in one fell swoop right across the District but there are some significant budget implications and so it will be implemented gradually beginning with a pilot scheme in the north of the District starting later this year.

We know that some 12,000 tonnes of recyclable materials are currently still being put in the general waste bins every year and so a big educational programme is required.

The collection routines will change so that the recycling bin and the residual waste bin are emptied on

Council Tax

The increase in Winchester's Council Tax this year is 5%.

This compares to an increase in the combined County Council and Fire Service precepts of 4.7% and Police Authority of 11.3%.

In cash terms, for a Band D taxpayer the figures are as follows Winchester City Council £104.40 (an increase of £4.95 or 9.5p per week)

Hampshire County Council £840.15 which taken with the Fire Service precept which for the first time this year is separate becomes £891.15 (an increase of £46.89 or 90p per week) + £4.72 Police Authority £108.36 (an increase of £11.07 or 21p per week) + 11.3% Parish Council £30.34 (A decrease of £2.57 or 5p per week) – 7.8%.

+ fX •

For the first time therefore taxpayers will be paying more for policing than for City Council services. The government's Rate Support Grant to the City Council rose this year by £182,000 but at the same time the amount that the government refunds to the Council for people claiming Housing and Council Tax benefits was reduced by £272,000 and so there was a net deficit of £90,000.

Set against this was a pay rise for local government employees, agreed nationally of 3.5% and so this year the Council was facing a substantial deficit on its budget.

In order to keep Council Tax down, Winchester did a number of things.

Scaling back on plans to extend Concessionary Fares, taking money from reserves and making some redundancies in archaeology brought the deficit down to reasonable levels.

One of the main problems facing local authorities at the moment is the ever increasing number of extra responsibilities being placed on them by central government without a corresponding increase in Rate Support Grant to pay for them. These responsibilities are statutory and have to be carried out by law.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT - March 2004 - Mrs E.J.Bazalgette

The Youth Club

The leaders of the Youth Club have approached the Council in the hope of some support and assistance and have advised them how to apply for a revenue grant. Last week we agreed to give them a grant to purchase various items of equipment. We hope that together with the leaders efforts this may lead to increased membership of the Youth Club.

The Playing Field

The new nets for the goal posts have unfortunately proved inadequate. Councillor John Houghton, who has taken on the task of overseeing the playing field, is investigating the problem, which we hope can be resolved in the near future. We are also in the process of ordering a new tarmac area to accommodate a goose-necked basket ball practice area. The play equipment is due for its annual safety check in April. New iron entrance gates have been purchased and fitted complete with stops. The hedges have now been cut. Due to the longer growing season we arranged last summer, and will continue the arrangements for this season, to have the grass cut more frequently. We are aware that the wall of the West side is in a somewhat dangerous state. This is Estate property. They are, of course, fully aware of its condition and the Council regularly brings this to their notice.

Street Lighting

The column and lamp in the Drove has been in place for some months now. We ordered it to be higher than average so as to illuminate a larger area, where one needs to be able to see where one is stepping!

Widlev Burial Ground

Our volunteers have requested a sit-on mower, otherwise it was likely that they would be unable to continue this quite hard physical work in a difficult area. With the help of a grant from the Winchester City Council this is in the process of being acquired. The Ground really looks well cared for and the Council is very grateful to these volunteers.

Southwick Surgery

Despite our best efforts and the support of our M.P., the PCT- Primary Care Trust- decided to close the surgery. There was no appeal. The Trust did support an alternative arrangement for a community bus to be available on Tuesday mornings. This was so little supported that it could no longer attract the very heavy subsidy.

With the support of the Wickham Care Group the Reverend Harvey Griffiths has now organised a rota of private car volunteer drivers. The patients pay a small fee per return journey. Repeat prescription arrangements are also in place. At the present time this seems to be working well. At the time of the proposed closure of the surgery the Council understood the usual attendance to be around 8-9. The number using the volunteer system is usually 2-3.

Norton Close

In June the Council was approached by residents of Castle Road regarding the planning application by J. & S. Estates to enlarge their properties in Norton Close. We subsequently called an Extraordinary meeting on 7th July which 25 members of the public from Norton Close and Castle Road attended. Car Parking was a key issue, as was the fact that a three-storey extension was included in the plan. Eventually this application was withdrawn, to be replaced by one of amended car parking spaces and the 3 storeys to two, with additional landscaping. However, there remained the overlooking problem, and we managed to secure a decision by the Planning Committee for a planning sub-committee to inspect the site. This took place on the 16th February. A final decision was deferred to 4th March, when it was decided to refuse the application. However, we should be aware that the applicant may well put in a further application, so the matter may not yet be fully resolved.

HMS Dryad

HMS Dryad will be decommissioned on 1st April this year. The establishment will then be known as MWS - Maritime Warfare School, Southwick Park, which will continue to remain in use. It is not yet known how the MOD will dispose of this property. We have been told the Council will be kept fully informed of the situation, but it could be as long as next April before any more definite information is available.

HMS Dryad could easily have sat very uncomfortably next to the village but has proved itself a very good neighbour, always helpful and aware of the sensitivities of the village, this has been maintained through the appointed Royal Navy Liaison Officer attached to the Parish Council. For the last ten years this post has been occupied by Lt Cmdr. Peter Bailey, 1st Lieutenant of HMS Dryad, in an exemplary manner, ever helpful and understanding, we shall miss him and would like to thank him for all his time and interest expended on our behalf.

Winchester District Local Plan Review

There were errors - mainly indexing and description in the pre enquiry changes 2004, which we trust have now been corrected. We support the need to preserve the provenance of the D-Day map.

Resignation

Chuck and Stella Reeves decided to resign as Parish Councillors in February this year. They were councillors for seven years and Chuck was Vice Chairman for four. Their knowledge of local affairs was of considerable help in many matters. We especially appreciated Stella's large contribution in creating the Millennium Committee - the results of which were highly successful. Her interest and experience with young families was invaluable. We miss them both and hope they will be very happy in their new home in Boarhunt.

Crooked Walk

We have campaigned for many years for the improvement of this road's surface. This has now been completely repaired resulting in an increase in the traffic as well as its speed. The police have been informed.

Parish Rate

Due to our judicious setting of our Precept and the prudent use upon perceived requirements of the Parish, we have been able to reduce the parish rate by 7.82%.

We continue to help fund the Newsletter and have increased our grant towards the Boarhunt Burial Ground maintenance.

As usual the Council has dealt with the annual problems of potholes, worn out roads, fly-tipping, the MDA Waterlooville, planning applications and public transport.

The District Councillor

As you have just heard Councillor Carter is not standing for re-election either as District or Parish Councillor. He has served on the Parish Council since November 1975, Vice Chairman and then Chairman for seven years until May 1997. He was elected District Councillor in 1984. Quite a record. He has not spared himself in his efforts for parishioners of both Southwick and Boarhunt and even the smallest of problems have attracted his time and advice. He has been unstinting in his efforts and the affairs of the village are very close to his heart. His help, sympathy and understanding in all situations has been enormous. He will be greatly missed as will his experience, knowledge and input, we wish him well.

Local Elections

These have been changed from the usual May to the tenth June to coincide with the European Parliamentary elections. Terms of office of those Parish and District Councils affected will be extended to this date and the Annual Meeting held as soon as possible after that date.

D Day 60th Anniversary - 6th June

Many national and international commemorations are taking place but your Parish Council felt the village should enjoy its own celebration, commencing at 10am with a short church service, coffee in the D Day Memorial Hall and ending with an escorted tour of the D Day Map and Maproom at Southwick House. All are welcome.

Portsmouth University have applied to hold their Student Ball on 11th June in the grounds of Southwick House. It is expected about 2000 will attend and they will be bussed in and out.

Once again I would like to thank the District Councillor and my fellow councillors for their help and support during a not too easy year in which the amount of paperwork is rapidly increasing, so an even bigger thank you to our long suffering Clerk, who continues to produce the most accurate and precise Audits, minutes and agendas.