

MILBORNE PORT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 9th April 2019 at 7pm at the Town Hall

Councillors Present: Mr J Oldham (Chair), Mrs M Lock, Mr P Lock, Mr T Campbell, Mr R Douglas, Mr C Laughton, Mr T Carty, Mr. J Edmonds, Mr. A Fletcher

Also Present: County Councillor William Wallace and 18 members of the public

Mr Oldham welcomed everyone to the 2019 Annual Parish Meeting and explained that it was a public meeting and not a Parish Council meeting.

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Received from Mr. R Tizzard, Mr. M Ritchie Mr. J Pitman
- 2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 10th April 2018** were approved and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 3. Annual Reports**

Chairman of the Parish Council, review of the year Mr Oldham outlined the council's year beginning with a comment about the upcoming elections. His full report is included in Appendix 1.

Following Mr. Oldham's report, a gentleman commented that the diversion of the footpath had made no discernible difference to the behaviour of dog walkers. A lady commented that the initial idea was to fence off the revised footpath, but this has not happened. A response from the floor stated that it was not possible to do this without major change to the layout of the playing pitches.

Mr. Lock commented that the council had formed a working party looking at dog fouling and were looking for a dedicated piece of land for this purpose.

A question was asked about the EV charging points to confirm that the Parish Council stood to gain from a proportion any profits from their use and that the installation had been free of cost to the Parish Council.

Mr. Carty talked about the renewed efforts to utilise S106 monies from recent housing developments to avoid losing these monies and these were mainly for recreational facilities.

Open Spaces Mr. Lock commented that the council is in the process of providing an allotment space for the medical centre to use for the rehabilitation of patients though more work is needed on this. He commented on the attempts to improve the provisions in the various play areas in the village. He also commented on the work being done to work more closely with the playing fields committee with the aim of giving a continuous improvement to the playing fields. He commented that with the reduction of services from district and county council, the Parish Council was taking a greater amount of effort to maintain the open spaces but commented on the efforts made by individuals to keep their own environs tidy. He commented on the vandalism on the Crackmore bus shelter, which had been renovated a couple of years ago.

He commented on the difficulty of getting householders to “adopt a footpath” with only two members of the public coming forward and asked that anyone interested to step forward. The reward would be County Council supplied gloves and secateurs to tackle the minor maintenance envisaged.

In his absence, Mr. Lock then spoke to the tree warden’s report which can be found as Appendix 2

District Councillor Sarah Dyke: No report received

County Councillor William Wallace: Mr. Wallace made reference to the upcoming elections, delighting in his reference to being in purdah. He went on to thank the Parish Councillors for all their hard work, which often goes unnoticed.

He commented that the application for a Puffin crossing at Crackmore would be considered in the second tranche in this financial year. He had emphasised to the county council how important this is. He requested Councillor Campbell’s technical support on this.

He also commented that the county council had achieved a balanced budget.

Mr. Oldham thanked Mr. Wallace for his recent support to the application for an extra classroom at the primary school.

4. Reports from village organisations

Milborne Port Football Club: On behalf of Milborne Port Football Club Rob Lockey provided a report. This can be found in Appendix 3.

Milborne Port Community Swimming Pool: On behalf of the Milborne Port Community Swimming Pool Rob Lockey provided a report. This can also be found in Appendix 3.

Women’s Institute: Christine Porter the Chairperson of the WI reported that there were currently 35 members of the WI and that they meet the second Thursday of the month in the downstairs room of the Town Hall. and this room is home to their successful Friday coffee morning and annual Macmillan coffee morning in September have a variety of other activities during the week such as crafts, and this year they contributed to the poppy display in the Church. They have three outings per year.

Tuesday Luncheon Club (TLC): Sue Scott from the Tuesday Luncheon Club outlined the function of the TLC to provide luncheon and a social gathering for the older residents in Church House. There are about 30 people who turn up for a 2 course meal. She made reference that including the helpers, a birthday was celebrated very frequently which meant wine every week! The average age of the participants was 85, with three people over 100 years old. She commented on the organisation which relies on five teams of volunteers who cook the lunches and a team of drivers. Attendees pay £4 for the meal and additional financial support has come from Sherborne Rotary, lottery fund, Sainsburys and the Co-op, and the county council and these elements of support help to keep the equipment up to date.

She also asked if there were other groups who use Church House who would benefit from a sound system for the hard of hearing who use Church House. She finished by thanking all the volunteers who made this well used service possible.

South West in Bloom: Karen Gough outlined that bolstered by previous years successes, the village had entered again and commented that the judges last year had wished to see a more colourful High Street and some work was planned around the entrance to the ball court. She commented that she had started a Facebook page to encourage the younger members of the village. She commented that the submission that was made to the judges looked at community work throughout the year, not just the planting and this year it was planned to elaborate more on the church houses on the High Street.

Milborne Port History and Heritage Group: Steve Underwood reported on behalf of the History and Heritage Group. They had just celebrated the third anniversary since foundation and now have a museum at the cemetery made possible with the support of the Parish Council. He discussed the oral history project and the work researching the church house mentioned above, and also were looking for other historical buildings to drive towards a survey and putting Milborne Port on the vernacular buildings map. They are applying to become a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation). He also commented on a couple of other things including the restoration of the original Town Hall Clock mechanism.

Spirit of Milborne Port: Steve discussed the main functions this group, highlighting the village fete where already £7000 had been committed to this event. The other event organised is the lights switch on in November.

Milborne Port Parish Magazine: Linda Mumford, the editor of the parish magazine introduced herself. She commented on the revamp of the magazine with a new picture on the front each month with an expanded magazine. The aim was to reflect the village and its organisations and asked for further submissions. She commented that she would like to expand the delivered copies.

Milborne Port Gardening Club: Maureen Lock reported on behalf of the gardening club and their report can be found in Appendix 4

Milborne Port Parish Church: Jacqui Hall commented on the maintenance of the Churchyard and Revd. Godfrey added that there had been a recent survey of maintenance requirements for the Church and she had estimated that in the order of £30,000 would be required in the near term.

General Discussion: There was a question from the audience about responsibility for potholes. This is SCC and there was a short discussion on this with Councillor Campbell, who has been tasked with liaising with the County Council to improve the approach on this. There also followed a short discussion on whether in future, the Parish Council may be forced to commission such work itself, though this would significantly increase the precept.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Appendix 1

The Parish Council's year 2018-2019

Summary

This year is an election year with a new full Parish Council being elected on May 2nd. Several current Parish Councillors are standing down and I would like to thank them for their service whilst they have been on the council. There are some 19 candidates for the 13 places on council so their will be a ballot on 2nd May and some of the existing councillors who are standing again may not be re-elected. I would also like to thank any councillors that depart in this way for their service. The new perspectives and energies we have had from recent co-options and by-elections have been very beneficial to council business.

There are many other people who support the work of the council in either a paid or unpaid basis, from those who help with churchyard maintenance, to town hall and toilet cleaning and gardening work. I am not going to name anyone as I would be sure to miss someone. However, you know who you are and I offer my thanks for your work.

It has been a busy year with the council being involved in many things over the year, and I would now like to highlight some of them.

Finance

The Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of its estate which includes the land of the memorial playing fields, cemetery, the closed Churchyard and some of the children's play areas amongst other things. These are paid for with money from the electorate which is levied by SSDC as a precept or addition to the rates we all pay. For the coming year, the precept is in the order of £89,000. This is a very significant increase and has been made necessary to support the library when the county library services withdraw much of its support. Even with this increase, our Precept per household matches those levied locally such as at Henstridge and is significantly less than many of the settlements of similar size in South Somerset.

The council has also made grants to various village bodies and in the last year, we have made grants to the Primary school, the playing fields and to the village hall.

We have also received a grant from Canadian Solar, who own the solar farm and this grant has been made for the express purpose of capital projects to improve the village. Council invited ideas from the public and the projects that we will promote will be finally decided in the May council meeting.

Significant Maintenance

In addition to the routine maintenance activities such as grass cutting, we have undertaken some significant activities and planned for others.

We have improved the water supply to the allotments with new troughs and feed piping.

We have made significant improvements to the Town Hall including new climate control, document security and electrical safety. These have been long overdue.

Improving the built environment

The layout of Milborne Port, with the A30 running through it imposes significant restrictions on what can be achieved. The entry to the South West in Bloom competition continues to provide a focus for improving improvements in the village and we have entered again this year. I am grateful of the support of many for the work in making this a success, spearheaded by Phil and Maureen on the council.

New lighting at the Springfield Road car park has been installed.

The footpath at the recreation ground has been diverted around the perimeter in the hope that dog walkers will respect this and reduce the significant health hazard associated with Dog excrement on the playing fields.

Our wish to deliver improvements to the land opposite the Town hall has come to naught as we were forced to withdraw our adverse possession application, which was an enabling precursor to that work.

Two new fast EV charging points have been installed in the East Street car park and these, each at 22kW are due to go live very shortly.

We have purchased a speed indicating device (SID), with the generous support of the owners of Ven House. As SIDS cannot be permanently installed in one spot this will be rotated round three entry locations to the village. Three current Parish Councillors have been trained to deploy and operate these. Also to help with traffic speeds entrance "gates" to the village will also be installed at the three main entrances.

General Business

The council has not been able to yet make very significant use of the survey of the whole village as part of a revamp of the Parish Plan, largely due to lack of time and available volunteer resource. It is clear that housing needs is one of the things that exercise our residents and we had a more detailed formal housing needs survey carried out. Council is now looking at a Neighbourhood Plan, though this takes a considerable time (ca. 4 years) and resource.

We continue to strive for transparency in our operations, whilst meeting the sometimes conflicting provisions of the new data protection rules. This, together with a gradually increasing general administrative load has led us to implement a modest increase in our part-time Clerk's hours of work so there has been a similar modest increase in when the Office is open on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Planning

The Parish Council has no executive powers with regard to planning applications, however, we are consulted on all applications within the Parish. Most contain no concern and we issue comments as appropriate.

Larger developments attract much comment and debate. Unsurprisingly, much of this comment is opposed to these developments. However, because there is a housing supply deficit in South Somerset many of the rules designed to ensure that only appropriate development takes place are currently over-ridden and some larger developments are inevitable.

In order to achieve the best result for the village the Parish Council follows a dual track strategy, objecting where necessary whilst engaging with the developers, influencing their plan so that, if they do win approval, the development will fit into the village better than it might otherwise have done.

The Council's strategy does seem to be working. There were two other major developments being considered for the village, one of which was always likely to be granted. Of the two, the one at the corner of Station road/Wheathill Lane was considered to be more sympathetic to the village. Hence the Parish Council, with others mounted a successful defence against the station road development, whilst seeking to improve the value of the Wheathill Lane development. As a result, we have a community hub being built for us which will house the library and display space for the heritage group, and also a space for the development of a convenience store, to complement the Co-op which will be moving to a new site next to the health centre.

The development at Gainsborough now has full planning permission and we have consulted with the developer about providing a good level of off street parking.

Future Plans

We have monies set aside for new signage in the village and we still have grant availability for a stairlift in the Town Hall, though navigating the issues with building control is proving difficult and time consuming.

We are currently looking at improving the car park surface at Springfield Road. We have provided some repairs to the East Street Car Park, but a retaining wall needs rebuilding following earlier damage.

We remain "in the queue" for a small improvement scheme project to create a "Puffin" crossing near the garage.

We no longer have plans for improving the land opposite the Town hall following the withdrawal of the adverse possession application.

We are always open to new ideas; however, our resources are heavily committed, and we probably will not be able to accommodate any major initiatives until the new hub is up and running.

Appendix 2

Milborne Port Parish Council

Tree Warden Report April 2019

Station Copse (Community Woodland)

Sadly, we have lost the only mature beech tree on this site. It was only a matter of time before it had to go, the beech tree had been infected with two types of fungi *Kretchmaria Deusta* and *Polyporus squamosus* for quite some time. Both types of fungi cause either limbs loss or main stem failure and make trees infected particularly unpredictable. The tree was removed as a precaution especially as it was also next to the highway, this proved to be a correct move as can be observed by the extent of decay.

The stem from the felled tree is left on site as a natural habitat for insects and of course a rustic seat if you wish! The fungi is not likely to infect the large oaks and newly planted woodland areas.

The new trees in the area are become quite well established and will require some formative pruning during the next few years. Although some trees have failed the majority have succeeded and the failure rate would be expected. There are also several that have been killed by deer eating the nice young bark. But, in general there will be some very good specimens.

Clump

There are four large beech trees, one large oak, four hawthorns (3 covered in ivy) one small birch and beech.

The ivy should be kept from growing into the large trees, but it is particularly good for wildlife habitat in the three hawthorns. The large beech (by the entrance to St Johns Hall) has several defects, but I am glad to say seems to be doing rather well.

Church walk

The eight Hornbeams have been reduced to a similar size and will be kept trim in the future to retain a nice compact conical shape.

The Grove

The three Lime trees have been reduced to pollards which will undoubtedly add some welcome sunlight to this attractive garden.

Slightly concerned with the weight of the rose to the "rose arch" as there is no diagonal bracing to the framework. Maybe this should be investigated or the rose lightly thinned?

St John's Churchyard

There are some fabulous trees in the churchyard a good mixture of typical churchyard trees. These are all due a review when in full leaf and a report is to follow in autumn.

The Ball court, Recreational ground and Gainsborough play area

These are all due a review when in full leaf and a report is to follow in autumn as with all the sites.

Appendix 3

Milborne Port FC

We have had 3 Minileague teams this season for Under 9s, Under 11s and Under 12s and has been a pretty successful season with the Under 9s winning the Champions Cup and the Under 12s are on the verge of winning their league.

We have had 2 youth leagues for Under 13s and Under 18s and it has again been a successful season with the Under 18s still in a position to come second and have this weekend won the County Cup Final beating Wimborne 5-3.

We have had two adult teams, although our reserves struggled in their league the first team are in a good position to win the First Division and will be playing in the Premier league next season. Unfortunately they lost a cup final last weekend losing 3-1 to Templecombe who are in second place in the premier league.

Next season we will have 2 Minileague teams, 3 youth teams and 3 adult teams (2 playing in the Yeovil & District league and one in the Dorset League. We are looking for volunteers to run under 7s, Under 8s and Under 9s teams...so if you know anybody who would be interested please ask them to contact me.

I am also trying to launch Walking Football into the village, if you know anybody that is interested, please point them in my direction.

Milborne Port Community Swimming Pool

Last year was a very busy season with the school pupils using the pool from mid-April to the end of September and the pool fully booked the majority of time outside of school time and during holidays.

During the last few weeks we have had a new floor laid around the pool and a new cover has been purchased.

We are now getting the water warmed up ready to open for the season and we are hoping to open up soon after Easter. We will be charging £15 per session this season. Families are already contacting us wanting to book slots. The booking system is not open yet but bookings will soon be able to be made via the pool website milborneportpool.co.uk. Please visit our Facebook page to keep up to date with the latest news.

Appendix 4

Milborne Port Gardening Club

2019 Report to Parish Council AGM

The Gardening Club has had another good and active year with an interesting variety of speakers and garden visits. The summer activities continue to be a great success and are generally appreciated by the members. Our current membership stands at 38 including some new members with 12 visitors over the year which is very encouraging.

We have been trying to encourage the younger generation to take an interest in gardening by giving advice and support in response to an invitation from Rebecca Ayers, the headmistress of the primary school. Kirsty Farthing, a committee member, has been giving some of her time helping the children with garden projects.

Our 2018 yearly plant sale was once again very successful raising another healthy profit of £285 which enables us to maintain our low annual subscription of only £12.

Our social evening was another great success this was held on a glorious summers evening in August in Pam Alexander's beautiful garden with a buffet supper enjoyed by all. Our thanks go to Pat Chitty for her kind donation of the Prosecco which flowed freely all evening!

The Gardens Group Gold Club (Castle Gardens) continues to support our club and offers very good membership benefits, which many of our members have taken up in the past year.

All of this does not go on without a lot of background work from the committee and very hard work by many others for which we are enormously appreciative.