

BULKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk : Mrs F A Price 1 The Croft Urchfont DEVIZES SN10 4RT

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

held on Wednesday 15 May 2013 at 7 pm in the Village Hall

Present : Cllr Mrs S Oliphant in the Chair

Cllrs S Barratt, Mrs C Crawford, R G Elliott, Mrs J Flynn, C Ogilvie and Mrs A Read

No member of the public

Clerk Mrs F A Price in attendance

In the absence of any member of the public and since the Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting were confirmed at the July 2012 Parish Council Meeting the PC went at once to

3. Chairman's Report: by Cllr Mrs S Oliphant, Chairman of the Parish Council 2012/13

As in previous years pressure on our budget has been a focus for us as costs increase and we strive to manage our expenditure without requesting an increase in our Precept.

So, I would like to start by thanking my fellow Cllrs for their unanimous decision, again after careful consideration and debate, not to increase our Precept. In reality this means that we have very little contingency and will have to continue our theme of identifying and approving ideas that will deliver savings in our expenditure. Thanks also to our diligent Clerk for her accurate reporting on and excellent management of our funds to bring us in on budget for another year.

The biggest change for us this year has been the resignation of 3 Councillors and the election of 3 new ones. Thank you to Cllrs Helen Breach, Chris Parkyn and Neville Boulton for their support and commitment to the Parish Council, and welcome to Councillors Jan Flynn, Clare Crawford and Simon Barratt. With new members joining the Parish Council, I would like to remind us all of the 10 principles of our Code of Conduct (Integrity, Leadership, Objectivity, Judgement, Accountability, Openness, Respect, Stewardship, Lawfulness and Selflessness) and encourage everyone to apply these principles to every aspect of our business in the coming year to ensure that Bulkington remains the sort of Village we all want to live in.

My thanks also to Cllr Jonathon Seed for his ongoing support and to our Policing Team for their sustained commitment to maintaining a policing presence in our Village and it is disappointing therefore that we have to record more targeted thefts within our community.

Our continued interaction with the Planning Department has done little to change my views about our rôle in the planning application approval process so, once again, while I welcome the support offered by Cllr Seed I remain sceptical that the Localism Bill, particularly the elements regarding neighbourhood planning, will achieve its stated aim to "shift power back into the hands of individuals and communities". But as we all continue to give or time on a voluntary basis and apply ourselves diligently to the review of planning applications, I would like to thank all of you for giving up your evenings to review the applications that we have had.

As a Council we voted unanimously to make £1,000 available to support the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and I would like to thank Cllr Ogilvie for his leadership of the team that created such a successful event, where it was a pleasure to community groups working together to a common goal. The money left in that budget has been used to supply an additional picnic table on the Playing Field for families to enjoy.

A big thank you to our Playing Field Committee who have rounded off another successful year with a healthy bank balance, additional members added to the Committee and a published calendar of maintenance and community events to ensure that this wonderful resource can be enjoyed by the whole community.

Bulkington is a working village and our thanks as ever go to the farmers and landowners who manage the land, hedges, ditches, lanes and footpaths around the Village. It is easy to take our surroundings for granted and we count ourselves lucky that our landowners take their responsibilities seriously and give their time and resources to improve our environment.

4. **Financial Report** by the Clerk Mrs F A Price:

The Annual Return for 2011/12 was accepted by the Auditors, Mazars, in August. External Audit fee was £400 + £80 VAT and the Internal Auditor's fee was £30.

Summary figures for the last 2 years, **nb** 2012/13 *not yet fully audited*.

	2011/12	2012/13
	£	£
Balance Brought Forward	6,034	6,119
+ Precept	4,500	4,500
+ Other Receipts	59,601	1,400
- Staff/Admin Costs	1,725	1,898
- Other Payments	<u>62,291</u>	<u>3,988</u>
Balance carried Forward	6,119	6,133

[**nb** These figures include Lloyds TSB Accounts *and* £11.97 in HSBC Account, see below]

Total Fixed Assets : Playing Field and Equipment, War Memorial and Bus Shelter: £50,080 - includes the £35,250 Insured Value of the new Play Equipment.

No grants etc for the Playing Field during the year, but the HSBC Account is kept open – with a minimal sum in it – to handle any further grant which may be given in the next year or two. External Audit costs were high at £400 + £80 VAT reflecting the Playing Field grant in 2011/12 - the Audit was actually carried out and charged in 2012/13.

Insurance costs remain high, but the Playing Field Committee reimbursed part of the Play Equipment All Risks cover, and the Council is in a 3-year fixed premium agreement.

The Fireworks display and Jubilee Celebrations were covered by the general policy.

The P C agreed to make up to £1,000 available under Section 137 for the Jubilee celebrations, and when these costs came to about £650 it was decided to spend the remaining £350 on the materials for a self-assembly picnic bench/table – which should be ready very soon – but the purchase was not actually made until April and so forms part of the 2013/14 Accounts.

The regular business of the Parish Council shows very little change from previous years, which accounts for the difference of only £14 in Balance Carried Forward.

Staff/Admin costs rose by £173, including £35 Training for an Elections course for the Clerk.

With 3 new Councillors Training costs will be considerably higher in the coming year.

It was possible to keep the Precept steady at £4,500 for the coming year, but there was a small one-off grant from Wiltshire Council (£171.52) intended to cover changes in the taxbase brought about by the Localisation Bill. The final effects of this will not be clear until next year's Precept is set in January 2014, but should not be so great as to force a rise in Council Tax – **nb** the Parish Council share of the total tax paid is very small so any change at this level has little effect.

The Council's reserves remain steady at about £6,000 or Precept + 1/3, which should cover any unexpected and uninsured expense – though not a major project.

5. **Questions and Comments:**

- Cllr Barratt asked for clarification about the Precept – the Clerk briefly ran through the process of setting the PC's request and submitting it to Wiltshire Council.
- Cllr Mrs Crawford asked about future grant applications, and suggested building in administrative costs and/or fees to any future applications.

With no further questions or comments the Annual Parish Meeting ended at 7.30, and the Parish Council proceeded immediately to the Annual Meeting of the Council