

BULKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

DRAFT

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council
held in the Village Room at Seend Community Centre at 7.30pm
[Bulkington Village Hall floor under repair]
11 March 2015

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

Cllrs R Hubbard and J Seed [Wiltshire Council]

Pcso Helen Wilson

No member of the public

Clerk Mrs F A Price in attendance

The Meeting started at 7.30 with

OPEN FORUM

- The Chairman gave a brief run-down of the Village Hall situation: the floor is drying out and nearly ready for use, but major work to walls will be required to prevent recurrence of damp problems. Village Hall Committee to explore grant possibilities, Parish Council to give such support as it can
- Cllr Seed asked Cllr Ogilvie about the drain situation – Cllr Ogilvie replied there were no current problems, but the promised “gel sacs” have not been delivered. Cllr Seed promised to look into it.
- Cllr Mrs Oliphant asked why the Environment Agency no longer seems to check sluices etc – local farmers are concerned. Cllr Seed will check, and Mrs Oliphant will email him the details.
- The Chairman then asked about progress on a new RAF Keevil runway: Cllr Seed said that the MOD is now considering a different aircraft, which will require a different runway, and there will be problems with lorries bringing in aggregate on Pinckney Lane past the sewage pumping station – lights will be needed to control two-way traffic on a narrow road. Another possibility is crushing and re-using existing track. Cllr Ogilvie suggested that cuts in Forces spending might be a problem, and Cllr Elliott wondered whether NATO might be involved.
- Cllr Ogilvie asked whether Wiltshire Council has policy to provide for an ageing population – such as is seen in Bulkington's demography. Cllr Hubbard said there are various schemes – eg for Dementia sufferers a “safe place” where someone can go for help – there is a shop in Melksham providing this service. Other schemes are to be found County-wide, but as always the problem is money. Cllr Mrs Oliphant wondered whether the Playing Field, when replacing the equipment for very young children, should consider providing instead for adult exercise and recreation? Cllr Hubbard replied that in a few years the village might be full of young families again. Cllr Mrs Read pointed out that grandparents often bring grandchildren – some visiting from quite far away – to use the Field and its equipment. Cllr Mrs Crawford said the Field is a draw for young families considering moving to Bulkington.
- Cllr Hubbard said the Area Board can support schemes for 13-19 year-olds, but this is difficult in small villages. However, thanks to Cllr Seed, Melksham Area Board now has a refurbished minibus available to bring village youngsters to Youth Clubs etc, once or twice a week, FREE. Cllr Mrs Flynn asked whether it could also be used by the elderly – Cllr Hubbard said this might be possible, but there would be a lot of red tape involved and volunteer drivers are needed. He would like to see the widest possible use, and adults could be asked to contribute to fuel costs. Generally, it might be a Community Bus, owned by a registered charity. Cllr Seed said that the real need is to create activity, and transport, to end isolation. Cllr Hubbard agreed that social isolation is the biggest problem, and so he was keen to see the bus used as widely as possible – which means getting funding to keep it going.

OPEN FORUM contd

- Cllr Mrs Oliphant raised problems with a stile which blocks the way for dog-walkers, breaking circuit round Bulkington – when approached landowners [Howard] decline to take any action. Cllr Seed agreed to meet Mrs Oliphant to see the problem, then he will speak to Charles Howard.
- Cllr Seed said there was some sympathy for Bulkington's grant application to the Area Board but schemes must be in by mid-April – he added that funds for a new Notice Board should be applied for by a Community group, not the Parish Council.
- Cllr Mrs Crawford asked for clarification of the grant terms – Cllr Seed replied capital grants cover 100% of the application up to £1,000, with 50/50 match-funding required between £1,000 and £10,000. Applicants are limited to 2 projects in any one year.
- PcsO Wilson said thefts in the area include a parcel left outside, and chain-saws from sheds etc.
- A report of an intruder at Leaze Farm seems to have been a false alarm – the Police note that good security cameras and other measures are going in to the new storage sheds at the farm.
- The new Police messaging service can be used for such things as flood warnings as well as reports of crime – she urged all to sign up. Cllr Ogilvie will put a link on the village website and check with the Police on websites etc, while the Chairman will put a reminder on the Notice Board.

Cllrs Hubbard and Seed and PcsO Wilson left at 8.10 and the Meeting turned to the main **Agenda**.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** none

2. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllrs Mrs Oliphant and C Ogilvie – Playing Field

Cllr Mrs Read – Village Hall

Cllr Mrs Crawford – Development Plan/Affordable Housing

3. **Minutes of 14 January 2015 Meeting:** Accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman

4. **Melksham Neighbourhood Plan:**

The Chairman said the Area Board is consulting villages outside the Melksham Plan area because the Plan may affect them – for example new Housing proposals.

She stressed that a Village Plan has little or no force, but Cllr Mrs Crawford said she has been assured that *small* villages will not have new housing forced on them.

The Chairman then gave Cllrs a sample of the Housing Needs Survey to be distributed in the village: the completed forms are to go to Wiltshire Council.

Cllr Mrs Crawford and Cllr Ogilvie suggested a covering letter from the PC to make it clear that the survey seeks the personal views of villagers, and there is no obligation to answer all the questions.

Cllr Barratt suggested using the latest Census (2011) for a distribution list – but Cllr Ogilvie said the data would not match.

Cllrs Mrs Flynn and Mrs Crawford volunteered to do some canvassing if required.

The Chairman and Cllr Ogilvie to go to the Melksham Plan “Open House”, probably on the 28th.

5. **Reports:**

- ◆ Walking with dogs and picking up after them: 150 copies of leaflet are being produced, by the Spotlight printer Neil Yockney – cost £33. **See 7. Finance**

The Chairman reported that landowners generally are pleased that action is being taken to deal with these problems, and other PCs may follow Bulkington's example – Cllr Hubbard has told Steeple Ashton PC that providing free bags and bins reduced fouling in Melksham by 80%, and the PC could apply for a grant towards the cost. **Chairman to follow up.**

Cllr Mrs Flynn will check possible sites for both bins and bag-dispensers.

Cllr Elliott was very pessimistic about the efficacy of notices etc, and suggested that his only option was to plant a crop such as maize since livestock will not eat grass fouled by dogs.

Cllrs Mrs Crawford and Mrs Flynn felt however that a start could be made, and after some disagreement on the exact provisions in the Countryside Code, the PC suggested that Cllr Elliott put up notices stressing that *dogs must be kept on leads* and *walkers keep strictly to footpaths*, especially in the growing season.

5. Reports: contd

- ◆ Cllr Mrs Oliphant has commissioned a carpenter to make the new noticeboard – cost partly covered by the £500 “wayleave” for laying solar energy cable under Fullwood Lane.
The old noticeboard will be given to the Playing Field.
- ◆ Cllr Mrs Read gave a fuller report on progress with repairs to the Village Hall; the floor is almost ready for use, a system of under floor ducts and fans to prevent future dry and wet rot is going in, but the main problem of water seeping through the South and West walls remains.
The Cttee is taking advice, but fears that the cost of any work will all but clear out its reserves.

6. Section 137 LGA 1972: No application received.

7. Finance:

The Clerk presented *preliminary* Receipts and Payments Accounts, warning that the Financial Year has another 3 weeks to run. The figures include Payments at this Meeting.

The completed Annual Return, including Internal Auditor's report, must be approved and signed ready to go to the External Auditors by the Appointed Date of 1 June.

The Clerk suggested this be done at the PC's May Annual Meeting at the latest.

As expected, the 2014-15 Accounts show an *overspend* against Precept + Grant of some £1,550 - largely the result of Balfour Beatty's late billing for 2013 PF Maintenance, plus the single month done in 2014; Village Hall hire for 2013-14 was also paid late because of a mix-up over billing.

As there was an unusually large sum Brought Forward - £6,900 – the PC is in no danger of going into the red and its Reserves remain over £5,000, comfortably above Precept.

£188 in VAT is to be reclaimed in April as usual, and will go into 2015-16 Receipts.

Cllr Mrs Crawford asked why there were no Accrual figures – the Chairman explained that the PC's Accounts are done on a Receipts and Payments basis only.

There were no other questions from Cllrs.

Received since last Meeting		
date	from	£
29 Jan 15	PF – reimbursement Calendar printing ex-VAT	222.95
	PF – contribution to equipment Insurance costs	60.00
9 Feb 15	Interest on Deposit Account	0.29
9 Mar 15	Interest on Deposit Account [est]	0.29

Paid since last Meeting				
date	Payee	Amount	[inc VAT]	Chq no.
14 Jan 15	AW Services – 2014 grasscutting	600.00		112
2 Mar 15	Fenland Leisure Products – swing seat	170.40	[28.40]	113

Authorised at this Meeting				
date	Payee	Amount	[inc VAT]	Chq no
11 Mar 15	Mrs F A Price – Clerk's ½ year salary	700.00		114
	Mrs F A Price – Clerk's ½ year expenses	242.88		115
	Bulkington Village Hall – 6 Meetings	60.00		116
	RW & HC Breach - hedgecutting	84.00	[14.00]	117
	Seend Community Centre – 1 Meeting	20.00		118

7. Finance contd

Letter – dated 19th January - from HMRC about electronic PAYE and National Insurance payments. Clerk will write after the beginning of April to say that Bulkington PC is not liable for either as it has no PAYE scheme and its sole, part-time, employee is over the age for National Insurance. HMRC have accepted this in the past – but their systems change constantly.

8. Correspondence: All relevant documents forwarded electronically.

9. William Breach Centenary Playing Field:

Cllr Mrs Oliphant reported

- Trees have been planted
- Metal detectorists' session cancelled
- Year's Financial report in preparation

Cllr Ogilvie stressed the importance of looking at provision in light of the different age profile.

Mrs Oliphant added that a changing population seems to mean less sense of community, with the result that engaging people of the village in maintenance of the Field is a real struggle. The Field is well-used, but the Committee is unable to recruit members and nobody comes forward to help with regular maintenance jobs.

10. Planning: No Application or Wiltshire Council Decision received.

11. Any Other Business: None requiring discussion

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.20pm

**Next Meeting 13 May
following the Annual Parish Meeting**

**Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
including Election of Chairman for 2015-16
and Year-End Accounts for 2014-15**