

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16th April 2008 at 7.00pm

At

Chepping Wycombe Parish Council – Council Chamber

In the Chair – M Smith, Chairman of the Council

The following Council Members were also present:

I Forbes (Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Amenity Land Committee), J Herschel (Chairman of the Works, Services and Planning Committee), D Johncock (Vice-Chairman of Council), C Jordan, Ms J Johnson, L Willis, Ms E Belcher, Mrs J Chalmers, Mrs S Digby, J Eadon-Smith, Ms K Wood and C Harriss.

1. WELCOME

The Chairman of the Council welcomed everyone to the meeting and in addition to some ten Members of the Public, he especially thanked the following for attending and participating in the meeting: Prof. P Wheeler (former Chairman of Council), Mrs B Hunt and Mrs L Tebbutt (former Parish Councillors), D Shakespeare (Leader of Buckinghamshire County Council), Mrs S Guppy and S Underwood (County Council Local Area Technicians), PC R Page (Thames Valley Police), F Smith (Bucks Free Press), Mrs H Forbes (Village Voice), B Bennett (Penn & Tylers Green Residents' Society), D Onslow (Flackwell Heath Residents' Association), R King (Loudwater Bowls Club), G Christie (Parish Council Warden and Grounds Manager) and Mrs A Banham (Assistant Clerk of the Council).

The Chairman acknowledged the sad loss of former Parish Councillor Mr Arthur Mellins of Flackwell Heath who had tragically died in a road traffic accident in November 2007. As stated in the latest edition of the Parish Newsletter (Issue 73), it was noted that Arthur really was a "True Gentleman" and that he would be missed by Parish Councillors and the wider Community alike.

It was noted that the Parish Council was very concerned about the safety of persons visiting the Tesco Superstore in Loudwater by foot and that Buckinghamshire County Council and representatives of Tesco would be asked to assess the feasibility of creating a tunnelled footpath from the store to the Wooburn side of the site.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillors R Smith and J Savage, D Grieve MP, D Johnson (Loudwater Action Forum Chairman), and M Appleyard (WDC/BCC/Wooburn PC).

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2007 were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MIUNTES

There were none.

5. ANNUAL REPORT

Community Policing

It was noted that work was continuing to launch a Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) within the Parish that would include all three Villages in addition to those in other Parish areas. The next meeting of this group was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 23 April 2008 at the Council Offices. Whilst the meeting was not open to Members of the Public, it was reported that local residents, as well as Parish Councillors, would be represented on the forum which was shortly scheduled to ratify its Constitution and Terms of Reference.

Some Members of the Public felt that Flackwell Heath residents were somewhat divorced from the Local Police HQ in Hazlemere and that the system was preferable when the Village was policed from Marlow. It was recognised that policing boundaries and jurisdiction changed over time and that these were matters for Senior Management in Thames Valley Police to address, rather than Parish Councils or local Police representatives.

The Clerk outlined the difficulties that the Parish Council had encountered in attempting to recover the costs of damage caused to its assets by criminal damage in the form of graffiti. It was noted that in respect of Minors, the matter was entirely the responsibility of the Criminal Justice System and that recovering the costs from these vandals or their parents/guardians was not possible as their identities were protected. It was generally agreed that this state of affairs was perceived as being unsatisfactory and that the Council would continue to do all that it could, within the law and the confines of its statutory powers, to protect its interests in such cases. In addition, the Council would strive to ensure that senior Thames Valley Police representatives were made aware of the problem and that local MPs were advised accordingly.

D Onslow (Flackwell Heath Residents' Association – Police and Traffic Group) stated that there appeared to have been little policing action resulting from the meeting that had taken place with Dominic Grieve MP on Friday 23 November 2007 and that problems surrounding Burglaries, Drug Misuse and Anti-Social Behaviour were still prevalent throughout the Parish.

Some Members of the Public felt that stickers/notices in hallways/entrances to properties indicating that Neighbourhood Watch groups operated in the area or notifying visitors that 'Cold Call Tradesmen' should not trouble the house owners/occupiers were useful in keeping down levels of burglaries. PC Page indicated that these notices were available for collection from the Police HQ in Hazlemere or, alternatively, he could arrange for a reasonable quantity to be delivered to interested parties.

PC Page clarified the police procedures for responding to burglaries in rural and remote areas. It was noted that, where possible, persons reporting burglaries should try to provide details of the Post Code where the crime in question was taking place.

It was reported that four new Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) would be commencing work in the forthcoming fortnight, two in Hughenden Parish and two in Chepping Wycombe Parish, together with one additional part-time Officer being available, on an "as required" basis.

M40 Noise Nuisance

The Chairman once again acknowledged the efforts of the local action group, the M40 Chiltern Environmental Group, led by Dr K Edwards.

It was reported that the motorway noise could be heard very distinctly in Altona Road Cemetery which was undesirable in an area designed to be one of peace and tranquillity. Members of the Public also highlighted the potential environmental impact of the noise pollution emanating from the motorway; it was suggested that the number of songbirds in the area had decreased and that the beech trees in Fennels Wood were being adversely affected by the alteration in areas of rain water run-off.

L Willis reported that a very successful meeting had taken place on 15 April 2008 in Lane End with B Johnson MP in attendance. The M40 Chiltern Environmental Group envisaged two principal solutions to the problem; namely, reduced traffic speed together with the installation of speed sound barriers. Some Members of the Public felt that it might be helpful to organise a petition to be submitted in support of the M40 Chiltern Environmental Group's work.

In mid May 2008 and with some assistance from the Parish Council, it was noted that Loudwater Action Forum would be conducting a survey by way of a pamphlet being delivered to every household in the Village. The questionnaire included a section on motorway noise and it was understood that any information obtained would be helpful to feed back to the M40 Chiltern Environmental Group and to the Parish Council as evidence of the problem.

Benches donated to the Parish Council

The Chairman thanked, in particular, all those persons and organisations who had contributed to Parish Life by donating a replacement or new bench throughout the course of the year:

- Altona Road Cemetery – Mr Monaghan (resident)
- Widmer Pond, Tylers Green – Mrs Blackmore (resident)
- Oakland Way and Heath End Road – Cllr Mrs J Langley (WDC)
- Derehams Lane Sports Ground – Loudwater Action Forum
- Straight Bit Recreation Ground – Flackwell Heath Residents' Association
- Tylers Green Bus Shelter – Cllr D Shakespeare (BCC Leader)

The Works, Services and Planning Committee was continuing its plan to replace damaged or older benches, where appropriate.

Parish Notice Boards

Responding to a query from a Member of the Public, J Herschel reported that the Council was undertaking a review of its Notice Boards throughout the Parish and that Members of the Public were asked to pass their comments and/or suggestions to the Clerk for consideration at a future meeting of the Works, Services and Planning Committee. He assured those present that there was no intention of removing the boards without careful examination of all of the responses received. It was also noted that some Notice Boards were more prone to attacks of vandalism than others.

Lime Trees on Tylers Green Common

J Herschel reported on activities that had been taking place by representatives of the Penn and Tylers Green Residents' Association in conjunction with Hazlemere British Legion to locate the sites where trees had been planted on Tylers Green Common (some of which were no longer present) to commemorate the War Dead of the First World War from the Village.

It was noted that the Parish Council had undertaken some work in its Amenity Land Committee meetings with the input of interested residents to ascertain the history behind this memorial plantation.

It was noted that the current intention was to reinstate the commemorative plaques by November 2008 and that further proposals would be considered by the Committee in due course.

6. FINANCE

I Forbes, the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, outlined the Council's yearly financial position and noted that the Council Precept had been set at 3.9% increase in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI).

Responding to a question from the floor, he outlined the reasons behind the Council's level of Precept which included:

- The size of the Parish, comprising three separate Communities in the Villages of Tylers Green, Loudwater and Flackwell Heath with an electorate of 14,000 persons;
- The range and extent of services provided by the Council, such as footway lighting (£14,000 budgeted for renewals in 2008/09), three Recreation Grounds, two Sports Grounds, Cemetery extensions (£10,000 budgeted), Kingswood and Tylers Green Common; and
- The Council's ongoing commitment to improving sites, such as the Cock Lane Recycling Centre (£9,333) and Straight Bit Recreation ground car park (£16,500) resurfacing and the kerbing at Nursery Lane/Church Road (£4,070) that took place in October 2007. Future work at Derehams Lane Sports Ground was anticipated which had also been included in the Council's Budget allocation (£7,000 initially).

Some Members of the Public asked for their thanks to the Parish Council to be recorded for having resolved such issues as the condition of the Road Surface at Cock Lane Recycling Centre and for lobbying the County Council to remove undesirable 30 MPH speed limit signs in the Village, these falsely gave the impression that the National Speed Limit applied in certain residential areas.

7. QUESTIONS

Following questions from Members of the Public, it was agreed that the Parish Council would endeavour to find answers from those responsible authorities to the following queries:

- **Thames Valley Police to be asked to outline what the usual procedure and expectation was for Members of the Public lodging complaints about Nuisance Telephone Callers; and**

- **The Planning Authority (WDC) to be asked to clarify the situation with regard to the Chimney stack at Loudwater Mill having been demolished and whether any account of Preservation Orders had been taken.**

It was noted that the Clerk would be arranging for answers to these questions and a copy of the Minutes of the meeting to be available under the 'News' heading of the Council Web site: www.cwpc.org.uk.

The 2009 Annual Parish meeting would be held in Flackwell Heath.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed, thanked everyone for attending and invited those present to have a tea or coffee with Members of the Council.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm.

CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL

[H R O Jones – Clerk of the Council 18/04/08]