

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PARISH OF
HILPERTON HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, HILPERTON,
on TUESDAY, 2nd MAY, 2006, at 7.30 p.m.**

CHAIRMAN: Mr. E. Clark, Chairman of the Parish Council, presided.

PRESENT: Nineteen members of the public, including parish councillors.

1. APOLOGIES

Mr. V. Bielecki, Mrs. J. Clark, Mr. R. Thomason, Mrs. Potts, Mr. P. Hayes, Mr. J. Willis, Ms. P. Turner, Mrs. J. Sinclair and Cllr. S. Content.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman introduced himself and Mrs. Marylyn Timms, the Parish Clerk.

3. MINUTES OF THE 2005 PARISH ASSEMBLY

The Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on the 3rd May, 2005, were agreed and signed. (Proposed by Mrs. Keates, seconded by Mr. Jackson, all in favour).

4. MATTERS ARISING

Minute 6 – Paxcroft Mead Community Centre: The transfer of the Community Centre from the developers, Marshgate, finally took place in June, 2005, and the Parish Council was now the Custodian Trustee of the centre.

Minute 6 – Hilperton Relief Road: Back in May, 2005, it was learned that the Government Office for the South West were not going to call in the Gap relief road application. West Wilts. District Council had lifted the Article 14 directive and were free now to complete work on the Section 106 agreements. Tied up with the relief road was the East of Trowbridge development, which GOSW had also decided not to call in. Until all the legal agreements were signed work could not commence on the relief road.

Minute 6 – Grass Cutting: This had been discussed at the May, 2005, Parish Council meeting and it was agreed that the best way forward was to keep pressure on the local authority to ensure that the grass throughout the village was cut frequently. Weed control was now the responsibility of the District Council as they had come to an agreement with Wiltshire County Council that they would adopt all of the weed control, with the County Council paying the District Council for this service. This had only just come into place.

Minute 7c – Cemetery: The state of that part of the cemetery reserved for ashes was reported to the District Council following last year's Annual Assembly. English Landscapes had made an inspection and carried out some work soon after, but there had recently been a problem regarding the emptying of the rubbish bin, and pressure had been put on the District Council to sort this out. Most of the rubbish had now been cleared away but the Parish Council would keep an eye on the situation.

Minute 7e – Post Office: The Parish Council had written to both Post Watch and the Post Office over the imminent closure of Hilperton Post Office in May, 2005. The Post Office's refusal to classify Hilperton as 'rural' rather than 'urban' meant that there was now unlikely to be any sort of post office service in the village other than at Hilperton Marsh. There had

therefore been little point in the Post Office writing to the Parish Council for suggestions as to how to restore a service to Hilperton if they were intransigent on the classification issue.

5. FINANCIAL BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

The Clerk reported that the precept for the year ended 31st March, 2006, had been set at £19,658, again with no increase in the levy. The total receipts for the year amounted to £23,823 with a total expenditure of £15,668.

It had been a relatively quiet year in terms of expenditure, and the Clerk said that the Chairman would be giving details of grants made throughout the year in his report.

The accounts for the year ended 31st March, 2005, were adopted by the Parish Council in June, 2005, and the audit was completed by September, 2005. The accounts for the year ended 31st March, 2006, were in the process of being prepared and would be available for inspection before the annual audit later in the year.

There were no questions.

6. PARISH BUSINESS

School Governors

Both school governors had given their apologies. Jenny Sinclair, governor of The Mead Primary School, and Pam Turner, governor of Hilperton CE Primary School, continued to keep the Parish Council updated on the schools' activities.

Pam Turner had sent in a report to say that one of the most important developments at Hilperton School was the extensive building programme which had been completed on time. These facilities included the replacement of a temporary classroom with a well designed suite that would be used for music/drama and small group teaching, with additional storage space. It was hoped that there would be a formal opening later this term. The main building had benefited from the extension to the staff room, Head Teacher's office, photocopying/storage area and disabled toilet facility. The ICT suites were now fully functional, and the school had also included a new programme called 'Bridge the Gap' as part of its personal development scheme. Everyone had been saddened to hear of the recent death of former Chairman of the governors, Gerald Parsons.

The new school extension at The Mead had been finished on the children's return to school last September. It had the benefit of not only the extra permanent classrooms but the addition of a music/dance studio and library area. The school continued to excel in music and also had a specialist language teacher, with French being taught right across the school from reception to year 6.

Mrs. Thomason wondered if the governors of Hilperton Primary School could look at the meals that the school was providing, as she felt the food was not as good as it should be, with no freshly cooked vegetables.

Grants made throughout the Year

During the year the following grants had been made:-

May, 2005: St. John Ambulance - £100 to help towards the building of new premises in Devizes (Section 137 Grant)

June, 2005: Victim Support Wiltshire - £150 to help them maintain their present level of service (Section 137 Grant)

August, 2005: Carers Support West Wilts. - £200 to assist with their funding (Section 137 Grant)

January, 2006: Hilperton Village Hall - £871.40 (Section 19 Grant) to assist with the purchase of new tables for the Village Hall (50% of the actual cost)

February, 2006: Hilperton Village Hall - £1,136.50 (Section 19 Grant) to assist in the funding of the annual grounds maintenance and public liability insurance.

March, 2006: St. John Ambulance - £250 to be used to help purchase a new ambulance (Section 137 Grant)

March, 2006: SPLASH - £200 to help with their 2006 fundraising appeal (Section 137 Grant)

Notice Boards/Litter Bins/Bus Shelters

The Chairman reported that a new notice board at Marsh Stores was erected in February. Work had finally begun on refurbishing the bus shelter at the Church Street end of Hill Street and this should be completed shortly. Requests had been made from time to time throughout the year for further litter bins but the Chairman said that it was the Parish Council's opinion that there were enough provided already.

Parish Council Newsletter

The Chairman reported that the latest Spring Newsletter had recently been delivered to all houses in the parish and he had again received some positive responses.

Village Maintenance

Work had continued to be carried out by Wiltshire County Council's Parish Lengthsmen and over the last year during their visits they had cleared gutters, cleared and cut back brambles and other undergrowth. Summer maintenance jobs had been undertaken by certain members of the Parish Council and the Chairman thanked both Robert House and John Willis for their efforts. CLARENCE had been contacted on numerous occasions to undertake urgent work and the Chairman reminded everyone of their freephone number 0800 23 23 23.

War Memorial

Since last year two grant applications had been made to the War Memorials Trust and both had been turned down because they were not happy about the proposals to cure the damp problem. They had recently suggested the installation of a French drain and the Parish Council had contacted one of their recommended contractors. A site meeting was held in March, resulting in another quote and another submission to the War Memorials Trust. The Chairman added that the work could not be undertaken without the co-operation of Mr. Harry Potts, for which the Parish Council was very grateful, and he assured him that he and the Clerk would meet him soon to discuss this matter.

Mrs. Lesley House had taken over the task of planting the flowers at the War Memorial and the Chairman expressed his thanks on behalf of the Parish Council for the work Mrs. House had done.

Highways/Pedestrian Safety

The Chairman said that speeding in various areas of the village had been causing some concern, especially along Devizes Road. Although it was generally acknowledged that the

highway authority would not consider measures such as traffic calming, the closing off of certain roads to prevent them becoming 'rat runs' etc. until the completion of the Hilperon

Relief Road, the Parish Council had recently made an approach to the County Council asking to be involved in the formulation of any future plans before they went out for public consultation. This they had agreed to do. Various bus stop clearways were planned for the village, at Paxcroft Mead, Greenhill Gardens, Newleaze and Tudor Drive. It was also hoped that a pedestrian refuge could be put in place at the Hill Street/Marsh Road end of Horse Road by way of the County Council's Partnership Funded Scheme.

Concern was expressed at the number of cars parking on double yellow lines in Church Street near the old Post Office. The Chairman said that PC Newbery had looked into this problem before and would do so again, if required.

Best Kept Village Competition

The Chairman said that the Parish Council had entered Hilperon this year in the large village category of the competition and judging would take place early in the summer. Householders were encouraged to keep their gardens clean and tidy.

Mrs. Thomason expressed her thanks to the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council for the facilities provided at the village hall and playing field, and it was agreed that a letter of appreciation should be sent to the Village Hall Committee.

Ongoing Development at Marsh Farm

Concern had been expressed at the scale of development at Marsh Farm and, when asked if the Parish Council had received any planning application recently in respect of the farm, the answer was in the negative. The Chairman was able to report, however, that the Parish Council had contacted the District Council's enforcement officer about the large barn erected down there and he was looking into the matter.

Whaddon Lane

a) State of the Road

The Chairman reported that the three pedestrian refuges along Whaddon Lane were last weeded in June, 2005, and a single white line was placed alongside them to indicate to pedestrians and vehicle drivers where they were. However, vehicles continued to use the refuges and erode the verges and they were frequently covered in mud. The large machinery and delivery vehicles using the lane were also overrunning the verges, bringing mud into the lane. The Parish Council had been in touch constantly throughout the year with the County Council to say how concerned people were over the state of the road and the extent of its deterioration. The latest response from the County Council was that they planned to resurface the road during 2006/7, depending on the allocation of funding.

Mr. Tucker had recently attended the annual Wiltshire Highways Partnership meeting and had had quite a constructive conversation with one of the officers from the County Council, explaining to him how they could get over the problem of people using the lane when work was carried out.

Mrs. Thomason spoke about how hazardous the road had become. The verges were getting too high which meant it was difficult for people to get onto them to avoid oncoming vehicles.

On the other hand, when the verges were lower lorries had a tendency to drive onto them, collapsing the soil back into the ditches again.

There was general agreement that pressure should continue to be put on the highway authority.

b) Converted Poultry Sheds

The Chairman reported on the situation regarding redundant agricultural buildings along Whaddon Lane for which the owner had, on appeal, received planning permission to use them for domestic storage. The enforcement officer at West Wilts. District Council had been contacted following complaints that some of the sheds were being used for commercial rather than domestic use, and there had also been some retrospective planning applications.

Parish Plans

The Chairman said that interest in parish plans was steadily growing. These were similar to Village Design Statements but wider in scope and could include social/community/economic issues, rather like the Community Area Plan. All issues of concern to the local community could be included and the Parish Plan was about what people wanted for their village, not necessarily along planning lines. The Chairman said that if the Parish Council felt it was worth pursuing it would depend very much on the goodwill of residents.

Police

The Chairman said that there had again been changes in police representation and the attendance at Parish Council meetings over the last year had been lamentable. Acting Police Sergeant Sandy Ralph had been invited to the Parish Assembly but had not turned up, nor expressed her apologies. She did, however, send to the Clerk reasonably regular statistics regarding crime in the Hilperton area.

County Councillor

Cllr. Content had given her apologies and sent in a report, copies of which had been distributed before the meeting.

District Councillors

The Chairman reported that both he and Trevor Carbin represented the parishes of Hilperton, Semington and Staverton at the District Council.

Most enquiries from residents seemed to relate to the Hilperton Gap in one way or another but the subjects on which they helped people were myriad, ranging from housing problems, via high hedges to planning applications.

Since the last Parish Assembly there had been many changes/matters arising at Bradley Road, with probably the most important being the change of administration from the Conservative led one, of which he was a part, to the current Liberal Democrat led cabinet which both Mr. Carbin and Ms. Content served on.

Simon Best, the Legal Services Manager who had provided much advice to the Parish Council, had resigned suddenly last year in circumstances which were never explained to councillors.

The Council Tax was raised by 4.99% for the year 2006/7. The District Council had been awarded PFI credits and this should see 400 affordable homes being built in West Wiltshire. The cost might have to be borne by an increase in council tax for thirty years.

The District Council had commenced a partnership arrangement with the County Council encompassing ICT, procurement and councillor support amongst other things.

Both Councillors Carbin and Clark continued to do all they could to assist the Parish Council but fortunately it did not need to call on their services too often as it was very effective in fighting its own corner on most issues and a report on the District Council was provided at every meeting of the Parish Council.

They both thanked everyone for their support and looked forward to continue to serve the community in the coming year.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

8. CONCLUSION

The Chairman said that the Parish Council encouraged people to attend council meetings and look on the website for details. Standing Orders had now been revised so that the December meetings would in future be held on the second Tuesday rather than the third and there was traditionally no meeting held in August.

The Parish Council had been consulted on many issues throughout the year, in addition of course to planning applications. These included:-

- Review of Electoral Arrangements in West Wiltshire
- Local Works – the Campaign for the Sustainable Communities Bill
- Police Learning and Development Programme
- WWDC – Leisure and Recreation Development Plan Document
- WWDC – Council Owned Development Sites for the Housing PFI Scheme
- WCC – Revising the Strategy for Wiltshire
- West Wiltshire Housing Society Garage Review

Donations from the Sir Williams Brown’s Charity continued to be given to needy, elderly recipients at Christmas time.

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked all parish councillors for their support throughout the year and Mr. Kendrick Jackson in particular for representing the Parish Council on the West Wiltshire Area Parish Council’s Liaison Group, to which he had recently been elected Chairman.

The meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.

Signed

Date

