

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PARISH OF
HILPERTON HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, HILPERTON,
on TUESDAY, 5th MAY, 2009, at 7.30 p.m.**

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

PRESENT: Thirty-eight members of the public, including parish councillors.

1. APOLOGIES

Mrs. J. Clark and Mrs. S. Thomason.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

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

3. MINUTES OF THE 2007 PARISH ASSEMBLY

The Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on the 6th May, 2008, were agreed and signed. (Proposed by Mr. House, seconded by Ms. Turner, all in favour).

4. MATTERS ARISING

Minute 6 – Wiltshire County Council’s bid for Unitary Status: The new Wiltshire Council came into being on the 1st April, 2009, and elections for new unitary councillors would take place at the beginning of June, 2009. The next elections for parish and town councils would be in 2013, thus resulting in a six-year term. Parish and town councils had lost their right to ‘call-in’ planning applications, despite intense lobbying, supported by Dr. Andrew Murrison, MP. They would now have to ask their Wiltshire Council Division member to make a request in writing for any application to which objections had been made by the parish council to be determined by the relevant area committee. This change was seen as a blow to local democracy.

Minute 6 – Newsletters: The Chairman said that the next newsletter would be produced following the elections in June, 2009.

Minute 7 – Activity Equipment: The Parish Council had given consideration to a request received from a young lady in the village for the provision of more activity equipment. Efforts had been made by the Parish Council to establish if there was indeed a need, including an article in the parish news, but no other young people had come forward.

5. FINANCIAL BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

The Clerk reported that the precept for the year ended 31st March, 2009, had been set at £20,420, with no increase in the levy for the tenth year running. The total receipts for the year amounted to £22,868, with a total expenditure of £20,684.

The main items of expenditure throughout the year, in addition to general administration costs, including insurances and annual subscriptions to various organisations, were:- a number of grants made (details of which the Chairman would give later), a new bench seat at Paxcroft Mead (near the brook), a new seat along the Trowbridge Road, the sponsorship of the Greenhill Gardens telephone kiosk for a year, and a replacement bus shelter in Hill Street.

The accounts for the year ended 31st March, 2008, were adopted by the Parish Council in May, 2008, and the audit was completed by September, 2008. The accounts for the year ended 31st

March, 2009, were being prepared before adoption by the Parish Council. There were no questions.

6. PARISH BUSINESS

School Governors

a) The Mead County Primary School

The Chairman said that Jenny Sinclair, who had been a governor of The Mead Primary School, had resigned. As parish councils' right to appoint governors had now been withdrawn, this was a matter which needed addressing.

b) Hilperton C. of E. Primary School

Pam Turner said that it was her privilege to be chairman of the governors of Hilperton Primary School. The school continued to be vibrant, with a couple of building projects coming on and a wealth of clubs and extra-curricular activities. Under the splendid leadership of both the Head and Deputy Head Teachers, the school was going from strength to strength.

Grants/Loans made throughout the Year

During the year the following grants had been made:-

a) Section 137 Grants:

The Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust - £300 given in May, 2008

SPLASH - £220 given in May, 2008

St. John Ambulance - £300 given in May, 2008

Youth Action Wiltshire - £300 given in September, 2008

Victim Support - £250 given in December, 2008

Carers Support - £300 given in February, 2009

b) Section 19 Grants:

Hilperton Village Hall - £1,446.57 given in January, 2009, to help with the maintenance of the playing field.

Paxcroft Mead Community Centre - £185 given in December, 2008, for the purchase of a monitor required for installation of CCTV cameras; and £453.44 given in February, 2009, to repair damaged guttering.

Allotments

The Chairman said this was a matter on which the Parish Council had been working for some months. Land had been identified and an agreement in principle made with the landowner to purchase a 1.5 acre plot. A working group of three parish councillors had been set up recently to look at all aspects relating to allotments. To date some twenty people had approached the Parish Council to express their interest in acquiring an allotment. Some of their needs had been identified, ranging from the reasonably simple to the more demanding.

Advice on planning had been sought and the Parish Council had been led to believe that planning permission for change of use of the land would not be required. However, permission would need to be sought for any enclosure, car parking and structure (sheds) and there were a number of ways that this could be done.

A feasibility study had been worked on which had indicated that this capital-intensive project would have a 'break-even' point for the Parish Council after 25 years.

The land would now be professionally valued and the landowner approached again regarding the possibility of an option for the Parish Council to acquire another one-acre of land in the

future. It had been agreed that up to £20,000 could be expended in order to establish the allotments. (A short question and answer session followed).

Tree Planting

The Chairman said that this was another project with which the Parish Council was involved. Two people had come forward to act as Voluntary Tree Wardens, to whom the Parish Council was most grateful, and he introduced Ross Kavanagh and Jean Grayshon.

The Chairman explained that the Tree Council launched the Tree Warden scheme in the 1990s. Working with local authorities, voluntary organisations, parish councils and local partnerships to set up and develop tree warden networks in towns, cities and the countryside, its aims were to plant more trees, survey existing trees and increase public appreciation of trees.

The Parish Council had already identified potential sites for tree planting:- at Hilperton Primary School and The Mead Primary School, and land along the Trowbridge Road. The Tree Council would only give grants for planting trees to schools if the schools came forward with a request themselves, and they had been told how to do this.

The Parish Council wished to plant a line of about sixteen trees (a combination of silver birches and copper beeches) along the north side of Trowbridge Road, to 'mirror' those on the south side. The road verge was found to be unsuitable as it was not very wide, it was steep and there was evidence of utility services in it, making it difficult to establish a line of trees along the verge. Mr. Roger Pike had therefore been approached and had kindly given his permission to plant on his land behind the verge but, being privately owned, Tree Council would not be able to give a grant. An application would shortly be made to Wiltshire Council.

Both Tree Wardens said a few words, for which they were thanked. The Chairman also thanked Councillor Wolsey Jameson for attending the Tree Warden launch meeting in Marlborough last November.

Bus Shelters/Seats

As mentioned in the financial report earlier, a new seat had been purchased and installed at Paxcroft Mead, along the footpath by the brook. Another seat had been installed along Trowbridge Road, by the bus stop. The Parish council also decided that a replacement bus shelter was needed in Hill Street (the Marsh Road end) and this was installed in March.

Village Maintenance

The Chairman said that the Parish Steward scheme continued to go well, as the stewards were now very familiar with their respective areas. Parish Councillors and the Clerk regularly reported defects as they occurred in respect of blocked drains, broken manhole covers, fly tipping, graffiti, overflowing litter bins, overgrown hedges, blocked ditches, broken kerbs, road defects etc. and they themselves took on projects in the summer break, for which they were all thanked.

Highways/Pedestrian Safety

The Chairman was pleased to report that Wiltshire Council had agreed to resurface the bottom (Marsh Road) end of Horse Road in September. The road was full of potholes and patching them up had not worked.

There was also a survey in hand to determine whether or not Horse Road was a suitable site for safety camera enforcement, as there had been reports of speeding. Discussion took place about problems connected with vehicles speeding along Devizes Road.

Best Kept Village Competition

Last year Hilperton had come joint fourth in the large village category. There were some helpful and constructive comments from the judges and, by and large, they commended a very good effort. They did, however, mention the fact that there was litter lying around the village in various places, and the Chairman said that this was something which needed to be addressed, especially as the Parish Council had entered the competition again this year.

Sponsor a Kiosk Scheme

Last year, BT proposed to close a number of public payphones, one of these being in Greenhill Gardens. The Parish Council, with support from the District Council, had objected to this, as the kiosk was there for the benefit of people passing by and the elderly residents in Greenhill Gardens. BT's response was that this kiosk would be eligible for their 'sponsor a kiosk' programme which enabled local authorities to keep a payphone service in its entirety by sponsoring the service and contributing towards the cost of maintenance. The Chairman said that the Parish Council had agreed to apply for the scheme, initially for one year only, at a cost of £500, and would need to decide whether or not to continue with the service after October.

County Councillor's Report

The single biggest council event in the past year had been the abolition of the district and county councils to form the new unitary Wiltshire Council. Despite being promised that the merger would save money, council tax payers were still faced with an above inflation increase this year.

Whether or not one agreed with the move to a unitary authority, and Councillor Clark said he had opposed it, the time had now passed to fight that particular battle and look to the future to ensure that residents of Hilperton received the service they deserved. One interesting point about the new council was that they had refused to pay parish councils their annual precept in full, as the district council used to. Instead, WC would be paying 50% in April/May and the balance six months later.

Nothing further had happened on the Hilperton relief road front. Until, or unless, the developers, Persimmon, commenced work on their east of Trowbridge development, they were under no obligation to commence work on the road.

With regard to 'day to day' business, Councillor Clark said that the year had been the usual mix of problems ranging from pot holes which took forever to repair through to housing society tenants receiving unfair treatment.

Police Report

PC Rebecca Nixon introduced herself as the parish's new NPT beat manager, following the move to another NPT by PC Lee Pelling. PC Nixon explained that it would take a while for her to become accustomed to her new area but she was aware of some of its problems, particularly the incidences of anti-social behaviour by youngsters in Hilperton and on the Paxcroft Mead estate. Her remit was to deal with long-term problems rather than those occurring day-to-day, and she would be supported by PCSO Ellen Wickenden. (Copies of a report prepared by PC Pelling had been tabled at the start of the meeting).

The Chairman thanked PC Nixon for attending the meeting.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS NOT HAVING A LEGAL CONSEQUENCE ON THE PARISH COUNCIL

There was no other business.

8. CONCLUSION

The Chairman encouraged people to attend parish council meetings and to visit the website for details. Eleven parish council meetings had been held throughout the year and eight planning committee meetings. A special meeting was also held in October, 2008, when a parcel of land adjacent to the Lion and Fiddle came up for auction and the Parish Council agreed to try to acquire this land for the village, for amenity purposes. In the event it was sold for more than the Parish Council agreed to bid. The Chairman thanked Councillor Robert House for representing the Parish Council at the auction in Bristol.

The Parish Council had been consulted on a few issues throughout the year, including:- new boundaries in the run-up to the commencement of Wiltshire Council; membership of area planning committees and development of the development control service, again in the run-up to the new WC; code of conduct for local authority members and employees; the future of Wingfield C of E aided Primary School

The Parish Council continued to give small donations to needy, elderly people at Christmas from the Sir William Brown's (Coal) charity.

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked:-

- * Mrs. Lesley House for the upkeep of the War Memorial and the planting
- * Councillor Kate Hayes and other parish councillors who had attended meetings and seminars throughout the year
- * Councillor Kendrick Jackson for representing the Parish Council on the West Wiltshire Central Area Parish Councils' Liaison Group
- * Councillor Pam Turner for putting her name forward and now becoming a member of the new unitary authority Standards Committee
- * those parish councillors serving on working groups throughout the year
- * former West Wiltshire District Councillors Trevor Carbin and David Binding for their efforts over the years
- * all parish councillors and the Clerk for their support throughout the year.

The meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.

Signed Date:

