

## Minutes of The Annual Parish Assembly 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017 Penton Village Hall 8.00pm

Present: Councillors	Clerk / RFO	Ward, Public, Other
Stephen Millen - Chairman Kevin Briant Rodney Bennett Victoria Whitelegge	Nanette Colbourne	Cllr Pam Mutton 14 members of the public.
<b>Apologies:</b> Heather Carrick; Hugh Burden		

### The Chairman's Report:

#### Welcome

I am pleased to welcome and see you all here as I believe it is most important on occasions like this for those who live in the Village to take the opportunity to hear about what we have been doing on your behalf and for you to tell us what you think about that and what else we could be doing.

#### Introductions

For those who do not know me, I am Stephen Millen. I have lived in the Pentons for over 40 years. Also present is Nanette Colbourne, our Parish Clerk. I will also ask the other Parish Councillors present to introduce themselves. Could I also ask those of you in the audience who are attending a Parish Council meeting for the first time to raise their hands, please?

This year, we have not arranged a guest speaker at the Annual Assembly. There are reasons for this. It is increasingly difficult to "persuade" representatives of such organisations as TVBC, Hampshire County Council or local high-profile companies to spend time outside their normal commitments to attend, bearing in mind the lower attendance over the years for this event. Additionally, the sourcing of people who can provide us with an interesting topic for the village community has really been exhausted over the years. We are open to suggestions for the future.

#### Changes

So far as the membership of the Parish Council is concerned, there have been a number of changes in the previous year. Paul Fraser stood down as Chairman and also as a member after 9 years as a councillor which included 5 as Chairman. Our sincere thanks are due to him for his valuable contribution and hard work.

Two casual vacancies for councillors were filled by cooption in the absence of any request for an election after notice of the vacancies had been published around the village. I filled the first vacancy and Hugh Burden the other. Hugh has unexpectedly been posted abroad for several months. We have; therefore, to meet the legal requirement approved his absence for four meetings during that period. Hugh will though be keeping in touch and join in discussions on line and by email. I agreed to act as Chairman on an interim basis in the absence of other candidates. It is also likely that there will be another councillor vacancy later in the year as a result of a work related move. Victoria is leaving the village for some time and after being with the council since August 2011. With only six members, continuity is important and it is,

therefore, equally important that residents ensure they feed back their concerns to the members and do not assume that their views will be obvious !

#### Planning

The Andover Local Plan was approved last year and will govern or at least guide planning until 2029. Most importantly it maintains the strategic gaps between Andover and Village and defines the limits of the settlement of the Pentons tightly to prevent development outside its boundaries. Some residential development was proposed by interested parties but not allocated at Homestead Farm Penton Harroway.

We continue to monitor and comment on planning applications to Test Valley; last year those amounted to somewhat less than previous years and certainly in respect of tree applications, which is good to see. We received some 14 applications in all, 2 of which are highly topical and have impact on the village with regard to the possibility of increase in traffic using "ratruns " to avoid the 100 acre roundabout. I will say a little more about this. We also react to reports of possibly unauthorised work to protected trees by investigating, speaking to those involved and liaising with Test Valley.

We have spent time and money on the planting at Newbury Hill seeking the best advice for the plants. Strimming, replanting, restaking and weed control have been carried out with further weed control and strimming to take place later this year. This work has proved beneficial and the plants are now starting to show signs of good growth.

It is hoped that we will be able to join the Lengthsman Scheme run by Hampshire County Council as advised in our newsletters. This will provide welcome additional money to be spent on such things as clearing the drainage runs at Newbury Hill, substantial tree work including the pruning and removing of ivy, and clearing and maintaining more sites in around the village. Should we not be successful, it has been suggested that we should start our own scheme for the 13 villages that we have identified as the cluster and each pay money from our precept into a similar scheme. The advantage of this would be good cost savings and the expertise of a certified tree surgeon and qualified gardener who has the equipment needed to carry out the work identified.

We do receive questions relating to planning issues which we welcome. Our advice is always to check with the local planning office at Test Valley especially if the property is listed or inter conservation area.

I would like to mention two sites which I know cause concern to residents.

Nelsons at the extreme south eastern boundary of the Parish close to Portway Business Park which has an established planning permission for waste recycling. The operation gives rise to complaints about the general condition of the site and buildings being erected without planning permission. More worryingly and recently the parking in, use of and reversing along the former now closed section of the A303 of very large lorries designed to carry waste materials. These vehicles have also been witnessed parking in the bus lay-by the main A34. We have reported these activities to the County Council, the Police and the Traffic Commissioners and continue to press for action.

#### Dunning Units

From time to time we receive complaints about vehicles from the units coming through the village. As a result of concerns we held a meeting with a representative of the managing agents and one of the larger users as a result of which I think we have re-established a good

understanding and working relationship. As an example we were able to ensure that the damaged road surface to the private road was recently repaired quickly so as to ensure there were no excuses for any authorised traffic. If you experience any difficulties please contact us as we are able to make contact quickly and ensure a prompt response and positive action.

#### Speed Watch

We now have all the necessary approvals and finance to implement the scheme which will involve the installation of a 'Smiley Face' close to the pond on the pole carrying direction signs to the church, pub and village hall which will be in full-time operation indicating speeds to passing motorists on the bottom road. It will be capable of adjustment to work in alternative directions and also be manned on occasions by volunteers from the village who will record details of speeding motorists for passing to the police and processing with an escalating series of letters for (persistent) offenders possibly resulting in prosecution. We are most grateful to those who have donated money towards the costs including those required to alter the existing pole which is now being actioned. 2 councillor grants were also received of £1000 each. We also thank those who have volunteered to help run the scheme. We will let you know as soon as we have a firm installation and operation date.

#### Finance/Precept

The Parish Council decided this year for the first time for several years – since the 2010 financial in fact - to raise the precept partly to meet increasing maintenance costs but also to allow the creation of a small reserve against unexpected expenditure. We are in the minority throughout Northern Hampshire in that in previous years we have not held any significant reserves. The aim is not to store money but to ensure that should the situation arise we will be able to draw on funds in an emergency. Income and expenditure for the year was in accordance with the budget and forecast. A significant part of the expenditure is accounted for by basic running costs, such as administration, insurances, energy and the general maintenance of open spaces and grassed areas as the accounts show.

#### TVBC Ward Review

The Local Government Boundary Commission is currently carrying out a review of the arrangements for the division of the Test Valley Borough Council into wards for the election of Councillors. Penton Mewsey is currently part of Penton Bellinger Ward which together with a number of other rural parishes is represented by two borough councillors. The final stage in the process will start on the 6<sup>th</sup> June when the Commission publishes its own proposals for an eight week period of public comment. Test Valley's own proposal to the Commission which the Commission will consider before it publishes its proposals are that the two parishes of Penton Mewsey and Penton Grafton (Penton Grafton parish consists of Penton Grafton, Weyhill and Clanville) should be separated from their existing ward and moved to form with Charlton a new ward represented by one councillor. Please take time to visit the Commission's website, details of which are in our May newsletter.

This proposal clearly raises the concern that a single councillor will find it hard if not impossible to represent the conflicting views of two communities with different identities and priorities.

#### Village Survey

This has been distributed to both Pentons; the aim is partly to collect information for our response to the Test Valley Warding Review and also to obtain a better understanding of resident's views and concerns. So far I personally have received several responses, but may I request those who have not yet replied to do so, please?

Litter Pick /Pond Clear Up.

Less than previous years, 38 bags were collected; however there was a really good turnout of volunteers including many children which was good to see. Unfortunately, our pond clear up was not well attended which meant we could not do as planned. The rain did not help.

Thanks.

It is always invidious to single out individuals but I would like to mention a few people. I would in particular like to record our and I hope your thanks to Tony Stubbs , who is 'retiring' from his role as village groundsman for his invaluable contribution over many years in helping to keep the Village so attractive To Patrick Midgley and his team for the invaluable work in keeping us informed of the Neighbourhood Watch. To all councillors and especially Victoria who is stepping down and Nanette Colbourne for her help and guidance to me. Not forgetting the unnamed residents who regularly walk lanes and foot paths and pick up litter on the way. This certainly helps to keep our village looking at its best.

The members of the public asked questions relating mostly to the Ward Review and some concern was noted about the proposed changes. The chairman encouraged the viewing of the web site details provided within the Newsletter for further information and clarification.

### **The Clerk's Financial Report**

As Paul stated in his report as Chairman this time last year, in the unlikely event that Running Costs, Donations and Subscriptions remained the same we would have just **£750** (plus any VAT refunds) to further invest in the village during 2016-2017. This and the increase in costs of maintenance for the village in terms of grass cutting and vegetation work was the deciding factor in raising the precept for 2017 – 2018 by £2k. As Stephen outlined, we are almost alone in North Hampshire in being a parish council that does not hold any reserve at all, and hence being advised by our new Auditor, Tim Light to do so. This will be kept at a minimum.

The pond area, land at the corner of Foxcotte Lane and opposite the pub is being maintained on a regular basis by a locally contracted young man. Extra maintenance such as the Newbury hill planting is also maintained by him as are small jobs around the village. His charges are very reasonable.

We were fortunate enough to secure a grant from TVBC from the developers Grant 'pot' to fund the purchase of the benches at the cricket pavilion. This 'pot of money' with a small amount from the Parish Council for the purchase has now been spent.

There have been changes at TVBC and the Developers Grant has been replaced on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 by the Community Infrastructure Levy, the CIL. The CIL enables the local authority to raise funds for new infrastructure by levying a charge on new developments within their area. Strict rules apply to how the money is allocated, however the benefit to the local community is that we would receive 15% of the total allocation and the CIL funding can be spent on a variety of uses, not specifically regulated as previously. Some of the build at the Andover Airfield Business site that lies within our parish will be applicable for CIL. Further details will be available to us when this happens.

Of what I call 'running costs' to run the parish council, my salary, street lighting, insurance etc. The amount last year was **£4,103**. This year it is only slightly higher by £67 at **£4,170**.

Our total purchases last year were **£4,020** which included the main cost of our defibrillator units. This year our purchases including the last costs and installation for our AED project have come out at **£4,074**

Donations / subscriptions made by us last year to PRC, PCC, NHW, and I have included grass cutting for the recreation ground were last year **£1,602** to this year **£1,683**

We always aim to boost our income by seeking grants from wherever we can. Additional income this year has been very welcomed indeed and has been obtained from the Developer Grant Fund (for the Cricket pavilion benches) and 2 Councillor Grants (of £1,000 each) plus very generous donations from the community towards the purchase of our Speed Watch Device and installation costs. We now have sufficient for the purchase. A VAT reclaim of £733 and the huge amount of £0.86 pence bank interest gave us an additional income total (ex Precept) of **£5, 116** against **£706** last year.

Our total spend last year was **£9,797**. This financial year 2016 – 17 the total spend is **£9,927**

Our bank statement for the end of the financial year is **£3,085.51** against £1,896.37 last year (however, £1,400 of this amount was donation money carried forward and allocated against our final AED purchase) Therefore the true amount last year was **£496.38**

Going forward there will be higher costs for maintenance in the village that must be addressed. We aim to end the next financial year end with a reserve in the region of £2k or so.

The financial breakdown will be attached to the minutes and filed.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for attending. The meeting closed at 8.20pm followed by the PMPC AGM. 3 members of the public expressed a wish to remain for the meeting.