

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PARISH MEETING FOR
OMBERSLEY AND DOVERDALE HELD AT SYTCHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL ON
TUESDAY, 17th APRIL 2018 at 7.30p.m.

PRESENT: Cllr. Mrs Judy Goodman (in the Chair), J. Jordan (Clerk),

Cllrs. W T Arnold, Mrs H Barningham, M J H Best, F Cody, Mrs S Collier, D Ingram, C McKenzie-Rowan, J Ringe, R Reynolds, Mrs. B Serrell, C Welch.

Cllr P Tomlinson (County and District Councillor) also attended along with 11 electors of the parish.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Cllr P Reynolds.

Apologies were also received from Jenny Batelen and James Martineau (St Andrew's Church), John Silvester (Tree Warden) and David Miles (Parish Lengthsman)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18th APRIL 2017 had been displayed on the website and notice board for the previous 2 weeks. The meeting agreed that they were an accurate record and they were signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES - None

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (summary):

The Chairman began her report by introducing herself and those members of the Parish Council who were in attendance.

She reflected on a very busy year and paid tribute to the Councillors, volunteers and residents who had contributed so much to the parish over the last 12 months.

The Church Fete continued to be an annual focal point in the village. A well supported walking group had been set up with regular walks being held throughout the parish. Both Village Halls also continued to provide facilities and opportunities which were valued by residents.

Work had begun in earnest in respect of the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish. Much work still needed to be done and this would be a feature of the coming year.

Finally, a co-ordinated approach Neighbourhood Watch was now being established. This joined up approach would, hopefully, go some way to reducing the rise in rural crime which had been evident in rural areas in recent years.

As reported previously a 'Virtual' Planning Group had been established. This was a group of Councillors who had been appointed by the Parish Council to consider comments on planning applications brought forward for consideration. Over the last 12 months, 73 applications had been considered. 50 of these had been approved by Wychavon District Council, 7 had been refused, 5 withdrawn and decisions were awaited on 11 others.

In addition to the number of applications received there were also a number of enforcement issues the Council had been involved in.

The Parish Council continued to support local businesses and organisations through rural rate relief and by awarding grants.

All members of the public were most welcome to attend any meetings. All agendas, minutes and other notices were posted on the Parish Council website and on the village notice board.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

PARISH COUNCIL (subject to audit). The Chairman of the Finance Committee Cllr. M. Best presented the Statement.

Income: Precept and District Council Grant £25,625.00, Lengthsman (inc administration charge) £3,235.00, County Councillor Grant £1,000.00, Bank Interest £0.80, VAT Reclaimed £6,124.11, New Homes Bonus £2,218.00, Rural Rate Relief £358.29, Income (SVH) £750.00, Income (Alzheimer's Society) £38.00, Income (St Mary's Church) £19,669.02, OPAG Income £1,760.42, Other Income £598.30 **Total Income: £61,376.94**

Expenditure: Statutory/administration £8,183.72, Councillor Expenses £65.00, Rural Rate Relief £360.29, Newsletter, Printing, Website £228.43, Grants and Donations – Clock, mowing, St Andrews, St Mary's, RBL, £24,501.33, Lengthsman £3,100.00, Maintenance and Inspections £3,740.00, Ombersley Memorial Hall £2,951.25, Sytchampton Village Hall £5,699.13, Ombersley Junior Cricket Club £332.50, Ombersley Guides and Brownies £1,495.92, Major Oliver Charity £2,487.75, O/D RBL £50.00, Weighbridge Improvements £1,911.22, Neighbourhood Plan £773.22 Misc/contingency £1,119.50, VAT on expenditure £6,121.59 **Total Expenditure: £63,120.85**

Bank balances as at 31st March 2018 were £40,317.44 in the current account, £3,111.61 in the Reserve Account.

Cllr Best further reported that as part of its consideration of its budget requirements for 2018-19, the Parish Council had considered its funding and potential budgetary pressure over the next few years. As a result it had agreed a five year budget plan to cover the period 2018-2023. It had forecast that to meet known pressures and demands over this period it would need to increase its budgetary requirement by £15,000. It intended to phase this increase over the next two years.

In broad terms, future financial pressures which would need to be funded by the Parish Council in the short term included:-

- Contribution to the costs of producing a Neighbourhood Plan
- Significantly increased costs associated with changes to the way the two Church Yards in the Parish were maintained in the future.
- Enhanced maintenance of public amenity and other spaces within the parish (as identified by local residents)
- Implementation of a number of locally identified improvement schemes which were being brought forward including as part of the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process.

Whilst the Parish Council continued to hold funds on behalf of a number of organisations in the Parish, the amount of unallocated reserves available for its own use was limited and would be insufficient to offset any additional investment to meet known pressures in the longer term.

The Parish Council also wished to continue to support its two local village halls and various local community organisations as well as continuing with its existing programme of maintenance of local public spaces in the future. Budgetary pressures were such that it could not meet the expressed desires from local residents and continue to meet its statutory requirements without increasing its budgetary requirements in the future.

Whilst the Parish Council's Bank balances appeared to be healthy, Cllr Best reminded those present that the Parish Council continued to hold funds on behalf of a number of local organisations. A list of the balances held had been prepared and was circulated. This showed that around £36,000 was currently being held on behalf of other organisations.

The Parish Council continued to reclaim VAT where it could and this year had supported a number of local businesses via the Rural Rate Relief scheme.

There were no further questions or comments raised by those present.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Best for his work in managing the council's finances.

REPORTS FROM RECEIVING ORGANISATIONS

Reports were received from the following organisations.

- Ombersley Memorial Hall,
- Sytchampton Village Hall ,
- Ombersley Guides and Brownies,
- Ombersley Junior Cricket Club,
- St Andrew's Church.

Each organisation took the opportunity to highlight their activities over the past 12 months as well as setting out their plans and aspirations for the coming year.

A report was also presented by the Ombersley Play Area Action Group setting out the activity they had undertaken in respect of fund raising for improvements to the Play Area. To date they had raised over £2,000. Fund Raising would continue to raise the funds needed to complete this project.

They were aware of, and supportive of, the development of a Neighbourhood Plan but felt that improvements were needed now and couldn't wait for the completion of the Plan. They would, therefore, continue to progress this scheme independently.

Cllr Mrs Collier updated the meeting on the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan. She informed the meeting that Ombersley had been designated as a Category 1 village. In broad terms this meant that the village was deemed to have the necessary infrastructure and services to support future development. Given that limited amount of development had been brought forward as part of the last South Worcestershire Development Plan, there was a reasonable expectation that further sites could be brought forward for housing development in the future.

The preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan would therefore be necessary if future development was to be influenced. Also, if the Plan was to maintain credibility it would need to demonstrate a co-ordinated approach to all projects and initiatives within the Parish.

Initial evidence gathering had already commenced and it was envisaged that a draft plan should be completed by November 2019. The concept of developing a Plan had already been accepted by the Parish Council and the views of residents would be sought. This would take the form of a questionnaire to every household in the parish. The final Plan would be required to demonstrate how it had incorporated the views expressed by residents.

Later in the process there would be a call for sites which would be analysed before the community would have the opportunity to consider them.

The preparation of a Plan was likely to be costly but a number of grants were available and these opportunities would be pursued. Ultimately, however, given all factors the Parish Council had concluded that it was imperative that such a Plan be produced.

Once completed the final Plan would be reviewed by Wychavon District Council before being put to residents for approval as part of a referendum.

Progress would be reported regularly and anyone interested in participating in the preparation of the Plan via one of the Volunteers Groups would be most welcome.

PATH WARDEN REPORT (Cllr. P Reynolds)

Although he was unable to be present at the meeting, Cllr P Reynolds had produced a Path Warden's Report, a copy of which was circulated to those in attendance.

The Report highlighted activity during the last 12 months which included:-

- Clearance Work (including responding to reports of broken stiles, unsafe bridges and damaged signposts),
- Work at Turn Mill supported by the Probation Service's Young Offenders Programme,
- Organisation of 4 quarterly walks throughout the Parish,
- Discussion on the maintenance of Millennium Wood.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Reynolds and his Team of Path Warden Volunteers for the work they continued to do throughout the Parish.

TREE WARDEN REPORT

The Parish Tree Warden was unable to be present at the meeting. He had, however, produced a short report which was presented by the Clerk. The Report covered: Tree Preservation Orders in the Parish, Millennium Orchard and Millhampton Wood.

LENGTHSMAN REPORT (Mr. D. Miles)

The Lengthsman was unable to be present at the meeting and had tendered his apologies.

The Clerk offered to forward any comments or issues back to the Lengthsman. No issues were raised.

POLICE REPORT

A copy of the latest Police Report was circulated and was received

COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS (Cllr. Tomlinson)

Cllr Tomlinson presented verbal reports to the meeting.

Issues raised included:-

County Council

- VELO Cycle Ride
- Northern Relief Road

District Council

- Progress with a Planning Enforcement Scrutiny Report
- Enforcement issues in the Parish (and discussions generally about retrospective planning applications)
- Advertisement Signs – The Old Leaking Well
- Review of the South Worcestershire Development Plan.

In concluding his report, Cllr Tomlinson informed the meeting that he was planning to stand down from the role of District Councillor following the elections in May 2019.

The Chairman and Councillors expressed their thanks to Cllr Tomlinson for the support he continued to provide to the Council and residents of the parish.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

There were no other matters raised which had not already been dealt with as part of the consideration of the items listed above.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending. There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.

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CHAIRMAN