

West Crewkerne Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Clapton & Wayford Village Hall on Tuesday 14th May 2013.

(7.00 p.m. – 7.45 p.m.)

Present:-

Members

Mrs J Borland (Chairman)

Mr F Broom

Mr H Ploszek

Mrs S Swaffield

Mr J Wyatt

Also Present:-

Mrs S Osborne, District Councillor, SSDC

Mr J Dyke, County Councillor, SCC

Mrs A Cox, Democratic Services Manager, SSDC (acting as Clerk)

13 members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Wetherall and the Clerk, Mr C D Payne.

2. To receive reports from any Parish Organisation present (Agenda item 2)

There were no reports made by any representatives of Parish organisations present.

3. To receive a report from the Parish Council Chairman (Agenda item 3)

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Mrs J Borland, welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish meeting and provided the following Annual Report:-

Good evening everybody and thank you all for coming. It really is nice to see lots of people here. Over the years public interest in the council's doings have waned, but it is good to see that this trend has reversed.

Even though we have limited funds we have managed to keep up with the times and thanks to the enormous efforts of Councillor Ploszek we now have a Parish Council website. <http://westcrewkerne-pc.org.uk/>

One of the biggest issues which this council faces every year is the deterioration of the roads in the parish. However we have made concerted efforts as councillors to report potholes, blocked drains, and roadside erosion to the relevant department in the County Council. Due to a very poor standard of resurfacing in September and a prolonged wet autumn and winter the road surface is now in it's poorest state for many years. The top surface gravel has caused blocked drains and many potholes. A tour of the worst roads in the area was organised by District Councillor Sue Osborne and showed at first hand to Mike Fear from the Highways Dept the problems we face daily. In an ideal world these problems would be rectified as soon as reported, but due to budgetary restrictions this is not the case. We can

however help ourselves by making sure that leaves and debris do not block drains in order that surface water can flow into the drainage system.

Over this year we have had a number of planning applications come before us, most of which have been non-contentious and I must stress here that our input into the planning process is only as a consultee. The planning officer or the Area West Committee makes the actual decisions and they may choose to agree or disagree with our opinion as they wish. Without doubt the most complicated planning application has been for the proposed and subsequently withdrawn wind turbine in Hewish. There has been much local opposition to this proposal and I should like to think that this has been a catalyst in bringing more residents being involved in local matters. However it does appear that people only seem to want to be involved by opposing a matter than by building local ties. A divided community can invest much time and energy in negative issues and invest none into the positive elements within the local area. For example, although some of you may say I'm biased, we see few locals supporting events in this hall which is our only remaining community asset.

I should like to thank all councillors including our district councillor for their support over the last year during some trying times. I honestly try my best to serve this community but should some of you feel that I have failed then the democratic process dictates you can all stand for election in two years time.

Finally I should like to thank Colin Payne our Parish Clerk for the past 10 years for his substantial contributions. His health has been deteriorating for some years and this has resulted in him tendering his resignation. His contribution will be very much missed by this council. Many people think that the job of a parish council clerk is easy and consists primarily of an ability to write fast. Anybody who has been involved in parish council matters will know that this is far from the case. The parish council needs someone who is highly trained both in local government law and procedures and accounts and we will be considering his resignation at the Parish Council, which follows this meeting.

4. Public Open Forum (Agenda item 4)

a. Parking at entrance to Clapton Court

A resident advised that there was an issue with cars parking opposite the entrance to Clapton Court which forced passing traffic onto the wrong side of the road and was dangerous to vehicles exiting the Court.

The Chairman advised that local residents were able to park in the village hall car park at a cost of £2 per week and local residents would be made aware of this. She also agreed to speak to the Highways Department to establish whether it was an appropriate area to mark as no parking.

b. Parking at the Village Hall

In response to a resident's question, the village hall representative confirmed that the Village Hall Committee had set the parking rate of £2 per week for local residents to use the car park. He said the Committee had a duty to raise income for the upkeep of the hall and he felt that if parking were free for all residents then there may be no parking available for hall users.

c. Highway improvements to Dunsham Lane

In response to a residents question, District Councillor Sue Osborne confirmed that the improvements to Dunsham Lane were being put forward by the Highways Department and she understood that contractors were being appointed to carry out the necessary work. County Councillor John Dyke agreed to ascertain the cost of the highway improvement work.

d. Drains in Woolminstone Lane

A resident reported that drains in Woolminstone Lane were blocked with silt. She said local residents had tried to clear them without success.

The Chairman confirmed that if the blocked drains were a health and safety issue then they would be given priority and she would report this to the Highways Department.

County Councillor John Dyke confirmed that funding for gully cleaning had been reduced as part of budget savings two years ago at the County Council and they were moving to a more risk based approach to gully cleaning.

The Chairman noted that many local residents currently helped to clear blocked drains in the parish and it may be beneficial to look at formalising the arrangements so that certain people were responsible for certain areas within the parish.

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Chairman

West Crewkerne Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held at Clapton & Wayford Village Hall on Tuesday 14th May 2013.

(7.45 p.m. – 8.50 p.m.)

Present:-

Members

Mrs J Borland (Chairman)

Mr F Broom

Mr H Ploszek

Mrs S Swaffield

Mr J Wyatt

Also Present:-

Mrs S Osborne, District Councillor, SSDC

Mr J Dyke, County Councillor, SCC

Mrs A Cox, Democratic Services Manager, SSDC (acting as Clerk)

13 members of the public

1. Election of Officers (Agenda item 1)

a. Chairman

Mr H Ploszek, seconded by Mr J Wyatt, nominated Mrs J Borland as Chairman of the Parish Council.

There being no other nominations it was:

RESOLVED: that Mrs J Borland be elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for the Municipal Year 2013/2014.

Following her appointment Mrs Borland signed the formal declaration of acceptance of office, and thanked Members for their support.

b. Vice-Chairman

Mrs J Borland, seconded by Mr H Ploszek, nominated Mr F Broom as Vice Chairman of the Parish Council.

There being no other nominations it was:

RESOLVED: that Mr F Broom be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for the municipal year 2013/2014.

Following his appointment Mr Broom signed the formal declaration of acceptance of office.

c. Burial Board Members

Mrs J Borland, seconded by Mrs S Swaffield, nominated Mr J Wyatt and Mr H Ploszek as West Crewkerne Burial Board members.

Mr J Wyatt, seconded by Mr H Ploszek nominated Mrs J Borland as the third West Crewkerne Burial Board member.

There being no other nominations it was:

RESOLVED: that Mrs J Borland, Mr J Wyatt and Mr H Ploszek be appointed as the West Crewkerne Burial Board members for the municipal year 2013/2014.

As a point of explanation, the Chairman advised members of the public present that as West Crewkerne did not have its own cemetery, it had joined with the Crewkerne Burial Board to jointly manage and administer the cemetery in Crewkerne. The Parish Council paid £2,260 towards the upkeep of the cemetery (Crewkerne Town Council contributing approximately £32,000) and local residents of West Crewkerne qualified for a discount should they wish to be interred there.

2. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Wetherall and the Clerk, Mr C D Payne.

3. Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda (Personal or Prejudicial) (Agenda item 3)

Mrs J Borland and Mrs S Swaffield both declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 11 (b) Finance, to consider and agree a grant to the Village Hall, as members of the Village Hall Committee.

4. To receive and agree a letter of resignation due to serious ill health from the Parish Clerk, Mr Colin Payne (Agenda item 4)

The Chairman read out the letter of resignation from the Clerk, Mr Colin Payne, and the Council accepted his resignation with great reluctance.

5. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th March 2013 (Agenda Item 5)

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2013, having been previously circulated, were approved and signed as a true record of the meetings.

6. Matters arising from the Minutes (Agenda item 6)

Sewage system connection for two new properties in Clapton (question from Mr C Taylor)

The chairman reported that the Building Control Inspector had confirmed that both properties were to be connected to mains drainage. There was a rainwater harvesting scheme being installed which may have been mistaken for a private sewerage system.

Fly tipping and Household Waste Recycling Centre in Crewkerne (question from Mr M Wilson)

The Chairman reported that Vega Sturgess, Director responsible for Waste and Recycling at South Somerset District Council had provided the following response: The usage of all recycling centres (including the free ones) has dropped hugely in recent years – mostly

because we are collecting plastic, card and green waste and so people don't need to go unless they are doing a big clearance / diy job. The fly tips which SSDC see are mainly commercial jobs and we suspect that they used to go to the sites disguised as residents and find it difficult to do so now that we have automatic number plate recognition. For the first 6 months Crewkerne TC subsidised the entrance fee at the Crewkerne HWRC but it had no effect at all on visitor numbers when the subsidy ceased. SSDC had about 650 additional fly tips in the year following the changes to HWRCs in 2011. Most of these were in Yeovil and Chard – where the recycling sites are free! And we got something like £15k or £17k in compensation for the whole district when SCC saved several £million by making the changes.

County Councillor presence at the Parish Council meetings

It was noted that following the recent County Council elections and division boundary changes, Councillor John Dyke was the new County Councillor for the Parish. Councillor Dyke confirmed that he would attend all the Parish Council meetings, other commitments withstanding.

7. Traffic Speed through West Crewkerne (Agenda item 7)

The Chairman reported that temporary speed cameras had recently been sited in Roundham and Clapton. She said that in Roundham, of the 13,665 vehicles recorded, 7,348 were driving in excess of 50pmh and 4,815 were in excess of 60mph. In Clapton, 12,078 vehicles were recorded of which 798 in excess of 50mph and 21 were in excess of 60mph.

A member of the public asked if it was possible to adopt a “20 is plenty” scheme in the village. The Chairman responded that because there had been no fatal traffic accidents this was unlikely, however, she would make enquiries and report back to the next meeting.

8. Planning Matters (Agenda item 8)

The Chairman advised that the following planning consultation comments would be submitted to the district council:-

A. 13/01036/AGN Higher Folly Farm, Higher Folly Road, West Crewkerne, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 8PN – The erection of agricultural building to store hay and straw. (GR 343109/107891) PERMISSION NOT NEEDED.

B. 13/00899/FUL The Folly, Henley Manor, Henely, Crewkerne, Somerset - Conversion of estate maintenance /workshop into holiday let, alterations and erection of a single storey extension. (GR 345956/107675)

The Chairman read out the following Parish Council response to the application which had been submitted on 19th April:-

The West Crewkerne Parish Council wishes that the application 13/00899/FUL be refused. The SSDC planning department and this Parish Council were persuaded to grant the original 2007 and subsequent 2009 retrospective application for an estate maintenance /workshop with a toilet facility, an enlargement to a double storey and full electric power to a building

that has never housed more than two mowers. Now the applicant declares, "The building is no longer required" and could "fall into disrepair". It is the responsibility of the applicant to maintain the building and should it become an eyesore then it should be removed and the land restored to its former state. There have been a number of detailed comprehensive letters from most of the Henley Estate residents all of which point out that the building is neither suitable or appropriate to be converted and enlarged for residential accommodation for ultimate use as a holiday let. The letters of objection by residents draw attention to the following matters:-

- Loss of privacy
- Noise disturbance
- Lack of supervision by an absent landlord
- Heritage site considerations not addressed
- Sewerage system next to the proposed holiday let.
- Additional traffic.

We would urge the planning officer to take note of these objections. There seems to be an inconsistency whereby holiday lets are prohibited by covenant (put in place due to previous bad experiences): but this prohibition does not seem to apply to the applicant. It is not clear who imposes this covenant, and if indeed it is the applicant it may be viewed as an abuse of process. It would be useful to know what tenure the other properties have which would indicate what power the applicant has in relation to the imposition of a covenant.

C. 13/00321/FUL Land at Lower Coombe Farm, Roundham, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 8RL – Installation of photovoltaic array. Installation of additional panels to existing array (retrospective) (GR 341675/109760) APPLICATION PERMITTED WITH CONDITIONS.

D. 12/04648/FUL Highlands Dairy Farm, Hewish, Crewkerne, TA18 8QY - The erection of a 40-metre wind turbine, a temporary access track and extension to existing access to form permanent access. (GR 341672/108629) APPLICATION WITHDRAWN

9. Highway Matters (Agenda item 9)

The Chairman advised that the Parish now held a detailed drainage map of the parish supplied by Somerset County Council which the public were welcome to view. She said although it was a large map, they would endeavour to post it onto the Parish Council website.

10. Reports from Councillors, Including District and County Councillors and the Burial Board (Agenda item 10)

Mr F Broom reported that the road below Higher Folly Farm was in a poor state of repair, to the extent that car exhausts could be heard hitting the road. It was agreed to report this to County Highways.

Mr H Ploszek said many of the drain covers in the parish were old and in need of replacing with larger, lockable drain covers.

County Councillor, John Dyke, advised that following a boundary review, West Crewkerne now came within the Crewkerne County Division. He said that he would be happy to assist in any local issues and he asked that he be notified of any highway issues reported to the Highways Department so that he could follow them up.

District Councillor Sue Osborne advised that:-

- the Local Plan Inspector was now holding the SSDC Local Plan Examination Hearing at the Council Offices in Brympton Way, Yeovil and consideration of sites in Chard and Crewkerne would be discussed the following day (Wednesday 15th May).
- Consideration of affordable housing provision was being reviewed and if the parish felt that it wished to be considered then please let her know.
- She had attended a presentation of an SSDC IT software programme which detailed SSDC land ownership so she could assist in any questions of land ownership.
- The outcomes from the recent Flooding Summit would shortly be published and there may be funding available to alleviate local flooding. She would advise the Parish Council if this happened.
- The local PCSO, Karen Pack, was unable to attend the meeting but had sent a brief report of thefts within the parish. She urged people to mark their property with a permanent marker and take photographs as stolen property was often recovered and it was difficult to trace the original owners.

The Chairman reported that a tree survey was planned for the Crewkerne Cemetery and it may be necessary to remove some dead or dangerous trees within the cemetery.

11. Finance (Agenda item 11)

A. It was agreed to pay the following remittances:

1. Burial Board Precept: £2,340
2. Zurich Insurance: £243.80

B. To consider and agree a grant to the village hall

(Mrs J Borland and Mrs S Swaffield, having earlier declared a personal and prejudicial interest, left the room during consideration of this item)

It was proposed by Mr H Ploszek and seconded by Mr J Wyatt that a grant of £500 be made to the Village Hall Committee towards the upkeep of the hall. All Councillors were in agreement with this.

C. To approve the Annual Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st March 2013.

The Annual Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st March 2013 were proposed and seconded as a true record and approved by all Councillors.

D. To agree the Bank Reconciliation at 31st March 2013.

The Bank Reconciliation at 31st March 2013 was agreed by all Councillors.

E. To approve the Annual Statement of Accounts to 31st March 2013.

The Annual Statement of Accounts to 31st March 2013 were approved by all Councillors and signed by the Chairman.

F. To approve the Annual Governance Statement.

The Chairman read out the annual Governance Statement questions and they were confirmed by all Councillors.

G. To confirm the Internal Auditor.

The Chairman confirmed that the accounts would now be sent to Mr R Mussett, the Internal auditor. She also confirmed that she would place a notice on the Parish Council website and the parish noticeboard on 20th May 2013, giving notice of the dates between which any elector of the parish could inspect the accounts.

12. Correspondence (Agenda item 12)

None received.

13. To agree the process of replacement of the Parish Clerk by means of advertisement or otherwise

It was agreed that a Sub-Committee of 3 Councillors, consisting of Mr F Broom, Mr H Ploszek and Mr J Wyatt, be formed to agree the form and method of advertisement of the Parish Clerk vacancy. They agreed to meet before the end of May 2013 to finalise the details.

14. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council was arranged for Tuesday 9th July 2013 at Clapton & Wayford Village Hall at 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

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Chairman