

## EAST BRENT PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the East Brent Parish Council** held at the Village Hall on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012 and commenced at 7.30pm, when the following business was transacted.

**Present:** Cllr E. Champion, (Chairman) Cllr J. Bowden, Cllr A. Gilling, Cllr J. Webb, Cllr B. Woodward, Cllr W. Walker, Cllr Y. Roscorla, Cllr S. McGreavy, Cllr N. Lloyd-Jones, Cllr B. Bees and the Clerk to the Council, Mr Martin Shobbrook.

### **Minute 01/12: TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Mr R. Filmer and Cllr V. Rawles

### **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held at the Village Hall on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012, were signed as a true reflection of the business conducted by this Parish Council at that time, with one amendment being requested by Cllr J. Webb. That being in minute 37/12. She wished to clarify that the parking problems in Brent Road were not being caused directly by the congregation of the Methodist Church, but by the combined usage of the road by the local residents and the Church goers when parking becomes a problem.

### **ONGOING ISSUES**

**Minute 07/12 : New Village Sign** - In the absence of Cllr V. Rawles from the meeting, Cllr J. Webb addressed the Committee on this topic.

She distributed a sheet containing four suggested designs of the new Village signs. After a full discussion by the Councillors, it was decided that the fourth example was the favoured one. This makes reference to the fact that East Brent was the first village to celebrate the end of harvesting each year. The words "HOME OF HARVEST HOME", should be inscribed in a crescent shape, above the village name on the sign. This would use up the permitted space authorised by Somerset County Council Highways Dept. on Village signs and would not incur any additional production costs for the Parish Council.

A proposal to adopt this sign was made by Cllr J. Bowden and it was seconded by Cllr W. Walker. It was unanimously passed by all the Committee.

**Minute 16/12 : Play Area Next to Village Green** - The Clerk informed the Committee of his discussions with Harley Cook regarding the replacement of the children's play equipment in this area.

He said that it has now been established that the land belongs to S.D.C, and not to the Parish Council; and that the sum of £26,539 is available as a grant under Policy RLT2, to pay for new equipment.

If the Parish Council wished to, it could pay towards enhancing the quality and scope of the play equipment, on top of the budget figure.

The work is scheduled to be carried out as and when, human resources become available.

However, it is one of twelve such projects currently within S.D.C. and it might take two to three years to be completed.

It was decided that as the general maintenance of the play area is below the standard the Committee would like to see, a request should be made to Harley Cook, to seek a more accurate timescale for this combined work.

Cllr A. Gilling offered a possible explanation for the lack of grass cutting and general maintenance of the area, being the lack of financial resources within S.D.C.

He asked the Clerk to copy him in on exchanges of communications, with Harley Cook.

**Minute 24/12 : Defibrillator Equipment** - Cllr J. Webb updated the Committee on the progress which she and Cllr S. McGreavy had made, regarding the supply of the equipment and the possible funding of it.

She said that there were over sixty businesses located within the Parish and offers of financial help were being given by a number of these. During the course of that day, she had received promises of funding amounting to over £1000.00. These included a promise of 20% of the costs, being made by William Haley Engineering Ltd. £20.00 from the Broddericks, and £100.00 from Rooksbridge Post Office.

Cllr Webb also said that there was a possibility that the equipment might be supplied free by Great Western Ambulance Service. This is being investigated further. There is therefore no doubt that the project is going to go ahead and Cllr Webb said that it is likely to be up and running within three months.

A further report will be given during the next meeting.

**Minute 26/12 : The Parish Council's Website** - Cllr W. Walker updated the Committee on the progress of the Website. He said that the Community Portal was ready to go live tomorrow (6<sup>th</sup> November 2012) subject to the Committee agreeing to adopt a very important policy.

He circulated to all members, a leaflet setting out the policy in respect of the use of images of children and young people on the Website. He invited all members to read it before he continued with his address.

The Chairman then stated that the Parish Council needed to formulate a policy regarding this matter in order to comply with legislation.

Cllrs A. Gilling and S. McGreavy said that this policy should be extended to include photos containing car registration plates and the faces of anyone in photos which were uploaded to the Website.

The Chairman highlighted the problem in getting the written consent of all such people before the images were posted. He said that the Council could take actions to correct any contraventions of the policy.

It was then proposed by Cllr W. Walker and seconded by Cllr S. McGreavy, that the policy document produced should be put onto the Website to indicate the thoughts and findings of the Parish Council. This motion was carried unanimously by the Committee.

Cllr Walker also said that the History portal was likely to go live next month as the preparations for this, are nearly complete.

**Minute 29/12 : The Ownership of Common Open Spaces within the Parish of**

**East Brent** - Cllr W. Walker advised the Committee that he had endeavoured to download information from the Land Registry, on the ownership of the "Village Green". His efforts had been unsuccessful as the Website had taken payment for this service on two occasions, but he had not received copies of the Land Registry's entries.

The Chairman suggested that the services of the Clerk (who is a retired Property Lawyer) should be sought in order to avoid any further waste of funds and to obtain the information needed. The Clerk readily agreed to assist and he with Cllr Walker, will prepare a report as soon as possible. An update will be given during forthcoming meetings.

**Minute 30/12 : The Building site at the Laurels, Old Bristol Rd, East Brent.**

The Chairman advised that he has not been able to meet with the Developer to discuss the outstanding issues regarding the construction process.

However, Cllr J. Bowden advised the Committee that some of the safety issues he had raised previously, had been attended to. The stop-cock in the pavement adjacent to the development had been correctly sited at ground level.

There were nevertheless, other outstanding issues and the Chairman agreed to arrange a meeting with the Developer to discuss these.

**Minute 34/12 : Preparation of a Code of Conduct for the Parish Council and Members...as directed by S.D.C.** Cllr N. Lloyd-Jones addressed the Committee and gave a brief history of the preparation of the C.of C. so far.

He explained that the majority of the Parish Councils within S.D.C. had agreed to adopt the "Sedgemoor" version of the C.of C. and whilst his own drafted version was shorter in content and more succinct; he accepted that in order to "conform" with the local doctrine, it would be advisable to formally adopt the "Sedgemoor" version.

He had been in contact on this matter with Melanie Wellman, Julie Poole and seen information provided by Peter Lacey who have S.D.C roles. He recommended that the latest version of the C.of C. (which the Clerk circulated to all Committee members) should be adopted. Cllr W. Walker commented that the members should be given the chance to study this document in detail before it was adopted. He accepted that it probably would be acceptable, but asked for the matter to be discussed at the next meeting. Cllr Lloyd-Jones also made reference to the Declaration of Interests form which all Committee members are obliged to sign (the Clerk also circulated copies of the new version to all Committee members). He said that these need to be returned to the Clerk by the date of the next meeting as the Parish Council was already "overdue" with compliance of these measures. Cllr Lloyd-Jones asked that if any Committee member have any questions or comments on either of these two documents, they should contact him immediately as the final version of these must be adopted during the December meeting of the Committee.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Lloyd-Jones for all the hard work he had undertaken on behalf of the Council.

**Minute 35/12 : Wi-Fi. Access at the Village Hall.** Cllr W. Walker advised the Committee of his discussions with Janet Nurse over the plans to bring a Wi-Fi. connection to the Village Hall. He said that the estimated costs to do so was about £200.00p.a. The cost of providing a Hub was about £60.00.

The matter is still under discussion by the Village Hall Committee and he recommended that this Council defers from further debate, until more is known of the Village Hall Committee's plans. He also said that he anticipated that a request for a contribution towards these costs, will be made to the Parish Council, by the Village Hall Committee.

**Minute 36/12 : The return of records and equipment from the retiring Clerk to the Parish Council.** The Chairman told the Committee of the response received from Bob Strachan to the request for the return of these items. He said that Bob Strachan was sorry for the inconvenience he had caused. The items were located within his former home at Worle and he will endeavour to arrange for them to be returned to the Parish Council as soon as he can. It was thought by a number of Committee members that this process should be expedited. Cllr J. Bowden suggested that he and the Chairman, should visit Bob Strachan's now tenanted property, having made a prior appointment, to retrieve these items. They had previously delivered them to Bob Strachan, a few years ago. The Chairman agreed to telephone Bob Strachan to do this and if necessary, he will disclose the fact that the Members have a retirement gift they wish to present to him. It had been hoped to keep this as a surprise for when Bob Strachan visits the area. It was thought that this could be used as a "lever" to encourage him to comply.

**Minute 37/12 : Parking problems along Brent Road, near the Methodist Church.** The Clerk advised the Committee of his exchanges of emails with the Highways Dept. at County Hall Taunton, over this problem. He said that it had been established that the land opposite the Methodist Church did belong to S.C.C. The County Council would be prepared to discuss the construction of a car park on this land, but it would not be prepared to fund the construction costs.

It would look to the Church, or the Parish Council, to do that. The officer who deals with this area (Chris Betty) is currently away on holiday and it was suggested by Cllr A. Gilling that this Committee awaits his return so that another approach can be made, to accurately establish the County Council's stance on this topic.

The Chairman and Cllr J. Bowden, both thought that if the Parish Council was to fund, or partly fund the construction costs, it would set a precedent and other parking problem areas in the Parish could expect similar assistance.

Cllr Gilling will establish when Chris Betty returns and he will contact him thereafter to discuss this matter.

**Financial Matters :** The Clerk advised that after a very long period of time and numerous telephone calls, visits to NatWest Bank; the transfer of the Clerk's details together with the setting up of the new bank mandate, had been completed. He was now receiving up to date bank statements and was able to start the formulation of detailed accounts of the Parish Council's finances, from the beginning of the current financial year.

He expressed his immense gratitude to Cllr N. Lloyd-Jones for all the help he has given in respect of this task. The two had had meetings and extensive conversations in an attempt to bring the accountancy details up to date.

Spread sheets have been formulated which will now enable the input of new data on an ongoing basis, to be used.

At this point Cllr Lloyd-Jones gave a detailed analysis of the accounts using an overhead projector to display the spreadsheets he had prepared. He went through each of the three bank accounts the Parish Council operates and gave details of the current balances in each. He further explained the plan to produce 2 budgets (a) to the end of this current financial year and (b) a draft budget for the forthcoming financial year (2013 - 2014) so that the funds available to the Parish Council, can be allocated as necessary including possible Parish projects. He asked if any councillor has suggestions on items that should be included into either budget that they make him aware of the item and potential cost. The budgets will be presented at the next meeting. Also, the possibility of restructuring the various bank accounts and changing the Parish Council's bank to Unity Bank Plc., will be discussed.

The Chairman again thanked Cllr Lloyd-Jones for his "sterling" hard work in preparing the accounts with the Clerk and he suggested that the complete new record of the accounts be formally adopted by the Committee as a whole, during the next meeting. The Clerk itemised the proposed payments shown on the Agenda and thereafter, Cllr J. Bowden proposed their payment and this was seconded by Cllr W. Walker. Approval of all payments was voted unanimously.

## **MATTERS OF REPORT**

### **The Chairman**

He raised the Remembrance Day Service on Sunday 11th November 2012.

He had been asked to read out the names of, "the fallen" in order to avoid any mispronunciation of their surnames. He felt this should be done by an official within the British Legion rather than by him. He will nevertheless attend the service and lay the wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.

Secondly, he raised the Core Strategy Consultation Document. He said that he thought the Parishioners should be told why the Parish Council feels the Village should be considered to be a Sustainable Development and to ask for responses from the community, about this. The categorisation will have an impact on the school, bus routes, businesses, low cost housing and many other aspects.

He said that he should explain the reasons why the Parish Council had asked for the re-scheduling. Cllr J. Webb said that the Parish Council's own Website is the media to use to do this. Cllr N. Lloyd-Jones suggested that the Parish magazine was another location for the announcement. Others mentioned the deadline for submissions to the magazine of the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month; the next issue it would appear in, would be January 2013. He also added that the wording to be used, needed to be carefully considered, in order to avoid the syndrome of "Not in my back yard". Other Villages within S.D.C. have a better/more important status than East Brent, and Cllr W. Walker said that he thought the reason for this, was that East Brent was in a Flood Zone area.

It was decided that the Chairman will prepare a suitable script and send it to Cllr Walker, for him to load onto the P.C.'s Website.

### **Cllr R. Bees**

He raised the emptying of the dog bins at the Cemetery. It appears that this is not being done frequently enough. Cllr J. Bowden (the Chairman of the Cemetery Committee) said that this was the responsibility of the contractors who cut the grass. He asked the Clerk to contact the present contractors, to request this urgently. Cllr W. Walker said that the high usage of the dog bins might be attributable to local kennels "off loading" their waste material in the bins throughout the Parish, thereby avoiding paying fees for the correct disposal of "commercial waste".

The second matter raised by Cllr Bees related to the traffic lights at the junction of Brent Road. On the 16<sup>th</sup> October he had witnessed a near accident there, when one car nearly drove into the rear of the car ahead. He blamed the siting of the traffic lights for this. It was suggested that a possible solution to the problem, would be to install "slats" or "blinkers" to the lights, thereby restricting the angle in which they can be seen, thus avoiding any confusion about priority. Cllr J. Webb agreed with him that the lights would be better if positioned in a different place. Cllr A. Gilling said that the rate with which the lights change sequence varies considerably. Sometimes they allow a large volume of vehicles through at a time, others they are only green for a very short period. He, (Cllr Gilling) will raise this topic with Chris Betty (S.C.C. Highways Dept.) when he speaks with him shortly. The problem with altering anything to do with traffic lights is that statistics need to be shown proving the need for a change.

### **Cllr A. Gilling**

He asked the Clerk to ensure that copies of the minutes of Parish Council meetings are sent to Mr Bob Filmer. He had not received the last meetings minutes. The Clerk said he would ensure that this is done.

Secondly, he raised the ongoing problems which occur at Orchard Close. He advised the Committee that there are still difficulties which affect the immediate neighbourhood. Other Councillors then added that they had been made aware of concerns from various parishioners and so it was agreed that the whole situation will be closely monitored over the next few months, in order to see if the Parish Council is able to help resolve the issues.

### **Cllr Y. Roscorla**

She wish to express her delight with the work carried out to widen the entrance gates of the Village Hall, as it did indeed make parking vehicles in the car park a lot easier.

### **Cllr B. Woodward**

Her first comment was that she eagerly awaited the return of Mr Chris Betty (S.C.C. Highways Dept.) in order to finally resolve the bus stop issue.

Her second comment was to inform the Committee that she will have a monthly meeting with Police Officer Pauline Dixon to discuss any crime prevention measures necessary. Pauline Dixon has handed out over 80 leaflets about this during a recent visit made to the Doctor's surgery.

### **Cllr N. Lloyd-Jones**

He advised the Committee that he intends to attend the Lympsham Parish Council meeting over the next few weeks, in order to see how they operate in comparison with East Brent. If he discovers any useful ideas which might be helpful in the running of East Brent Parish Council, he will report them to this Committee.

He also reported that he had attended a recent meeting discussing Affordable Housing in the Parish. The plans which evolved recently seem to be progressing well and it will not be too long before a planning application is submitted to S.D.C.

His third point concerned the keeping of Parish Council records.

He reminded the Committee of the legal requirement under the Data Protection Act, for the Clerk to use and store all the Parish records on a private computer, rather than on his own.

Arrangements are under way (via Cllr A. Gilling) for a laptop computer to be supplied to the Parish Council, by S.D.C. at some point in the future. However, even when this is in place, there will be an urgent need for all the records to be backed-up onto an external hard drive as well, in case of the laptop malfunctioning.

It was therefore proposed by Cllr W. Walker, and seconded by Cllr Lloyd-Jones that a suitable external hard drive is purchased immediately, to resolve this potential problem. This proposal was passed unanimously.

His final point concerned the Parish Magazine. He reported that he and 2 Councillors had attended a meeting with the Editor, Mrs Molly Richards.

The plan is to still to produce 500 copies of the magazine as of next January with 10 editions in 2013. However, it is unclear if the advertising revenue that may be generated, will be sufficient to fund the full production costs (circa. £3,000). He said the Parish Council has partially funded the magazine to date and would probably consider doing so again, in order to ensure it was available to all households. He added that the Parish Council would ideally, only wish to use as small amount of public funds as possible; and so the Magazine's only single source of income, (advertising) is very important.

The Chairman commented that there currently seems to be a considerable difference between the income and the total expenditure, of the magazine. Cllr W. Walker asked if the Parish Council still intended to partly fund the Magazine, as it should ideally, be close to being self-sufficient. Cllr S. McGreavy said that arising from a previous discussion of the Committee, if the magazine was not made available to all parishioners, the Parish Council should not continue to subsidise it. Cllr J. Webb added that the advertising fees for businesses (currently £6.00 per month) could be increased quite considerably, following the planned additional circulation numbers and the wider distribution within the Parish.

Cllr Lloyd-Jones said he would ask for an update, following the meeting with Mrs Richards on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, including asking her for a copy of the 2013 advertising rate sheet and details of which parties have now confirmed their participation in next years publications.

The Chairman said that in a month or so time, he wishes to have another meeting with Mrs Richards to review the production / income figures, in order get a better understanding of the latest figures for 2013. He will contact her to do so.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, at 9.45pm.

**The next Parish Council meeting will be on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012 at the Village Hall at 7.30pm, or earlier if a planning meeting is necessary.**