

[.EAST BRENT PARISH COUNCIL](#)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of East Brent Parish Council, held at the Village Hall on Monday 2nd June 2014. It commenced at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr E. Champion, Cllr V. Rawles, Cllr J. Bowden, Cllr A. Gilling, Cllr W. Walker, Cllr N. Lloyd-Jones, Cllr J. Webb, Cllr B. Bees, Cllr B. Woodward, Cllr Y. Roscorla and the Clerk to the Council, Mr Martin Shobbrook.

Chairman's opening remarks

The Chairman, Cllr Edward Champion, thanked the members of the public for coming to the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council and he welcomed them and the guest speaker, District Councillor Robert Filmer.

Annual Election of Officers of the Parish Council

Cllr Champion told the Committee that it was his intention to stand down as Chairman of the Parish Council and he asked the Clerk to temporarily preside over the meeting, to conduct those proceedings. Before doing so, he thanked all the other members of the Committee for their help and support not only during the last year, but since his appointment to the office of Chairman. Cllr Bowden then proposed a vote of thanks to Cllr Champion who had held the position of Chairman since December 2010. During that time he had served the Parish Council exceedingly well and he has steered it forward in an exemplarily way.

Election of Chairperson:

The Clerk then invited the Committee members to propose the names of a new Chairperson. Cllr Bowden proposed Cllr Rawles and this was seconded by Cllr Webb. No other nominations were put forward. A unanimous vote in favour of appointing Cllr Rawles as Chairperson, was then passed. The Clerk confirmed her appointment and handed over control of the meeting to Cllr Rawles.

Election of Vice-chairperson:

In her role as Chairperson, Cllr Rawles invited the Committee members to propose the names of a new Vice-chairperson of the Parish Council. Cllr Gilling proposed Cllr Webb and this was seconded by Cllr Woodward. Cllr Bowden proposed Cllr Lloyd-Jones and this was seconded by Cllr Walker. No other nominations were put forward. The Chairperson then invited the members to vote for the two candidates. There were five votes cast in favour of Cllr Webb and two votes cast in favour of Cllr Lloyd-Jones. The Chairperson therefore declared that by a majority vote, Cllr Webb should be appointed to the office of Vice-Chairperson for the year 2014-15.

Election of Footpath Representative:

Cllr Walker had indicated his willingness to remain in this role and his appointment was therefore proposed by Cllr Woodward and was seconded by Cllr Webb. A unanimous decision to re-elect Cllr Walker as Footpath Representative for the year 2014-15, was passed.

Election of the Young Person's Representative:

Cllr McGreavy had indicated his willingness to remain in this role and his appointment was therefore proposed by Cllr Webb and seconded by Cllr Walker. A unanimous decision to re-elect Cllr McGreavy as the Young Person's Representative for the year 2014-15, was passed.

Election of the Village Hall Representative:

Cllr Woodward had indicated her willingness to remain in this role and her appointment was proposed by Cllr Webb and seconded by Cllr Gilling. A unanimous decision to re-elect Cllr Woodward as the Village Hall Representative for the year 2014-15, was passed.

Election of the Planning Co-ordinator:

Cllr McGreavy had indicated his willingness to remain in this role and his appointment was therefore proposed by Cllr Walker and seconded by Cllr Webb. A unanimous decision to re-elect Cllr McGreavy as the Planning Co-ordinator for the year 2014-15, was passed.

Election of the Finance Officer:

Cllr Lloyd-Jones had indicated his willingness to remain in this role and his appointment was proposed by Cllr Walker and seconded by Cllr Champion. A unanimous decision to re-elect Cllr Lloyd-Jones as Finance Officer for the year 2014-15, was passed.

Election of the Emergency Planning Officer:

The previous incumbent, Cllr Webb seconded a proposal by Cllr Gilling, that the retiring Chairman, Cllr Champion should be appointed to this role. A unanimous decision to appoint Cllr Champion as Emergency Planning Officer for the year 2014-15, was passed.

Election of the position of Website Co-ordinator:

A new appointment of a Website Co-ordinator was proposed by all the Committee and the name of Cllr Walker, as the first holder of this official position, was proposed by Cllr Webb and was seconded by Cllr Woodward. A unanimous decision to appoint Cllr Walker as the Website Co-ordinator for the year 2014-15, was passed.

Planning matters

As there were members of the public present who had attended either to listen to, or to address the Committee on the planning matter listed on the Agenda, the Chairman invited them to make any representations, before he declared the meeting formally open.

Mrs Mary-Ellen Harris spoke first and said she was very concerned regarding the planning application being made by the owner of Venns Grove, Church Road, East Brent under planning application number 24/14/00014. She said that if the proposed buildings were allowed, they would be higher than her property and it would have an impact upon it. They feel the existing soak-away water system is inadequate to deal with rainwater and the loss of further land which attempts to drain rainwater, will only make matters worse. The roof of the new building will catch more rainwater and this will exasperate the already difficult situation. When SDC previously gave planning permission for development at the property, it specified that there should be no further development at the site. This application will breach that condition if it is granted. Mrs Harris also said that the position of the new wall of the proposed shed will make it very difficult for her to maintain her boundary fence.

The Committee was then addressed by Mr Geoff Adams who told the Committee that he and his wife were very disappointed to see this application being made, for the same reasons that Mrs Harris had mentioned. The proposed garage is likely to be joined to the house if further development was allowed and he felt this application was an attempt to get consent for that "via the back-door". He repeated the worries about the drainage of surface water and told the Committee that the existing soak-away will have to cope with three drains.

The Chairperson invited anyone else present the chance to speak, but no one came forward.

She therefore declared the meeting formally opened at 7.40pm.

Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr S. McGreavy. Cllr Gilling declared an interest in relation to all planning matters on the Agenda and also item 8/13 on the Agenda.

The Chairperson then welcomed and introduced the guest speaker, District Councillor Robert Filmer.

Minute 09/14: An address to the Committee by District Councillor Robert Filmer

In his capacity as Chairman of the Development Committee of Sedgemoor District Council, Cllr Filmer said that he wished to explain the role of planning between the Parish Councils and the District Council. He was doing so in the light of recent planning applications East Brent had considered and correspondence he had seen from various Parish Councillors and from members of the public.

He said that SDC works on a development plan drawn up by the District (Local Plan) which is regulated by central Government. The District Council is bound by measures which are designed to promote development and efficiency and to ensure compliance with time limits.

Planning applications for general development must take no longer than eight weeks to be processed from the date of registration to decision. Time starts to run from the day when the application should have been registered. Major applications must be completed within thirteen weeks from registration. Parish Council's have twenty-one days in which to register any opinions on planning applications. Central Government have now introduced "sticks" to regulate timetable compliance. If this is not achieved in forty percent of applications, the District Council's will lose their right to determine the decision. The local planning officers will still have to do the necessary work, but the decision making process will be transferred to central Government. A further "stick" to enforce timetable compliance, is the ability of the applicant to obtain a complete refund of the application fees if the matter is not concluded within six months. Under this, developers might encourage "delays" in order to obtain a refund. The appeal process is also under time pressures. The Inspectorate of appeals must deal with them within one year. District Council's have delegated schemes under which the decision making process is assigned to particular planning officer, unless that Council does not have such a scheme. District Councillors must not get involved in Parish Council matters. At this point, Cllr Walker raised a question with Mr Filmer. He asked if it meant that Parish Councils could not get help from the District Council or Councillors? Mr Filmer replied that Parish Council could get help and advice in planning matters, but District Councillors can't make recommendations to Parish Councils.

The Chairperson asked Mr Filmer if help could be given to the Parish Council on more complicated matters, or ones which are "out of the normal"? Mr Filmer confirmed that Parish Councils can get advice on procedural/planning law aspects, but not on how to decide an application. He said the Parish Council's role, is to assess the impact of a particular planning application on the locality. The Councillors do not need to have a detailed knowledge of the planning laws or planning policy, that is the job of the planning officers.

Comments from each Parish Council need to be presented early in order to give the planning officers sufficient time to process the application properly. If the Parish Council does not respond within twenty-one days, the District Council consider that the Parish Council has no objections or comments to make on the matter.

Councillor Gilling interjected and supported what Mr Filmer had said. Cllr Gilling said that there was nothing preventing an adjacent ward member from being brought in to lend support on any particular issue. The fundamental criteria is that Parish Councils must be seen to be separate and not influenced by any decision from a ward member. The District Council runs training sessions in September of each year for Councillors to attend and learn about planning issues. Mr Filmer recommends that as many Parish Councillors as possible attend these. They would learn about new aspects of planning, such as the changes in permitted development rights. Some agricultural building can now be converted without the need to apply for planning permission. This often explains why members of the public do not see a planning application being posted. Many new types of building works can be carried out without planning consent. The public now have easier access to information about planning. There are three levels of on-line registration available. These range from being notified of an application within a particular Parish, to being notified of new documents being lodged within a particular matter; to being notified of decisions made in particular matters.

Cllr Walker asked Mr Filmer if the views of Parish Council's were fully taken into consideration by the District Council. He had in mind the fact that SDC did not record the comments made by East Brent Parish Council in connection with one particular planning matter. During a

subsequent telephone call made by the Clerk to SDC, it was confirmed that the comments had been received by SDC, yet they were not noted on the on-line register. Mr Filmer said that the comments should have been recorded and he would try to ascertain why they did not appear. As there were no further questions, the Chairperson thanked Mr Filmer for his address which had been very informative and enlightening for the Parish Councillors.

The Chairperson then said it would be appropriate to bring forward the particular planning application before the Parish Council, tonight. She introduced planning application 24/14/00014 relating to Venns Grove, Church Road, East Brent. She invited Cllr Walker to address the meeting on behalf of the absent Planning Co-ordinator, Cllr McGreavy. Cllr Walker outlined in detail the nature of the application and also alluded to the history of the various planning applications on this property which have preceded this one. He explained that he and Cllrs Webb and Woodward had visited the site and, with the aid of the submitted plans, examined the proposals carefully. The sub-committee considered that the proposed garage construction would offer some overshadowing to the neighbouring property and therefore to the detriment of residential amenity. Although not necessarily a planning issue, there was some concern over the accumulated drainage from the garage and rear garden. With regard to the proposed shed, the sub-committee felt that it would cause some landscape impact by virtue of its visual prominence against the back-drop of St Mary's Church.

The Chairperson asked what the Sub-Committee's recommendations were for this matter. Cllr Walker responded saying that they felt the application should be rejected. A proposal to that effect was made by Cllr Walker and it was seconded by Cllr Webb. . Cllr Lloyd-Jones was not in agreement with all the points being made against this planning application

The Chairperson then took a vote on the matter and by a majority number, the application was rejected. The Clerk was instructed to convey this decision to SDC and to include the reasons why it was reached, which Cllr Walker would prepare.

At this point, the members of the public present, left the Hall. The Chairperson read out the recorded decisions of previous planning applications, which were listed on the Agenda.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 12th May and Monday 19th May 2014 were agreed as an accurate account of the meeting and were proposed and seconded.

Ongoing issues:

Minute 04/14: Parish Magazine:

Cllr Champion told the meeting that there was no further news on the outsourcing of the printing of the magazine. As there was nothing positive to debate, the Chairperson directed that this matter should be postponed until the next Committee meeting. In the meantime, Cllr Champion will speak to Molly Richards to obtain the information needed.

Minute 24/12: Defibrillator Equipment:

Cllr Webb told the Meeting that the second unit will be fixed to the wall of the medical centre and light by a low wattage light (not a P.I.R. design so as to avoid being triggered frequently to the annoyance of local residents). This work will be carried out by Cllr McGreavy upon his return from holiday. Cllr Webb told the meeting that she has organised a V.E.T.S. training session for the use of the defibrillator for the public on Monday 8th September 2014 at 7.00pm. All those who have placed their names on the list of contacts for support in connection with the defibrillator should have now received a letter about it. Cllr Walker will put details of the forthcoming meeting on the PC's website. The Clerk was asked to chase District Councillor John Denbee for the release of the promised cheque of £1500.00, which has not arrived. The cost of the annual subscription for the community scheme will be £100.00. Cllr Webb will co-ordinate this.

Minute 03/13 : Horse Chestnut Trees on the Village Green:

Cllr Lloyd-Jones updated the members that he along with 3 other councillors had meet Janette Burton and Dave Aggett of SDC on the 15th of May at the site of the trees. The councillors explained their concerns over the large size of the trees and the impact they have house drains, overhead phone cables and how overall they make that area dark and quite unusable.

Ms Burton said an application could be put forward to remove the trees (covered by a TPO), but the case would need to be a strong one. Cllr Lloyd-Jones is to contact Wessex Water about the drain issue. Also the councillors proposed mitigating the possible loss of these trees with the planting of more suitable tree species in the park opposite which was well received by Ms Burton.

Minute 08/13 : Proposed playing field off Pill Road, Rooksbridge :

Cllr Gilling declared an interest in this matter and remained in the meeting, taking no active part in the debate other than to answer questions raised with him.

Cllr Lloyd-Jones gave an update to the members, stating he has submitted to SDC a letter re the 3 planning conditions along with the required payment. We are waiting to hear back from the land owners solicitor about the lease. However, having the landowners permission the area has now been prepared and seeded, plus the boundary fencing is being installed the week of June 2nd by the Housing Society. He will follow up with the Housing Society about having some form of written agreement that access is granted across a small strip of their land. The plan is to not open the area for use this year, so that the grass could be well established for next spring.

Minute 8/14 : Audit of the Annual Accounts for the year 2013-14 :

The Clerk told the meeting that the Internal Auditor had not been able to conclude his audit of the accounts, within the prescribed time limit set out by Grant Thornton & Co. This was due to the pressures of work he has on at the present time and the fact that he required some amendments to be made to the Audit Submission Form. He had told the Clerk that he was content that the accounts submitted to him for approval were factually correct, but he nevertheless felt they needed to be presented in a slightly different format. He had cited to the Clerk, several examples of the amendments which he felt were necessary and he recommended that he should make these amendments himself, as he was the person who would "sign them off" and release them to Grant Thornton, for their approval. The Clerk then gave details of these to the committee, they were:-

1. The figure in box two on page two of the Annual return (relating to the Precept paid to the Parish Council) should be £16,858.84 and not the gross Precept payment the Council actually received as shown (£17,695.00). Whilst the latter figure is correct, it should be broken down into the three component elements, *support grant/precept/dog bins charges*.

2. He says that there needs to be a further endorsement of five of the payments authorised by the full Committee during the year 2013/14. These were:-

Cheque no 001120 To SDC for £385.00

Cheque no 001193 To Community Heartbeat Trust for £3,550.00

Cheque no 001190 To Tanks Direct Ltd. for £370.80

Cheque no 001117 To Bristol Wessex Water for £25.69

Cheque no 000116 To M.J. Champion for £82.50

He accepts that all these cheques were correctly authorised by the full Committee and subsequently drawn and signed, but they did not appear for payment on the preceding Agendas. All that is now required to formalise this, is for a statement re-affirming these payments to be added in the next set of Parish Council Minutes. A directive to this effect should be recorded in the next Minutes of the Parish Council. The reason why these payments were not shown on the Agendas for the meetings in which they were authorised, was because they were requested during those meetings, by individual Councillors and authorised by the whole Committee. In future, if any Councillor needs a cheque to be drawn in time for a particular meeting, details of that payment must be given to the Clerk at least five days before the meeting, so that it can be included in the appropriate Agenda.

3. The internal auditor recommends that the Committee should agree to allow the Chairperson to authorise these changes when the auditor has finished them, so that there will be no need to re-convene another full meeting of the Committee. The return date for the submission to Grant Thornton has now past and it needs to be done in the next 3-4 days.

The existing forms which the Chairperson and Cllr Lloyd-Jones originally signed, can still be sent in, but to them will be added the Auditors adjustments.

A proposal to accede to this request was made by Cllr Champion and seconded by Cllr Webb. A unanimous vote in favour of the proposal was passed by the whole Committee. The Clerk agreed to contact the Chairperson with details of all of the proposed amendments the Auditor was making, to confirm these with her prior to submission of the forms to Grant Thornton.

Minute 10/14 : A review of the condition of the "planters" adjacent to the East Brent Village signs together with the re-awarding of the contract to cut the grass along the A38 and around the War Memorial ;

Cllr Bowden expressed his disappointment that the present contractor had only given the Parish Council notice of his resignation from the agreement within the last two weeks. It has resulted in the grass becoming overgrown and unattended. Therefore there is an urgent need to create another contract as soon as possible. After a detailed debate about this, it was agreed that a sub-committee would be formed to obtain three quotations from Phil Collins: Jason Mayo and NS Garden Services. The members of the sub-committee will be, Cllrs Lloyd-Jones, Bowden, Champion and the Chairperson. They will decide the number of cuts needed, the extent of the areas to be cut and the dates of the first cut of each year and prior to the Harvest Home celebrations.

It was further agreed that a discussion on the "planters" would be adjourned and sorted out during a subsequent meeting.

Minute 30/12 : The completion of the pavements adjacent to the building site at the Laurels, Old Bristol Road, East Brent :

Cllr Walker advised the meeting that he had again contacted District Councillor John Denbee on the 30th April to request his intervention in this long outstanding matter. So far he has not received a reply. He confirmed that his email had been sent to the correct email address for Cllr Denbee (Cllr Denbee having previously told the PC that he has had email problems and many had not reached him). This matter will therefore be carried forward to the next Committee meeting, by which time it is hoped that Cllr Denbee will have responded.

Financial matters :

The Clerk referred to the proposed payments listed on the Agenda. No questions were raised and a proposal for payment of them all was made by Cllr Walker and seconded by Cllr Bowden. A unanimous vote was carried by the whole Committee to pay these items and cheques were subsequently signed by the Chairperson and Cllr Champion.

Matters of Report :

The Chairperson wished to advise the Committee that she will be away on holiday between the 16th to the 18th June and may not be able to attend the next meeting on the 7th July. If she was unable to attend, she offers her apologies in advance.

Cllr Gilling commented on the completion of the cleaning and restoration work which has been carried out upon the Village War Memorial. He said that it had been done to a high standard and it looked very good. Cllr Bowden said that he felt the lower step still needed attention. Cllr Webb agreed to inspect it and to contact Wells Cathedral Stone masons, if necessary. The Clerk will supply her with the necessary details.

Cllr Gilling also advised the Committee that at the next Cluster Group meeting, the question of the formation of a Community Warden scheme will again be discussed. Brent Knoll PC have already indicated that they will not join the scheme.

Cllr Bowden reported that he has spotted some "fly-tipping" along the exit slip road of the M5, where some chairs have been thrown down the bank. The Chairperson agreed to contact SDC to have it removed.

Cllr Woodward reported that a resident has notified her that a street light is not working. It is located opposite the Village Hall. The Chairperson agreed to contact the Lighting dept. at S.C.C. Cllr Roscorla asked if weeds at the roadside within the Parish were still being sprayed with weed-killer? Cllr Walker agreed to enquire and report back to the Committee.

Cllr Webb reported that the Parish Council's notice board needs to be cleared of redundant/irrelevant material. Cllr Champion agreed to attend to this after the meeting. It was felt that the similar notice board at Rooksbridge was well maintained (probably by Mr Keith Bellingham, to whom thanks should be given).

Cllr Lloyd-Jones reported that good progress has been made in the renovation of the Red House Road playing field. The old goal posts have been removed and will soon be renewed. SDC did ask if the Parish Council, as it has done before, would pay for the goal nets costing around £60, this was proposed and agreed by the Committee. Along with Cllr Walker signs have been placed in the park informing Parishioners what is happening, in case they think nothing is going to be done. During his discussions with SDC over this work, he has negotiated a provisional agreement that two benches will be placed in the play area. One will be financed by SDC and the other by the PC. The expected cost for this will be approximately £500. This will neatly complete the whole renovation of the area. He made a proposal that the PC should agree to fund this second bench and this was endorsed by Cllr Bowden. A unanimous vote by the Committee was then passed for this. Cllr Lloyd-Jones will therefore proceed with the necessary arrangements.

Cllr Champion told the meeting that he had been approached by a Parishioner about the flooding occurring at the bus stop at Burton Row. This has now been resolved by the placing of earth at the site which has been grassed over. It has resulted in the Bus having to stop on the road, instead of the lay-by, but the problem has been resolved. No further action is needed by the PC.

There being no further business to conduct, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 9.30pm.

The next Parish Council meeting will be on Monday 7th July 2014, at the Village Hall at 7.30pm.