

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Ludgershall Parish Council
held on Thursday 14th May 2015 in the Memorial Hall, Ludgershall**

Present: Cllr. Paul Thomas – (Chaired meeting)
Cllr. John Cartwright
Cllr. H. Cox
Cllr. R. Jones
Mrs. Deborah O’Brien – Parish Clerk
6 Parish residents
PCSO Denise Grayburn – Thames Valley Police

1. Welcome and Introduction

Councillor Thomas welcomed everyone to the meeting and agreed to Chair the meeting due to the Chairman’s unavoidable absence.

2. Apologies for Absence

Those present noted apologies from Cllrs. T. Chettle and S. Lawson; County Councillor Angela Macpherson; Paul Hodson/LAF and Mr. Alastair Thompson (Churchwarden).

3. Minutes

Those present **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on Monday 28th April 2014

4. Report from Chairman Ludgershall Parish Council

Councillor Thomas Chettle, Chairman of Ludgershall PC submitted a report via e-mail about the work of the Parish Council in the previous year, and this was read out by Cllr Thomas:

- The Parish underwent a satisfactory internal and external audit for the year 2013-2014. The Parish finances are very healthy as you can see from the income & expenditure reports.
- The Parish Council has replaced the Millennium Bench with a new and improved bench.
- The Parish Council has continued to book a Play Around the Parishes event despite the increase in price from AVDC.
- The 200 club was started this year in aid of the play area. The play area has had some refurbishment work carried out this year and continues to be under the control of the Parish Council however thank you to Pat Crisp, Jim Goss and Archie Harris for all of their help in the past year. The next ROSPA inspection will be in May.
- We received a donation of £907 towards the play area raised from the progressive supper which took place on New Year’s Eve. With thanks to Estelle Fisher for choosing to donate this money to the play area.
- The Parish Council has continued to maintain the areas of the village green this year and has carried out a number of areas of pruning and ditching. There is further work planned for later this year.
- The Parish Council have entered the Best Kept Village competition and this is to be judged in June
- BCC offered the parish the chance to assume devolved services for cutting of verges and hedges but we declined as it was felt that this would not be cost effective.

- In February 2015 the Parish Council wrote to Martin Tett leader of the Council as we had continued concerns regarding the condition of our roads. The following feedback was given by David Stuart, Scheme Delivery Manager at TFB:

1. CRN 407276 Church Lane carriageway repairs. – as noted by the LAT the works required to repair this section of carriageway are slightly more significant, requiring a full width removal and patch, under road closure, of approximately 40 linear metres of carriageway. Ideally this can be addressed within the recently selected Ludgershall High Street resurfacing. However, given the obvious potential for grounding due to the uneven carriageway, any continuing deterioration, will result in a requirement for more urgent intervention, for which monies will be allocated from the 2015 revenue funding allocation. I would be hopeful therefore that work can be undertaken within the first quarter of 2015/16 financial year, by end June 2015.
2. CRN 381640 Church Lane opposite Bury Court – it is appreciated that the works have been requested since November 2012. From my investigation on site today, it is apparent that the drainage is inefficient in the location, but has had to be considered against other competing priorities across the network. I have agreed with our LAT that the drainage investigation/high pressure jetting crew will attend to address the apparent blockage within the pipe from the ditch headwall, which seems to be preventing effective drainage through to the ditch adjacent to the junction. Any breakage identified will be addressed and once this is running satisfactorily, additional work will be undertaken to ensure that water currently running along the edge of carriageway is effectively diverted into the ditch and then through the repaired pipe. We do consider it highly likely that the Utility Company does have a liability and, once proven through the investigation, will be pursuing the utility for reimbursement of costs.
3. The Kerb Rodding of gullies and weirs – the majority of gullies and weirs, aside from the specific issues noted in this email, were noted to be running effectively and, as such, immediate intervention for a comprehensive clearance cannot be justified ahead of other competing priorities on the network. The programme of county wide cyclical cleansing does however begin again in April 2015 and gullies and weirs within Ludgershall will be included within the programme. Specific dates will be notified as the programme progresses. Meanwhile inspection personnel, alongside the LAT, will identify and address any specific priorities as and when they arise.
4. The closure on Long Lane/Wotton End was in place to enable prioritised patching to address those areas of most concern. This was part of a County wide programme aimed at addressing the worst affected areas from previous severe weather events and as such, did have a finite budget which had to be targeted at the worst affected locations. These patches were completed and are holding up well. There are, as you note, a number of areas of additional deterioration within the length of the road. Specific defects considered of a severity to merit priority intervention will continue to be identified and addressed individually through inspection and LAT identification. However, this will not remove all defective areas. We do agree that the section of road is in generally poor condition and is likely to give rise to continuing defect formation and will therefore look to identify funding within 2015/16 budgets which can facilitate a more substantial patching programme. This cannot however be confirmed at this time.
5. CRN 480242 ponding of water opposite Pear Tree cottage. As noted, by the LAT, it is unclear how the water which collects on the carriageway opposite Pear Tree Cottage is discharged into the ditch. An investigation is to be carried out in April any drainage which may be in place which can be utilised to alleviate the issue. Assuming this can be found, the area of ponding should be relatively straightforward to alleviate. Should this not be in place, it is likely that a new pipe would require to be installed under the road to the existing ditch. This would require a more significant investment and may not be justified ahead of other priorities. Your LAT will keep you informed of progress.
6. CRN 434208 Sign directing traffic from (High Street to Wotton Underwood/top of Church Lane). The missing sign will be erected as soon as this arrives from our sign suppliers.
7. Bicester Road to Ludgershall Road – similarly to Long Lane/Wotton End (above), the repairs carried out were delivered through specific funding received from Department for Transport, which had to be targeted at those worst affected areas across the county. As a result only the most severe defects could be addressed at the time. There are currently no plans for any further works to this section of road, although it will continue to be monitored through inspection with any priority defects arising addressed within appropriate timescales.

5. Report from Thames Valley Police – PCSO Denise Grayburn

PCSO Grayburn advised that a new Chief Constable – Francis Habgood has been appointed. He has been with TVP for many years. Waddesdon Police team has a new PC – Kirstin Harding and retains 3 PCSOs. Crime continues to be low – there were 4 reports in the last year. Dog fouling continues to be a problem, especially around the fishing pond.

6. Report from Cllr Angela Macpherson – BCC

2014/2015 has been a very busy and varied year for me as your County Councillor. In addition to working with you locally I attend many ‘whole County’ meetings and events and am Chairman of the County Council’s Select Committee for the NHS and Adult Social Care. In this report I have highlighted some information on recent county council activity and as always will continue to work hard to represent your concerns at county level and to work productively with you and the local community.

Adult Social Care

Adult Social Care is by far the highest area of expenditure for the County Council at around £130m. Local authorities continue to be under increasing pressure with more statutory obligations from central government, coupled with actual spending cuts and the demands brought about by an ageing population

The Care Act went live from the beginning of April. It brings with it the most fundamental changes in sixty years to how care and support will be delivered, not least in making it fairer and more consistent across the country for everyone.

All of us will know someone who needs care and support and it is estimated that one in three of us will need care at some point in our lifetime, so it is important that all of us are aware of what support we can expect and how to find out what’s available.

A range of posters and leaflets developed by central government will be the basis for information for service users, carers and the general public to let them know what the changes will mean to them. A letter and leaflet will be going out to all our service-users and carers in the next few weeks. Posters and leaflets will be displayed in public places, including libraries, GP surgeries, reception areas in council offices, etc. A series of articles have also appeared in local newsletters and magazines.

The County Council have developed a new website (entitled ‘Care Advice Buckinghamshire’) with useful information.

Improving Children’s Social Care Services

Following the disappointing Ofsted report last year, the council’s Improvement Programme for Children’s Social Care services is now well underway and the pace of change remains high. There are significant actions needed to make the required changes in Children’s Safeguarding but the council is putting plans in place to ensure it delivers the best possible outcomes for our most vulnerable children and maintains its focus on working with the police and other partners to prevent Child Sexual Exploitation.

HS2

The House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee published their report on 25 March. The conclusion is that the Government has not made a convincing case for HS2. It must do so before Parliament passes the Bill to enable the construction of the first stage of the railway to begin. These comments reflect what Buckinghamshire County Council has been saying for the last five years.

We lobbied for, and have received, three dates rather than one, from the Committee Clerk for the visits to Buckinghamshire. These are from 20th May through to the final one on the 22nd in the Buckingham constituency.

The County Council's appearance at the Select Committee to present on our petition issues will be after the General Election.

The County Council has led on discussions with local communities in the Calvert, Twyford and Claydons area in developing community led mitigation ideas for the area. The idea is to create a network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes, interspersed and connected to villages in the area to counter balance the hard infrastructure that is coming with HS2. I am totally committed to continuing the fight against HS2 and will focus my efforts on supporting local petitions and plans for the best mitigation.

Greatmoor Energy from Waste Programme

Construction of the Energy from Waste (EFW) facility at Greatmoor is proceeding apace. I attend meetings of the EFW community liaison group which offers an opportunity for local residents to ask questions and raise any concerns about the project.

It is planned that the facility is fully operational by March 2016. There is a slight delay (29 days) reported against the original construction plan, however it is anticipated that some of this delay can be caught up over the next year.

The construction phase of the main facility is due to be completed by late May this year, following which sees a 9-10 month commissioning phase.

Commissioning is divided into two main stages; Cold Commissioning which is essentially about ensuring the facility is fully working in terms of all processes except the burning of waste, and then Hot Commissioning which is about testing the facility with actual residual waste. The first testing with Buckinghamshire's waste is anticipated for October this year. For further information on progress, there are regular updates on the County Council website and on FCC's website, which also includes a live webcam.

Transport for Bucks (TfB)

Last April an independent health check of the TfB contract was undertaken. The findings revealed serious shortcomings on both sides of the partnership – client and contractor – resulting in failings in governance, strategic partnering and value for money. A series of recommendations were made to improve the contract and its implementation by BCC and our contractor, Ringway Jacobs.

One year on, the situation is much improved. The governance of the contract has been revitalised and relaunched. TfB has completed a reorganisation that has resulted in better engagement with elected Members; strengthened and streamlined management; more focus on local area-based working; and driving a culture based on:

- Ownership and local empowerment
- Customer service
- Quality
- Delivery on promises

The County Council's client team has been augmented and is much more actively holding TfB to account for its delivery, through more regular inspections of works and a revised set of key performance indicators.

I am only too aware of the many issues with the roads, footpath and drainage issues in our communities. It is good news that the 2015/16 fiscal year will see the county council investing significantly more in highways than previous years at approximately £25m.

The major project in this area has been the resurfacing of the A41 through Kingswood which has been hard fought for and is now much improved.

Many other schemes are scheduled to take place this year around our villages and as always I urge parishes and residents to use the TfB portal to report potholes and any other concerns. Then the issue can be logged, allocated a job number and delivered.

Tri-County Partnership

The County Council continues to work with colleagues in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire in exploring the opportunities and potential benefits of a co-ordinated approach to the strategic planning and delivery of infrastructure. The discussions are looking at how to develop an integrated approach to the planning and delivery of strategic investment in transport infrastructure, digital infrastructure, economic development and skills development.

The expectation remains that post-election the trend towards greater devolution of powers will continue: the current discussions provide the opportunity to develop a proposition for consideration by the incoming government.

Broadband

The Connected Counties programme seeks to ensure countywide fibre connectivity is extended to in excess of 90% of premises (business and residential). Areas that have been enabled to date are detailed on the Connected Counties website.

The website includes the ability to validate individual phone numbers and addresses and use a variety of maps for visual reference.

With the Connected Counties rollout past the halfway stage, a great deal has been achieved and there is more to come. Over 100 fibre cabinets have been installed in Buckinghamshire, serving over 23,000 homes and businesses. Recent activity has seen new exchange areas go 'live' with a significant amount of additional fibre connected premises expected before the end of Q4. Fibre to the premises work is also ongoing. Importantly for our area, work is taking place to support a variety of broadband activities, seeking to fill in the broadband 'gaps'. This includes: Village Networks as a local wireless provider -developing a superfast products; a community 'pilot; the LEP's 5G trials; and new commercial/residential site consideration.

Secondary Schools Allocation

Allocations have been more difficult this year in that the overall number of young people in the transfer group has increased by 349

(5813 residents this year compared with 5464 residents last year) –over 11 forms of entry.

- 86% (87% in 2014) were offered their highest preference for which they are qualified. However, this is an increase in real terms getting their first preference school.
- 97% (95% in 2014) of grammar qualified Buckinghamshire resident pupils were offered their first preference grammar school.
- 82% (84% in 2014) of upper school qualified pupils were offered their first preference upper school.
- 238 (219 in 2014) children were allocated to a school that was not their preference.

Country Parks

Following another excellent year for the Country Parks, visitor numbers have increased by 11% on last year's figures and now exceed 850,000 per annum. This has been reflected in the income generated on site, with the Country Parks and their partners, San Remo Catering and GoApe (Black Park), generating a combined turnover of £2.45m in 2014/15. It is also worth noting that these three business units also employ in excess of 70 people from the local community.

A comprehensive events' programme for the council's Country Parks has just been published and circulated in the local community. Full details of the events can be found on the BCC website. Highlights of the new programme include the Lakeside Fair on 27 May, Fun in the Park in July and August and Outdoor Theatre (Twelfth Night) and Cinema (Stardust and The Blair Witch Project) in August, plus much more.

Working in the community

I have been busy attending as many local parish council meetings and Local Area Forum (LAF) meetings as is possible, with nineteen parish councils in my division. Each has different issues and problems that require assistance.

Parishes have recently been offered the opportunity to be part of the first phase of the Devolved Services project, which transfers the delivery of services such as grass cutting to parishes. It is fair to say that the process has been protracted, over complex and not ideal particularly for smaller parishes. This has resulted in less take up in our area.

I have been pleased to see villages awarded LAF funding and the benefits that has brought, including new footpaths, improvements to village halls and community activities.

My Community Leader's Fund has been of benefit to small local projects and I have contributed to many villages for example, supplying new salt bins, planters for villages, a live music event at a local school, supporting a dementia cafe and the setting up of a local Tea Dance for more elderly.

I continue to run local surgeries and have been able, in liaison particularly with our PCSOs, to help individuals with issues around travellers, neighbourhood nuisance, claims for vehicle damage, vehicles speeding through villages, access to local schools and school transport and adult social care provision. Details of the coming year's surgeries will be published on the BCC website shortly.

7. Report from Councillor John Cartwright – AVDC

Cllr. Cartwright gave a report on the activities of AVDC over the past year. Overall AVDC had a good year and its future is built on sound foundations. All projects had to stack up on a business standing – e.g. The Gateway has to make a profit to justify its expense. There are events daily, nights and weekends which have resulted in a profit in excess of £50,000.

The new academy buildings which includes Aylesbury College and Bucks University will add to the economy of the town. AVDC had the ability to take low interest loans from the Public Loans Board to fund these. There will be approximately 10,000 students and the rental for the buildings over 25 years will show a handsome profit.

AVDC is still looking at evolving into a Unitary Authority as this would be the most efficient system for the area. AVDC would like to reconsider the Waste Incinerator Chimney and if it becomes a Unitary Authority it would like to close the chimney down.

8. Report from John Cartwright on behalf of the Village Hall Committee

There is a £900 surplus in the accounts which was boosted by a legacy from Mr Clifford East. The Hall received a £2,000 grant to purchase new chairs, and was able to re-sell the old chairs for £500. At its Annual meeting, the Village Hall Committee gained 3 new members – Barbara & Harmon Bolster and Ann Cartwright.

9. Report from Alistair Thompson, PCC Churchwarden (received via e-mail) on behalf of St. Mary's Church, Ludgershall

1. Introduction

This report provides an outline commentary on the life of St Mary's over the last 12 months. It will cover the worship, general running and fabric of the church together with an update on the restoration project.

2. Worship and Pastoral Care

The usual pattern of 4 services a month has continued comprising, Evening Prayer, Morning Prayer, Holy Communion and Family worship. On the fifth Sunday each month we join a Benefice service. Evening and Morning Prayer services are frequently taken by members of the congregation. Lessons and intercessions are delivered by members of the congregation.

Our services are well supported by members of the village, with members of other benefice parishes. Attendance has been in line with previous years.

Our Christmas and Easter pattern of services were generally well supported.

An additional service this year was held on Easter Saturday led by the Ven. Karen Gorman as a Service of Light. This service marked the completion of Phase 2 of our restoration project.

Regular coffee mornings have been held in the village hall as a means of outreach to the village community.

3. General running and fabric of the Church

The day to day management of the church has run smoothly this year. There is a regular team of cleaners, flower arrangers and church yard mowing and maintenance team who keep the churchyard in immaculate order. We are indebted to all of them as they have in their own way maintained our church to a very high and enviable standard with loving care.

We have a keen team of bell ringers who have met on Friday evenings to practice and who have rung bells at our services and weddings throughout the year.

On SaturdayMarch a team of volunteers undertook a spring clean of the interior of the church.

PCC: Our PCC comprises 7 members of the congregation. We have held 4 PCC meetings throughout the year. The minutes have been kept by Valerie Evans – Secretary to whom our thanks is offered for this role.

In June 2014 we were visited by the Aylesbury Rural Dean who conducted an inspection of all our records, inspections etc. We are pleased to report that all was in good order.

Quinquennial Inspection: This was due to be carried out in autumn 2014. However we have delayed this until the completion of phase 2 of the restoration works. It will be carried out by Richard Oxley.

4. Financial

We are indebted to Mervyn Wilson who has been our Treasurer for the last year. He has kept a firm control on our income and expenditure as can be seen from the published and audited accounts for the year.

5. Fundraising

Throughout the year there have been a wide variety of fundraising activities in aid of the restoration works as well as towards general running and upkeep of the church. These events have included: Harvest Supper, Black Tie Dinner with Auction, Jumble sale, Bike Night Raffle, Bucks Churches Trust sponsored bike ride, carol singing etc. We wish to thank everyone who has organised and supported these events in many ways. The accounts provide details of the sums raised.

6. Restoration Project.

In March 2014 we signed a contract with English Heritage for funding of Phase 2 of the restoration project in the sum of £193,000. We also received a £20,000 grant from Bucks Historic Churches Trust. This allowed us to commence the second phase of works in June with a contract awarded to Ward and Co. The total project cost was some £228,000.

This phase has comprised repair and re-covering of the tower roof, installation of a new pumped drainage system, stonework repair and re-pointing to all exterior stonework. This was substantially completed in December. However EH have allowed us to spend the contingency sum left over from the main works which is now allowing us to carry out re-pointing and stonework repairs to the exterior of the chancel. This will ensure that all exterior stonework appears the same.

The completion of this phase now marks the completion of all exterior and main fabric works.

We will shortly be commencing the planning for the interior restoration works.

Prepared by Alistair Thompson and Jean Mole

10. Report from Mr. A. Harris – Charities

Notices for applications were placed on the Notice Boards within the Parish and also in the Bernwode News. No applications were received.

The total amount in the John Hart Charity for Apprentices amounts to £311.

The William Spiers Charity total is £324. Both of these Charities are invested in a Charity account with the Coventry .

11. Report from the Fishing Club – Mr R. Jones

The Club still struggles to get youngsters from within Ludgershall involved. There is a persistent problem with dog fouling around the pond.

12. Comments/questions from villagers:

There were questions concerning potholes and road repairs with inadequate diversionary signage. This has been reported to TfB by the Clerk and residents were also advised to make use of TfB's online reporting system.

Broadband – Cllr Thomas gave an update on plans for developing high speed broadband utilising Gigaclear's proposal.

A request was made for a skip or village freighter to be made available. Plans for the freighter to attend are in process.

13. Accepted by:

_____Chairman _____Date