

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Ludgershall Parish Council
held on Monday 22nd May 2017 in the Memorial Hall, Ludgershall**

Present: Cllr. T. Chettle (Chaired meeting)
Cllr. S. Lawson
Cllr. C. Lewin
Cllr. P. Darvis
9 Parish residents
AVDC Cllr. Cameron Branston

1. Welcome and Introduction

Councillor Chettle welcomed everyone to the meeting and agreed to Chair the meeting. He thanked everyone for attending.

2. Apologies for Absence

Those present noted the apologies received from Cllrs. R Jones and M Themis; County Councillor Angela Macpherson

3. Minutes

Those present **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on Monday 25th May 2016

4. Report from Chairman Ludgershall Parish Council

Councillor Thomas Chettle, Chairman of Ludgershall PC delivered a report about the work of the Parish Council in the previous year:

- The Parish Council has been through a period of change which has created some challenges for councillors over the last year. There has been two different clerks working for the council and the position is currently vacant. The Council is grateful for the good support being provided by the Locum Clerk. Two new councillors have been co-opted and there is currently a vacancy.
- The village has been entered once again for the Best Kept Village Competition. The village was a runner up last year which indicates a year on year improvement so the Council is hoping for an even better outcome this year. Judging takes place in May and June. The Chairman thanked all the villagers who work so hard to make sure the village is very well cared for. This includes grass mowers, strimmers, and litter pickers in particular.
- The Parish Council has continued to book the Play Around the Parishes event. The 2016 event was well attended.
- The recommended ROSPA inspection of the Play Area was completed by an external contractor. The Parish Council hopes to update some of the equipment this year.
- The 200 club continues to provide funds to support The Play Area.
- The Parish underwent an external audit for the year 2016-2017. The audit was less successful this year compared with other years. This situation will improve now that we have Deborah O'Brien supporting us until a new Clerk is appointed.

- A grant from Bucks County Council and Parish Council funding has enabled the purchase of a P.A. system. This will ensure more residents will be able to hear Council proceedings.
- There is a large amount of village green in Ludgershall which requires a great deal of attention. There are some other additional grassed areas that are looked after by the Parish Council. These have been devolved by the County Council (devolved mowing). The Chairman thanked the mowing team for all their hard work. Cllr. Jones, Mr J Goss and Mr J Fisher in particular were thanked.
- Some trees have needed attention during the last year including some pollarding. Looking after trees continues to be a focus for the Parish Council.
- The Parish Council now has its own dedicated website. Parish Council documents can be viewed and down loaded by the public. There is also information about accounts, audits and governance as well as a link to enable villagers to contact the Council.
- The Parish Council has worked closely with Cllr Angela McPherson from Buckinghamshire County Council who has supported the PC's quest to get some roads repaired and resurfaced. This is an ongoing focus for the PC.

5. Report from Thames Valley Police – PCSO Denise Grayburn

No report was received.

6. Report from Cllr Angela Macpherson – Buckinghamshire County Councillor's Annual Report

Challenging times continue for local government with significant reductions in budgets from central government of well over 40% in last 5 years.

This impacts all services commissioned and provided by the County Council from domiciliary care for the elderly, child protection for our most vulnerable youngsters, through to home to school transport, SEN provision, libraries, roads and footpaths and much more.

Road repairs and maintenance continue to be main focus for parishes in my division which has a large network of mainly rural class C and unclassified roads. There is no getting away from the fact that many of these roads are in very poor condition and have been underfunded for many years. The Leader of BCC with other local authority leaders continue to lobby central government with some success. Authorities nationally were awarded a pothole fund but frankly it is a drop in the ocean and for the whole county is very thinly spread.

County councillors have some degree of choice locally as to which roads are resurfaced/microsurfaced (we have a choice of c. 2 roads a year) and I have tried to spread this across the twenty one villages and hamlets in my division and additionally push for improvements to the main east west road A41 which have been delivered through Kingswood. I will continue to fight hard for as much of the repairs budget as possible for our villages from the total £16m pot that covers the whole county.

HS2 and East West Rail (EWR) predominate in the north of the division. The County Council, alongside the district and parish councils and residents all played a major role in petitioning against this project but sadly Royal Assent has been granted and we are already seeing ground investigation works established around the maintenance depot area. Now it is all about mitigation and ensuring

that local people have a voice and are able to hold the main contractors to account. Certainly HS2's engagement with the communities affected has been woefully lacking to this point.

EWR whilst generally agreed to be of benefit in terms of offering better connectivity and a boost to the local economy still presents issues locally during its construction phase not least with a proposed compound in Charndon literally half a mile from HS2's permanent infrastructure depot. Again we will be seeking the best mitigation for the villages and residents affected.

This year the County Council's strategic planning department has been very involved in supporting the District Councils who are forming their local plans. BCC has worked in partnership producing infrastructure and sustainability plans.

At the end of last year the County Council submitted its proposals for a new Unitary Authority to the Secretary of State. 'Modernising Local Government' would do away with all five councils within the current county council boundary; that is BCC, AVDC, Chiltern DC, South Bucks DC and Wycombe DC. It is proposed that all these councils would be dissolved and a new single authority formed. The proposals seek to streamline services, avoid duplication and provide significant savings, much needed in the light of the cuts handed down from the centre. We await the decision from the SoS which we hoped would be this May but may now be deferred due to the general election.

As your local councillor I have a small Community Leader's Fund which I can use to support or kick start small community projects. I've been pleased to have been able to support the setting up of a youth club, defibrillators, lunch club for the elderly, local football teams and scout groups to name but a few. I'm always keen to hear about new community initiatives, and funds permitting, am happy to offer support.

It's been a busy and challenging year but hugely enjoyable. I am proud to be your County Councillor and make every effort to keep in touch with all the villages in my division. I attend parish meetings where I can, (as there are many of them!) and hold surgeries with my district council colleagues. I am easily contacted by email: angmacpherson@buckscc.gov.uk or phone 01296 738818

7. Report from Cameron Branston – Aylesbury Vale District Councillor

Housing and the Vale of Aylesbury Plan has been a focus over the last year. The plan (which is not yet signed off) states there has to be 33,000 houses built between 2013 and 2033. There are two plans for the reorganisation (unitary) of local government in Bucks that the new secretary of state will have to consider. One is a whole county council and the other is two smaller based councils based around the north and south of the county. Currently planning for new houses in villages is capacity related but this could change. Local plans can be used by villages to set out where housing should or shouldn't be built. In drawing up a plan a village has to accept some new housing.

Cllr Branston took questions and comments from villagers and councillors which included:

- When considering the building of new homes the lack of amenities in villages should be taken into account
- The issue of the lack of affordable housing was raised – larger projects include this
- The proportion of affordable homes to larger homes was raised
- Is the government concerned about the impact on the community?
- Could self building enable new housing to be more affordable?
- Cllr. Branston was asked to explain the difference between a Neighbourhood Plan and a Neighbourhood Ordinance.

- Cllr Branston explained how a Neighbourhood Plan can be used in the planning process and is usually drawn up by larger villages. An ordinance carries some weight in the planning process but not as much as a NP.
- A villager suggested that an open meeting be arranged solely for the purpose of discussing planning
- A villager asked how much the precept would have to be increased if the Parish Council decided to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan. The Chair of the Parish Council indicated that the Council would have to consider the costs very carefully if the village made the decision that they would like a plan. The Parish Council agreed to consider an open meeting to discuss the issue further.

8. Report from Ludgershall Village Hall

No report was received

9. Report from the PCC

No report was received

10. Report from the fishing club Ken Tiffin

There are currently 30 members of the club. The fishing club would be very happy to have more young people involved. Children can fish from age 6 upwards as long as they are accompanied by a responsible adult. Saturday morning sessions would be suitable for families. The question was raised about whether there had been a response from the contractor about the cost and feasibility of extending the fishing swims. There had not been a reply but this issue will be on the next PC agenda. Dog fouling is currently not an issue in the pond area. Cllr. Jones and other members of the club keep the area clean and tidy. The chairman reminded residents that the dog excrement bin near the pond will be relocated to a more suitable place.

11. Charities Report – Mr Archie Harris

The William Spiers account has £316.27 invested in the Coventry Building Society Charity account. The Charity for Apprentices (Hart) has £212.68 invested as above. Notices for applications for grants were advertised in the Bernwood News and also on three village notice boards. Two applications were received from people born in the village and they were granted £50 each. The rate of interest is 0.25% gross p.a. as at the 5th April 2017. Although there is only a small amount available it has been useful for 2 people this year which is a positive outcome.

12. Unitary proposals

Cllr. Darvis explained the extent of influence the PC and the public can have. Cllr. Darvis is attending a consultation meeting and would like to represent the views of the community. Currently there are two tiers - AVDC and BCC which are responsible for different things. There is a view from central government that one tier may be more efficient. Costing of the two different ways of organising have been undertaken and are similar. Residents at the meeting did not express any strong views so the Chairman reminded everyone that we need to think carefully about what suits us, and our needs, locally. It was agreed that an emailing facility would be set up so that we can share and consult residents directly. (Only for residents who are interested and are willing to use their email for this purpose.)

13. Questions and comments from electors of the parish

- A question was raised about why Councillors are leaving the council and not staying on? The Chairman explained that each councillor had different reasons for leaving but having a suitable clerk in post is the key to providing good ongoing support for councillors. The lack of a continuous clerk has impacted. Actions have been put in place to resolve this.
- A comment was made about the amount of contributions made by the residents at meetings and whether too much discussion was allowed on some issues.
- A question was raised about whether the PC adheres to the Standing Orders and other rules of governance. The Chairman said the PC is committed to ensuring that the standing orders and structures are adhered to.
- A comment was made about the importance of giving thanks, recognition and proper introductions to council members and ensuring this is properly minuted.
- A resident reminded the PC about an overgrown hedge obscuring motorists' views. This particular hedge is the responsibility of the land owner.
- A resident expressed concern that the litter bin near the bridge on the play area was being used for dog excrement. This will be kept under review by the Parish Council.