

Minutes of Worminghall Annual Parish Meeting

Thursday 25th June 2015 @ 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs: Dr Weaver (Chairman), Showell (Vice Chairman), 8 members of the public.

Minutes of meeting held 1st May 2014: Agreed and signed as a true record. No matters arose from those minutes.

Cllr Showell thanked Dr Weaver for her hard work over the last year.

Dr Weaver conveyed condolences to Penny Rowe on the loss of her husband on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Chairman gave out her report:

It does not seem a year since I was last presenting an annual report to you. It has been an eventful year and one with several changes.

Worminghall is now in a different ward, no longer in Long Crendon but in the Ward of Oakley. We, therefore, say good bye to Councillor Michael Edmonds and welcome our new District Councillor - Michael Rand. Councillor Rand has a great deal of experience in local government and has already got to know several of us in the village well, being involved in some of the planning issues we have had this year.

We have had a change of members of the parish council with the resignation, after many years of hard work for the local community, of Councillor Penny Rowe, and Councillor Matt Grierson who has been so integral at pushing forward with the Community Led Plan. We will miss them both and thank them for everything they have done at the same time as looking forward to welcoming new faces.

Another change is the introduction of devolution of some services from Buckinghamshire County Council. Villagers might have noticed that the grass-cutting is now being carried out locally by Mr Gregory who is being paid directly by Worminghall Parish Council, with the costs recoverable from Buckinghamshire County Council later in the year.

As well as these changes the Parish Council has been involved with several less-than-straightforward planning issues. We have done our best to represent the majority opinion of the village and we have valued the support of the local community greatly. It has forced us to really question how we deal with all planning applications and made us learn exactly how we should and should not comment on them, sticking to guidance from the planning department. We hope that this means that we can be seen to be fair and consistent and that our opinion does count for something at the District Council to ensure that only the developments that the majority of the village want are taken forward and the character of our village is maintained. The Parish Council is limited on its own in the amount of influence it can bring to bear on the District Council but, as has been shown, a combined approach of the Parish Council and persistent local residents can make a real difference.

The opinion of the local community has now been formally laid down in the final version of the Worminghall Community Led Plan which, as you may remember, came about after a great deal of effort from the steering committee communicating with the Parish Council

with direct input from Councillors Grierson and Tasker. This has now been printed and delivered to all households at the lowest cost we could achieve. We believed it was important that everyone had their own copy to encourage ownership of the plan and so that everyone could see what is trying to be achieved. The actions are to be reviewed annually by the Parish Council. Looking at the areas set out by the plan:

Firstly, housing. It has been suggested that there is gentle growth in housing with small scale development within the village parameters. There is never going to be complete agreement within the village exactly where the housing should be situated. There is currently an appeal for 10 homes within the village awaiting the decision of the Appeal hearing.

Secondly, community facilities and groups. The Clifden Arms has been registered as an asset of Community Value and we are delighted to see it open again. With regard to local security, the area has been designated a no doorstep selling zone and there are new Neighbourhood Watch signs at the entrances to the village.

Thirdly, traffic and connectivity. We already had the MVAS signs in place to try to help traffic calming and we are grateful for Councillor Showell for repeatedly organising the charging and re-positioning of these signs. With regard to connectivity, a local company have been active in the village trying to get enough interest in bringing high-speed broadband into the village.

Fourthly, the environment. There is an interest in improving the appearance of the village. Planters for the North and South entrances of the village have been built by local residents and stocked with plants donated by them. If anyone else would like to make a planter and stock it in other areas of the village, please make the Parish Council aware so we can ensure there are no objections from the District Council. A litter pick has been organised for August 30th from midday at the crossroads from where refuse bags can be collected. Please wear bright clothing and happy faces and let's make it a sociable event. The work of keeping the village tidy goes on all year, mainly un-noticed, but I have certainly spied our hard-working parish Clerk, Adele, rooting around the bus shelters, notice boards and telephone box and I think we should extend our thanks once more to her.

We will review the progress of the Parish Plan again next year.

From the point of view of finances, the precept has been raised by £3,000 to help us to build a reserve for unexpected expenses. This has already been needed this year to help towards the cost of paying a planning consultant and legal services for a difficult planning issue. The overall cost was £23,000, the vast majority of which was paid by contributions from local residents.

I would encourage as many members of the village to get involved with the local community. Please do attend the Parish Council meetings that now continue to be held at six-weekly intervals and let us know what you want us to do for you.

Matters raised by the public:

Village Community Plan – sent to County and District Councillors.

Communication with the village residents – Clerk to renew her details in Bernwode News and on Notice boards.

Frustration of Councillors whose comments on Planning Applications seem to be blatantly ignored. The residents should all engage and stand together to be heard by the higher authorities.

Local organisations were invited to the meeting and gave a summary of their activities over the year, a copy of their accounts was submitted to the Parish Council.

David McBain - The Almshouses – wiring and doors renewed and safety certificates issued. Almshouse Fete on Saturday 27th June.

Carol Robson - Village Hall Committee & Village Fete Committee. Fete to be held September 5th in the Village Hall. Jean Chadbone is organizing this.

Time Out – Mr Wallhouse - £1,000 donated over the last year to VH.

Apologies were given from:

Susan Small – Christian Aid

Susan Small – Mother & toddler

David Small – Worminghall Village Lunch

June Slade – The Parochial Church Council

The Chairman thanked them all.

Meeting closed 7.57pm