

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF COOMBE BISSETT AND HOMINGTON HELD
IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 10th MAY 2016 AT 6.30 pm (unconfirmed).**

Present: Councillors: D Rattue, D Hobson, C Chelu, P Crosthwaite, S Gledhill, A Bird and G Bundy. Mrs D James (Clerk). Unitary Councillor Julian Johnson. Mr R Maycock, Mr and Mrs J Speirs, Mr T Mynott and Dr A Lack.

Apologies for absence: Mr and Mrs D Simmonds.

D Rattue welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes of the last meeting: S Gledhill proposed, A Bird seconded and it was carried unanimously that the circulated minutes be confirmed and signed.

There were no matters arising from those minutes.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT Cllr. D Rattue:

As is the practice of Council at Annual General Meeting we shall each report on our areas of responsibility. During the year we have dealt with 6 council meetings and 2 special public meetings and your representatives dealt with 24 planning applications. The planning application for the solar park at Bake Farm, which had been approved last year and was to provide a community benefit for the area is yet to materialize, despite numerous letters to the developer BSR and the involvement of our local MP John Glen the promise of a financial benefit has not been forthcoming.

The Wiltshire Housing Allocation Development Plan recommendations are still awaited from Wiltshire Council and these will play an important role in deciding the future of our villages. Over the past months discussions have been underway to look into the possibility of the community having a Neighbourhood Plan and I pleased to report that a group of people have got together to look into the requirements of having such a plan.

The finances of the Parish Council continue to be in a healthy state, which has enabled the Council to keep the precept in line with the previous year.

We have also been able to carry out several improvement schemes, the refurbishment of the children play area at the recreation field and the drainage improvements at Pennings Drove are two examples of the work completed in the past year. In addition the CHAVS have continued to carry out minor works which whilst a benefit to the community in practicable terms has saved the Parish Council much valuable finance.

The Speed Watch Team continue to play a valuable part in our efforts to keep roads safer for all those that use them and it is hoped that the introduction of a 20 mph zone in Coombe Bissett will assist them in carrying out their greatly appreciated work.

In conclusion I would like to record my appreciation to all the Parish Councillors for their hard work and dedication in what has been a very busy twelve months, and also say a special thank you to our Parish Clerk Debbie for the efficient and pleasant way she always carries out her duties of Parish Clerk.

POLICE REPORT Cllr. D. Rattue:

The past twelve months has seen Wiltshire Police under take a major cost cutting exercise, which was brought about by the reduction in finance from Central Government. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire carried out a public consultation to increase the police part of the council tax by 1.9%. This meant that an average Band D property would increase by £3.12 a year (or 6p per week)

The increase would provide an additional £769000 of much needed local income, which would help to protect local policing. Wiltshire Council approved this request and it came into from April of this year.

Over the coming months local policing will see several changes occurring, with the local policing team and the response team being combined to serve our community. This will mean we will not have a designated community beat officer, a role successfully carried out for many years by Matt Holland.

A final decision is awaited on the location of a Custody Unit to serve Southern Wiltshire, so in the meantime detainees will continue to be transported to the Melksham Custody Unit. In order to further reduce costs and provide a more effective service there will be an increased level of co-operation between the police forces of Avon and Somerset and Gloucestershire. Major crime investigations are already part of the South West Strategic Partnership. Over the last twelve months recorded crime rose by 2.4% (national average 4.5%). The figures show that Wiltshire remains the fourth-lowest force for volume crime per 1,000 people. H.M. Inspectorate of Police rated the performance of Wiltshire Police as good in its latest report on U.K. policing.

The latest twelve-month figures show that there were over 33397 reported crimes in Wiltshire.

Vehicle Crime was down 20.4 % (-588).

Theft was down 4.7% (-736).

Drugs down 21.6% (-355).

Sex offences up by 37% (+314).

Violence with injury up by 10.6 % (+419).

Violence without injury up by 30.4% (+958).

Violence against the person has risen in line with national trends but at a lower rate and Wiltshire Police will over the next twelve months make great efforts to improve this performance statistic. In a recent independent survey 85% of the public said they had confidence in their local police force and confirms that Wiltshire is one of the safest places in England to live.

COOMBE BISSETT C E PRIMARY SCHOOL REPORT Cllr. C Chelu:

The school continues to make small extensions to the building to accommodate new facilities. There is much information about school activities available bi-monthly in the Express and on the school website, where details of Ofsted inspections can be accessed. The class numbers are now as follows:

Oak class (Reception & Y1) = 20 pupils (9 boys, 11 girls)

Elm class (Y1 & Y2) = 25 pupils (12 boys, 13 girls)

Fir class (Y3 & Y4) = 26 pupils (10 boys, 16 girls)

Ash class (Y5 & Y6) = 30 pupils (19 boys, 11 girls)

Of the 101 children on roll, 27 live within the catchment area, which still results in a large number of vehicles coming into Coombe Bissett twice a day.

VILLAGE HALL REPORT Cllr. C Chelu:

The Village Hall continues to be used by a variety of village organisations and maintains a healthy financial balance. Revenue from weddings remains a useful source of income. The running of the hall depends upon the time given by a number of volunteers on the management committee, who are especially grateful to John and Sue Hopkins for their work in cleaning and maintaining the hall. Chris Baughan resigned from the committee during the last year and has contributed a great deal towards its repair and maintenance over many years for which he is heartily thanked. The monthly film night is proving to be a great success; especially now the new fans have enabled an even heating of the hall in winter. Regular users are requested to report any damage or losses that they notice.

HIGHWAYS AND STREET SCENE REPORT Cllr. C Chelu:

Wiltshire Council is just about to start a new Highways contract with Ringway, who are taking over from Balfour Beatty. Hopefully this will result in a better level of service. However it should be noted that money is still short and that some issues will not be addressed. The general public via the My Wiltshire App can report all issues on the web. The Parish Council have finally been able to put in a drain, pipe and ditch into the top of Shutts Lane to remove some of the run off rain water from Pennings Drove which was going down Stockbridge Lane. The requested 20mph limit on Homington Road through Coombe Bissett has finally been implemented, and a 50mph speed limit applied to the C12.

SNOW WARDEN REPORT Cllr. C Chelu:

There being no particular falls of persistent snow this winter, there is little to report. The Parish has plentiful supplies of salt for next winter and volunteers are organised ready to clear snow and salt walkways.

CHILDRENS PLAYGROUND AND RECREATION FIELD REPORT Cllr. A Bird:

The play park had a major facelift this year with new wood chippings and fence posts. The climbing ropes were replaced along with repairs carried out as highlighted by the annual RoSPA inspection.

Dog fouling continues to be a problem. It would appear that some dog owners even take it upon themselves to remove the dog fouling signs. Specific owners have been identified as not clearing up after their dogs, and consideration must be given as to appropriate follow up action.

Two new bins were purchased this year, and litter does not appear to be a major issue.

The cricket club has a new grounds man, and the field is being maintained to an extremely high standard. Once again the cricket nets will be available for public use during the summer.

COOMBE BISSETT PLANNING REPORT Cllr. P Crosthwaite:

We have dealt with 22 planning applications over the past year, covering housing and farm building alterations and extensions, tree work and new build. We are still awaiting decisions on three of these applications, one was withdrawn and approval was given for the others, although in two cases not for all that was applied for.

There has been no progress on the council houses this year; during the summer it was reported that the tender price was higher than was first agreed which was due to delay the start of building until November 2015. However, there has been no activity.

Unfortunately, there has not been any progress with the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. This is a tool for local people to get the right types of development for their community, but it can only include proposals for amounts of growth equal to or greater than those set out in the local authority development plan. A committee of 21 is needed from across the parish, and although there is interest in taking this forward, and the Parish Council fully support it, no one has so far volunteered to lead the initiative.

A 5MW commercial solar farm has been built on Bake Farm but the 5MW community element has yet to be built. The Parish Council continues to pursue BSR for the promised community benefit, although BSR has said that only the community element can be used for the calculation of community benefit, and currently no offer is available for negotiation. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment process continues.

The Parish Council submitted a consultation document on all the sites in the village, and we await Wiltshire Council's decision. There has been no notification from the developers regarding public consultation on the field south of Thorne Close between Homington Road and the A354.

FLOODING REPORT Cllr. P Crosthwaite:

This year has passed relatively quietly on the flooding front. However, had two issues due to heavy summer rains – a huge wash of debris and chalk down Shutts Lane into Homington Rd and down Old Blandford Road onto the A354 and Donkey field, and flooding of the A354 as road drains were unable to cope with the volume of water.

In January we carried out a thorough review of the parishes' drainage issues with Wiltshire Council and a log of works to be undertaken has been drawn up. Wiltshire Council delivered their flooding first aid kit, which includes sand, sand bags and signage, and very little of this was used during the winter.

During the year Bill Imeson stepped down as flood warden, and David Parson and Mark Carrington offered to take on the role. Please remember to report blocked drains direct to Wiltshire Council.

RIGHTS OF WAY REPORT Cllr. G Bundy:

As last year I walk all of the rights of way throughout the year, armed with my secateurs, but they were not needed on the bridleway section of Shutts Lane as once again Richard Shearing has kept it trimmed back.

Requests have been made to the Wiltshire Council to come and inspect a gatepost, which may need replacing on Footpath 7 in Homington, and also to look at 2 footpaths in Coombe Bissett to see if they approve of improving the surface for walkers by placing road planings on the surface. Despite sending two email reminders there has still not been a response. The cutbacks clearly are having an effect!

I mentioned fly tipping last year. There have been problems this past year and on 2 occasions in Shutts Lane/Gypsy Lane, local volunteers, who were fed up with seeing the problem, have cleared this. In both cases it was reported to Wiltshire Council using the My Wiltshire App by the Parish Council and other residents but the Wiltshire Council, I suspect due to cutbacks are not very quick in dealing with such matters.

Very recently it has come to our notice of the fencing, which restricts access, to the wooded area known as "Great Yews". This is not within our Parish boundary but many of our residents do walk that way. Our Clerk has reported the matter to both the clerk of Odstock Parish Council and the Wiltshire Council Rights of Way Officer.

COOMBE BISSETT CEMETERY REPORT Cllr. G Bundy:

In the last year there has been income totaling £280 in respect of 2 interments and 1 headstone siting. Annual expenditure is higher than normal but two costs should not be repeated for several years. The hedge on the southern side was trimmed and lowered by the contractors, Bawdens at a cost of £423 and the new gates and gateposts cost £400. As far as the gate and posts are concerned Ken Mould provided his labour free of charge and he will be dealing with the small problem of some warping of the timber when we have had a dry spell of weather! Other expenditure, which are annual costs on a regular basis, are the bin emptying fee by Wiltshire Council of £115 and the cutting of the grass by Bawdens, the costs of which are included in a fixed 3 year contract with them to cut other Parish Council owned grass areas. The borders each village residents maintain side of the gates and the border inside and the CHAV group has also been involved in these two areas. The old cemetery register has been carefully scrutinized and various purchased plots are being verified to check if they will be required. The cemetery plan is now also on digital format.

HOMINGTON REPORT Volunteer Cllrs. D Hobson and S Gledhill:

Footpaths and Rights of Way

The outstanding work on the project to improve Footpath 7 as it leaves the village was completed. The Project was directed and coordinated by Des Hobson. During the heavy rainstorms of summer 2015 the improvements were effective in channeling water away from Lower Road and improving the surface along the footpath.

A gatepost on the footpath leading to Homington Down was replaced with the help of volunteers.

Flooding

The risk from flooding in the village, particularly from run-offs following heavy rain has continued to be monitored.

Planning Applications

Two planning applications have been considered over the last year. One was for a garage and porch and the other for improvements to a field entrance.

Village Relationships

Both Councilors have been involved in work to address a number of complaints from villagers concerning alleged problems caused by the actions of other members of the community.

Traffic

Unfortunately, the Homington Community Speed-watch has currently ceased to operate due to lack of volunteers. Options to reinstate the Speed-watch are being investigated.

Parishioner's Questions:

Mr Speirs observed he was saddened that more parishioners were not attending their Annual Parish Meeting. He reported that cars are intermittently for sale at the bottom of Drove Lane and asked if this could be stopped. Councillors indicated that this would be a police matter if indeed it is illegal. He also highlighted the increase of heavy lorry traffic travelling up Drove Lane.

Dr A Lack commented that the Annual Parish Meeting had not been widely advertised and the front page of the village website could have been utilized. He then explained that Great Yews has recently been fenced off accompanied by private woods signage by Longford Estate. Dr Lack has communicated with the Estate Manager who has explained reasons for this action which includes vandalism. The Clerk has sought advice from Nick Cowen the Wiltshire Council rights of way officer who indicated that nothing illegal has been done but it could be possible to establish a definitive right of way, following a public enquiry. J Johnson interjected that this process is a lengthy and very costly procedure. The Clerk reported that she has passed on information to the Odstock Parish Clerk who's parish Great Yews is situated in.

Date of next Annual Parish Meeting: Tuesday 9th May 2017.

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm.