

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF COOMBE BISSETT AND HOMINGTON
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 8th MAY 2018 AT 6.30 pm (unconfirmed).**

Present: Councillors: D Rattue, C Chelu, P Crosthwaite, A Bird and G Bundy. Mrs D James (Clerk). Wiltshire Councillor R Clewer. Mr D Germain, Mr and Mrs M Wardroper, Mrs J White, Mrs L Buckley, Mrs M Simmonds, Mr and Mrs J Speirs, Mrs H Oliver and Mr R Maycock.

Apologies for absence: Councillors D Hobson and S Gledhill.

D Rattue welcomed everyone to the meeting. He paid tribute to Mr Bertie Woolnough and Mrs Penny Morris who have recently passed away. Bertie from Coombe Bissett supported the Parish Council in many ways, particularly undertaking the job of internal auditor for several years. Penny from Homington happily participated in various village tasks. They will both be sadly missed.

Appreciation and thanks to Derrick Rattue for his work as chairman was expressed by C Chelu and supported by other members of the Parish Council.

Minutes of the last meeting: G Bundy proposed, P Crosthwaite 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 the Council at the Annual General Meeting we shall each report on our area of responsibility. During the year we have held 6 Council Meetings and 2 Special meetings and your representatives have dealt with 15 planning applications.

The Wiltshire Housing Allocation Development Plan recommendations were finally published which indicated that development in our community was not proposed in the foreseeable future.

The Parish Council has over the past 12 months carried out several improvement schemes, notably the Phase 1 Stocksbridge Lane re-surfacing. This was made possible with a grant from Wiltshire Council and contributions from residents and the Parish Council.

Major improvements have also been made to the Children's Play Area on the playing field with particular attention given to the safety of users when cricket is being played.

The Parish Council were able to obtain a £2000 grant from Tesco for outdoor community equipment and this has financed a selected piece of exercise equipment which was recently installed at the playing field. A special thank you to all the CHAVS who have assisted with this and for all their efforts through out the year on many projects.

The long awaited Wiltshire Council Housing project on the Old Chalk Pit Site was completed and this provided 4 properties, which could be rented, these are the first council houses to be built in the village for many years.

The speed watch team continue their excellent work in making drivers aware of the speeds they are travelling. Excessive speeds are still being recorded on the Homington Road as it enters the 20 mph zone in Coombe Bissett.

The Neighbourhood Plan has made good progress in recent weeks and a grant has been approved to help with costs associated with its preparation. A special thank you to all the group for the time they give to the formulation of a plan.

The Parish Council has ensured by good management to keep the precept below last years figure with a 1.4% reduction whilst other sectors of the Wiltshire Council Tax have shown increases ranging from 3.0% to 7.0%.

Finally I should like to record my appreciation to all the Parish Councillors for the work they do in making our community a unique place to live and also a special thank to our Parish Clerk Debbie who is without doubt the cornerstone of the Parish Council.

POLICE REPORT Cllr. D. Rattue:

Wiltshire Police have recently appointed on a temporary basis Keir Pritchard as Chief Constable, Paul Mills as Deputy Chief Constable and Craig Holden as Assistant Chief Constable. All of these are experienced officers who will endeavor to further improve the performance of the force

The National Crime Statistics has recently been published for the period January 2017 to December 2017 and it showed that recorded crime in Wiltshire increased by 7.95%. This compared with a regional increase of 11.1% and a national average of 15.3%.

Recorded Burglary was up 13.2% on the previous years figures with 503 more burglaries making a total of 4318 break-ins for the year January 2017 to December 2018. The increase is primarily down to how break-ins are recorded by the force, since April 2017 the way burglary is recorded has changed nationally i.e. shed break-ins are now classed as residential burglaries (home/property break-ins) whereas before they were categorized as non-dwelling (non-home/property break-ins).

Wiltshire Police has also improved how they record crimes with a 95.2% crime recording compliance rate. Although the improvement in quality of crime recording has impacted on the results tackling burglary continues to be a force priority. Over the past 12 months a burglary improvement plan has been introduced which now forms the basis of all burglary investigations and take on board the concerns of the public, as our communities are a vital resource in shaping Police response to this type of crime. As part of this, burglary detection rates have improved from 3% in April 2017 to 5.8% and this continues to improve.

The report also indicates a increase of 24.2% in theft from vehicles (from 2064 in 2016 compared to 2564 in 2017). The report suggests that the majority of these incidents are from vehicles, which are insecure or have valuables on display and are often beauty spot thefts.

The number of overall recorded drug offences dropped by 15.2% with 187 fewer offences in 2017 compared to 2016.

The number of recorded rapes increased by 37% with 30% of this increase coming from non recent reports as people gain confidence in reporting such crimes. The Police and Crime Commissioner has Angus Macpherson has stated his commitment that all victims of crime have the confidence to report crime to Wiltshire Police and receive support from their very first call and throughout the criminal justice process when they do so.

Wiltshire Police Crime increase is well below the national and regional figures and compared to similar sized forces we are well below the average crime figures for those forces.

In order to protect front line policing the police and crime element of the council tax will increase by £1 a month. This will mean that Band D properties police precept will rise from £14.19 to £15.19 per month.

Following the March 2018 chemical terror attack in Salisbury, Wiltshire Police have with other National Agencies have been involved in the investigation of this terrible situation, which left three people including a Police Officer fighting for their lives. This unacceptable attack has had a major impact on both the local economy and the deterioration in international relations.

CHILDRENS PLAYGROUND AND RECREATION FIELD REPORT Cllr. A Bird:

The play park has had a new fence installed to replace the previous one, which was in a poor state. A damaged platform on the slide has also been replaced. As a result, the play park is in an excellent state of repair. The hedge along the north boundary of the field has been cut right back. The gates leading from the Village Hall car park to the field have been replaced.

Dog fouling continues to be a problem. The Parish Council is considering banning dogs from the playing field, as other measures have been unsuccessful.

The field continues to be maintained to an extremely high standard by the Cricket Club. The Club's roller was stolen earlier this year, but with help from Wiltshire Council, the support of Richard Clewer, the generosity of local residents and club fundraising, this has now been replaced. An extension to the Cricket Pavilion has been built to house the new roller.

Finally, as a result of a successful bid for Tesco tokens, a new piece of outdoor gym equipment has been purchased, and will be installed next to the play park in May. Thanks to Chris Chelu for his work in achieving this.

COOMBE BISSETT C E PRIMARY SCHOOL Cllr. C Chelu:

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:

Ash class (Y5/6) = 16 Girls & 8 Boys

Fir class (Y3/4) = 17 Girls & 13 Boys

Elm class (Y1/2) = 14 Girls & 10 Boys

Oak class (Reception & Y1) = 5 Girls & 13 Boys

Of the 96 children on roll, only 26 live within the catchment area which still results in a large number of vehicles coming into Coombe Bissett twice a day, many of which park up at the village hall. Recent contact made with the Parent-Teacher association will hopefully result in useful dialogue regarding parking on the field when necessary.

VILLAGE HALL Cllr. C Chelu:

The Village Hall continues to be used by a variety of village organisations. However, the Bowls club is struggling as its membership has fallen and it may close, which would result in a loss of revenue.

Revenue from weddings is still a useful source of income and there are regular enquiries and visits from prospective hirers. There have been some issues with non-village hirers not leaving the hall as they found it, and this sometimes results in a reduction in the returned deposit. It is hoped that that it will be possible to install an electrically operated wide screen, which will facilitate the setting up of the monthly film nights. The running of the hall depends upon the hard work of a number of volunteers on the management committee. Three villagers repaired part of the driveway eroded by users during the year, but some users still cannot manage to keep their vehicles on the tarmac.

HIGHWAYS AND STREET SCENE REPORT Cllr. C Chelu:

Wiltshire Council has continued to work this year with the new Highways and Street Scene contractors. Pothole filling has been the main issue over the winter especially after the low temperatures experienced and the period of snow. The first cut of highway verges is about to start and it is hoped to achieve 8 cuts this year. Gulleys and grips continue to be a problem as mud quickly builds when it rains heavily. For some, one clean out a year with the Vactor is not enough. Blocked gulleys likely to flood houses can be cleaned on request. All issues can be reported by the general public via the My Wiltshire App on the web.

SNOW WARDEN Cllr. C Chelu:

The snow experienced this year was short lived, and our thanks go to the volunteers who managed to clear and salt the main footway within the village. The Parish still has supplies of salt ready for next winter and more can be requested. The parish snow plan was put up on the website to give advice during this period.

COOMBE BISSETT PLANNING REPORT Cllr. P Crosthwaite:

It's been a quiet year for planning in Coombe Bissett with just 9 applications to consider. To date all have been approved by Wiltshire Council.

All Coombe Bissett and Homington's SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) sites were excluded from Wiltshire Council's draft development plan, and no additional site allocations are expected up to 2036.

In March Blue Cedar Homes presented a proposal for development of the Bundy field following on from their presentation in July 2017. The proposal is for 12 retirement properties and 5 starter or low cost homes with access off the Blandford Road. In addition, the proposal includes church car parking spaces for 10-15 cars, a village green area and a parking area for village hall and school users for 30-35 cars. As the site is outside the housing policy boundary, the application could only be approved if the majority of villagers supported it.

A housing needs survey was carried out in February and we await the results.

FLOODING REPORT Cllr. P Crosthwaite:

Apart from one or two isolated incidents there hasn't been an issue with flooding during the past year. This is despite the groundwater level being extremely high this spring, one of the highest ever recorded, and we experienced the 5th wettest March on record.

The proposed kerb and gully work on Homington Road to help prevent flooding has been put on hold. The project was priced at £7500 by Wiltshire Council, with the Parish Council being asked to contribute 40%. The Parish Council's offer of £1000 towards the work was rejected, as was an application for a grant for the remainder of our contribution.

Despite continued efforts throughout the year to try to push forward the agreed drain improvement work along part of the A354 no progress has been achieved, but pressure from Richard Clewer continues to be applied to accomplish the project.

Please continue to report any blocked drains direct to Wiltshire Council.

In December three telemetered loggers were installed by the Environment Agency to help them understand the relationship to permanent gauging stations, both upstream and downstream, to assist with the development of flood warning systems and flood alleviation options. The data will also be used for model calibration in understanding the distribution of flows through the arches of the bridge and the backwater effect at the bridge. Data will also help the EA to understand the balance flows between millstream and main river. The data collected so far has been excellent giving important input to the EA's river flow model.

In addition, the EA is hoping to get some flood management work started by working in conjunction with the AONB on projects as part of their Heritage Lottery Fund application.

RIGHTS OF WAY REPORT Cllr. G Bundy:

Again this past year I have walked all of the rights of way, many of them much more than some.

In general they are all passable but works have been carried out on some to improve them. Footpath 4 is the one that has had most work done, with some of the surfacing on the north side of the river having been much improved for walkers thanks to the efforts of a local resident. Also two of the gates ground surfaces have been improved so that walkers do not end up having to wade through a deep large puddle area. Again one done by the same local resident and the other by two CHAVS and one of the Chavs grandsons. However the major work on this footpath was done on the southern side of the river in what is known as Stocksbridge Lane to make it safe for walkers with a tarmac surface being laid, paid for in the main by a grant obtained by the Parish Council and substantial contributions by some of the local residents who live on that part of the lane.

Other improvements, on other footpaths in particular, have been carried out by myself with the aid of my secateurs!

As to the coming year the Parish Council are investigating how to improve part of Footpath 6 where it passes through the wooded area below Homington House as it has become more narrow and needs widening to make it easier for walkers.

COOMBE BISSETT CEMETERY REPORT Cllr. G Bundy:

Income depends each year purely on how many fees in respect of burials, plot reservations and headstone fees are received and as a result the cemetery is one Parish asset that normally in each year is in a situation that income is often insufficient to meet expenditure. This last year is no exception with repairs needed to the entrance walls, hedges having to be cut and maintained and of course the grass cutting which is needed on a regular basis to maintain the cemetery in a good condition. Despite this situation it is a wonderful asset for the village as it creates a peaceful location for those visiting to remember their loved ones.

HOMINGTON REPORT Volunteer Cllrs. D Hobson and S Gledhill:

Flooding

The risk from flooding in the village, particularly from run-off following heavy rain has continued to be monitored. The Parish Council has continued to lobby Wiltshire Council to clear grips and conduct other minor works to improve drainage.

Planning Applications

Nine planning applications (including two variations) have been considered over the last year. These have included, residential property re-development, house extensions, agricultural buildings and tree surgery. In two cases planning applications were rejected by the Southern Area Board, due at least in part to the objections raised by the Parish Council.

Traffic

Due to a lack of volunteers the Homington Community Speed-watch is not currently in operation. If any villagers are interested in re-opening the scheme they are asked to contact one of the village's Parish Councilors.

Parishioner's Questions:

Mr Germain asked for proper resurfacing on the A354 through the centre of Coombe Bissett. He explained that the poor surface results in a high, unacceptable level of noise reverberating throughout the area. C Chelu gave assurance that he will raise the request with Highways. R Clewer commented that Wiltshire Council Highways always prioritise road safety issues ahead of other problems.

Mr Speirs commented on the long grass on the Donkey Field. The Clerk explained that the contractors have attempted to tackle the grass but the surface is currently water logged so the mower is unable to be taken across. The Clerk will contact the contractors to discuss how the problem can be solved.

Date of next Annual Parish Meeting: Tuesday 14^h May 2019.

The meeting closed at 7.03 pm.

