

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF COOMBE BISSETT AND HOMINGTON HELD  
IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 14<sup>th</sup> MAY 2013 AT 6.45 pm (unconfirmed).**

**Present:** Councillors: D Rattue, D Hobson, Rev W Cole, C Chelu, P Crosthwaite, R Cox and S Gledhill. Mrs D James (Clerk). Unitary Cllr J Johnson, Mr D Germain, Miss R Dicksee, Mr J Dicksee, Mrs S Speirs, Mr J Speirs and Mr G Bundy.

**Apologies for absence:** Mrs P Pratt, Mrs A Germain and Mr R Maycock.

D Rattue welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Minutes of the last meeting:** W Cole proposed, R Cox seconded and it was carried unanimously that the circulated minutes be confirmed and signed.

There were no matters arising from those minutes.

**CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT Cllr. D Rattue:**

As is the practice of your Council at the AGM we will each report on the areas of responsibility.

During the year we have held 6 council meetings and 28 planning applications were dealt with by your representatives.

In June 2012 the two villages celebrated Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee and the events held over several days proved to be both successful and enjoyable for all of us. To commemorate the Jubilee both villages planted trees, which will be a lasting tribute to such a great occasion.

The Parish Plan was published and is giving the Parish Council valuable information on the items which villagers wish to have implemented subject to the necessary finance being available. Several items have been introduced: A bus shelter installed outside the Fox and Goose; Community Speedwatch introduced on the C12 in Homington; first phase of road safety improvements in Homington and a footpath from the Fox and Goose to Marsh Lane. After 5 years of discussions with Wiltshire Council, agreement has been reached for affordable housing to be put on the Old Chalk Pit site.

Our Parish Clerk Debbie James has just completed her first year as clerk and her contribution to the effective running of the Council has been immense. We are indeed fortunate to have her as parish clerk. I would also like to record my appreciation to Julian Johnson, our Southern Area Board representative who has so effectively supported our applications on numerous occasions. To all the Parish Councillors, I would say a special thank you for all their hard work over the last year and the support they have given me as Chairman.

Mr J Speirs thanked the Parish Council for the repairs and improvement of the footpath between the Fox and Goose and Marsh Lane.

**WILTSHIRE POLICE REPORT Cllr. D Rattue:**

In November 2012 the Wiltshire Police Authority was replaced by the Police and Crime Commissioner and Angus Macpherson was elected as the new commissioner. During this period a new Chief Constable, Patrick Geenty was appointed and has taken up the post. In the southern Wiltshire Neighbourhood Policing team which covers our area we welcome Sgt. Dave Lennane and takes over from Sgt. Dean Garvin, who has moved to the Salisbury custody unit.

The Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner has recently published his police and crime plan which focus on partnership, pro-activity and prevention. The plan which followed a period of consultation on the draft proposals will set the direction of policing for Wiltshire and Swindon over the next 4 years. The plan focuses on working with communities and partners and covers the following main areas: Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour; protect the

most vulnerable in society; put victims and witnesses first; reduce offending and re-offending; drive up standards of customer care and ensure unfailing and timely response to calls for assistance.

Speeding in the two villages continues to be a problem though there has been an improvement since the introduction of the Speedwatch scheme. It is hoped to introduce the scheme in Coombe Bissett on the A354 which is an area of concern for people living on the Blandford Road.

Locally Matt Holland and his team continue to offer a welcome contact for us all and their presence in the community is a vital part of the neighbourhood policing objective.

#### **COOMBE BISSETT UNITED CHARITIES Cllr. W Cole:**

On 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012 our Central Board of Finance Shares were valued at £3069.62, a decrease of some 10% compared with the previous year's valuation of £3405.51. At the end of the financial year 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 we had cash in the bank totaling £144.61. We provided seven residents with heating gifts of £20.00, all of which were received with very appreciative thanks accompanied by thank you letters or cards. During the past year Viv Scammell resigned after some years in post when he rendered inside knowledge of many elderly residents and we thank him for his valuable service... Therefore trustees are now as follows: Parish Council nominated – Westley Cole and Sue Dyer; Co-opted trustees – Dr. Richard Willis and Abigail Bird; there is no Ex-officio trustee following the departure of the Reverend Alison Williams but in due course there will be a Team Vicar appointed who automatically becomes a trustee. Once again the Parish owes a vote of thanks to Richard Allen, our untiring Clerk who continually wades through the mountain of paperwork which issues forth from the Charity Commission. As usual requests for donations or knowledge of deserving persons should be channeled to either the Clerk or a Trustee.

#### **COOMBE BISSETT C E PRIMARY SCHOOL Cllr. W Cole:**

During the past year there have been considerable improvements to buildings, grounds and curriculum. The school library was reopened in Book Week after being refitted, painted and furnished. There is now an exciting and inspiring library which is being enthusiastically used by children from all year groups. Outside the playground has had new markings and equipment to provide even more play opportunities for the children. Now also developed in the school grounds is a new willow dome and tunnels on the top field and new planters in the outside learning areas of Oak Class and Elm Class (Foundation Stage and Key Stage One). On the bank there is a Jubilee Orchard with fruit trees donated to the school by the PCC. This year, as well as an exciting creative curriculum, extended is the range of enrichment events; maths days, book week, Healthy Schools and Harvest Week, archaeology day and eco afternoon. There are 95 children on role, including children from Coombe Bissett, Homington, Stratford Tony, and Bishopstone.

#### **COOMBE BISSETT CEMETERY Cllr. W Cole:**

During the past year there have been two interments – Joyce Thorne and Rosemary Lashbrooke – both Coombe Bissett residents of many years standing and both members of a well known local family. Following comments about the state of the Cemetery a change of contractors by the Clerk has resulted in a dramatic and very noticeable change in the appearance of the burial ground which has been appreciated by several residents. It is worth recording every year that keeping faith with the terms of the gift that any person so disadvantaged from burial of a relative by the cost may make an application to the Chairman of the Parish Council for alleviation of the fees.

### **FLOOD WARDEN REPORT Cllr. P Crosthwaite:**

In the autumn the Flood Wardens attended a Flooding Conference in Warminster run by the Environment Agency. The rain became an almost permanent fixture during the second half of 2012, and we knew that groundwater flooding could be an issue during the winter, as groundwater was already at end of winter levels. The Parish Council made villagers aware of the issues, and ways to alleviate the problems of groundwater flooding, with an article in the Express, but before Christmas Homington Road flooded for the first time in many years. Wiltshire Council was swift to respond and conscientious in it's clearing of drains on Homington Road: after their first visit the situation was significantly improved, and a follow up visit clearing all the drains along the lower part of the road solved the problem. During this time sand bags were distributed where necessary. Wiltshire Council delivered more but these were not needed. Flood warnings and alerts were issued by the Environment Agency for the River Ebbble but no flooding subsequently occurred.

### **COOMBE BISSETT PLANNING REPORT Cllr. P Crosthwaite:**

In Coombe Bissett there were 21 planning applications during the year; 12 involving tree work and 9 dwelling alterations, extensions or new build. All applications were approved except one which was withdrawn following objections.

### **CHILDRENS PLAYGROUND AND RECREATION FIELD Cllr. C Chelu:**

The playground continues to be well used by children and parents both after school and at other times. Litter is minimal although the kick wall was badly graffitied. This has been over painted and there has been no re-occurrence. The gate was broken off its hinges, but this has been repaired. Recently 3 fence palings had to be replaced due to vandalism. The RoSPA report indicates that the playground is in a satisfactory and safe condition although their report contained some out of date photographs. They have not replied to letters regarding this matter. Most dog owners are using the plastic bags and the bins provided. However recently there have been complaints by the cricket club about the amount of dog fouling. Occasional use of the field for parking has not resulted in significant damage to the grass. It recovers well if allowed to rest.

### **VILLAGE HALL Cllr. C Chelu:**

The village hall remains financially healthy, but still relies substantially on village bookings for its income. There has been more interest recently in using the facilities for wedding receptions, the web site proving to be a useful promotional tool. All public hall bookings now appear on the website calendar automatically and on-line enquires for booking are now available. Although parking at the Hall for parents dropping off and picking up school children is busy, there have been no reported issues this year.

### **PARISH STEWARD LIAISON REPORT Cllr. C Chelu:**

The wet weather both this and last year has resulted in much damage to softened grass verges by large vehicles. Blocked drains have generally been cleared on request in Coombe Bissett apart from those in Shutts Lane which have not been cleared since last August despite two requests. Problems of flooding and drainage in Homington have been largely resolved by local residents in liaison with Wiltshire Council. Potholes have been a recurrent problem.

They generally have been filled, but often requiring several requests to do so. All too often the filling comes out again necessitating another call out. Substantial repairs are not possible as Wiltshire Council say that they do not have enough money. Occasional requests have been made to remove fly tipping from the top of Drove Lane. These are always dealt with quickly.

#### **HOMINGTON REPORT Cllr. D Hobson:**

Homington commemorated the Queen's Diamond Jubilee by planting a line of white willow trees on the road out of the village towards Salisbury, completing an avenue. It was made possible by fund-raising by many parishioners, some financial support from the parish council, plus a group of active volunteers. The project was led by Aileen Webb, Stephen Gledhill and Brenda Macey, and villagers are most grateful to them.

The Homington Community Speed-watch volunteers have spent many hours on the roadside in all weathers recording traffic speeds. Vehicles caught speeding are sent a letter by the Police. Thanks to their hard work it has been enormously successful in reducing speeding traffic past the three blind junctions in the village. This is an ongoing commitment, so volunteers are always welcome.

Jane Gregory stood down as parish councillor at the end of her term in May 2013. You will be much missed Jane! Another Homington resident - Stephen Gledhill - has been elected in her place.

Like every village, Homington thrives because of the people who volunteer: whether it is cleaning the church, cleaning the bus shelter, collecting newspapers for elderly neighbours, arranging church flowers, planting flower tubs, picking up litter, getting culverts un-blocked, and gritting the roads when it snows.

#### **RIGHTS OF WAY REPORT Cllr. J Gregory:**

Improvements to the upper end of footpath 7, running between Lower Road in Homington and Homington Down, undertaken last year proved sufficient in their own right however the lower end of the footpath was overwhelmed by surface water for much of our wet winter this year, rendering it impassable. The Parish Council will work with the landowner during the coming months to find a solution to the problem to ensure this is not repeated and that this much used footpath remains open to all who wish to use it throughout the year. We are extremely grateful to the villagers of Homington who worked over the Christmas period to help to clear the culvert at the head of footpath 7 and particularly to Dr Jeffrey Easton who co-ordinated a visit from Wiltshire Council to assist with this work.

Deposits of hardcore at the far end of footpath 7, just below where it joins Homington Down, have successfully filled the mud patch which has thrived there for some time. Walkers have reported a significant improvement. A new kissing gate has been installed on footpath 2 to Stratford Tony, funded by the Area Board with a contribution of £25 from the Parish Council. This has been very well received.

In response to numerous requests expressed in responses to the Parish Plan questionnaire a new footpath has been installed between Marsh Lane and The Fox & Goose, funded by the Parish Council. Thanks to Siteform, the contractors who undertook this work on our behalf, for completing the work to a high standard. This work has improved the appearance of this previously muddy area and it has made the route safer for all those who use it. We are confident the benefits of this new path will be enjoyed by many.

**Parishioner's Questions:**

Mr D Germain asked why the three weirs in the parish which used to be kept in good condition had deteriorated. He explained that this has resulted in low levels of river water during dry spells in some areas. Mr Germain has reported this to the Environment Agency and is prepared to discuss further.

Mr J Speirs asked why the white railings running along the A354 are in such poor condition. D Rattue, D Hobson and C Chelu explained that Wiltshire Council and the Environment Agency had been approached. Wiltshire Council report they do not currently have funds to carry out painting, accompanied by traffic management of the area whilst the work is in progress. The Environment Agency report that because of the close proximity of the water course, it is illegal to rub down the old paint and contaminate the water. The Parish Council regrets they are unable to support any villagers who may wish to paint all or sections of the railings.

The Clerk will report the damaged white railings for repair to Wiltshire Council.

Mr D Germain asked if there was any progress on his previous request for a Parish Council donation towards a new heating system in the Village Hall. D Rattue informed him that his enquiry would be referred to the Village Hall committee via C Chelu.

Mr J Speirs made an enquiry to the origin of the Coombe Bissett United Charity. W Cole replied he would investigate and publish in due course. The beneficiaries are confined to Coombe Bissett residents.

Mr G Bundy asked how the Parish Council deals with planning applications. D Rattue explained that all applications are discussed at Parish Council meetings. If a meeting is not imminent and the Parish Council is likely to object, an extra full council meeting would be called.

Mr J Speirs kindly thanked the Parish Councillors for their work and support of the Parish.

Date of next Annual Parish Meeting: Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

The meeting closed at 7.32pm.

Signed:-----Dated:-----