

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF COOMBE BISSETT AND HOMINGTON HELD
IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 13th MAY 2014 AT 6.45 pm (unconfirmed).**

Present: Councillors: D Rattue, D Hobson, C Chelu, P Crosthwaite, R Cox, S Gledhill and A Bird. Mrs D James (Clerk). Unitary Cllr J Johnson. Mrs S Kittermaster, Mr R Maycock, Mr S James, Mr P Hartgill, Mr G Bundy, Mr J Speirs and Ms S Newnham.

Apologies for absence: Mrs S Speirs and Mrs P Pratt.

D Rattue welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes of the last meeting: P Crosthwaite proposed, C Chelu seconded and it was carried unanimously that the circulated minutes be confirmed and signed.

There were no matters arising from those minutes.

CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT Cllr. D. Rattue:

As is the practice of your Council at the A.G.M. we will each report on our areas of responsibility.

During the year we had 6 Council Meeting and 1 Extraordinary Meeting. Your representatives dealt with 37 planning applications including the controversial Bake Farm Solar Park application.

Sadly during the year the year the Parish Council lost it's longest serving member Rev. Westley Cole. For over three decades Westley served the Council both as Chairman and as a member of the Council, his presence will be greatly missed by the community.

During the past year our villages have been adversely affected by continuous rain which caused serious flooding to many properties in both Coombe Bissett and Homington. Several families had to move from their homes whilst others were forced to rely on pumps to keep the flood waters at bay. The local flood wardens and their helpers did a tremendous job in assisting those in need and the community spirit came to the forefront on many occasions.

During the past twelve months several improvements were carried out in the villages with a traffic calming project at Homington being completed. In addition new kissing gates were installed on footpath four and the white railings opposite The Fox & Goose re-painted, in both cases the work was carried out by volunteers and their efforts are much appreciated by the community.

The Councils financial accounts are in a sound position and this has been helped by grants received from the Southern Area Board for improvement schemes carried out in the parish.

Over the past twelve months I have been very fortunate to have such a hard working and enthusiastic Parish Council who are so supportive in the work we carry out. A special thank you to our Parish Clerk Debbie James whose dedication to her work is appreciated by all the community.

Finally we welcome Abigail Bird to the Council following her recent election and I am sure she will prove a great asset to the work of the Parish Council.

POLICE REPORT Cllr. D Rattue:

Salisbury Police Station which has been in Wilton Road since the 1960s is to close at the end of June 2014 and will no longer be the focal point for Policing in Southern Wiltshire. Officers and staff are to be relocated across the area with the Response Units being based at Amesbury; other sections will share accommodation with Wiltshire Council

at Bourne Hill and the Five Rivers Complex. A new custody unit is to be built in Salisbury; until it is completed Salisbury will use the Melksham facility.

The Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner have stated that front line policing will not be effected by these changes and there will be considerable financial and efficiency benefits over the coming years.

Locally a Neighbourhood Speed Watch has been set up in Coombe Bissett and joins the existing one in Homington in efforts to reducing speeding in our villages. We owe all the Speed Watch volunteers a sincere thank you for giving their own time to make our community a safer place to be.

The following performance figures for Southern Wiltshire which covers Coombe Bissett and Homington give an indication of policing performance

CRIME

SOUTHERN WILTSHIRE	12 MONTHS TO DEC.2012	12 MONTHS TO DEC.2013	VOLUME CHANGE	% CHANGE
VICTAM BASED CRIME	649	586	-63	-9.7
DOMESTIC BURGLARY	27	23	-4	-14.8
NON DOMESTIC BURGULARY	120	75	-45	-37.5
VEHICLE CRIME	83	76	-7	-8.4
CRIMINAL DAMAGE ARSON	165	116	-49	-29.7
VIOLENCE AGAINST PERSON	68	89	+21	+ 30.9
ASB INCIDENTS	275	248	-27	-9.8

The County of Wiltshire continues to be one of the safest places in England to live and we hope that despite the reduction of funding for Wiltshire Police from central government this feature remains the same over the years to come.

COOMBE BISSETT C E PRIMARY SCHOOL Cllr. C Chelu:

The school has agreed to give minimal reports to the council as there is much information about their activities available bi-monthly in the Express and on their website. The class numbers are now as follows:

Oak class (Reception & Y1) = 19 pupils (8 boys, 11 girls)

Elm class (Y1 & Y2) = 23 pupils (13 boys, 10 girls)

Fir class (Y3 & Y4) = 29 pupils (18 boys, 11 girls)

Ash class (Y5 & Y6) = 25 pupils (13 boys, 12 girls)

Of the 96 children on roll, 28 live within the catchment area.

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. The school uses the playground for younger children and teachers perform assessments on their physical abilities. Litter is minimal. The RoSPA report indicates that the playground is in a satisfactory and safe condition, any risks being assessed as low. The hedge and weeds do need regular maintenance, and the bark chippings need occasional

loosening to retain the energy absorbing characteristics required to protect falling children. A new football goal has been supplied by a local resident and the rotten kick wall is being replaced. Occasional use of the field for parking has not resulted in significant damage to the grass. Most dog owners are using the plastic bags and the bins provided.

VILLAGE HALL Cllr. C Chelu:

The village hall remains financially healthy, but continues to rely substantially on village bookings for its income. Loans raised for the new extension some years ago are now largely paid off. A grant from the Express has enabled the committee to purchase some new chairs. Website enquiries still generate booking for weddings, although adverts in Valley News have not produced interest. There are occasional parking problems when the hall is booked by two organisations and parents are dropping off and picking up school children. The school has been requested to book the field for parking when they have special events.

HIGHWAYS AND STREET SCENE REPORT Cllr. C Chelu:

During the last year Wiltshire Council have contracted out this work to Balfour Beatty Living Places. This appears to have resulted in a double layer of management. The Parish Council liaise with Wiltshire Council who then liaise with Balfour Beatty to see if the work requested can be done. The Wilts Council man has a little van. The BB man has a big 4 x 4 pick up. A comprehensive photo-report was sent to Wiltshire Council last August showing all the work that was required to repair the roads in the two villages. Only road damage that is classified as dangerous is mended. This appears to be precious little. Potholes have been a recurrent problem especially after this year's flooding. Temporary repairs tend to need redoing after a while. Substantial repair requests have been noted by Wiltshire Council but it will take some time to complete them, despite the increase in budget that Wiltshire Council has announced. The Parish now has a series of Community Days when a team of operatives will descend and carry out requested jobs. The results so far have been disappointing and requests to complete some work to a higher standard have been made.

FLOOD WARDEN REPORT Cllr. P Crosthwaite:

A combination of flooding from river water, ground water run-off and rising springs made the start of 2014 one of the worst for flooding in living memory in Coombe Bissett. In total 20 homes were significantly affected and 8 households were forced to leave their homes. On top of this many houses experienced severe sewage problems. At present 5 houses are still uninhabited

The Parish Council purchased sand and sand bags and these were distributed to households in an attempt to slow or divert floodwater. In addition, the Plymouth Brethren distributed many sand bags around the village, and we are extremely grateful to them, and to numerous villagers, for all their hard work at the crisis time.

Since then we have been working with both Wiltshire Council and the Environment Agency so that they can understand water flows and drainage issues in an attempt to rectify problems. Wiltshire Council's principal drainage engineer visited the village on 10th April and has assured the Parish Council that there will be an annual jet clean and vacator clean along Homington Road, the solid drain cover between Wyckfield and The Old House will be replaced with a grill type cover, a venturi attachment will be installed on the drain in the garden of The Old House to aid water entering the river when it is fast flowing and levels are high, and CCTV will be used in all highway drains in flood affected areas so that accurate assessment of problems can be identified and remedied accordingly. Wiltshire

Council will consider and refer to the Environment Agency the flow of the main river and dedicated flow path under the arches of the road bridge, and they will examine the drain on the Stratford Tony turning to assess its direction.

We have also been offered a Flood First Aid kit by Wiltshire Council which includes one ton of sand, 50 sand bags, 50 gel sacs, flood warning signs and fluorescent jackets.

COOMBE BISSETT PLANNING REPORT Cllr. P Crosthwaite:

During the last year we have dealt with 24 planning applications in Coombe Bissett, 5 of which related to tree work. 2 applications were withdrawn and subsequently re-submitted and to date only one application has been refused by Wiltshire Council.

The most significant application this year was on the land to the west of Bake Farm Buildings for the erection of solar panels, and associated works and infrastructure, including switchgear, inverter stations, access tracks, security fencing, security cameras and grid connection. The Parish Council objected to this proposal and amended plans have now been submitted for discussion by the developer. The Planning Officer will shortly be meeting with the applicants and a far more detailed consultation is likely to follow. Those consulted previously will be re-consulted with amended, detailed plans and the deadline should be extended.

COOMBE BISSETT CEMETERY REPORT Parish Clerk:

There was one burial during the past year. Income was also received from a memorial fee.

The grass cutting maintenance team has kept the cemetery looking neat and tidy and a fixed price contract for the next three years has been agreed. The trees and shrubs on the right side have needed attention and work should take place in the near future, depending on the presence of bird's nests.

Due to changes in bin collection procedures, a few weeks ago Wiltshire Council unfortunately stopped emptying the rubbish bin. A new contract has been signed so that a wheelie bin will now be emptied each month for a monthly fee of £8.92. Appreciation to John Wheeler who ensured the bin was moved into Pennings Drove for ease of collection. He has also kindly disposed of the old bin. The Parish Council thanks John for his hard work at the Cemetery maintaining the gates and entrance beds.

It has been requested by the grass cutting team that people park with consideration outside the Cemetery as machinery cannot be taken through if a vehicle is parked across the gates.

HOMINGTON REPORT by volunteer Parish Councillors Des Hobson and Stephen Gledhill:

High ground water levels affected the village in early 2014, with 8 houses at serious risk of indoor flooding. Thanks to ditch digging and culvert clearing by many villagers prior to the winter, and householders' own electric pumps, internal flooding was just avoided, though village roads were awash for several weeks. Our culture of self help is envied by many other communities. We need Wiltshire Council's input to deal with matters which cannot be resolved by our own resources.

The Homington Community Speed-watch volunteers have spent many hours on the roadside in all weathers recording traffic speeds. The village is enormously grateful to all the volunteers, and especially co-coordinator Philip Alfry. Vehicles caught speeding are sent a letter by the Police. Thanks to the volunteers' hard work, the initiative has reduced traffic speeds past the three blind junctions in the village. However, more volunteers are needed, so please consider whether you might be able to spare some time to help. The Police won't be doing it for us, so if you are worried about speeding traffic you do need to get involved.

We have complemented the Speed-watch initiative with new road markings and a 'gateway feature' through the village in the hope that these will have some psychological effect on inadvertently speeding drivers. We know that they will have no effect on deliberately speeding drivers. What we now have is the best we are going to get: Wiltshire Council won't give us speed cameras, chicanes, mirrors or sleeping policemen – we have asked. The

Parish Council has paid Wiltshire Council 10% of the cost of the new markings. Another traffic matter is that Barbers Lane has been shortlisted for a 20mph zone.

We have responded to five planning applications over the last year, plus one tree application. Two of these were large applications.

Following a request from villagers for a grit bin at the bottom of Barbers Lane we have asked Wiltshire Council twice, and been turned down twice. The Parish Council is investigating alternative options.

The line of willows planted last year to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee is flourishing thanks to careful nurturing by Jim Webb and Vince Ryalls. 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, and picking up litter.

Parishioner's Questions:

No questions.

Date of next Annual Parish Meeting: Tuesday 12th May 2015.

The meeting closed at 7.07pm.

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