

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Great Shefford Parish Council held on Thursday 2nd May 2013

Present Cllr S Benn (Chair), Cllr S Ackrill, Cllr J Winfield, Cllr G Knass, Cllr J carter, Cllr G Parsons and Parish Clerk Sandi Ackrill.

Also present 2 members of the Public

1) **Apologies and Declarations of Interest on Agenda items** – none

2/3) **Nominations for Chairman** – Cllr Parsons nominated Cllr Benn and Cllr Knass seconded – there were no other nominations – Cllr Benn was elected and signed her Chairman Declaration of Office.

4 **Co-option on possible new councillor** – there were no applications

5/6) **Nominations and election of Vice Chairman** – Cllr Winfield proposed Cllr Ackrill which was seconded by Cllr Knass – all were in favour and there were no other nominations – Cllr Ackrill was elected and signed his declaration of office.

7) **Chairman's Report 2012/13**

This has been a year of consolidation, change and achievements.

Consolidation, in relation to paperwork and structures. This year we completed and adopted Standing Orders, Complaints Procedures, Freedom of Information Requests and Terms of Reference for three of the Parish Sub-committees (Country Fayre, Allotments and Parish News). This was the result of a lot of discussion and commitment and I thank everyone involved either as councillors and/or members of subcommittees and in particular our parish clerk for pulling it together and keeping us to our deadlines. We also agreed our auditors for the next 5 years.

Changes, in relation to payment procedures for our clerk. She is no longer paid by cheque but is now paid monthly through BALCS (Berkshire Association of Local Councils). Changes also in terms of members of the Parish Council. Sadly, we said goodbye to our Chairman, Viv Williams after 15 months in the chair, but previously also Vice Chairman and we wish her well. She continues to be involved with the Horticultural Show as part of the Country Fayre sub-committee. We also saw the resignation of Councillor Mark Andrews. Mark was only with us for a short time but was often one of two people visiting sites re planning applications. We welcomed two new councillors to our team this year, Jim Carter (returning after a few years break) and a more recent resident to our parish, Glenn Parsons. With the resignation of the previous chair, thanks must go to the current Vice-chairman, Steve Ackrill, for holding the fort. The new chair was elected in February.

Achievements. In a proactive parish like Great Shefford, there is a vibrancy and residents of both this parish and neighbouring villages comment about how much goes on in the village and surrounding parish. Behind the scenes, there are a lot of people involved in a great deal of planning to make things happen. In some of these, the Parish Council or a sub-committee of the Council take the lead, in others a lesser role but organisations and working groups know that they can contact the Parish Council. Two good examples of these, both of which were very successful during this past year are the Country Fayre with the country theme proving very popular and the Jubilee celebrations where the Parish Council provided some of the funding. We have a playground of which we can be proud and the end of September saw the installation of the half-pipe skate ramp. This was a joint venture between a group

of local youths and supportive adults and the Parish Council. The Villager of the Year Award went jointly to Alan and Alma Dawkins for the magnificent achievement of raising the money to have the Church Bells restored. Some of the parish councillors were able to be present at the dedication service at the end of April.

Safety is a key issue and is high on the agenda. Risk assessments such as the bus shelter and playground are done regularly and maintenance to ensure they are safe. As a result of inspection, we replaced seats on the see-saw and some swings. I would like to thank all those involved with maintenance, Steve Ackrill for grass cutting, litter clearance and inspections and Nigel Goldstraw and a thank you to all those who have helped in addition. A resident in Shefford Woodlands was concerned about the brow of the hill on B4000 and an appropriate speed restriction. This has resulted in a painted SLOW on the road. We rely on the public to be vigilant and bring things to our attention and to all those who have done so, thank you. The Newbury Road footpath continuation and Swan bridge maintenance were also completed this year. Dropped curbs for the buses have been done. We are still in negotiation about a bus shelter for Church Street but agreement about this is near completion.

One of the subcommittees that has been very active during this year is the Emergency Management Team. This was set up in 2009 following the flooding in 2007. Ground water levels have been as high for part of this year, as they were in 2007 and the team have worked hard, liaising with West Berkshire County Council Highways division to try and prevent flooding to parts of the village. To this effect, a pump was installed at the northern end of the village. Thanks must go to many of the team for clearing ditches, riparian owners for taking responsibility and particularly to the Village Liaison Officer, secretary (website updates) and the parish clerk for ensuring that there was an effective dialogue between us and the authorities. We also thank a local landowner for storing 2 ton of sand that during Christmas week we thought we would need urgently.

The Village has benefitted from many other events e.g. Annual Litter Pick in October, Christmas Carols round the tree in December. This latter event also involved a short dedication to our fellow Councillor, Gerald Goddard who sadly died on the night of the Carols the previous year. The bench on the 'green' now bears a plaque with his name. The last event that the Parish Council was involved in, this year, was the Parish Assembly. This took on a different format enabling more communication. From the amount of noise in the hall, this was certainly achieved. A great big thank you, not only to the Parish Councillors, Parish Clerk and all the local organisations who took part but also to the residents who came along. We have received a lot of positive feedback on the evening. I know of two organisations who have increased their membership already as a result of their 'stand'.

Villagers have shown remarkable patience and understanding this year: with tankers coming through 24/7 which not only were noisy but have helped churn up the verge and increase potholes on Newbury Road, the pump which for nearly 4 months was on all day and all night; the telephone difficulties resulting in no phone and sometimes no broadband for several weeks. Some of these have been resolved and with some, it is necessary for the ground water levels to continue to drop before inspections and negotiation of repair can begin. A Lambourn Valley Flood Action Group is being formed. Representatives from the village and Parish Council will be attending a meeting to be planned in May.

I apologise if I have neglected to report on any major issue or concern that we as a Parish Council have been involved in. It remains for me to formally thank our Parish Clerk who works vigilantly on our behalf and must do many more hours than she is contracted to do, all Parish Councillors past and present who have served the Council well this year, the chairmen and members of our subcommittees

and those who help doing various 'jobs' as required including those who effectively run the Parish News and our website.

Thank you all.

8) **Finance Report 2012/13**

We started the year with a balance of £11,968 in our current account. Although £5,000 of this sum is still to be invoiced to us for the continuation of the Newbury Road Footpath.

Our income during the year was £20,458 of this figure our precept was £17,500 VAT was £2878.12 this was largely due to a claim relating to the skate ramp project. Our bank Interest for all three accounts for the year was £8.05.

Expenditure during the year was £31,365 the main bulk of this was the purchases of the skate ramp £13,483 – electricity costs were lower than last year at £220 we are responsible for 9 lights in and around the village, there was no expenditure from our S137 fund this year. We have spent £170 maintaining items such as fencing/bus shelter and the recreation ground not including the grass cutting. We purchase two swings and chains for the recreation ground at £600.80 – A big part of the village's expenditure is the Insurance which is now £1228. We have contributed £500 towards the maintenance of our churchyard at St Marys and this coming year there is also an extra £250 for St Stephens too.

Our Playground account is now empty we received grants from WBC through our District Councillor Graham Jones for a members capital Bid of £5000 and also a Creating Capacity Fund Grant of £2100 together with the remaining playground project money meant we could order and install the skate ramp which has been well received by the local children. The Recreation Ground maintenance accounts still hold £14,509 - and only money spent was the Swing replacement cost from this account.

With regard to contributions we have donated to the Royal British Legion (Poppy Appeal), Youth Club, Citizens Advice (Outreach Service at Lambourn Surgery) and this year £220 towards the Jubilee celebrations.

We have throughout the year carried our periodical safety inspections on all Parish owned items around the village but if you note any items of concern in and around the village please let me know – this relates to safety issues, vandalism and fly tipping.

We closed the year on a Balance of £15,209.59 of this we are awaiting an invoice of £5000 from WBC which was our contribution to the new footpath along to the bus shelter and the painting of the bridge railings which I hope everyone agrees look so much better. (This money was the remainder of the grant we obtained to create the first part of the footpath along the side of the A338) We also have agreed to purchase a new wooden bus shelter for the layby in Church Street and need to finalise that this evening the cost for this will be £5725 if approved. The work on the trees in the recreation ground is also about to be completed which is another £790 already approved. Which actually leaves us with a closing balance of £3694.00?

The accounts are now completed and I will soon be contacting our Internal Auditor to arrange the first part of our Annual Audit. We have not been selected for a spot check by the External Auditors this year and I do not anticipate any problems completing the required paperwork. There will be a chance for any elector who wishes to examine the accounts to do so once they have come back from the Internal Auditor. If you have any questions in the mean time please contact me either

through the website or by phone and I will be happy to discuss any issues you may have on behalf of the councillors.

As normal I thank the councillors for their continued hard work, Nigel Goldstraw and all those who continue to volunteer in the village with general maintenance /grass cutting and strimming.

9) **Minutes** of the meeting of the 4th April 2013 were proposed for adoption by Cllr Knass and seconded by Cllr Parsons.

10) **Review and Possible adoption Parish Sub Committees their Representative and their Terms of Reference**

- a) **Country Fayre** – Cllr Knass proposed that Cllrs Ackrill and Carter be the Parish Council representatives, The Terms of reference were adopted unchanged and that the Fayre Committee is an official Sub Committee of the Parish Council – this was seconded by Cllr Benn. The terms were signed.
- b) **Emergency Management Team** – It was proposed by Cllr Knass that the Emergency Team be re adopted as official Subcommittee of the Parish Council and the representative would be Cllr Benn this was seconded by Cllr Winfield.
- c) **GSAS** – It was proposed by Cllr Knass that the Terms of Reference be adopted unchanged and that Cllr Benn be re-elected as the Parish Council representative on this committee. Cllr Knass would continue to complete the 2 annual Allotment inspections on behalf of the Council. This was seconded by Cllr Carter. The terms of Reference were signed.
- d) **Parish Newsletter** – It was proposed by Cllr Parsons that Cllr Carter will arrange the 2 annual update meetings with the Editor and Treasurer and that Cllr Benn would remain the signatory for the Newsletter cheques. This was seconded by Cllr Ackrill. Terms were signed by councillors but would be taken to Richard Allen (current editor) for his signatory and then returned to the clerk. **Cllr Benn**

11) **Review and adoption of:**

- a) **Complaints Procedure** – Cllr Parsons proposed that we we adopt the complaints procedure unchanged and Cllr Ackrill seconded.
- b) **Freedom of information Policy** – Cllr Winfield proposed we adopt the Policy unchanged and Cllr Carter seconded.
- c) **Standing Orders** – Cllr Parsons proposed we adopt the Standing Orders as drafted and agreed last November other than a couple of dates were amended to this year, Cllr Knass seconded this.
- d) **Finance Regulations** – Cllr Knass proposed we adopt the regulations which we agreed last year, unchanged and Cllr Ackrill seconded this.

All the above documents were then signed and we will be held in the accounts file for the forthcoming year.

12) **Review of Insurance and Asset Register**

Clerk had spoken to our Insurance company – the approximate renewal cost is going to be £1265 we are tied in until October 2014. Clerk offered to send to councillors if a copy was required by them. We will need to remember to add on the new shelter if agreed later in the meeting.

The asset register was reviewed and the clerk suggested we keep a list on the bottom of the register of all items owned by the parish but which are not necessarily assets. All agreed so clerk will draw up a new document.

Clerk

13) Open Forum – Nothing was raised.

14) Finance –

Cheques signed since last meeting (as Parish information evening was held)

68	S & S Ackrill	£45.00	Litter march
69	G Parsons	£20.00	(Prize for Parish Evening)
70	S Benn	£6.49	(Refreshments for Parish Evening)
71	FCC recycling	£38.40	(Litter for Feb and March)
72	BALC	£182.24	(Annual Subscription to Berkshire Association of Local Councils)
73	Southern Electric	£80.08	

All the above were either approved at previous meetings or budgeted costs.

To sign and Approve this evening

DD(April)	Douglas Tonks	£409.58	(Payroll and Clerk Fees)
74	FCC Recycling	£21.50	
75	Sandi Ackrill	£21.90	(2012/13 Years Postage costs)
76	Village Hall	£90.00	(Jan Feb and March)
77	S & S Ackrill	£325.00	(April Grass Cutting and Litter Picking)
DD(May)	Douglas Tonks	£409.58	(Payroll and clerks fees)

Bank Accounts

Current	£15,533.46
Playground	£0.00
Recreation Ground	£14,509.59
VAT Claim received for	£123.87
Precept will show in the account next statement	£9838.60

b) **Audit** – The accounts are done and the clerk will contact our internal Auditor in the next few days in order to arrange a meeting with her.

c) **Annual Safety Inspection** – We have been informed by our insurance company that Digley Associates who we had booked out inspection with for April are no longer trading at their recommendation we have booked another company “The Play Inspection company” to complete our annual check at a cost of £59.95. This is a few pounds more but councillors felt it best to follow the advice and suggestions of the insurers. I Clerk has had a confirmation that the inspection will be done in May.

d) **Risk report and Sign off** – Cllr Carter completed an inspection in February and noted some damage to the seat in the Recreation ground - the clerk has asked Nigel Goldstraw to have a look at this for us and repair if possible. All other benches and the Bush Shelter posed no safety concerns. There is one bench outside the recreation ground which doesn't belong to the council – Cllr Carter will make some enquiries about where it came from and hopefully get it taken back by who ever put it there.

Cllr Carter

The councillors signed off the Risk report for the year ending March 2013.

15) Planning –

Two documents to note:

Wessex Saw Mill Application for a Knackers Yard has been withdrawn
13/00388/LBC The Manor House – Granted (see WBC Website)

- 16) Website** – Our site was hacked for the second time a few weeks ago. We have been advised that the company who support our website will no longer be able to as the software its running on is out of date. Following a lengthy discussion it was agreed to create a new site using Word press software at a cost of £100 plus VAT. The councillors and those present who work on the current website also agreed to set up a working group which Cllrs Carter and Parsons would be part of along with John Turton and Linda Bowden. To create the new site, decide who would have access and move the data across. Following discussion it was also agreed to renew the second domain greatshefford.org to prevent cybersquatting for the sum of £29.67 and also to change the name from Henry Wilson to the parish council/clerk. The above was proposed by Cllr Benn and seconded by Cllr Winfield. **Clerk/Cllrs Carter /Parsons**

- 17) Bus Shelter** – following a mis communication we now need to find some additional funds to create the new shelter in Church Street – this will cover the installation costs (which originally WBC were going to arrange when the other works by the Swan were completed) we now need to find an additional £850.00. Following discussion it was proposed by Cllr Ackrill to spend a new total of £6025.00 on the Cropston Shelter by Littlethorpe of Leicester. This was seconded by Cllr Carter. Clerk will order We have also received an email from WBC informing us of the need for some new road markings in the Church Street layby – to prevent cars from parking in the layby during bus operating hours. The councillors didn't really see a choice to this suggestion and agreed to give approval from the village. **Clerk**

- 18) Allotment Update** – 2nd AGM 10th April much interest at Parish Information Evening – now all plots are taken and there is now a waiting list.

19) Country Fayre

Village Walk – Bank Holiday Monday 2pm Village Hall and afterwards back at the Social Club. Donations of cakes gratefully accepted.

Cllr Ackrill requested on behalf of the Fayre Committee if the Villager of the year gift could be purchased by the Clerk and following discussion it was agreed to the expenditure of up to £70 proposed by Cllr Benn and seconded by Cllr Winfield. **Clerk**

All plans are coming along nicely some new additions this year. Application forms for stalls are available and the Horti classes are on website and going in Parish News.

20) Recreation Ground – Visiting Traffic and Whit Lining Machine

We have had a letter from a resident which was read out at the meeting regarding some cars who drive right up to the recreation ground – their speed is of concern to some who live in the lane and there could be an accident soon. Following discussion it was agreed that Cllr Carter would find out where the boundary of the Caters land is to see how far up cars should be going – there the could be a possibility of some lockable bollards being placed up to prevent unauthorised vehicles parking on the grass area and in front of the gates which could deter car owners from driving up there – but it would depend on the boundary and access for grass cutting etc. Matter for another agenda. **Cllr Carter**

The White lining machine has been kindly stored by a resident for a number of years as in previous years a football pitch was marked out up in the recreation ground. The resident no longer has room for it and would like it to be stored somewhere else. Following discussion it was agreed to offer it to local schools and clubs to see if anyone would like it. In the mean time Cllr Parsons would go and collect it from the resident's garage. The parish councillors are grateful for the help we have had with storing the machine in the past. If anyone knows a club who may appreciate the machine please contact the clerk.

21) Matters for Future Consideration from Open Forum – nothing

22) Cllr Questions

Cllr Winfield – said Signs from the junction of the B4000 and the A338 were damaged in an accident last week and have now disappeared – hopefully the council have them – but the clerk was asked to bring the matter to the attention of Streetcare. **Clerk**

There was litter in the ditch next by the Swan car Park the other week which had obviously come from the Swan as it had delivery addresses on it. All would monitor this as it could be one off. **ALL**

Cllr Parsons – The verges at in The Mead especially those nearer the main road are very untidy and need re doing or some sort of hard paving option – Clerk asked to bring the matter to the attention of WBC. **Clerk**

Cllrs Carter and Ackrill were approached at the Parish Information Night by a resident who was concerned about some trees bordering their property – the councillors have been to visit and agree there could be a loss of light issue – but would like an expert opinion – following discussion it was agreed that the clerk would ask WBC Tree officer to visit the home owner.

The clerk reported that about 67 people attended the Parish Information Evening along with 18 local groups and organisations. The free Prize draw was won by Liz Pounds. The clerk would like to thank the Brownies and Brown Owl – Sue Holt for doing such a wonderful job with the refreshments and for also providing some entertainment during the evening. Also a big thank you to the village hall committee for allowing us to use the hall free of charge for the event. It seems to have been a well-received evening.

Cllr Benn has written to Thames Water about the state of the roads and some initial repairs have been carried out but a full survey can't be done until the water levels drop and tankers leave the village- Ongoing. Cllrs Benn and Knass along with Church Street resident Fiona Walsh will be attending a Lambourn Valley Action group meeting later in May to represent the village in trying to prevent the problems we have had repeating themselves.

23) Correspondence –

- Parish Plan Surgery – 30th May a Market Street 5.30pm
- Poppy Appeal Co-ordinator needed for the village Please contact Lambourn British Legion or get details from the clerk.
- Copy of a letter from a resident to District Councillor Graham Jones was read out – Both the clerk and Cllr Jones have now spoken to WBC who are going to carry out the necessary safety check on the height of the new railings by the new bridge in front the Swan.

24) Date of Next meeting Thursday 6th June 2013 at 7.40pm

Meeting closed 10pm