

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Council of Melksham Without Parish Council held at The Rachel Fowler Centre, Market Place on Monday, 23rd March, 2009 at 7.00 pm.

Present: Parish Council: Cllr. Mike Mills (Chairman), Cllr Richard Wood (Vice- Chair); Cllrs Alan Baines, Rolf Brindle, Gregory Coombes; John Glover; Pat Nicol; and Mike Sankey: Elizabeth Bean arrived at 8.30p.m.

County Council & District Council:- Cllr. Roy While; Cllr. Rod Eaton.

Invited Guests Inspector David Cullop, Sgt. Barry Dalton; (Wiltshire Constabulary);

Members of the Community: Mr. Peter Dauntsey, (Town Crier); John Hamley; Melksham Railway Development Group, Whitley Players and Whitley Reading Rooms);

1/ Welcome & Apologies:- The Chair, Cllr. Mike Mills warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Cllrs. Terry Chivers; Don Millard; District Cllr. Richard Wiltshire: Mr. Dale Robinson and Mr. Richard Bean, and Mr. Bob Brownrigg.

2/ Hot of the Press Item:- The Chairman was delighted to inform the meeting that Melksham Without Parish Council had once again been awarded Quality Status. He congratulated the Clerk, Mrs. Jarvis, and explained much time and hard work had gone into the application which consisted of 267 pages, but it was well worth the effort.

3/ Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2008: Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday, 17th March, 2008, were confirmed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

4/ Chair's Report: The Chair, Cllr. Mike Mills gave a report of the work of the Council during the year (*See Appendix attached*).

5/ County Councillor Roy While: The Chair invited Cllr. While to give a verbal report. Cllr. While explained that there was a lot of preparation going on at County Hall to get ready for the new Council. This was a problem for the whole of Wiltshire, but he was confident that they were "on the ball". He was concerned that the Enforcement Team at WWDC had been disbanded. The Chair enquired who then would be responsible for enforcement, on the S106 agreements. Cllr While explained that a new Planning team would come into existence on 1st April, but he was continuing to investigate any concerns. It has been a frustrating year for District Staff, some were moving out, but a lot were going over to the new Authority. Cllr Rod Eaton explained that the District had not taken on full time staff on for the last two years otherwise they would then have had to make them redundant. Thus some staff were self employed, and some staff were sub-contracted from private firms.

There were many concerns coming from residents, and some issues had now been resolved. Cllr Baines was concerned about the Area Partnerships being set up and enquired if anything could be done to encourage other rural parish councils to join in. Cllr Glover explained that Seend Parish Council preferred to join the Melksham Area, rather than Trowbridge. There was discussion on the 750 homes at Sandridge to Clackers Brook, and the great danger of losing out on community benefits. Cllr While was confident, the new council would do its best though setting it up would be a major task.

Cllr Baines left meeting at this point.

6/ Wiltshire Annual Policing: – Inspector David Cullop *(see appendix attached)*

Inspector Cullop congratulated Mary on the Quality Parish award. He then expounded on his Report, and commented on the 106 agreements which he said were a pet topic of his, as he felt the Police should have an input in the large planning applications. He also hoped that when the new Community Area Partnership came into being, they would approach the new unity board to review CCTV.

Insp Cullop then introduced Sgt Barry Dalton who had accompanied him to the meeting to answer any questions the Councillors would have. He also commended the special constables and the community volunteers who supported them as they did a sterling job on the front line. He gave information and details on how to join. Insp. Cullop informed on the proposed improvements to neighbourhood Policing after taking into account the lessons learnt since the inception of Neighbourhood Policing in 2007. He expanded on the report which had compared Wiltshire to other similar sized forces. There was a need to change to meet the demands of the new Unitary Authority. Melksham Rural South now includes seven parishes, 5 current in the Trowbridge area and two in Devizes. Melksham Rural North includes Melksham Without, Broughton Gifford and Atworth. Insp. Cullop was delighted to inform that the Melksham team will keep its same numbers.

Inspector Cullop went on to say that the Police were committed to listening to the public and to improving customer interaction. With regard to the problem of telephone answering machines, the public will now be able to speak to the duty officer, and if possible be connected to the local officer. A service manager will monitor that area to see if there is any improvement. There will be scheduled appointments according to priority. Flexible appointments will be instituted for those with child care needs, or the disabled. Reports will be logged, and someone will be in touch within three days, or if someone lives in a very remote area an appointment will be made for the person to have a visit. According to the Crime figures, motor vehicle theft was still a concern, whereas every other crime figure had been reduced. This year there were 158 fewer victims, though detection rates were still not where he would like them to be.

Inspector Cullop expressed regret that the Melksham 1st Community Partnership was no longer in being, and he urged Councillors to do what they could to keep it going. The Inspector said he did not wish to lose the volunteers who had been involved. He hopes the Safety group would also be able to keep going. Insp. Cullop emphasised that anything the Councillors could do to help the Police get things right for Melksham would be appreciated.

The Chair thanked Inspector Cullop for coming and for the excellent police work over the last 12 months. He also expressed appreciation for the excellent Police team we have in Melksham Without. He then invited the Councillors to ask questions. Cllr. Coombes expressed his thanks. Cllr Eaton also commented on the professional and impressive work done especially on weekend nights. Mr. Colin Goodhind said the Neighbourhood Watch in Melksham was the best in the county. Cllr. Glover expressed concern about the heavy lorries speeding at 50 – 60mph, when it should be 40 mph. Insp. Cullop explained that road policing is a specialist Dept and they would monitor an area. They have analysts working on these areas?

- 7/ **Bowerhill Village Hall Trust** – Cllr. Mike Mills The Chair reported that this year, there was a strong committee who were committed to getting things done. He also reported that the Hall was on the web now at www.bowerhillvillagehall.uk
- 8/ **Shaw Hall Committee** – Cllr. Bean who had just arrived from the Shaw Hall Annual Meeting reported that the new chairman was Mr. Clive Briggs.
- 9 **Beanacre Church Hall** - No report received.
- 10/ **Whitley Reading Rooms** – The Council noted the report from the Treasurer, Mr. Bob Brownrigg.
- 11/ **Berryfield and Semington New Village Hall** – The Council noted the report from Cllrs. Richard Wood, Steve Petty and Mrs Gillian Arbery. It was also noted that the temporary building had received permission to remain for a further three years.
- 12/ **Pavilion Youth Club** – Cllr. Mike Mills explained that the Pavilion Youth Club had been hit badly, by the opening of an evening at Boomerang. Membership of the Club had dropped dramatically, as all the young people had started going there. Lorraine Lugg, the Youth Leader at the Canberra suggested the club close temporarily for a few weeks, and she would do some street work, talk to the young people, to see why they were not coming back to the club. She suggested a re-launch in the Wiltshire Times and Melksham News, and get things back on track. Cllr. Brindle suggested that there may be a conflict of nights, and proposed a change of evening.
- 13/ **Whitley Players** – This excellent report was noted and John Hamley stated he was very well pleased with how things were developing.
- 14/ **Bowerhill School** – The Council noted the excellent report from Head Teacher, Mr. Andrew Matthews. The Chair reported that he had been invited to the school for a Question and Answer session. He said the children had wonderful ideas, were very positive, and very impressive in their presentations. They had inquired what the Parish Council was doing about global warming. Cllr. Eaton informed that they had suggested a shopping mall, and a children's Adventure Centre.
- 15/ **Forest & Sandridge C of E School** - Cllr Glover expressed disappointment that the head teacher, Mrs Anna Coombes had not submitted a report. The Clerk explained that in the past, there had been a representative from the council who sat on the school board of governors. This was no longer the case, and so the link between Council and local Schools had grown weaker, which was a great disappointment.
- 16/ **Bowerhill Residents' Action Group (BRAG)** – Cllr. Mike Mills explained that the group was now thriving. At the last Village Hall AGM in May, no one had come forward for the committee. However, within a short time, enthusiastic people had agreed to join. The meetings were well attended by the community, the police were represented by Janet and Barry, and Cllr Brindle for Melksham Without Parish, and County Councillor While.
- 17/ **Rachel Fowler Centre** – Cllr Richard Wood informed that Mr. Doug Hodder was retiring at the Annual General Meeting. Cllr. Wood expressed his appreciation of Mr.

Hodder who has given fantastic service to the Centre, and would be sadly missed. He said that Melksham owes Doug a "Debt of Honour" for sterling services.

18/ Rachel Fowler Centre – Secretary's report – Mr. David Bartlett. The Council noted the report. Cllr. Wood explained that there were difficult times ahead for Rachel Fowler, as more volunteers were needed. Sadly Richard Jefferies had suffered a stroke, Minute Secretary of the Music society and will be sadly missed. Bookings were holding up, but the competition was severe.

19/ St. Barnabas Church Hall, Beanacre – No report was received.

20/ Shaw C. Of E. School – No report was received.

21/ Bowerhill Villager – Mrs Brenda Chandler – The Council noted this excellent report.

22/ Connect (formerly Shaw & Whitley Village Voice) – Clive Briggs. The Council noted the report and were delighted that Shaw and Whitley once again have a magazine.

23/ Melksham – Minor Injury Unit – The Council noted the report from Cllr. "B" Bean The Clerk expressed concern that the case still is not being pushed forward. Melksham desperately needs a minor injury unit. She felt the PCT only paid lip service to the petition, and it was never taken seriously. She expressed her appreciation of Melksham News who have given fantastic support and kept the issue alive. Cllr Nicol said the PCT were a law unto themselves. Cllr While was thanked by the Clerk for pushing the committee at the last overview meeting to consider Melksham's needs, as she felt the committee were only half awake. Cllr While assured her that whoever was involved in the "proposals for change," whether it was the area board, the partnership or staff at County Hall, had to consider the whole of Wiltshire. There were probably more access problems in the west of Wiltshire. Cllr While suggested that confrontation was not the answer now as things had progressed too far, but rather than lose the whole argument, something good could come out of it. He also explained that he had worked quietly to help the new maternity unit. He had not publicly claimed credit, but the report had just come out at the last minute.

24/ Melksham Trust – Cllr. Richard Wiltshire. The Committee noted the report.

25/ Melksham 1st – Cllr. John Glover explained that it had been necessary for the Directors of Melksham 1st to issue a redundancy notice to their Chief Executive. In the closing weeks a lot of work had been undertaken to ensure the company was left in a dormant, but viable position, so that it could be continued in the future. Cllr Eaton was concerned that as no one was driving the different groups, they would decline and melt away, thus good people would be lost. Cllr. While said it was absolutely essential an appointment for an area officer be made at the earliest possible time.

26/ Melksham 1st Sports Group – Cllr. Richard Wood reported that the demise of Melksham 1st has precluded any further meetings of the Sports Group since November 2008. He felt it was a sad loss indeed.

27/ Community Safety Report – Cllr. Mike Mills The Council noted this report.

28/ Melksham Charities – Cllr. Sankey reported that the charities are currently reviewing the long term future of the Alms houses.

29/ Wilts & B Canal and WCC Highways Forum – Cllr. Mike Sankey explained that he had not been involved nor had invitations to attend these organizations in the last year.

30/ Melksham West Neighbourhood Police Teams – Cllr. "B" Bean The Council noted the report.

31/ Area 32 Melksham Public Transport Group – Cllr Alan Baines reported that First Bus decided to discontinue service 237. In order to maintain some sort of service, the County Council had stepped in until the end of July when there would be a major review. Fare Saver 237 will run basically on the same timing pattern from 10th May. It was suggested that perhaps some services could be combined with the two buses working alternative services to make the best use of bus and drivers and provide maximum services. Cllr Rod Eaton explained that £34 m was spent on subsidizing the buses which sometimes went with only 2 -3 people on them. People must "use it or lose it." Cllr Glover said there was a social responsibility to provide buses and trains and to encourage the public to use them. He appreciated people needed to use cars, and we could not force them to use public transport but we all had a responsibility to consider global warming.

32/ Melksham Railway Dev. Group – Cllr. Alan Baines commended Graham Ellis work on the "Save the Train" petition which he had organised.

33/ Melksham Railway Dev. Group – The report from Cllr. Rolf Brindle was noted.

34/ Friends of Melksham Hospital and Wiltshire Assoc. of Local Councils – The reports from Cllr. Gregory Coombes was noted.

35/ Whitley Reading Rooms – Cllr. Gregory Coombes reported he had never had an invitation to attend any meeting. Mr John Hamley stated he would see Cllr. Coombes would receive an invitation to the next meeting.

36/ Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership – Cllr Rolf Brindle reported on the superb work carried out by volunteers to open the canal towards Lacock. Everything was proceeding nicely and at least thirty people attend the meetings.

37/ Youth Work – Mrs Pat Nicol - This report was noted, and Cllr Nicol stated, she and Cllr Brindle would get a date and call for a meeting as soon as possible.

38/ Bowerhill Sports Field – Progress report. The Clerk expressed her disappointment at the lack of progress on the legal agreement which appeared to be a deliberate time-wasting strategy on the part of the County Council. due to a County Council Officer wasting time drawing up a new legal agreement because of the new council. Cllr. While reported he had discussed this matter with the officer dealing with this new legal agreement who was waiting for the new authority to be in place.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for providing such useful information.

Meeting closed at 8.50 pm and everyone adjourned for refreshments.

Chairman, 23rd March, 2009