

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Melksham Without Parish Council
held on Wednesday, 20th April 2005 at Melksham Town Hall, 7p.m.**

Present: Parish Council: Cllrs. Mike Mills (Chair); Cllrs. Alan Baines, Rolf Brindle, Gregory Coombes, Chris Holmes, Ruth Gillings, Mike Sankey and Paul Wiltshire. Cllrs. Pat Nicol and Terry Chivers arrived later.

Members of the Community: Cllr. Roy While representing (West Wiltshire District Council); Inspector Gary Porter (Melksham Police); Mr. Dale Robinson (Bowerhill Action Group); Mr. Richard Bean (Shaw Village Hall).

1/ Welcome and Apologies: The Council Chair, Cllr. Mike Mills, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Vice Chair Cllr. John Glover; Cllrs. Steve Petty; Don Millard; District Councillor Richard Wiltshire, and Mr. Bob Brownrigg, (Shaw and Whitley Reading Rooms).

2/ Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2004: Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday, 15th March 2004 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

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

4/ County Council Report from Cllr. Terry Chivers, and William Spiers: The Council noted the report. The Chair informed the Meeting that Cllr. William Spiers was retiring from the County Council, but would be greatly missed. He expressed thanks to all the County Councillors for their wonderful work over the year.

5/ District Council Report from Cllr. Terry Chivers, Roy While and Richard Wiltshire: The Council noted the report and discussed the Domestic Waste recycling issue which was still causing problems. Cllr. Baines commented that some properties still do not benefit from a black box, or green bins and enquired from Cllr. While if there were plans for all the parish to have the bins, not just particular areas. He also made the point that rubbish was collected every other week, which was effectively half a service. Cllr. While agreed to follow this up at District Level. Cllr. Brindle remarked that the District Council have offered to sell a second bin for a small fee. Cllr. Chivers informed the Council that Pippa McVeigh had left the District Council and Ishti Turner was now involved with the Anti Social Behaviour issue, and was trying to help people solve the problems, by keeping a record of the vandalism, and advising residents to report it immediately. Cllr. Sankey reported that Bowerhill now had a new Community Safety Officer appointed for Bowerhill, and that the Police were doing all they could at this time.

6/ Annual Policing Report from Inspector Gary Porter The Council noted the report. The Chair invited Inspector Gary Porter to comment. Inspector Porter reported that the Police were inundated with complaints about youths swearing, drinking, throwing litter around and being abusive to residents, particularly at the bus shelter in Halifax Road. Criminal behaviour was also apparent. Concerned residents had contacted the police, who moved the youths on, but unfortunately, the youths usually return within the hour. The Inspector was concerned that residents may take

matters into their own hands and become vigilantes. Cllr. Mills enquired how the Council and residents could help. Inspector Porter proposed a multi-agency approach which would identify the problem areas, the individuals concerned, and which area the roving groups of up to 100 were targeting. He commented that a group of 50 youths can certainly intimidate the residents, and that the difficulty was that the Police resources were limited. The Police intend to have increased patrols to disrupt the activities, and to use key legislative powers, such as dispersal orders, and ASBO orders. However, they need intelligence, surveillance and strong evidence before authorities could use these powers. Residents must work with the Police. WPC Ann Morris was a very dedicated individual, but on numerous occasions, residents declined to give names or get involved. This made the police job very difficult.

Inspector Porter explained that a meeting has been proposed of all interested parties, e.g. the District, the Town, the Parish, Youth Services so that there could be a co-ordinated response. The Police would also increase patrols, and borrow resources from around the Division. The Youth Worker from the Canberra, would be out on the streets of Bowerhill in the summer.

Inspector Porter gave instances on Mitchell Drive where 12 youths, aged 15 – 18 had left school at 3.10p.m., and by 3.55 p.m. had consumed 4 to 5 whiskies and lager. The problem the Police are dealing with, are large groups of young people drinking alcohol but their parents are totally unaware. High profile policing video recording will identify key offenders, the police will then take people home or write to parents. Residents of Mitchell Close, Barnes Wallace Close, must get involved, must sign up with the local Council, and must keep records. Senior officers were keen to pursue this line of action. Publicity about Bowerhill would unfortunately, encourage other youth around the area to go there, but this needs to be nipped in the bud, that Bowerhill is not the social place to gather. The Chair explained that gangs were gathering at Hornchurch rd, but the houses on that road, had no front gardens. Therefore, this was a major issue for residents, as gangs of kids were on the pavement, right outside resident's doors or windows.

Inspector Porter suggested that instead of residents haranguing the teenagers, they should treat them with respect. If people do approach in aggressive manner, then the youth will respond in the same manner. He explained that the vast majority were not involved in criminal damage, but there was a small hard core. Schools and parents needed to get involved. The Chair allowed questions to Inspector Porter, as the Anti-Social Behaviour was such an important issue. Dale Robinson enquired when the meeting would take place, he also commented on the lack of facilities for the youth at Bowerhill. The Inspector replied, as soon as possible, but residents should contact Ishti Turner, and email the District Council on a daily basis. The Council will issue diary logs, which can be used as evidence.

Inspector Porter emphasised the need for young people to work with the Police and community. The Chair explained that residents had expected the play area to be in place now, but it will take another year before this is done. Inspector Porter was unaware developers had failed to provide these benefits. Cllr. Coombes asked if Police community support officers were full time, how many were available for Bowerhill, and if community officers were replacing special constables The Inspector explained that he could have 2- 3 officers available. Recently appointed officers

included Norman Webster who had a good knowledge of the local area, officer Janet Gould who joined the team in April. They were under tutorage, and would be getting to know people in the area. They will intended to act as a visible Police presence in the community daily. He emphasised once again that it was essential to get information back to Police so that problem could be solved. The Police could then do what was needed to get results. Community Support Officers did not have powers of police office or powers of arrest and they did not carry handcuffs, etc., but they still had the same powers as the Police

Inspector Porter once again emphasised that Police can be extracted from one area, and be redeployed to another as the demand arose, as for instance when the violent incident occurred in Berryfield. Community Support Officers were sent to support the local community. Officers were kept pretty much in their local area, but were occasionally redeployed as required. The Chair inquired if the division was up to strength, and Inspector Porter replied that they were, and he would give a local telephone for contact. The Chair thanked the Inspector for coming and wished him success.

7/ Bowerhill Residents Association: The meeting noted a report from the Chairman of Bowerhill Residents Association, Cllr. Mike Mills.

8. Bowerhill Village Hall Trust: The meeting noted a report from the Vice Chairman, Cllr. Mike Mills. All Councillors had received an invitation to attend the official opening of the Bowerhill Village Hall on Wednesday, 11th May 2005.

9/ Shaw Village Hall: The meeting noted a report from the Chair of Shaw Village Hall, Mr. Graham Hibbert. Mr. Bean informed the Council that he is now the new Chairman, and that there was a lot to be done in the future, but expressed thanks to Melksham Without Parish Council for all the help given to Mr. Graham Hibbert in the past. He also expressed appreciation for the Clerk who has been a great help to him, in recent weeks.

10/ Shaw & Whitley Reading Room: The meeting noted a report from the Treasurer, Mr. Bob Brownrigg

11/ St. Barnabas Schoolroom: The meeting noted a report from Churchwardens, Stanford Cole and Maryann Hitchcock.

12/ Forest & Sandridge C of E Primary School: The meeting noted a report from Mr. Gordon Hiscock, Chair of Governors.

13/ Melksham First: The meeting noted a report from Mr. Ian Bertram, Chairman.

14/ Melksham First: The meeting noted a report from the Council representative, Cllr. Rolf Brindle. Cllr. Baines wished Carolyn Beale well in her new post. It was noted that Melksham First would become a Limited Company by Guarantee in June. Cllr. Brindle commented that the Community bus service for outlying areas was moving forward with the help of the parish council and the community. This would be especially helpful for the young people of Bowerhill. Cllr. Chivers was concerned that

each driver must hold a full PSV licence for a 16 seater, and this could mean a £2000 bill for each driver to be properly qualified.

15/ Melksham Community Safety Group: The meeting noted a report from Cllr. Rolf Brindle, MWPC Representative.

16/ Melksham Youth & Community Service: The meeting noted a report from Cllr. Pat Nicol, the Parish Council representative. The Chair informed the Meeting that Cllr. Nicol was very experienced in Youth work, and it was good to have her input.

17/ Area 32 Public Transport Group: The meeting noted a report from Cllr. Alan Baines. Cllr. Baines explained that consultation on changes to 72/ 73 Melksham – Corsham Services would continue and amendments to timings will go out to tender in August. The Chair mentioned that bus stops have been erected in Hornchurch Road. Cllr. Roy While agreed to find out from the District Council if a bus could manoeuvre the road around there.

18/ Health Service: The meeting noted a report from Cllr. Paul Wiltshire. Cllr. Wiltshire informed the meeting that no further progress had been made in the GP Service at the moment, but that there was an opportunity to meet with directors on 25th April, and that everyone should do what they could. The Chair asked if the twelve other beds were due to be closed Cllr. Wiltshire explained that there were problems with Minor Injury Units, and that staff were coming from Warminster to help keep Melksham and Trowbridge operational. The staff moral was extremely low. However, there was to be a review of all health services in the area, and this would last approximately one year. Cllr. Coombes was concerned at the staggering sums of money being wasted on new equipment, and redecoration. He was concerned that Ambulance staff had patients for 4 hours in the ambulances before being admitted to Bath RUH. The Chair emphasised that the Town and Parish councils must do everything they can to support Melksham Hospital. Cllr. Chivers was concerned that the health service in Melksham was on its knees, as it took up to 8 weeks to get an appointment, and that several doctors were retiring. He also commented that there should be a District Hospital for Wiltshire, but that residents at Devizes and Melksham needed to fight to retain their hospitals.

19/ Beanacre Community Park: The meeting noted the report from Mrs. Carolyn Beale. The Clerk reported that planning permission for the land had been successful, and £50,000 had been raised, the Church has confirmed a lease would be granted and it was hoped that the project would be up and running by the summer. Mrs. Beale thanked the Parish Council for their support, because without it, the project would have fallen by the wayside.

20/ Bowerhill Sports Field: The Meeting noted a report from Cllr. Alan Baines. Cllr. Baines explained that the Sports field is an ongoing saga. The Clerk explained that the County Council lacked will to complete the Legal Agreement for the Parish Council to take over ownership of the Sports Field. However it was in the interest of the District Council for the Parish Council to have a Sports Field in the area. Part of the problem was that there had been such a change of officers at the District Council, who did not know the history of the situation, and who tended to ignore things. County Officers were unfamiliar with the District Plan. Cllr. While agreed to try and arrange a meeting

with the District, the County Council and the Parish Council to resolve outstanding issues.

21/ Beanacre Matters: The meeting noted a report from Cllr. Holmes. Cllr. Holmes informed the Council of the difficulties experience by residents trying to exit Westlands Lane. It was a difficult and dangerous manoeuvre.

22/ Bowerhill Villager The meeting noted a report from Mrs. Brenda Chandler.

23/ Rachel Fowler Centre. The meeting noted a report from the Chairman, Mr. Jefferies.

24/ Rachel Fowler Centre The meeting noted a report from the Secretary Mr. Hodder.

25/ Friends of Melksham Hospital The meeting noted a report from Cllr. Gregory Coombes.

26/ Wiltshire Association of Local Councils The meeting noted a report from Cllr. Gregory Coombes.

27/ Melksham Trust The meeting noted a report from the Chairman, Cllr. Richard Wiltshire.

28/ Berryfield & Semington Road Action Group The meeting noted a report from Cllr. Steve Petty.

29/ Bowerhill Community Action Group – Interim Action Plan was submitted by Jackie Nicholas, on behalf of the Action Group.

30/ Thanks The Chair expressed thanks to everyone for coming.

Meeting closed, and everyone adjourned for refreshments

Chairman, 27th March 2005