

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Council of Melksham Without Parish Council held at Melksham Town Hall, Market Place on Monday, 22nd March, 2010 at 7.00 pm.

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

Other Community members: Inspector David Cullop, Sgt. Barry Dalton; (Wiltshire Constabulary); Mr. Tim Jalland, Melksham Community Area Partnership and Mr. Andrew Matthews, Head Teacher Bowerhill Primary School; Mr. Bob Brownrigg, Whitley Reading Rooms, Mr. Eddie Carter and Mr. Petty.

Apologies: Cllrs. Steve Petty; Don Millard and Terry Chivers, and Wiltshire Councillors Cllr. Roy While and Cllr. Rod Eaton

1/ **Welcome:-** The Chair, Cllr. Mike Mills warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2/ **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2009:** Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday, 23rd March, 2009, were confirmed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

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

4/ **Wiltshire Councillor Roy While:** The Chair explained that Cllr. While is on holiday, and Cllr. Eaton has been in hospital. He went on to ask if there were any questions. He himself was concerned that dog bins which had been installed on land at Hornchurch Road three years earlier, had since disappeared. He said he would ask Cllr. While to inquire what had happened to them.

5/ **Wiltshire Annual Policing:-** Inspector Cullop thanked the Chair and Councillors for inviting him once again, and he mentioned that some changes had resulted since the Unitary Council had taken over. He felt it was good to focus on the opportunities rather than the negatives. Melksham Without now had one neighbourhood policy team which covered the whole of the parish, and most important neighbourhood policing was for consistency and continuity of staff. PC Barry Dalton is in post, with all the same staff as twelve months ago.

Melksham Community Area had grown to seven parishes, but there was concern that the increase in size could lead to an increase in crime! This did happen over the first few months, but the team have worked very hard over the year, and the recent report showed a reduction in crime. Detections are over 30%, the highest since he has been back in Melksham.

Inspector Cullop stated that the one area of concern was about the Town, as opposed to Without. There had been a spate of burglaries where people had left doors or windows open at night. The "Lock it or lose it" campaign has been started locally, and these are simple measures, but prevent homes being an easy target.

Cllr Coombes asked if there could be more PCSOs in the Villages, as there was a lot of respect for them. Inspector Cullop replied that due to the recession, he was lucky to keep the current level of PCSOs, and he doubted that any more funds were forthcoming for policing.

He agreed the PCSOs were doing a fantastic job and are good value for money. He also said the Chief Inspector was committed to keeping what we have got, as residents have got to know the team. Unfortunately over decades, they had moved away from this, but now they had a stake in the community.

Mr. Bob Brownrigg informed that the support in Whitley from the PCSO was superb. The follow-up on vandalism to the Reading Rooms was 1st class. He appreciated too, the entries in Village Magazine. Cllr Mills agreed and said Janet calls into the Youth Club and Bowerhill School, so the children are building a relationship with her.

Mr Petty, Melksham Town resident expressed his concern to Inspector Cullop about speeding traffic in Melksham's Semington Road. He felt someone could be killed, as people were speeding up to 70 mph. and Police were not doing anything about it. He was also concerned about the excessive speeds in Spa Road. PC Dalton informed him, that speeding is an issue which never goes away. However, they do take it seriously, and he suggested Mr. Petty gives them all the information, and he will instigate a survey, and as soon as he gets feedback, he will work from that. He explained that the Police rely on information coming in. Inspector Cullop said that the Beat Manager for the town will do a survey and find the extent of the problem, though he had not heard of any complaints to the Town Council, but will ask for a survey to be done along that part of the road, and will get back to Mr. Petty. Mr Petty thanked the Police. PC Dalton agreed that the zebra crossing which is next to the little shop was the worst place to put a crossing.

Cllr Wood explained that residents at Semington Road, Berryfield had complained about speeding and a census had been done, near the traffic calming measure. He suggested perhaps an occasional prosecution would be helpful, and inquired if it was on a rota for speed signs? PCSO Dalton confirmed that it had been a priority target last year, with hand held devices, and that it would be re-assessed within twelve months. Inspector Cullop explained that speeding is a serious problem, and education and engineering are important, but the money left in the Wiltshire budget was tight, as we live in a large county. However, we will keep chipping away at the problem.

Cllr Glover advised Mr. Petty to contact the Melksham Town Council, as we are the council on the outside of town. Cllr. Brindle mentioned that portable speed devices do work much better than a fixed one. Cllr Baines agreed that 'E' engineering in Forest Road created a problem in the parish as drivers then speeded up to make up lost time in Woodrow and along rural roads which are very narrow. .

Andrew Matthews questioned the % on drug rates. Inspector Cullop explained that some towns have a favourite drug, heron is bigger in one town than another drug, whereas 10 miles down the road, and amphetamine is more popular. However, it was clear that enforcement alone, does not solve the problem, but had to be combined with health education, and referrals to BADAS. Cllr Bean inquired if the police were continuing to encourage the "Neighbourhood Watch" situation. If so, were they a help or hindrance? P.C. Dalton replied that the scheme was in place and still running. Headquarters fully supported the Neighbourhood schemes, and encouraged collaboration with the Police. He said residents helped to spread information for them, and usually get good information back, i.e. "cold calling", door to door aggressive selling.

Cllr Bean explained that in December, a very distressed resident came to see her, as there was no vice-chair for Shaw Hall. Neighbourhood Watch at Shaw had not been given any encouragement, and so residents had given up. Inspector Cullop explained that when Neighbourhood watch was first set up, it was run by the Police with Tax money which paid for a regular Police Officer. However over the last decade, it became a charity with volunteers. In the Town particularly, there were political issues, and Police could not spend the amount of money required, and so records went out of date, etc. Now Community Volunteers are working together to serve the community, the scheme has been revamped, and he loves to meet people and help them. They are recruiting volunteers, from all walks of life, and not just special constables for a Community Policing Team Office, and a link up with Trowbridge. Someone is needed to run a Melksham office.

The Chair informed that Checkmate Engineering had complained about the the number of cars parked at Pegasus Way, 30 metres in each direction on double yellow lines. Cars are also being parked on the residential estate instead of the industrial estate. People cannot see at the Halifax Road junction. Inspector Cullop explained that yellow lines fall within the new decriminalised enforcement area if using 1998 Act. He can pass on comments, but with the size of the industrial estate, his concern was about the issue of the link road, and how to increase security, perhaps with CCTV, but villains will have easy access and can be miles away within a short time. He has to look at all the issues. He has a really great concern but asked everyone to remember that the Police like the rest of the public sector, have had budgets reduced.

The Chair thanked Inspector Cullop for coming and for the excellent police work over the Parish areas.

6/ Melksham Area Community Partnership – Mr. Tim Jallandan expressed his thanks to the Chair for allowing him to come to the Annual Parish Meeting, he had hoped Chris Holden would also come. However, he explained that he is a serving Army Officer, who lives in Poulshot and had been asked by the Parish Council there if he was interested in getting involved as a volunteer. The Community Partnership has been in operation since November, therefore very new, and everyone is finding their feet at the moment. He was saddened that at the initial meeting only four villages were represented, instead of the possible nine. The villages indicated that they felt it was all to do with Melksham, but he felt it was better to be in than without and that villages were just as important as Town developments and their future. It is all about pulling together, talking together, supporting parish councils and their work, and getting things done, or pressuring Wiltshire Council to get things done. Mr. Jallandan went on to explain that Wiltshire council is very much in favour of the area board, and that the Board is there to support the community at the lowest level. In his parish, they had an issue with trees, and ponds for the last two years, but the Area Community Partnership gave advice on the best way to take things forward. They are there to support parish councils, to provide funding and support. If we work together, we will achieve more! The Chair explained that some parishes were closer to Devizes and would rather have been connected to Devizes Area Community Partnership.

7/ Berryfield and Semington New Village Hall – Cllr. Richard Wood commented that events had almost overtaken the plans, as the proposed new route of the Wilts & Berks Canal may go through the planned site of the new Village Hall.

8/ Bowerhill Village Hall Trust – Cllr. Mike Mills - The Chair reported that this year there had been a complete turn around since last year's depressing report. The people of Bowerhill are very enthusiastic, many came forward to serve on the committee and have got a phenomenal amount of work completed.

9/ Shaw Hall Committee – Cllr. Bean reported that sadly, four officers of the Village hall committee were standing down that evening, which could cause a very serious problem for the Hall. Cllr. Glover and Cllr Mills encouraged Cllr. Bean by pointing out the amazing turnaround for Bowerhill Village Hall Committee.

10/ St Barnabas Church Hall Beanacre - No report received.

11/ Whitley Reading Rooms – Mr. Bob Brownrigg explained that over seven years, there had been significant improvements to the hall costing a considerable sum of money. He thanked the MWPC for their continued support over the years.

12/ Pavilion Youth Club – Cllr. Mike Mills said the youth club is a massive success story, and gave high praise to the young people whom he said were a pleasure to be with.

13/ Rachel Fowler Centre – Cllr Richard Wood informed that the AGM was planned for the next few weeks. It had been a challenging year, but on the positive side, there was new refreshing committee who had come forward, and Cllr. Wood also gave credit to the chap who took over, as he was not in the best of health. He reiterated how important it is that the Rachel Fowler centre carries on, as it has an immensely important role in Melksham town.

14/ Rachel Fowler Centre – Secretary's report – Mr. David Bartlett. The Council noted the encouraging report from Mr. Bartlett.

15/ Bowerhill School – Mr Andrew Matthews gave an excellent update on all that is happening in the school. He explained that the school already had a visiting delegation from China, and this current month are expecting a visit from Indian teachers with whom, he hopes to establish a working link between Bowerhill pupils and the KS2 children in India. Mr. Matthews said the 2009 SATs results were very good, and he is proud of the balance they have in successfully coupling high attainment with enjoyment.

The pupils have fond memories of their visits to the Brecon Beacons, and Mr Matthews is happy that the school progress has been maintained. Cllr. Mills informed the Council that he had had a very happy afternoon visiting the school, and he is so impressed with the children, especially when they asked him "Who was responsible for the Credit Crunch?"

16/ Forest & Sandridge C of E School – The Council were delighted that contact has once again been made with Forest & Sandridge School.

17/ BASRAG – The Council were pleased to hear of the great success on the estate with the homework club which is excellent, and a fantastic success.

Community Action Groups:-

18/ Berryfield:- The Chair expressed his delight at the great success on the estate and also that the homework club was excellent. He said this was a fantastic success.

19/ Bowerhill Residents' Action Group (BRAG) – Cllr. Mike Mills said they now had a very enthusiastic committee, who were getting things done. An enormous number of residents gathered for the litter pick.

20/ Bowerhill Sports Field – Progress report – Cllr Baines said that with luck, the Council will be able to report more fully on the Bowerhill Sports Field survey, as most residents do not want all facilities to go to Woolmore Farm.

21/ Melksham Hospital and Health Services Reports – Cllr Coombes commented that £450,000 was spent on engineer studies. Closure was needed, and it was too much money. Cllr Glover was concerned that the Health Working Group for Chippenham was based in Melksham and the Melksham one based in Trowbridge. Cllr Clark explained that it was due to office space.

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

23/ Area 32 Melksham Public Transport Group – Cllr Alan Baines gave an update on bus services 72 and 73 which were "hanging by a thread" and if they were not used, they would lose them completely. Some rationalisation of the services was needed, to make efficient use of the vehicles. He commented that car parking at Bowerhill affects bus services, especially when cars are parked on the bend of Halifax Road which makes the buses have to move to the wrong side of the road. Cllr Mills reported that the Highways Department and Police say this is not an issue. Cllr. Baines commented that the bus drivers do have an issue with the parked cars. The Chair commented on the Sainsbury application, which he thought was purely a matter of an unsuitable plan. This council should not be seen as supporting incorrect plans for Sainsburys.

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

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

26/ Whitley Reading Rooms – Cllr. Gregory Coombes reported that he had never been invited to a meeting. Mr. Bob Brownrigg promised to rectify this in the future.

27/ Youth Work – Cllr. Pat Nicol commented that there had been no invitation from CAYPIG to attend meetings. She said local people need to get going to meetings to see how things are run.

The Council was pleased to note the following reports:-

- 28/ Shaw C. Of E. School** – Mr Dave Borrie
- 29/ Bowerhill Villager** – Mrs Brenda Chandler
- 30/ Connect** – Clive Briggs -
- 31/ Melksham 1st Sports Group** – Cllr. Richard Wood
- 32/ Community Safety Report** – Cllr. Mike Mills
- 33/ Melksham Charities** – Cllr. Sankey
- 34/ Wilts & B Canal and WCC Highways Forum** – Cllr.
- 35/ Melksham West Neighbourhood Police Teams** – Cllr. "B"
- 36/ Melksham Railway Dev. Group** – Cllr. Alan Baines
- 37/ Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership** – Cllr Rolf Brindle

38/ Comment and question time - Mr Petty a resident of Melksham Town said that the state of roads in Melksham were deplorable and a danger for cyclists. Cllr. Brindle commented that all of the High Street was about to be re-surfaced to beyond Lowbourne. Mr Petty enquired why could this not be co-ordinated. Cllr. Mills explained that Melksham Town Council was responsible for the Town and not Melksham Without Parish Council, and Mr. Petty should raise these issues with the Town Council. However Mr. Petty replied that he had brought these issues up many times with the Town Council but nothing had been done. It was agreed to pass on these concerns to Melksham Town Council.

The Chairman thanked Councillors and all who had submitted reports. He also thanked the Councillors for their hard work, and also those who represented the various organizations.

Meeting closed at 8.35 pm and everyone adjourned for refreshments.

Chairman, 21st March, 2011