

## COLLINGBOURNE DUCIS PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT COLLINGBOURNE SCHOOL ON THURSDAY 6 MAY 2010 AT 7.00 PM

**Present:** Cllr M Cox (Chairman), Cllr A Jones, G Chandler, K Pickis, , Cllr P Risborough K Rossiter, N Whinton, N Williams, PCSO M Downham, Mr J Mason, Mr B Frost, Mrs L Rogers Mr R Cater, three members of the public and Mr P Gill (Clerk)

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr B Bale, Cllrs B Crompton and Wilts Cllr C Howard Sgt M Freeman,

#### **1. Annual Report of the Parish Council.**

Cllr Mike Cox, Chair, presented the following report:

The current Council was elected during May 2007. Since then, two have resigned and there is currently one vacancy on the council. In spite of advertising, no-one has yet come forward for co-option to fill this vacancy. Since probably Victorian times, members of the parish council have met on a monthly basis to receive reports, be briefed on correspondence and debate issues affecting the community. With the advent of modern communications, the need to meet to receive reports and briefings has dramatically reduced and members are kept fully informed between meetings with little new business for the monthly agendas. The council has therefore decided to reduce the number of face to face meetings through the year and reformat them to focus more on decision making. There will be no change in the way notices are posted on the notice board as well as the website or in the arrangements for contacting councillors.

Planning and development in the village continues to be a major item on Parish Council agendas. Garden grabbing where one dwelling is demolished and replaced with two “executive” dwellings, thus avoiding the low-cost housing rules, has led to some developments many residents consider inappropriate and the Council does its best to resist this trend. As reported last year, the Council co-operated with the Church and the Old School developer to bring mains water and drainage up to St. Andrews for the first time in over 800 years. The Parish Council is supporting this project and voted to help St. Andrews with grant aid in the same way it had the Village Hall during its roof crisis a few years back. The final phase of a new extension for a toilet is now nearing completion. Once finished, the building can be used for a wide range of community uses some of which, such as informal drop in tea and coffee or toddler times for Mums and young children, are increasingly needed. It also opens up cultural opportunities – for example, the Church has a particularly fine music acoustic which currently is difficult to exploit. For many years (since about 1894) this parish council has maintained the clock on the Church tower. Not much runs for 138 years without a break and old age caught up with the mechanism last year, with the clock being stopped for some time pending a complete overhaul and refurbishment of the bearings and working surfaces. The clock was finally restored to full working order just before Christmas and many people have commented how nice it is to have it working again. The project to enhancing facilities at the recreation ground has proved successful and has been well received in the village. Also, benches and litter bins throughout the village have been replaced, repaired and augmented during the past year. There was some damage on the rec, which has been repaired, caused at the end of 2009 by “visitors” from outside the village and the police will report separately on the current levels of anti-social behaviour and crime in the village. Requests have been received from a number of sources to further augment provision on the rec. by adding swings and possibly a roundabout so some budgetary provision has been made for this in the coming year.

The Council continues to try to support the cricket and football clubs which use the recreation ground and does its best with a booking system to maximise the use of the ground while minimising disruption to those organisations. As a result, and thanks to the diligence of the clerk, the council is deriving a small income stream to augment the precept income and keep council tax increases down – the average parish council tax bill in Collingbourne Ducis decreased a little this year (in contrast to Wiltshire Council’s increase). The recreation ground demonstrated its full potential during last September’s Village Show for which the council was also pleased to also sponsor the climbing wall for young (and young at heart) people. The show was a huge success and the organisers are to be congratulated. Thanks to the help of Wilts Councillor

Charles Howard, the play areas in Saunders Meadow are now out of the hands of the developers and have been transferred to public ownership of Wiltshire Council. Until recently, Wiltshire had no policy of what to do with such play facilities and is firming up a policy for handing them over to Parish Councils, including 106 monies and maintenance budgets, so we await details. Dog fouling on the recreation ground continues to be a problem and there is no easy answer to this. The Parish Council keeps the situation under review and asks dog owners to clear up after their pet and take the droppings home, rather than leave them to become a health hazard in the bins on the recreation ground. The village litter picking contract was abruptly terminated last year when the Tidworth Development Trust went into receivership with this Council being a creditor for about £300. The Council was fortunate in being able to quickly contract the litter picker directly and is grateful to the Blue Lion for agreeing to have the necessary rubbish container on their property.

The Council entered the village in the Best Kept Village competition last year and won first prize in the Kennet area and came 4<sup>th</sup> overall. The Burial Ground got a particularly black mark for the mound of old flowers and rubbish referred to in last years report. This area, which was originally to be set aside for interment of ashes, has now been fenced, hedging planted and the ground rotovated and reseeded. Last year, the Parish Council submitted a proposal to Wiltshire Highways for improvements in road safety in the Chicks lane/A338 area. With the help of Wilts Cllr Charles Howard, this has moved forward a bit: the footpath in Chicks lane has been surfaced from the school to recreation ground entrance and meetings are being scheduled with a view to improving safety at the speed hump at the west end of Cadley Road. However, both of these projects involve monies allocated to this parish council some years ago and so far no Wiltshire Highways monies have been spent on the proposals. Lighting on Church Bend has been improved, although the final stage of a light in the churchyard is still promised for completion by the end of March 2009 (!). Wilts Cllr Charles Howard works hard to keep this council abreast of Highways issues and members are aware that working with Highways must be a particularly thankless task. The Parish Council is aware of continuing village interest in the provision of allotments. So far, no land has been identified which the council could lease or license for that purpose. However, some work has been done on facilitating the use of garden land which owners were finding difficult to manage by those who wanted land to grow things – the council does not, though, have powers to act other than as a facilitator in such arrangements. Speeding continues to be an issue through village, particularly during the late evening. The police are aware of this and will report separately. The council has made some tentative investigations into procuring a mobile interactive speed sign, as some other local villages have done, and this will be re-visited during the coming year (finances permitting). Residents recently asked if 30mph stickers could be made available to put on wheelie bins and the council has made these available to villagers at a small charge to cover costs – they can be obtained from the parish clerk on request.

A Member of the public asked a question relating to typographical errors that appeared in the Parish Council's insert in the April edition of the Courier. Having sought the Chairman's permission to answer the question the Clerk owned up to human error.

## **2. Summary of the Council's financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2010.**

The Clerk presented the following summary:

“The Parish Council's finances were lower than last year which was mainly due to the Making of a considerable donation to help with the repair of the church clock and the installation of toilets. The total expenditure was £33,105 against budget of £36,012; income was £27,342 against budget of £28,057 the end result was an operating deficit of £5,763. Furthermore, reserves now stand at £8813 against £14576 for FY 08/09 which the Parish Council considers to acceptable and in line with the Precept of £16,500.

As part of good financial housekeeping the fees for the Burial and Recreation Grounds have been revised upwards to take account of the actual running costs and the Grass Cutting Contract is subject to competitive tender.”

There were no questions from those present.

### **3. Headteacher's Report from Collingbourne C E Primary School.**

Mr Jeff Mason, Headteacher, presented a detailed report a digest of which follows:

Collingbourne School continues to grow and move forward. The school currently has 113 children. Although in September this year, we are expecting to be completely full with 120 on roll. We aim to ensure that learning at Collingbourne is immensely enjoyable and fun, whilst being creative and relevant to life-long learning. Over the course of the year, we have entered creative projects such as Salisbury Diocese Singing Project, working towards achieving the Green Flag award for environmental awareness and education in respect to recycling. We are also proud of the support of many local helpers who help to enrich children's learning through sharing their interests and getting children involved in them. Currently, Pam Halverson from the Gardening club has inspired many children and staff to have green fingers! Since my last report, a number of projects to improve the learning environment have taken place. For instance, we have expanded the play area of the reception class considerably. This now has its very own nature area with a pond. The other developments include a new ICT suite, which we aim to roll out to the community to provide adult and family learning. Lastly, the school wild life area has had a major uplift with new decking, monster feet and safety railings. Another aspect of the school's day-to-day workings are the afterschool clubs. This is an area of the school that we are particularly proud of in terms of the diverse range of activities offered to all children such as Let's get Cooking, French, Archery and Air rifle to name a few. A key focus of the school for the next few years is to provide services to the community. We are currently setting up a youth club for older children and young adults to come to and enjoy. In addition, we are also planning for Tidworth Children's centre to provide some of their services on the doorstep of our families locally. Finally, the school welcomes volunteers and helpers to become involved in the school and ask that you get in touch.

Mr Mason then answered questions from those present and the Chairman thanked Mr Mason for his report.

### **4. Report from Wiltshire Cllr C Howard.**

Cllr Howard presented a written report a digest of which follows:

It is now just over a year since Wiltshire Council was formed. During that time, much has been achieved but much remains to be done, including the ongoing problem of road repairs. So far as I am concerned, my work as your Wiltshire Councillor has proved to be rewarding but demanding in time. I find that on average every month I am travelling well over 400 miles on Council business. During the past year I have been involved in a range of matters arising in Collingbourne Ducis, some of which have included: assistance and advice on planning applications, further discussions and negotiations with Wiltshire Council about the playgrounds at Saxon Rise Saunders Meadow, the building of a new footway to the Village Hall in Chick's Lane and the proposed rearrangement of traffic calming measures at the west end of Cadley Road. I am pleased to say that the A338/A346 Working Group completed its report on 30<sup>th</sup> March the conclusion of the report was that Wiltshire Council should be asked to apply to the Department for Transport for the Corridor road between Salisbury and Swindon to be de-primed. After which measures could be taken to reduce the very high level of through lorry traffic which uses this road. The supportive resolutions passed by the four area boards were formally submitted to Wiltshire Council on 21<sup>st</sup> April.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Howard in his absence for his help and support to the village.

### **5. Report from Wiltshire Constabulary.**

PS M Freeman provided the following but belated report: This report is drawn from the statistics for the Tidworth Community Area (TCA), which shows that no crime was recorded in Chute Forest in the past year. You live in a very safe area. The statistics for the TCA show that although crime has reduced by 12% we have maintained our detection rate of 31%. Moreover,

dwelling burglaries have reduced by almost 30%. We are fully manned and my post will not be removed in the foreseeable future. Wellington Academy is to fund a part time PCSO to work with the staff and pupils, and the BLUES N ZUZ is still going strong.

The Chairman noted with some disappointment the absence of PS M Freeman but noted that PCSO M Downham had attended.

#### **6. Report from the Collingbournes & Everleigh Link Scheme.**

Mr B Frost presented a report a digest of which follows:

The LINK Good Neighbour Scheme covers nearly all the County. Collingbournes and Everleigh LINK was formed in 2004 and last Summer Chute LINK finding that the call on their service had dropped over the years had decided that they would disband. LINK Project in Devizes approached me and asked if we would be prepared to consider amalgamation. The new Scheme is called **The Collingbournes, Chute and Everleigh Good Neighbour Scheme** to indicate our geographic cover. Most of the tasks we are asked to undertake are transporting users to the local surgeries and to hospitals mainly those in Salisbury, Winchester, Swindon and Andover and occasionally a couple, more distant. Our volunteers last year drove 7827 miles and gave 520 hours and we averaged a task a day during the working week. This increase in activity, which almost was double from the previous year. Wiltshire Council who mainly funds the LINK Schemes in the County looked at our balance sheet and decided we did not qualify for a grant. The increase in activity soon proved them wrong and thanks to generous grants received from the two Collingbourne Councils we did not have to go cap in hand for a handout from LINK Scheme. It is likely that we will be put in a better financial position financially regarding the grant this year and Wiltshire County are trialling a subsidy towards the mileage driven by our volunteers. The volunteers are not paid for their time but receive modest travelling expenses of 38p per mile. I feel the Scheme is particularly lucky in that the Coordinator is Dick Edwards husband of the Dick Edwards, husband of our Vicar.

The Chairman thanked Mr Frost for the report.

#### **8. Report and Statement of Accounts from Collingbourne Ducis Village Hall Trust.**

Mrs L Roger presented a report a digest of which follows:

Village Hall end of financial year is June 30 and the AGM is in November after which the audited accounts are freely available. The village hall continues to be successfully run by a dedicated committee of volunteers and trustees. Since our last report we have continued to welcome regular and casual from within and without the village and we shall review our hiring charges to reflect the cost of fuel and repairs. We are currently making monthly efforts to celebrate 25 years of serving the community 1985 -2010. We have staged a number of monthly events designed to be fun and fund-raising with the best part of the funds financing the November fireworks. To date we have raised £721. The tennis court is being used well and the decision to leave the facility unlocked has proved to be sound. The last comprehensive biannual inspection of the building revealed work which needs doing to meet the latest legislation for public buildings. We have funded ourselves immediately necessary work to the tune of some £2,500, and have been awarded a grant of £5000 by the Wiltshire Village Halls Grants panel towards the remainder. We are hoping that a grant from Awards for All or the Area Board will mean all the remaining work is financed. Our current financial situation is strong. As at 30 June 09 the cash at bank was £19462 and an operating surplus of £2711 was made in FY 208/09. We are particularly pleased that our growing loan repayment reserve, and the redemption of a Standard Life policy in 2013, mean that the funds to repay the Public Works Loan Board loan of £25000 secured by the Parish Council, will be in place well ahead of 2025. In addition we have a general reserve currently standing at some £5000 for significant maintenance and emergencies. We shall be seriously considering major interior redecoration next year for the whole building and hope that the CDPC will consider favourably a planned request for financial help to augment the funds from our reserves.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Rogers for the report.

**9. Report from the Parochial Church Council.**

Mr R Cater presented a report a digest of which follows:

St. Andrew's continues to serve the village in its capacity as a place of regular public Sunday worship and for personal requirements for baptisms, weddings and funerals. With two Communion services, Evensong for those who enjoy a reflective service and a family service designed for the younger people. We also enjoy a monthly meeting with young parents and their pre-school children. We value our strong links with the school children who receive regular visits from our vicar. The church is pleased to organise a pancake race for the children which ties in with the Easter message and we are delighted to host the children's services and events associated with the Advent season. The children's ability as they perform in public at these services and the confidence they show will be of enormous benefit to them in later life. The PCC gives books to the children at Lent and as they leave Collingbourne and move on to a new world for their secondary education. We have the benefit of clergy for each service and our resident vicar, Revd Mary Edwards is available to village people for personal advice. The welcome of physical refreshment is a regular feature of our services. This is an opportunity for people to meet up with new visitors, exchange news with friends and essentially use the church for more than just the prescribed services. This was our aim, when 7 years ago, we set out to bring our church into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with catering and toilet facilities: We feel that this intention has been approved and supported by your Council to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for the generous grant of £5,000 towards the cost of building the toilet. It is a humbling gift and we are conscious of a duty of response in our service to the community. We hope that the church will now be used by the village even more frequently for social events. For many years a Church Fete was an annual feature of village life but the need for a larger event outgrew our organisational strengths: we are now happy to co-operate under the leadership of a committee which is giving the village a Day which it well warrants. Financially we just keep our head above water: but maintaining an ancient building for public use is a continual burden and we hope that in the future the willingness of the church to serve the village will be matched by the villages wish to support the church.

The Chairman thanked Mr Carter for the report.

**11. Written Resolutions.**

There being no resolutions to consider the Chairman thanked all the speakers.

The meeting closed at 19.15pm.