

BLEADON PARISH COUNCIL

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Annual Parish Meeting – 8th April 2019

DRAFT Minutes of Bleadon Annual Parish Meeting held in the Coronation Hall, Coronation Road on Monday 8th April 2019 at 7.00pm when the following business was transacted:

PRESENT Cllr Mary Sheppard (Chairman) and 16 members of the public. Apologies were received from PCSO Aisha Mitchell.

Prior to the start of the meeting Marian Barber (Clerk to the Parish Council) introduced Cllr Steve Hartree to present this year's Valued Citizen Award.

Steve explained that the Parish Council had initiated the Valued Citizen Award last year in order to recognise the considerable contribution to the village, over many years, of individuals within the parish. This year's nomination was for a long-term resident of the village who had also served as a parish councillor for over thirty years. Over that time councillors old and new relied on her comprehensive knowledge of the village, the people, and the history of the area, and this continues today, benefiting the decision-making of the current parish council. Steve presented the Award to Cllr Mary Sheppard.

Mary thanked Steve for the award, saying that she was very pleased and honoured to receive the award but felt that others in the village deserved it just as much.

Marian then explained that although this was not a Parish Council meeting the regulations required the Chairman or vice-Chairman of the Parish Council, if present, to chair the meeting.

Cllr Mary Sheppard, as vice-Chairman, then took the chair, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present. She asked the meeting to nominate a person to take the minutes; Marian was nominated and voted in on a show of hands.

Parish Council Chairman Cllr Jim Baines' report (read by Cllr Sheppard):

Good evening and welcome to all. May I first offer my apologies for absence due to a holiday booked long before I was aware of the date of this meeting. The meeting will be chaired by the vice-Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Mary Sheppard.

For those new to this event I should clarify that it is not a Council meeting but is an opportunity for the councillors to deliver short reports on their endeavours and achievements during this last year and for you the Parishioners to ask questions of the councillors on any topic you wish. I would however stress that whilst all questions, requests and indeed complaints will be noted, no decision can be made this evening. All matters arising will be carried forward for consideration at the next Council meeting. Primarily this is your meeting and I hope that with your input it is informative and productive.

As a new councillor and Chairman this last year has been challenging; I along with five new councillors have had a steep learning curve. All have brought expertise and enthusiasm to the job of helping this community deal with all ongoing Parish responsibilities from legal formalities in relation to its assets to the emptying of dog bins and initiating new projects such as the

Neighbourhood Development Plan and Bleadon in Bloom. I would also take this opportunity to thank the two continuing councillors, Mary Sheppard and Steve Hartree, for their sterling work prior to our arrival.

For myself, my primary role has been to chair the monthly Council meetings which have been lively and never boring; I confess to sometimes feeling like a referee in trying to ensure legal process is followed but also allowing lively debate and ensuring everyone has their say. Secondly, clarification of legal matters in relation to the Halls site, liaising with solicitors and the renewal of the Youth Club lease. Also site visits for planning applications, line manager duties in relation to the parish clerk and lastly internet banking along with Cllr Anne Selway and the parish clerk.

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Website – Concerns were raised in the year about the standard of the council’s website. Cllrs Hemingway and Richardson met with the website provider and drew up a refreshed website appearance and content which meets with the council’s approval. Uploading of historical information and content is still ongoing and carried out mainly by the parish clerk.

Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr Richardson held a meeting with the NW co-ordinators within the village and gained a useful insight into how the organisation is operated. She listened to concerns and offered to be a channel by which the co-ordinators could feed back to the parish council at any time.

Community Safety – following on from large-scale concerns from parishioners about road safety in and around the village, Cllr Richardson spoke with the Avon and Somerset Speed Enforcement Unit (SEU). They gave advice on speed enforcement and this has now resulted in SEU officers working regularly on the 30mph limit within the village. However, the problems surrounding the A370 continue. Parishioners voted not to allocate funds towards safety improvements between the Bleadon Road and Bridge Road junctions. Despite this result, Cllr Richardson continues to seek a solution with Avon and Somerset SEU and hopes to enforce the current 50mph speed limit, as it currently stands, in the future.

Marshalls Liaison – there have still been various issues with Marshalls Quarry including continued light pollution, traffic problems and waste management. Cllr Richardson has re-implemented the Liaison Group which will be meeting within the coming weeks hoping to reach an amicable solution to the problems for all parties concerned.

Footpaths and Bridleways – the posts in Purn Way should now have been repaired/replaced. Scalpings have been donated from Marshalls for the path from Bleadon House to Rectory Way. There is a lot of dog mess around and NSC are going to be cracking down over the next few months. If someone has a dog but no poo bag then they can be prosecuted. There is some money available for furniture and gates. In the audit the priority was the bridleways up to the plantation from Shiplate Road where the gate has not been right for 15 years. Cllr Hemingway has asked the parish clerk to see if NSC will rectify these three gates.

Bleadon Village News – the Spring edition (BVN111) is out and the printing cost was again covered by advertising income. The next deadline is 8th May for copy for the Summer edition (BVN112). We are hoping to add to our regular columns and would like to see a letters page.

Allotments – the parish council has been busy this past year getting the allotments tidy and up together. The compost heap in the north east corner was removed and a new fence erected on the southern end of the plots. Purn Landscapes removed the tree stumps on the south side of the gate making room for an extra parking space. Special thanks must go to the allotment holders for their hard work in clearing and removing the old sheds and debris. We have just one half plot available now, and wish everyone a successful growing season.

Churchyard – Many thanks to the Parish Church volunteers for clearing the overgrown graves. It is looking more loved but there is still work to be done. The Church Clock is beginning to look tired and will soon need a facelift. This could cost several thousands of pounds and so I hope the Council will not spend money foolishly.

Finance Report

Cllr Steve Hartree (Chairman, Finance and Personnel Committee) reported that the Parish Council commenced this last year with healthy balances and has enabled the finance of all aspects of the Council's work. During the year contracts for the work of the Ranger, payroll and work respect of the Coronation Hall have been awarded. The ranger contract now includes emptying dog bins. Financial support for Bleadon in Bloom, a Neighbourhood Plan and capital projects has been provided.

The Council is currently considering contracts for CCTV in the car park and for WIFI in the halls, and continued financial guarantees are provided for Bladon News. Advice was received, however, that the Parish Council cannot provide finance for any campaign against a developer in relation to planning applications.

Many payments are now made by BACS, so saving the Council expenditure on postage. Once again clear report on the Council's finances was received from an independent examiner.

The increase in the precept for 2019/20 (2.12%) has been kept to less than the rate of inflation, and a number of agreed projects 2019/20 will be financed from reserves.

The year to 31st March 2019 concluded with an increase in the Council's reserves and the Council will consider financing new projects from these reserves during the forthcoming year

My sincere thanks go to Marian, our Clerk, for her outstanding work in relation to the Parish Council's finances and to the members of the Council's Finance and Personnel Committee for their work and support.

2018/19 Draft Year End and 2019/20 Precept

Marian Barber, Parish Clerk, provided this report, explaining that the figures are unaudited, taken from the accounting package, and therefore draft.

The opening balance at 1 April 2018 was £60,209, the approved precept for the year was £44,401, and additional income of £6,545 brought the total to £111,156. Expenditure was £44,689 which leaves a closing balance on 31st March 2019 of £66,466. Again, please note that these figures are subject to minor year-end adjustments before audit.

The precept for 2019-2020 was set at £45,344 in November 2018 and was approved by North Somerset Council in January 2019. It represents a 2.12% increase on the previous year.

It is proposed to reduce the reserves to between £44,000 and £50,000 in the current financial year in order to bring the reserves figure in line with advice received. As a start, allocations totalling £7,090 from reserves were approved at the parish council meeting on 1st April.

Coronation Hall Management Committee

Cllr Steve Hartree reported that the Committee had met on a regular basis over the past year; Les Masters continued as Chair with Kevin Barrett as Secretary and Ian Gibson as Treasurer. Hire charges are kept under review and bookings are constant. A new Hall Caretaker was appointed and a replacement cleaner will be needed very soon.

The Parish Council made grants towards the cost of a one-way system in the car park, replacement fire doors and a new exterior pedestrian access to the front of the Hall. The

Management Committee finances are in good order, with reserves for Hall improvements such as the main kitchen upgrade, expected to cost in the region of £25-£30,000.

Tribute must be paid to the excellent and most efficient work of Kevin (secretary) and Ian (treasurer) and to the enthusiasm of the members of the Hall Management Committee. The Parish Council continues to support this social hub of the parish and is represented on the Management Committee by me.

Minutes of the previous meeting (9 April 2018)

Andy Scarisbrick proposed that the minutes be approved as published; seconded by Gill Williams and approved on a show of hands. The Chairman signed the minutes.

Open Forum

Cllr Sheppard asked whether anyone present wished to speak. A resident asked that thanks be given to the Ranger (previously Mark Howe, currently Adrian Leonard) for their services to the village, Brian Robinson for maintaining the church clock, and the church volunteers for their work in the churchyard. She asked two questions: 1) why had the Parish Council's response to NSC's consultation on the Local Plan to 2036 stated that 10% increase in housing adjacent to the settlement boundary was acceptable? 2) She said that various people had commented to her that the Neighbourhood Plan survey centred on the village rather than the parish as a whole – why had it been written that way?

Cllr Hemingway, as Chairman of Planning, explained that the response to NSC's consultation related to the future plan under revised rules. The key point in the response was the parish council did not want any adjustment to the settlement boundary. The parish council comments on planning applications to NSC, who make the decisions.

Terry Porter explained that the policy regarding infill villages does not allow building outside the settlement boundary BUT a Planning Inspector recently allowed an application of 100 homes outside the boundary of Sandford. In Bleadon, applications outside the settlement boundary have and will be permitted at times.

The resident said that she had received negative feedback regarding the Neighbourhood Plan survey, that people at the ends of the parish didn't feel they belonged, and that the turnout tonight was lamentable. Others present suggested that they had received positive feedback; it is school holidays and so people may be away; general disillusionment in local government systems caused by the debate over European membership; if people are broadly content they do not turn out – they only do so in numbers when they are dissatisfied; and if there is so much concern why were there only eight nominations for the nine parish council seats?

Cllr Williams explained that the final page of the survey (Q29) asked for any and all comments – it was the opportunity for people to raise anything and there were 99 comments made. A summary of the key issues and a list of minor issues was on the wall at the meeting and will be published in the survey results, circulated by the end of May.

Closing remarks

Cllr Sheppard gave special thanks to Liz Scarisbrick for providing refreshments before and after the meeting.

Date of next Annual Parish Meeting

This is usually held on the second Monday of April. However, next year this will be Easter Monday and so the Annual Parish Meeting is booked for 7pm on **Monday 20th April 2020** in the Coronation Hall.

The meeting closed at 7.50pm.