

WHITTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 14th May 2019 in the Senior Citizen's Hall, Whittington at 6.30pm.

Present: Cllrs Jill Whitby, Frank Davis, Ian Johnson, Steve Charmley, Keith Stanton, Jenny Pritchard, Rupert Harvey, Greg Hickman, Paul Jones.

*11 members of the public.
PCSO Roberts.*

- 1. Welcome and apologies** - The Parish Council Chairman will welcome everyone to the meeting and receive any apologies for absence

The Chair, Jill Whitby, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies received from Cllr Beaumont.

- 2. Minutes** - To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on the 16th May 2018

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16th May 2018 and these were duly signed by the chairman as a true record.

- 3. Chairman's Report and Annual Report from the Parish Council**

The Chair read out the following report:

2018 proved to be a year of change for the Parish Council.

In June we lost our Clerk Sue Cowley, after over 30 years service and after a successful interview Amy Jones was welcomed to the position. She has hit the ground running, and started to ring in the changes, and to bring the Council up to speed on all the new Government legislation.

The Council also lost two longstanding Councillors, Pat Raine and Andy Cawthray. We welcomed Lucy Beaumont and Keith Stanton to the vacant positions and both have quickly risen to the challenges of being a Councillor.

The Council also moved Venues for its meetings. In January we moved to the Castle, primarily to take advantage of the Broadband to assist with presentations at our meetings.

The past year was also a challenging year. The defibrillator was purchased at great expense, and was promptly stolen within weeks. Luckily it was found and replaced in a newly secure cabinet. It has been used a handful of times over the past 12 months, proving what a vital asset it is to the Community.

The “youth” issue was ongoing for much of the year, resulting in a fraught attendance at the October meeting, where the local Police Officer and Inspector sought to allay concerns. Following on from this, The Council in partnership with the TNS foundation set up a series of meetings with the youths of the Parish to look into what could be done to turn their energy into something worthwhile. A Whittington Youth group has been set up, with funding gained by the TNS foundation and a grant from the PC. The group have been busy, not only in their weekly meetings, but also at venues in the Village, putting on a fun day for the children of the village in the Easter Holidays, and voluntary work at the Castle grounds. It is good to see something positive coming out of a bad situation.

The Council has also moved on with its Street Light changeout. The next three areas for changeout have been identified following a survey of the lights by Highline Electrical. The end of the project is of course financially dependent.

The Council put their grounds maintenance out to tender, after the previous company let us down quite badly over the summer months. The maintenance for the Memorial Garden has been handed back to the Church, and grants have been given to the Cemetery “Friends” group and The Castle to assist with the cutting of their land that the Council no longer manages.

It has been a quieter year on the local planning front. However, the Shropshire Council Local Plan review intimated at a couple of large developments in both Park Hall and the main village. The Parish Council fed back their thoughts and requirements should any of these developments make it through to the “Final” plan. This review has now begun the process of evaluating all the feedback received in Shropshire and will be reporting back after Committee meetings next month. It is to be remembered that this is a 20 year plan, and a lot can change in that time.

As Chair I was honoured to be asked to open the Whittington Together Fete last August, commemorating the 100 years since the end of the Great War. It was a glorious day and it was good to see the Village buzzing. The Carol Concert at the Boote Inn was also well attended, although most of the planning for this has now passed from the Council to the Boote. The Council made a contribution to the festivities, and also purchased more lights for the Village Tree. The Council have also made a contribution to assist with the cost of the floodlights at the Castle. Other donations were approved for the Whittington Music Festival, The Ripple, the Senior Citizens, the Community Centre and Whittington Together, amongst others.

I would like to end by thanking Amy the Clerk, and the Councillors for their support and hard work during the past 12 months, I can assure you that hard work will continue and we will strive to look after the interests of our parish and its residents.

The Clerk presented an Annual Financial Report documenting the Year End Annual Return Figures and the grants made by the Parish Council in 2018/19. The Clerk referred people to the website, where copies of all financial documentation can be found.

4. Speaker: Tim Shrosbree – Right Home Right Place – Shropshire Council

Tim Shrosbree informed attendees that from Mid June – Mid July a Housing Needs survey will be carried out to determine the Housing Need in the parish. A report on the findings of the survey will be available about a month or so after the survey has been completed. If the survey identifies a need for affordable homes then an exception site scheme or a community led scheme can be looked into.

The survey will go live on 17th June but prior to this, every household in the parish will receive a letter and a paper copy through their doors. Information will be going on noticeboards, social media, in the Ripple etc. The Right Home Right Place team are also encouraging big employers in the area to complete the survey to assess the type of accommodation that may be required for potential employees.

Every type of housing need is assessed by the survey.

The information was **NOTED** and posters provided to display on the parish council noticeboards.

5. Speaker: Adnan Ali – Community Speedwatch – West Mercia Police

Adnan Ali delivered a presentation on the West Mercia Safer Roads Partnership, a volunteer led programme where volunteers are provided with all the training and equipment required to carry out the speed monitoring in their parish. A minimum of 6 volunteers are required to launch the scheme and volunteers always operate as a team of 3. All equipment and training is provided and there is no cost to the Parish Council. All monitoring must be carried out in good weather and daylight and there are no restrictions on how often the monitoring takes place. Other Parish Council's in the area, currently running a Community Speedwatch Programme are St Martins and Ryton XI Towns.

Mr Ali explained that speed data on Station Road, Boote Street and Ellesmere Road has been gathered and analysed and all roads fit the criteria for the scheme. The minimum age for monitoring is 18 years of age and all volunteers covered under West Mercia's public liability and personal accident cover. Training takes between 2 – 3 hours.

The programme co-ordinator selects all the sites where the monitoring is to take place, in accordance with west mercia police policy and suitable locations have already been identified in Whittington.

It was **RESOLVED** that anybody interested in becoming a volunteer share their details with the clerk who will communicate them to Adnan Ali with a view to setting up a community speedwatch group in Whittington.

6. Annual reports from organisations in the Parish

Community Centre – Report read out by the Treasurer:

We continue to have regular activities, Women's Institute, Brownies, Ballet classes, Zumba and Under 5s group, along with meetings and parties of all kinds which are increasingly popular.

However, it is an old building and these hirings do not cover all the expenses and other fund raising still goes on. Car boot sales and stalls at various events and the ever popular quizzes, all help to raise the extra funding. Every year we have a very busy but quite tiring weekend, providing refreshments at the Clwyd Rally.

We were awarded a grant to replace the large window in the main hall and the kitchen window which not only look very good, but we hope help with heating costs. We also received a grant from the Parish Council for which we are very grateful.

However, we had a setback with the damage to the wall and although it was covered by our insurance, we still had to pay excess and it caused unnecessary stress and worry.

Expenses continue to rise, especially with utilities. Day to day housekeeping and repairs are undertaken by our caretaker and committee members and spouses and we make a rule to always use local firms for our maintenance. Officers and committee members do not take any expenses including provision of refreshments for events. Similarly, no expenses are ever taken for admin, phone calls, photocopying, stamps and other items, so keeping costs down.

Every year we take part in the Shropshire Village Quiz in which Community Centres and Village Halls compete every month with a final in April. We actually hosted one of the quizzes this year. We also continue to support the Whittington Together Event, with a Produce and Flower Show which includes competitions for children.

We are an independent organisation and always will be. We have a small but dedicated committee comprising of three Trustees Roger Smith Chairman, Kath Griffiths Secretary and Christine Hughes Treasurer and six committee members.

We would like to offer our thanks to the Parish Council for their continued support. We are very proud of the Community Centre and we will keep it 'in the heart of the village' for many years to come.

TNS / Whittington Youth – Report delivered by 2 representatives and 2 young people from Whittington Youth:

Funding from Staffordshire Community Foundation has been received to deliver a 'youth social impact project' – working with young people to make a positive impact in their communities. Working under the structure of a 'Youth Council', the project is currently 11 weeks into the 40 weeks that have been funded and is going really well. Holiday Club is also up and running for 4-14 year olds and is a free entry event. A facebook page has been set up named 'Whittington Youth'

and representatives have been attending Whittington Together meetings and will be having a presence at the Summer Fete. The group are now actively seeking out fundraising opportunities such as bag packing to continue to bring in funds to support the project. It was noted that this is a very forward-thinking project, with a modern approach, led by the young people and as a result the youth feel more ownership of the village as a result. Averaging 22 attendees each week, 29 registered and 22 attended the holiday club.

Whittington Together – A representative delivered a presentation and a short video on last year's village fete. The focus of which was the Poppy Cascade, which involved communities from all over the world knitting poppies for the display. Around 3,500 poppies made up the cascade. Thanks were given to the Castle for hosting the event,

Police – CSO Roberts gave the following report:

ASB - 84 incidents in last 12 months. Spout of burglaries. Still considered a very safe village to live in. Speed checks will continue as well as a physical presence in the parish. If it is a crime / incident, please report using 101 or 999.

The Chair and Clerk read out reports from:

- Whittington Music Festival
- The Church
- Friends of Whittington Cemetery
- Whittington Senior Citizens' Club

7. Parish Matters / Open Forum - Local government electors are invited to ask questions.

- Both at the junction of the North Drive with Twmpath Lane (outside number 30 North Drive) and at the junction of Inglis Road with the Burma Road (opposite Park Crescent and the chicane by the bus stop), there is a large area of floodwater after rain which extends to at least the centre line of the road. Both areas are trafficked by buses and other large vehicles. In both cases dirty water cascades over the pavement, drenching any passer-by and also (in the case of the first area) the curtilage of the adjacent property. The drains have collapsed and the tarmac is sinking. Cllr Charmley has raised this with Shropshire Council and the Clerk has reported it to EMOswestry.
- Station Road to the Junction – road surface disintegrating. This has been reported.

8. Shropshire Council Report

Steve Charmley reported on the following:

- **Oswestry Rugby Club** - 300 children / young people attending every Sunday.
- **Whittington Primary School** – 215 currently on roll. The school has maintained their 'Good' Ofsted rating following their most recent inspection

and are heading towards Outstanding. Financial projections for forthcoming year are very positive and there has been the development of an SEND Hub at the school. Numbers are increasing due to recent developments and a spike in birth rates. The school are looking at adding an additional classroom in the future

- **Shropshire Council** – Another busy year for Shropshire Council as it becomes more commercial in its focus. The Council have purchased the shopping centres and master planning is now taking place. The Riverside Shopping Centre, Multi Story and Bus Station will be demolished next year and will be the start of a large-scale regeneration project. Master Planning through 'Future Oswestry' is looking at the flow of traffic, streetlighting (everything that makes a town centre a town centre). An additional roundabout will be created at Mile End with road improvements to be completed early 2022. Highways England are responsible for the road but the council are investing because it unlocks housing, employment and business land at Mile End. Shropshire as a county continues to be underfunded by around 50%, compared to metropolitan areas. Highways contractor Kier was appointed this year and are on the verge of financial collapse, as reported in the press. The situation is being closed monitored by the council.
- **Streetlighting** – The question has been raised with Shropshire Council as to why Whittington Parish Council have been burdened with so many streetlights including those that line the main highways when these in other parishes are the responsibility of SC. Currently looking into submitting a bid to central government through Future Oswestry to support the conversion of LEDs in local parishes surrounding Oswestry. Further updates on this will be provided through the Parish Council at their monthly meetings.

9. Closing remarks by the Chairman

The Chair thanked everybody for attending and refreshments were served.

Meeting Closed: 20.08