

**RECORD OF BOURTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
HELD AT 7.00 PM ON MONDAY 20<sup>th</sup> MAY 2019 IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Chairman of the Parish Council, Mike Withers, who chaired the meeting, 7 Parish Councillors, Cllr Belinda Rideout (Dorset Council, Cllr David Walsh (Dorset Council), approx. 30 members of the public and the Parish Clerk, Eve Wynn who took notes of the meeting.

**1. Apologies**

Allan Miller, Sue Matthews (Bourton & Silton Charity)

**2. Record of Last Meeting**

The record of the 2018 annual meeting had been published and is available on the website.

**Agreed as accurate by all Cllrs present.**

**3. Report by the Chairman of the Parish Council for the 2018 to 2019 year.**

The year has been one of major change in many areas. Very shortly after last year's Annual Parish Meeting, Simon Firbank resigned after 24 consecutive years as chairman of the Parish Council. We all owe Simon a large debt of gratitude for his unstinting service to the community over so many years and hope that he is enjoying the rather more peaceful existence at home. All the best to him and his family for the future.

Later in the year councillor Tim Heaton resigned for pastoral reasons. My thanks to the two people who were co-opted onto the council to take their places, Iain McVie and Andrew Gillett, who have contributed much to the PC's work and breadth of experience.

May this year saw the election for the Parish Council which, as it turned out, was uncontested, as only nine people put their names forward. I now welcome onto the team new councillors Ian Cooper and Andrew Sturt. It was also at this point that long-serving Parish and Independent District Councillor Geoff Miller decided not to seek re-election to the Parish Council after some 49 years of unbroken public service. My thanks to him and best wishes for the future to him and his family.

Thanks also to our County and District Councillors, Andrew Cattaway and Peter Williams who are not continuing under the new unitary authority, Dorset Council. Our thanks go to them both for their hard work on behalf of the village and their attendance at PC meetings to report on the wider political issues which might affect the village. Congratulations and thanks go to our new Dorset Council representatives David Walsh and Belinda Rideout who are with us this evening, and to Val Potheary who has apologised for being unable to attend this evening as she has commitments at Gillingham Town Council. We hope to see more of them during the coming year to lead us through some of the challenges that the new authority will undoubtedly throw up and to wish them all good luck in their new roles.

My sincere thanks also go to the number of members of the public who turn up at PC meetings to raise their concerns and which can result in lively debate which is, in my view, a healthy.

**Village Hall.** This subject of the selected site for the new village hall continues to be a divisive issue within the village. I hope that, now the task of determining the outline planning applications on both the Sandways and Jubilee sites rests solely with the new Dorset Council, once the decision is made, then the village can unite around the hard working Village Hall CIO Trustees and Parish Council to make the new hall a reality. I would like to especially thank councillor Mike Chapman for his tireless hard work in bringing the project to this stage and, as its ongoing project manager, for seeking out funding opportunities with the Trustee team in a very challenging financial period. It has recently been announced that both planning applications will be heard at the meeting of Dorset Council's planning committee on 28<sup>th</sup> May. Interestingly, both applications have been recommended for approval.

**Bourton Mill.** The year has seen a most frustrating period of road closures affecting Factory Hill which has made life difficult for residents and for the business at Bullpits golf course. Sales of the first six houses to the south of Factory Hill have not been as buoyant as hoped for and work is now underway to construct the two houses in Bridge Street. It is reported that further building commencements will take place on the main factory site shortly. There remain ongoing concerns by the Parish Council over wildlife habitats and flood compensation issues as well as an unfulfilled Section 106 commitment by the developer to contribute capital monies for the village hall project, which was due to be paid at commencement of development.

**Ash Grove Development.** Again, as with the Mill site, sales have been rather slow on this completed development of 10 houses at the end of Church Track.

**Developments Generally.** Despite the difficult house sales position demonstrated by the lack of sales on the above two developments, there does not seem to be much slowing down of developer interest in the village. The Parish Council has received queries and applications on a number of infill schemes within the

village's Settlement Boundary, as well as some interest outside the Boundary. The Parish Council have stuck firm with the policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan and in the former North Dorset District Council's Local Plan to resist development outside the Settlement Boundary. It should be understood that a slowdown in house sales is a cyclical thing and that developers are always trying to anticipate an upturn in demand and price. Other major issues which the Parish Council have fought are the maintenance of the rural character of the village by objecting to over-development on individual sites and the preservation and enhancement of the environment. It is not yet known when Dorset Council will complete a review of the existing Local Plan, but we should be prepared for whatever comes out of it and the challenges on land use in the village that it may present.

**The Neighbourhood Plan.** This is now a "made" Plan and forms part of Dorset Council's Local Plan policies. It is possible, as mentioned above, that the Neighbourhood Plan policies may have to change to match those within any revised Local Plan policies following completion of their review process. It is a fact that Local Plan policies take precedence over the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Wildlife & Habitats Group.** This group continues to thrive due to the drive of its leader, Bernard Sullivan, and the incredible amount of hard work put in by its volunteers. My thanks go out to the group who have helped to make the village look good and helped to promote wildlife corridors and habitats. Many trees and shrubs have been planted, verges kept tidy, and a major project has been completed on Footpath 11 to lay down boarding to overcome mud and water issues for walkers. There has also been an interesting project jointly with the Wild Trout Trust to survey conditions for fish in the River Stour. Well done to all the team and I would urge as many people as possible to contact the team and offer to assist as volunteers. There is plenty of work still to do.

**The Speedwatch Team.** Under the sterling leadership of Sheila Williams, the speedwatch team has done a great job in trying to keep our village roads safe. The band of volunteers has worked closely with the Council and Police in bringing new technology to bear on speeding motorists and the team are often seen very early in the morning carrying out their work. My thanks to you all.

**The Village Website.** Special thanks again to Nick Hall for his tireless and cheerfully executed work in keeping the village website updated, as well as his invaluable efforts on behalf of the village hall. The village is very fortunate to have someone like Nick to rely on.

**St George's Church and School.** As well as a number of changes of personnel in the Parish Council, the year has also seen the school's headmaster, Michael Salisbury, leave to continue work in Shaftesbury, being replaced by Mrs Farndale, who we wish the best of luck in her new role. This year the village has also lost its extremely capable and much-admired vicar, Graham Perryman. The Parish Council would like to wish both Michael and Graham all the very best for their future and to thank them sincerely for all their great contributions to the heart of the community.

**Dorset Alert.** This continues to send out alerts on matters which may affect our day-to-day lives. It is good to see PCSO Vicky Gibbs (previously Levy) back from secondment and our thanks go to her and the police team for keeping us informed of criminality in the area.

**Bourton Village Day and the Bourton Bash.** The Parish Council were pleased to be able to support these events which proved so successful. Huge thanks to Sharron McVie, Trevor Knott and Alex Ross for organising these events and good luck to them for their efforts for this year which are much appreciated.

#### **4. Parish Council Accounts for the Financial report for year ending 31st March 2018**

The Parish Clerk reported the following summary: **Staff costs** £6192.97; **Total other payments** £13,490.50;

**VAT of £114.96 was claimed back and has been paid by HMRC to the parish council in the 2018/19 year** although another larger reclaim is due to be paid and will reflect in 2019/20 accounts.

**Balances Carried Forward-** as of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 the final balance is **£41,162.64.**

The budget analysis sheet identifies itemised expenditure incurred during the Financial Year compared with the budgeted amounts, which councillors had received prior to the meeting. The Clerk confirmed that the internal audit had been completed and she would forward the accounts to the external auditor for finalisation.

A copy of the 2018/19 Parish Council Accounts will be placed on the website once the audit has been completed and signed off.

## **6. Bourton and Silton Charity Accounts**

Peter Williams reported that Sue Matthews (Treasurer for Bourton and Silton Charity) will provide a brief update for the June PC meeting.

## **7. Open Forum**

Members of the public raised the following points:

- A MoP asked that as both sites of the proposed new village hall are recommended by officers of the council this could then be an opportunity for a referendum if the PC wished to take that route. MW said the decision now rests with Dorset Council officers. BR said DC will look at both applications individually and that both might well go through. This could then be the time for a referendum to take place. A MoP said the village voted for the Parish Councillors and felt they should therefore support the Parish Council. A MoP said thank you to all the BPC councillors for steering the village in the right direction on this matter and another MoP agreed that the village should get behind the councillors and registered his thanks.
- A MoP said accusations of bullying, coaching and the Democratic Site Selection Group being a single-issue group are preventing the PC from answering relevant questions sent in by members of the village. If there were people who feel bullied perhaps arrange a meeting with them to discuss their accusations. The MoP said when the Parish Council is asked perfectly proper and pertinent questions about the site selection process, they should provide specific answers to those questions and not continue to repeat the accusations. The MoP said we need to move on, and we are letting the community down by allowing this pettiness to continue. Many of those who feel that their views were not taken into consideration over the site selection will have respect for a public body who can say "Perhaps we need to have a rethink and try to take the village with us."
- Nick Hall reported that he was happy to continue running the website for another year.
- Sharron McVie and Trevor Knott reported that plans for the Bourton Village Day were well underway and all were welcome to come to the event on July 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Bernard Sullivan said that in light of climate change problems he would encourage all 822 members of the community to each plant a tree in their garden and asked that the PC show leadership in this initiative. He also reported that himself, James Mann and Jenny Morgan had had a meeting and proposed that wild flower seeds be added to the new grass seed that will be sown at the Mill Site.

**The meeting was formally closed at 7.23pm**