
PUXTON CIVIL PARISH - 2018 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Hewish & Puxton Village Hall - Thursday 3rd May 2018 At 8.00 pm

Chair: Sue Popperwell, Chair of Puxton Parish Council **Minute Taker:** Don Hill **Attendees:** 8

MINUTES

58/18 Apologies: Clayton Penfold

59/18 Matters arising from minutes of last year's meeting: The minutes were circulated to and approved by the meeting attendees and signed as a true record in June 2017. There were no matters arising.

60/18 Reports from Interest Groups: Reports were received from The Parish Council, North Somerset Council, Holy Saviour Church. Hewish & District WI, Hewish & Puxton Village Hall Committee. They are attached to form a part of these minutes.

61/18 Open Discussion: There was no open discussion

62/18 No other topics were raised, and, after the Chair thanking everyone for their attendance, the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

REPORTS

Puxton Parish Council - Sue Popperwell, Chair

Good Evening Everyone. It my role to chair this Annual Parish Meeting and also to deliver a report on significant parish council happenings during the past financial year.

Councillors

Of our 6 councillors at the start of the year, 3 moved away from the area: Jim Sulley, Katy Wilson and Mandy Edwards. They have been replaced by Clayton Penfold, Jim Howard and Lynda Redding and we continue to have a vacancy that, if filled, will bring us up to our limit of 7 councillors for the parish.

As to Policing...

Parishes no longer receive regular police reports or attendance at meetings. However, the local team is always available and responsive if we raise specific issues with them.

Gullies at Spring Cottage & Puxton Lane have been an ongoing problem...

Our North Somerset Council Area Officer has worked hard to ensure that the various A370 gullies are kept clear. Particularly - within our parish - those in the vicinity of SJH Machinery. He is working on a long term fix for gully issues in Puxton Road, but with the key gully jammed shut, it is going to need major work and this is taking a long and frustrating time to organise and fund.

Parish Maintenance

During this financial year we had the services of a parish maintenance company to keep signs clean, keep the bridge repaired, litter pick and cut greens and lay-bys etc. Ideally we could utilise these services more intensively, but budget constraints have so far limited us to two days a month from April to November.

Puxton Road Speed Limit

We had hopes of introducing a 30mph speed limit along Puxton Road and North Somerset Council conducted a speed analysis to gauge the extent of the speeding problem. Surprisingly, this did not expose a significant speeding issue and with the costs of installing the speed limit being some £8,000, which the parish would have to pay, the project was postponed.

A370 Footpath

Perhaps the single most vexing issue during the year has been the ever deteriorating state of the footpath that runs along the seaward side of the A370. Its maintenance is a North Somerset Council responsibility and has been completely neglected during the past few years. In some place the path is virtually impassible, forcing pedestrians out into the notoriously busy roadway and rendering the path unusable by those with wheelchairs or pushchairs. We are urgently awaiting the outcome

of some test work North Somerset Council have conducted to assess the cost of maintenance and repair work, much of which will have to be done under the protection of traffic light controls.

School Transport Provision

Because of the dangers attaching to pedestrian use of the A370, we laid a strong complaint with North Somerset Council when they suddenly withdrew or limited the various school transport arrangements for rural youngsters. It appears that the whole district is up in arms about this but are being greeted by the response that there is simply not the budget to continue provision of the service. The pressure remains on, however, for a reinstatement of the former services.

Broadband

Gigaclear have started work on installing fast broadband to North Somerset: we are still waiting to hear when our parish scheme will get underway. It should be within the next year and can't come soon enough!

Planning

The scrutiny of planning applications from the parish to North Somerset planners is a key responsibility of the Parish Council. This year has seen the usual mix of straightforward ones, and of retrospective ones, most of which have been uncontroversial. If problems arise with an application once it has been granted, that application becomes the subject of an Enforcement Order under which North Somerset Planners investigate the issues and enforce their resolution. No-one can help but to have noticed the problems planners have experience in this regard in relation to work being carried out at Stonebridge Farm. The A370 in the area has, on many occasions, been a sea of mud and dust. Due to a loophole in the planning conditions attached to this application, NSC were powerless to enforce those conditions that applied to washing the wheels of lorries leaving the site and have had to keep the roadway cleaned at their own expense. We remain ever vigilant to this problem and are aware that there are still some months left during which problems may occur again.

Finance

A successful audit of the 2017-18 accounts has just been completed and the required publicity to make this and the related accounts available to everyone will be posted to the parish website shortly. As a parish with under £25,000 of income or expenditure, we no longer have to have an external audit of the accounts in a normal year. The cost of moving the community fund monies into and out of the parish account unfortunately pushes our income and expenditure levels above this level. We had to pay a £200 external audit cost when the monies came into the parish account, and will probably have to undergo an external audit - with its related costs - at the end of this financial year, as the community fund is moved across to the Village Hall during the coming weeks to contribute to its purchase of the freehold.

We do not currently have a donations budget, but responded to the St Anne's School Defibrillator appeal by a £250 contribution from the Community Fund.

North Somerset Council - Tom Leimdorfer, Ward Councillor for Congresbury & Puxton

As in recent years, **North Somerset Council** decisions in the past year were mainly in response to increasing budget pressures. The recent rise in **Council Tax** will have been an unpleasant surprise to residents struggling with rising costs. The poorest experienced the largest percentage increase, widening inequality in our district. At the same time, the Council's overall funding is reducing, resulting in **cuts in services for both vulnerable adults and children**. Cross-party representations by the Local Government Association have been ignored by government. Cash-strapped councils are looking at all means of generating income, including rent from property deals. There is more and more reliance on what **local communities can do for themselves**. Some developments of interest:

- **Libraries and Children's Centres** – Congresbury Library is now staffed by volunteers with just three hours of NSC staff help per week. Apart from some IT problems, the library is doing well with some new ventures like lectures and coffee mornings as well as an 'honesty library' stocked with donated books to supplement the books we have from the Libraries West stock. Worle Library has moved into Worle Children's Centre. Children's Centre staffing is being reduced at Yatton and Congresbury, while the Banwell Children's Centre may close.
- **Home Care** – the services in this area were under pressure both last summer and during the winter cold spells. Recruitment and staff sickness problem led to the use of agency staff and service failures. With the help of Council officers, the problems are gradually being overcome. However, the proposals for the 'new offer' indicate more reliance on family, friends and community to limit increasing costs.
- **Waste and recycling collection** – the recycling rate remains over 58%, which is the best in the South-West. There were problems with missed collections throughout the winter but the **routes will change** from June 2018 to improve reliability, reduce vehicle movements and enhance the local knowledge of each crew.
- **Planning issues continue to be dominant** – Following the adoption of the Site Allocation Plan to 2026, the current Core Strategy now has the full force of an adopted Local Plan. However, the next phase of planning is under way with the Joint Spatial Plan submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and the North Somerset Local Plan 2018-36 in preparation. A key proposal is the new garden village south-west of Puxton (north-west of Banwell) and the Banwell by-pass, which has passed the first stage of Department of Transport funding process.
- **Weston town centre transport scheme** – has obtained funding for a redesign of the centre for a public transport 'hub' and improved pedestrian and cycling routes.
- **Carbon reduction target** of 50% to 2035 has been adopted by the Council in line with the Climate Change Act. Carbon emissions by vehicles is the biggest challenge.
- **Local NHS issues** include the continued night time closure of Weston A&E, the amalgamation of North Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group with Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Mendip Vale Medical Practice have increased the area they cover and have submitted a planning application for a new surgery at Smallway which would replace the current Congresbury and Yatton surgeries.

- **A Food Enterprise Zone** has been approved on part of the old Weston Airfield area, part of the new Weston Business Quarter. This area will now be subject to permitted development rights with certain conditions.
- **An Investment Fund** has been set up, funded through unsupported borrowing. The Council has approved two major investments of commercial retail outlets in Weston and Worle. Based on advice of consultants, these investments should yield an annual income to the Council and thus help to reduce its projected funding gap.

In Puxton Parish, Enforcement issues relating to two developments along the A370 in Hewish have featured in my case work as well as on the Parish Council agenda. **Home to school transport**, where budget cuts are resulting in less safe options for young people attending secondary school has also featured in both my casework and Parish Council agenda. The same applies to **safe walking routes on pavements along the A370**, a problem which is ongoing. With respect to **home care**, I was able to help a vulnerable resident with advice and Attendance Allowance claim.

The **National Grid Hinkley C Connection Project** is getting under way. The early work is in the region of the Iwood/Churchill substation. The major works in the area of Hewish will not start till 2020, but will then affect the parish for several years. National Grid have some mitigation obligations, including an extensive **tree planting scheme**. They would like to hear from landowners with land within 3 km of the pylon route who would be interested in having trees planted on their land (see www.hinkleyconnection.co.uk).

I have had the privilege of representing Congresbury on North Somerset Council for the past 15 years and Puxton for the past three years. While I have worked closely with your Parish Council and tried to respond to concerns of residents, I am aware of the fact that I have not been able to make a significant contribution to the parish of Puxton. Many of the plans under consideration for the region and the locality relate to the next 15-20 years. The next local elections are in a year's time and I feel it will be time for a younger person to take over and help us shape our future. Naturally, I will continue to try to do my best for you in the coming year.

St Andrew's/Holy Saviour Church, Puxton - Rosemary West, PCC Secretary *(read by the Minute Taker)*

The church is maintained by the Churches Conservation Trust, with three services being held in the church every year (Christmas, Easter and Harvest). These services are always well attended. There are also occasional baptisms and funerals held in the church, and burials in the churchyard. The PCC of St Andrew's Congresbury maintain the churchyard. Many thanks to Janet Rogers who opens the church for visitors and to all who care for the building and churchyard.

Hewish & District Women's Institute - Sharen Hucker, President

Hewish and District W.I. continues to meet monthly in this hall. We now have 21 members and hopefully another lady will join at our May meeting. Unfortunately our W.I. has lost a lot of members even since I joined 7 years ago mainly due to ill health or death. This is all very sad for us as we only have one of our founder members left. In 2020 we will be celebrating our 60th Anniversary and it is my goal to gain new members for this occasion.

As well as our meetings we hold a craft afternoon monthly with ladies enjoying their knitting, crocheting, sewing and of course a nice cup of tea or coffee and a good chat. We also do a walk along the seafront monthly stopping off at Dr. Fox's Tearooms for yet another cup of tea or coffee and a piece of cake to help with the walk back.

At Christmas we held a Christmas meal at Beachlands in town and 38 people enjoyed a lovely meal. As we like to get out for our meals we also do this on a monthly basis taking it in turn to do one at lunchtime and the next in the evening so that all members even the ones who still work can enjoy this,

Our speakers over the last year have been very mixed and varied and included how to pot up your hanging baskets to making a beautiful hand made quilt to iced cake flowers to a very interesting talk about the S.S. Great Britain.

And lastly back at the beginning of April we all went out for a wonderful Cream Tea again at Beachlands. After devouring all the scones, sandwiches, cakes and so much tea and coffee we left completely stuffed.

I personally never thought that going to W.I. could be so much fun. I am currently in my second year as president and I would welcome any new members to come along to our meetings.

Village Hall Report - Christine Richardson, Chair

As I don't think I made a comprehensive report at the last AGM, I thought it best to start from November 2016, when the new committee took over.

Firstly, I would like to thank all my committee who have worked extremely hard and been very supportive during what has certainly been an interesting, albeit difficult, 18 months.

Unfortunately, to start, many health and safety issues, which had been overlooked for a several years, demanded that so we urgently commission a detailed Fire Risk Assessment and an Electrical Compliance Review. These reports highlighted considerable remedial works and improvements which had to be addressed urgently in order to continue to be able to hire

the Hall safely and legally. These works were swiftly commissioned along with a thorough clean and the implementation of a good regular cleaning regime.

After investigating the position with the lease of the land, that the Hall stands on, we were hit with the bombshell that the landlord did not want to renew the lease, at the end of its term in 2019. This meant that we either had to find the money to buy the land or face closing the Hall.

On top of this, the roof over the committee room sprung a massive leak during the bad weather. On inspection of the roof, which was covered in patched holes, we had to take a leap of faith that we would be able to raise enough money to buy the Hall and proceeded with a new roof over the committee room and kitchen.

In May, I wrote to some local residents asking for help to raise the funds to buy the Hall and we held a public meeting to assess local interest in the future of the Hall. This resulted in several people volunteering for the Fund Raising Committee that has been valiantly headed up by Lynda Redding. We also approached the Parish Council for help from the Parish Community Fund.

In the summer, the WI held a brilliant cream tea afternoon and raised about £650. Thank you to the WI for this amazing effort. In December, the North Somerset Brass Band held a most enjoyable Christmas Concert which raised over £400, helped by the kind donation of refreshments from the Woodspring Dog Training Club. Thank you to both organisations and earlier this year, Jackie Petherbridge held a Quiz Night which raised £300. Thank you, Jackie.

Charlotte Veryard and Jane Woolmington came up with the great idea of holding a Christmas Raffle, which many kind local residents and Hall users supported. This was drawn at the Christmas Concert, and raised nearly £2,000. These activities along with very generous donations from several individuals and local businesses, a donation of £500 from Weston-super-mare and Banwell Young Farmers, £400 from Carla Theatre Arts and £10,000 from Hall funds started us on our journey to buy the Hall for the local community. I won't mention everyone now, but we will have a suitable "Thank You" board displayed in the Hall after the purchase is completed.

These funds have been greatly boosted by the sterling efforts of Lynda Redding who helped us with a bid for funds of £20,000 from National Grid and £10,000 from The Harvest Home Group. Thank you to both of those organisations. This gives us a total of just over £49,000.

David Plaister of David Plaister's Ltd kindly agreed to liaise with the landlord's agent to get us the best price for the land. After some protracted negotiations it was agreed that we could buy it for £85,000.

Sadly most of the Fund Raising Committee have fallen by the wayside and we are now left with just Lynda Redding, Clayton Penfold, Jane Woolmington and myself.

However, the Parish Council have agreed to provide a grant of £40,000 from the Community Fund subject to a charge over the land. This money will put us in a position to purchase the Hall in the near future. Unfortunately, due to many difficult technical issues, that I am happy to explain to anyone who wishes to know, I cannot stress firmly enough that agreeing the charge on the land in the very near future is critical to being able to complete the purchase of the Hall.

During our public meeting last year the consensus of opinion was that the Village Hall is a wonderful asset for the residents of Hewish and Puxton. Due to the amazing efforts of Pauline Pearce, our Booking Secretary, the Hall is regularly hired by a variety of users. This last accounting year, 2017/18, is the first year the Hall income has exceeded £10,000.

Sadly, even though they enjoyed greatly reduced hire rates, we lost the playgroup earlier this year. On assessing the profile of users groups there is a slight dependency on dog training groups. Going forward, in order to widen the user profile and encourage more local people to use the Hall for parties and celebrations, we feel we it would help to improve the facilities.

To this end, we have been working with a surveyor, Michael Greaves,, who has also agreed to work for a pittance, to develop a plan of improvements. Lynda has identified the Garfield Weston Foundation, a charity that supports UK based charities with funding for capital projects up to £100,000. A successful bid to them, along with the purchase of the Hall, would provide Hewish and Puxton with a modern, vibrant Village Hall for many more generations to come.

To finish, I would like to say a big "Thank You" again to all my Committee, all of those who helped on the Fund Raising Committee along the way and every one who has raised funds and made donations.

Of course, we are always happy to receive any more generous donations to continue the good work!