

**Curdridge Parish Council**

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## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

Held on Thursday, 21 April 2016

7 pm in the Billiard Room

at the Reading Room

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Cllr K Bundell (Chairman – chairing the meeting)

Cllr E Bodger

Cllr C Cross

Cllr J Furby (arrived at item ....)

Cllr L Newton

Cllr C Weaver

Andy Smale and Tom Bell from WinACC

Cynthia Town – Whiteley & Shedfield Conservative candidate

Roger Duckworth (a resident)

Jenny Whittle (Parish Clerk)

Roger Huxstep - Whiteley & Shedfield Conservative candidate (arrived at item 10)

### **1. Chair's welcome to Parishioners and Guest Speakers**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllr R Kemp; Cllr Furby would also arrive late, as she was at another meeting. Cllr Humby had also sent apologies, as he was at an official engagement in honour of the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and Cllr Ruffell had sent apologies, as he was chairing a WCC Planning Committee Meeting. Hampshire Constabulary had also sent apologies, as their representative due to attend this meeting was currently off sick.

### **3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 16 April 2015**

The Clerk advised that the Minutes were not to be approved (except for typographical errors) and were just to be received. The Minutes would be displayed on the parish website and notice of this fact would be advertised in a future Curdridge Parish Magazine article and on the parish notice boards.

### **4. To receive a report from Hampshire Constabulary local representative, together with a brief Q&A session**

Hampshire Constabulary representative was not present to give this presentation. No questions arose at this time to be presented to Hampshire Constabulary, although it was suggested that it would be useful for representation at parish meetings once in a while to liaise about concerns raised within the parish.

## **5. Presentation by Winchester Action on Climate Change regarding saving energy in the home**

Andy Smale introduced himself and Tom Bell. He had been working for WinACC for 6-7 years and he was the Energy Consultant responsible for advising residents and businesses how to save energy. His new project "Home Energy" is directed at the "fuel poor" (generally Council and housing association tenants) to assist them to make home energy savings and home visits can be arranged for residents that fall into this bracket by contacting Andy Smale at WinACC on 01962 217844 or email: andy.smale@winacc.org.uk.

Andy advised that there were five main actions that home owners could carry out within their homes to significantly reduce their energy consumption and fuel bills. These were:

Insulating Properties, i.e. loft and cavity wall insulation – this is the most important, as this is where most energy is lost and although the government has reviewed its policies and the majority of funding has been removed, there are still a few grants available, which WinACC can advise anyone interested about. Hot water pipes should also be insulated.

Draught Proofing, i.e. windows, doors, skirting, filling holes around pipes etc – draught proofing would cost about £100 for the average home to be fully insulated, but the savings would amount to about £100 to £150 in the first year. Replacements window seals and products can be found relatively cheap online.

Heating Temperatures/Control/Thermostats – it is recommended to fit the new intelligent thermostats, which can automatically adjust and vary room temperatures and can be controlled by a timer. Radiator valves can also be adjusted down – 3 equals about 22-23 degrees and 2 equals about 19 degrees. Hot water temperatures can also be adjusted down and it should be noted that power showers are very high energy consumers and therefore shower times should be kept to a minimum (where possible).

Modern Boiler Installation – modern boilers are far more fuel efficient and less damaging to the environment and although the average cost of installation is about £1,500, this is easily recouped in the lifetime of the boiler, which is approximately 15 years.

Light Bulbs – LED energy savings bulbs now only use 10% of the energy used by the old filament bulbs and although quite expensive they do last 10-15 years and now perform just as well.

Andy then invited questions:

Cllr Bundell – are LED bulbs available in bayonet, as well as screw in versions? Andy confirmed that they were.

Cllr Bundell – does cavity wall insulation cause dampness, due to air being unable to circulate in the cavity? Andy confirmed that problems can arise if there is already damp in the wall cavity or debris in the bottom of wall cavities when the insulation is fitted. This can generally be resolved by removing every 4th brick and clearing the cavity base, which is quite a simple process. It is also recommended to use rockwool or bead insulation, which still allows for moderate air circulation and is therefore less prone to damp.

Cllr Bundell – are solar panels still considered to be a good investment? Andy advised that solar panels are not the earner that they once were for property owners, due to Government cuts. However, he feels that it is still a very good idea to fit solar panels, which will pay for themselves within 13-15 years and should last 25 years.

Cllr Bundell – some home owners are put off of solar panels, as they do not look nice. Andy advised that there are now some really good variations on the market, although he would not recommend the integrated ones made to look like roof tiles, as solar panels do not like to be closed in and can over heat.

Roger Duckworth – it is generally felt that solar panels are not energy efficient, as most of the energy is accumulated during the day when it is least used. Andy advised that an energy storage system has now been designed, which can be connected to existing solar panels and stores the energy for consumption during the evening and possibly the next morning. These storage systems are currently very new and quite costly, but hopefully will come down in price.

## **6. To receive a report from the District Councillor**

Cllr Bundell read out the following joint report from Cllrs Humby (County/District) and Ruffell (District) in their absence:

**Communications** Our communications team is now working with a clearer focus on getting our message out to the public and within the council and making sure we are harnessing the benefits of social media. We are improving the performance of our Business Support Team to concentrate on ‘What matters to the customer’ and have seen big improvements in time scales for planning where we are piloting this. This will also deliver savings in the long term and the ethos we are encouraging is that we must constantly work to see how we can improve and do better.

**Transport** New Park-and-Ride at Pitt in Winchester is now open for business situated on Romsey Road near Pitt roundabout adding another 199 spaces to the overall 1650 park and ride parking spaces now available in Winchester City. The Parking Team has been shortlisted for the ‘Partnerships’ award category at the 2016 British Parking Awards.

**Economy** Winchester City Council and Crest Nicholson are jointly funding a business advisor to offer individual support for Bury Farm businesses, to understand the needs of each business and work to help them find alternative premises and solutions to any other business issues. Plans for a new Creative Enterprise Centre in Winchester - Winchester City Council is proposing to transform a former industrial site at Barfield Close into a Creative Enterprise Centre. Working in close collaboration with local universities and creative industries, the Council is designing workspace that is tailor-made to meet the needs of graduates, business start-ups and other creative organisations.

Hampshire Apprentice Partnership - 7 roles available. Winchester City Council is co-ordinating an exciting new apprentice programme in Hampshire. The Hampshire Apprentice Partnership involves four councils in the county and offers thorough experience in the workplace, whilst studying for a professional qualification without any fees or debt. Winchester City Council currently has seven diverse apprenticeship roles available for enthusiastic and motivated young people.

The council continues to facilitate the Fieldfare funding, which is available for different rural projects over the next five years. Farmers, foresters, growers, rural businesses and rural communities can bid for a share of a £1.6million fund across the Fieldfare area.

**Homes** the Extra Care Home development scheme is progressing with the closure of the Chesil Street surface car park, which is part of the Council’s car parking strategy. The neighbouring Chesil multi-storey car park has capacity to cope with displaced parking from the surface car park. The new scheme will provide 79 new homes with state-of-the-art facilities, these modern spacious flats will provide for all the care and support needs of its residents. 21 New Council Homes are complete and residents have moved in. Winchester City Council has been shortlisted in two separate categories for the UK Housing Awards 2016. WCC have made vacancy management savings of over £245,000 this year in our Housing Revenue Account and made savings in major repairs but still are managing to maintain the improvement and

refurbishment programme and our council house stock of 5100 homes with a positive 15 year plan for building new council homes.

**Environment** Thursday 21 April 2016 (today) is the 90th birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth II. The people of the Winchester District are never slow to respond to such occasions, and we are certain that residents, businesses and visitors will be keen to be part of this very special celebration. People could find out more about what was planned nationally at [www.hmq90.co.uk/](http://www.hmq90.co.uk/) and take part in the Clean for the Queen Event from 4- 6 March; the City Council was working on this event in partnership with our Street Cleansing contractor, the Landscape Group Ltd <http://www.cleanforthequeen.co.uk/home/2365>

Winchester has been recognised as a Purple Flag centre offering visitors an entertaining and safe night out, for a fifth year. Just as a Blue Flag is an indicator of a good beach, a Purple Flag is an indicator of where to go for a good night out.

**Corporate Theme 2016/2017** - Further to Winchester City Council's decision in December 2014 to adopt a Walking Strategy for Winchester (following on from the success of the Great Waste project), this project is in recognition of the health, economic, air quality and reduction of congestion benefits of walking and the aim of our "Feet First" initiative is to promote walking as the norm for short journeys, or as part of a longer journey and create the context for change over a number of years so that people have direct, easy, safe and pleasant routes encouraging them to want to walk to school, shops, work and public transport, as well as for leisure purposes. As part of our "Feet First" project we will be looking at actions the Council can lead on and implement itself, as well as working with key external stakeholders, such as Living Streets, Hampshire County Council, parishes and major institutions, to facilitate walking in all its forms. We want to make this theme as inclusive as possible and for it to reach out across the District.

**Fly-tipping** At Cabinet on the 10th February we agreed to a budget of £30,000 being authorised to purchase mobile CCTV cameras to deal with ad hoc anti-social behaviour issues or problems such as fly-tipping.

**Sport** Winchester City Council and partners are delighted to announce that the 2016 Winchester Criterium will include British Cycling's South Regional Circuit Race Championships.

**Finance** Winchester City Council is doing its utmost to achieve balanced budgets, whilst still maintaining services. But the issue we have is that there will be councils in the country left with insufficient resources to run services and we do not know if we will then be called upon to bail them out; even so we will have to make cuts.

At a recent cabinet meeting we were informed that we will receive a revenue support grant reduced by 42%. - £728,000 less grant reduction than was expected and there is an unknown with the Government consultation on the New Homes Bonus scheme, which could mean further reductions of £4m over the 5 years of the medium term financial forecast. However the latest update from DCLG does mean a better outcome for both WCC and HCC. The DCLG U-turn is very welcome, we do not have the numbers yet but would hope it would be an improvement of £100k this year and £150K for each of the next 2 years for WCC.

We have about £2 million in general reserves, but once these are spent they are gone; it is important to keep money available for when we really need it, for example if we have another major flooding event. Of course we have specific reserves earmarked for particular projects and this is reviewed each year. There are no reductions to frontline services planned for 2016/17 and Grants to the voluntary sector and Council Tax Support Grants to Parishes have also been maintained at the same level as 2015/16.

The Government confirmed there will be no Council Tax freeze scheme for 2016/17 and Central Government projections assumed that all authorities would increase their precept by the maximum amount. Therefore the present projections reflect an increase of 3.4% in Council Tax for the District and Winchester Town area. This equates to an increase of £4.38 for a Band D property. The taxes for the County Council, Fire and Rescue Authority and Police and Crime Panel will also be set.

The decision to terminate the contract for Silver Hill will have a major impact on the council as this was income that has been budgeted in the future and will no longer be coming in. Instead

the council will be faced with more expenditure for demolition and making safe the area until a new plan is forthcoming. Thankfully we have other projects in the pipe line, like Station Approach that will generate income for the council, but we have projects that will be a cost to the council, like the refurbishment of River Park and providing new offices for the council as the current ones are no longer fit for purpose.

**Local Plan** Consultation on the 'Publication' (Pre-Submission) version of the Local Plan Part 2 was undertaken between 6 November 2015 and 21 December 2015. The consultation focused on the matters of 'soundness' which require the Plan to be - positively prepared, Justified, Effective and Consistent with National Policy. The Plan must also comply with both legal and procedural requirements and have been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate ('legal compliance'). The Publication Plan and other supporting information can be viewed online on the City Council's website.

Comments and representations on the Publication Plan were received from 368 people and organisations, covering many aspects of the Plan. All of the comments have now been uploaded and can be viewed on the Local Plan Part 2 web page.

The next stage of the Local Plan process was the Submission of the Local Plan and all the comments received at the Publication stage to the Secretary of State, for examination by an independent planning Inspector; the Plan was submitted for examination in late March 2016 and the appointed Inspector will now start to examine its soundness and legal compliance. The Inspector will produce a list of the questions to be examined at the public hearings, which are expected to take place in late June/early July 2016. Further details will be included in future WCC Newsletters once known and there will be an opportunity for people who commented on the Plan to make further submissions in response to the questions posed by the Inspector.

**Cllr Rob Humby & Cllr Laurence Ruffell - April 21<sup>st</sup> 2016"**

#### **7. To receive a report from the County Councillor**

See item 6 above.

#### **8. To receive the Annual Report of the Parish Council Chairman**

Cllr Bundell reported that during the current year the Council had employed a new Clerk, Jenny Whittle and had co-opted a new Councillor, Carol Cross.

Traffic and highways – one of main concerns for residents is the level of traffic in the village and speeding. As a consequence Council purchased a Speed Limit Reminder, which is randomly placed throughout the village to remind drivers of their speed. A volunteer Speed Watch Group was also being overseen by Cllrs Cross, Newton and Weaver and the continued help and time given by all of the volunteers was much appreciated.

Road Safety Projects – Council had worked with CCRRSA (Curdrige & Curbridge Residents Road Safety Association) to establish some future projects that would improve road safety within the parish. The process for the first project to improve the junction of Curdrige Lane and Lockhams Road to reduce vehicle speed and increase the safety of pedestrians has just started and it is hoped that this project will be implemented relatively soon. The next project to be investigated will be the reduction of the speed limit on Kitnocks Hill from a 50 mph zone to a 40 mph zone, although Hampshire County Council have advised that this is a costly process and the accident statistics may not warrant this course of action; the parish will continue to push for this.

Duck/Toad signs – the road signage to protect the ducks and toads is now in place; Council thanked Cllr Furby, Cllr Newton and Darren Lewis from HCC for implementing this.

It is hoped that the pavement along Botley Road from Chapel Lane to Botley Station will be resurfaced by HCC in the current financial year, although it is uncertain to what extent.

Council had been unsuccessful in implementing a Traffic Regulation Order to stop Botley Train Station users from parking in Vicarage Lane, as HCC advised that due to cuts TRO's would only be undertaken where there was significant evidence of historical hazards.

Ward Changes – the parish used to come under Curdridge, Curbridge, Upham and Owslebury, but would now come under Curdridge, Curbridge, Whiteley and Shedfield and would have 3 new ward members, instead of the current two, so the parish would sadly lose Cllrs Humby and Ruffell.

Devolution – this is a government initiative aimed at devolving more services and powers locally at lower levels (e.g. parishes), although the parish would be limited as to what additional services it could take on. The process is still in the planning stages and no decisions have as yet been made.

Fly Tipping – this is another big concern for residents and has worsened significantly since the time of the service cuts placing limitations on site visits by commercial vehicles. HCC are currently undertaking a public consultation to consider further service cuts, which Curdridge Parish Council has responded to, pointing out that it is very concerned that if these cuts are not considered broadly, they could increase fly tipping problems further.

Memorial Benches at Curdridge Parish Council Cemetery – Council has this year installed two memorial benches at the cemetery, one for Neil Evans and one for Robert Wright, former Parish Councillors.

Minibus – Council is still funding the minibus, which is kindly run by volunteers and is used by at least two community groups, which could not continue if this facility was not available. The minibus improves the quality of life for several residents who would otherwise be house bound. The volunteers were thanked for all their hard work.

Litter Pickers – Council is extremely grateful to the volunteer litter pickers who work tirelessly to clear a significant amount of roadside litter on roads that are becoming increasingly dangerous for them to walk along. Council also thanked them for taking part in the Clean for the Queen Event (in aid of the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday) and tidying the village up in readiness for any local events.

Lunch Club – Council also continues to fund the Lunch Club room hire and storage costs to enable this valuable community service to continue. Once again the work of the volunteers running the Lunch Club was greatly appreciated.

Reading Rooms – Council still makes grant contributions towards the running/management of the Reading Room facilities to ensure these facilities remain available for use by the community.

Botley to Bishops Waltham Trail – Cllr Newton, who is Council’s representative for this project, advised that the trail plans are progressing, but this project has been consistently difficult to implement due to red tape and coming to agreement with land owners. She advised that the North end of the trail is progressing well and tenders obtained; the section of the trail within this parish is still being finalised.

Planning – having opposed the two large developments proposed for Whiteley and Boorley Green, Council had unfortunately been unsuccessful in overturning these and they have both been permitted.

### **9. To receive the Annual Statement of Parish Council Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2015, together with the Audit Certificate for the year 2014-2015**

The Clerk explained that parish councils have a legal duty to have their accounts audited by an internal auditor and external auditor to protect against fraud and to ensure that spending is monitored; consequently, the audited accounts are not finalised until a significant time after the associated year end. She advised that the audited Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2015 contained the following figures:

Balances brought forward	£ 50,895.00
Annual Precept	£ 22,106.00
Total Other Receipts	£ 16,434.00
Staff Costs	£ 6,678.00
Loans Interest/Capital Repayments	£ 0.00
All Other Payments	£ 30,163.00
Balances Carried Forward	£ 52,594.00
Total Cash & Short Term Investments	£ 52,594.00
Total Fixed Assets (plus other long Term investments & assets)	£123,823.00
Total Borrowings	£ 0.00

The Clerk then advised that the Precept set for the current financial year 2016-2017 for the parish is £34,799.97 and that there is currently a sum of £39,856 ear-marked from accumulated reserve funds for projects within the parish. These projects include road safety projects (the first being the much needed improvements to the Curdridge Lane and Lockhams Road Junction to slow vehicles down and make the junction safer for pedestrians and cyclists), the Botley to Bishops Waltham Trail and an ongoing annual contribution towards the minibus replacement fund, as well as other smaller projects.

### **10. Questions from Parishioners**

The Chair invited Cynthia Town to speak, as she had attended the meeting to become more familiar with the parish, should she be elected in the future. She said that she had been very warmly welcome by villagers and thought that Curdridge was a beautiful village; although she had also noticed the problems associated with speeding traffic and pedestrian safety,

particularly in relation to the relocation of the bus stop to Curdridge Lane. She thanked Council for having her at this meeting.

The Chair invited any other questions.

Roger Duckworth spoke in relation the Broadlands redevelopment in Chapel Lane, as he has concerns that the excavation works are significantly larger than planned and are not in the correct position. He feels that the excavated site has severe implications on flow and stability of the water table and the surrounding environment, particularly the health of mature trees. He had reported this to Winchester City Council's Enforcement who made a site visit, but could not gain access to the site to inspect this, but still appear to have made the decision that the work is acceptable.

Roger Huxstep arrived

Roger Duckworth requested Curdridge Parish Council to write to Mr Palmer in Planning Enforcement at Winchester City Council to support his concerns. It was agreed that this would be done.

#### **11. Closing address by Chairman**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.