

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 23rd April 2009.

Present 13 members of the public
District Cllr Tim Wilkinson
County Cllr Roger Walters
PCSO Gail Chittendon
All Parish Councillors
Clerk Cathryn Carlisle

Apologies

Mr Andrew Overall
Mrs Crow-Smith
Rev Colin Wilson

1 Chairman's Welcome

It is good to see a good representation from the village. Again this year each councillor will say a few words on what they've been doing over the year.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 2008 the minutes

Where approved and signed as read.

3 Report on Actions from last meeting

There were none.

4 Bendelows Trust

Representatives Mr. Alex Tanner and 1 other trustee
The trust has had yet another successful year. The tea cost around £280.00

This year's tea will take place on either last day of July or 14th August depending on the availability of the hall.

Equipment that can be borrowed is as follows: Wheel Chairs, Hoists, Bedpans, and Crutches. Please contact Angela Tanner with regards to borrowing equipment. Donations are asked for, for the loan of the equipment.

5 Clerk's Annual Report

This year I have compiled an Annual Report showing who does what in the parish which includes emptying the bins to who looking after the street lights, planning, highways and many more. One of the things the PC did this year was to pay for the hire of the hall for the Activity Day which is run by Braintree District Council for children between 5 – 12 years of age at the cost of £5.00 per child which around 30 children attended.

6 Chairman's Annual Report

You have already heard from the Clerk about the administration side of the PC and some of what the PC has done to improve its running and to ensure that it is run according to the regulatory requirements and some of its actions to improve the village. What I will do is pick out some of the actions that the PC has undertaken and representations it has made to the local authorities. You will also hear from other Councillors about other actions that the PC has taken over the past year and that it will be taking in the future.

Resignation of Councillor Jenni Harrison

It is with regret that I have to announce that Jenni has had to resign from the PC as her employers have relocated her some considerable distance from Shalford. Jenni was Vice Chairman and she has

contributed much to the work of the PC and she will be missed. I would like to thank Jenni for all her hard work and wish her all the very best in the future. As well as being on the PC Jenni was the organiser for the Village Appraisal Project and a new organiser to complete the task will need to be found? I understand that the statistical analysis work has been completed and all that remains is to oversee the putting together of the document which is being done by a contractor. Anyone wishing to take on this role should contact the Clerk Cathy Carlisle. There will also be a vacancy to fill on the PC and anyone wishing to be considered as a Councillor should contact the Clerk.

Turning to some of what the PC has done this past year.

Cutting back of hedges alongside the roadways

After representation to ECC Highways the hedges on the Braintree Road, along with dead trees have been cut back. This will allow large vehicles to keep to their side of the road and not be a hazard to oncoming vehicles.

Park End Lane

The proposal by ECC Highways to make Park End Lane into a Byway Open to All Traffic is still under discussion. The Parish Council's proposal is that it becomes a Restricted Byway, one closed to all motorised vehicular traffic but open to pedestrians, cycles, horses and horse drawn vehicles.

Parking at Church End near the School

After successfully getting ECC Highways proposal for a No Parking restriction at key times of the day at Church End near the School withdrawn ECC Highway are now considering introducing a No Waiting at the same key times. The PC understands that this would mean that adults dropping off and collecting children would be able to do so but could not leave their vehicle. This is an unworkable proposal as the children in the Reception Class have to be taken into the classroom by their accompanying adult in the morning and collected by the adult from the classroom in the afternoon. The other children being met by the adults have to assemble in a waiting area and are not allowed out of the School gate without their accompanying adult.

The current situation with a number of cars moving around the school at key times of the day is not unique to Shalford. The same can be seen in Wethersfield and Bardfield. Nor is the parking of cars along the road outside the School a new phenomenon. An aerial photograph of the School at play-time taken circa 1980 shows cars parked all along the road from Broomclose Villas to past the 'Headmasters House' now the 'Affordable Houses'. The PC has already objected to this No Waiting proposal and ECC Highways have said that they will be monitoring the situation until June.

Boxted Wood Eco-Town proposal

Finally I wish to raise the 'problem' of the proposed Eco-Town near Boxted Wood. The PC is totally against this proposed development, as are the Stebbing and Great Saling PCs. The objections are many and include that site does not have the transportation infrastructure and would lead to an increase in traffic on the B1256 (old A120): the proposed School building plans are a nonsense. Plus the site development would destroy important wildlife site and affect the ancient woodland of Boxted Wood. The PC is most concerned about this proposed development and has nominated Councillor Golding as its representative to sit on the committee being set up by all the potential affected Parish Councils. It will also be writing to Galliard Homes, Braintree District Council and Essex County Council, making a formal objection to the proposal once the timing of the planning application is known.

Planning Committee

This year we have set up a planning committee to make the planning more efficient and abide with government rules. This committee will meet on the 1st Monday and the 3rd Monday depending on when we receive planning applications. These meetings are open to the public. If any major planning applications are received that would interest a large amount of people i.e. like the affordable housing last year we would hold a public meeting on a separate night.

7 Financial Report Cllr Phipps

This year we have taken on a new roll we employed a person to go around and clean the bus shelters also empty all the litter bins in the villages. In the autumn of this year we decided to get the causeway trimmed every fortnight this will be reimbursed by P3, this we hope will keep it free of nettles and giant

hog weed. The cuttings are to be removed from the site. We had hoped we could spray the area to get ride of nettles but as the stream is very close to the bank we were told that this would not be environmentally friendly.

8 Stoneley Park Cllr Phipps

Following the Shalford Public Meeting I attended a meeting on the 06 January at ECC. Present were Nicola Beach Head of Waste and Recycling, Andrew Brown, Crispen Downes, Peter Spurrier and Councillor Roger Walters.

At this meeting we discussed who would be liable for the cost of managing and maintaining Stoneley Park and the amenity site and the future involvement of the Shalford Parish Council with the site. In addition what changes would be made to the current amenity site by ECC once it was closed.

At the meeting it was agreed that ECC would continue to manage and maintain the site with no cost to Shalford PC. Improvements to the site's wildlife environment could be made by the PC with the agreement of ECC. The current amenity site would be restored to an agreed landform. There would be a lease drawn up which would allow the PC to have a say in the management and maintenance of the site. And this would enable the PC to apply for grants for wildlife environment improvements, ECC cannot apply for such grants.

Subsequently a letter was received from Andrew Brown confirming these facts and also confirming that ECC will remain responsible for the waste within the site and for any control measures needed to reduce its impact on the environment.

The work on the amenity site will include:
Installing a height barrier at the entrance;
Remodelling of the car parking area;
Parking area boundary fence improvements;
Restoration of the area currently occupied by the Recycling Centre to an agreed landform.

It is envisaged that the amenity site will close in late 2009 and further details as to how the work is progressing will be made known to the public by the PC .

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Councillor Walters for all the assistance he has given Shalford PC in this matter.

I would also like it to be noted that despite the fact that it was proposed in 2000 that Shalford PC would take over the responsibility of the maintenance of Stoneley Park, it is the present PC that was the first who questioned who would be paying the cost of this maintenance and I am pleased to say that there has been a positive outcome for Shalford.

9 Speedwatch Cllr Isbell

Since using speed watch in the village we have recorded a large number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit.

The area we can cover includes The Street (B1053) from the Wethersfield Boundary (the river) to the de restriction sign at the Village Hall. (30 and 40 mph limits). The area from the Village Hall towards Great Saling to the end of the limit. This area includes the school. There is also a speed limit at Jaspers Green where we attend from time to time.

When we started this exercise it was a joint effort between ourselves and Great Saling. Unfortunately Great Saling stopped taking part. As it was part of the conditions of having the speed unit we do operate in Great Saling from time to time.

These have all been recorded and forwarded to the Police for further action.

Although most offences are somewhere in the high 30's the fastest we have recorded was 47 mile per hour.

Due to winter weather we have not been able to operate very often recently.

We have also had a problem in so much as the Police Officer who was overseeing Speed Watch left the scheme and went to other duties. Unfortunately neither he nor anyone else bothered to tell us. In fact it appears that he moved a few weeks after our course at the Village Hall.

Although sending e mails etc and numerous telephone call to Colchester – H Q we eventually ran out of documentation etc. which stopped operations for a while.

However we have now been contacted by a WPC who is now operating from Billericay. I now have the permission to reproduce the paper work and all being well we will be back on the streets soon.

As a matter of interest the speed unit is due to be recalibrated soon. I do not know if that will be done or taken away for calibration.

10 Website Cllr Eversden

Shalford Parish Council is now in its 5th year of running a web site to provide information to the community, there is no cost to the parish precept for this service.

During 2007 we changed the supplier of this service to Essex County Council because our previous supplier started to run unwanted pop up advertising material and complaints received that the design was difficult to navigate.

As an administrator I have no command of the site design just the material that it displays, this is quite an important aspect for community sites, if I move away hopefully the site will continue just by appointing another administrator, using an individual to run and own the site can cause problems if the person dies or leaves the area.

Our site meets all the requirements under the disability act, even to the extend of providing a text reader for somebody who has a impaired sight or is blind.

Can Anybody Find Us

Using a major search engine and entering "**Shalford**" normal shows **124,000** listing spread over many pages, our community is normally list within the first 4 entries. This type of listing does not happen by accident, but by constant change to the home page, to this end a Local News area was added during 2008.

Residents, Local Police, Neighbourhood Watch and our scribe for weekly Braintree & Witham's times are encourage to submit articles for the "**Local News**" section to keep the site fresh, and updates are applied each Monday morning.

2008 provided us with first full yearly set of statics that showed **368** different computers accessed the site that each month, total number of visit for the year at **9,713**, with **138,462** pages opened In March 2009 for one month we had **488** computers logged on and with **1800** visits.

Events Dairy

We have a on-line events diary which anybody can add their events into, so far only one person has taken advantage of this feature.

Newsletter

We have a monthly electronic news letter which goes out to 120 people each month, during 2008 people have signed up from Somerset and even Canada for this service.

Where Do We Go Next Year

We are always looking for ways to improve the information provided, the Parish Council provide publication of all agenda's before any meeting, minutes and account information is currently displayed, we even have a statements on our Freedom of Information policy published.

New for 2009 will be the Annual Report of activities for the past year.

Every encouragement is made for local organisations to have space and display their activities this recently resulted in two photo albums being displayed on the site.

Essex County Council has promised new overall design sometime this month or in May 2009.

11 Village Hall Committee Cllr Hull

The village hall committee put £750 towards a desperately needed new mower for the playing field the Parish Council made up the remaining balance of £3127.50.

Also the PC pays for the bins around the tennis court and play area to be emptied once a month by Phipps Landscapes. This is a great help however the bins here are very small and can be filled in the space of half an hour. This problem is soon to be remedied as the PC has donated two new larger bins to the VHC which the PC was awarded for the high quality of their footpath map.

The Village Hall Committee are looking for someone to cut the playing field if anyone is interested please contact the village hall committee.

12 Visual Aspects of the Village Colin Golding

We all like to be proud of our village and it is one reason why we give up our time to be Parish Councillors.

As a Council we have discussed on a number of occasions whether we should enter the Best Kept Village competition but have shied away from it.

One reason is that as you drive through Shalford the colours of spring and summer autumn seem to be limited to green fields, green grass verges and daffodils in spring along with few hanging baskets on the George, Village Hall and houses.

So I thought it would be a good idea if we added splashes of colour in the Village by creating raised flower beds at strategic points.

They would be raised to protect them from grazing rabbits, made from something not too obtrusive such as railway sleepers and would be planted to provide colour all year round.

We have budgeted to provide some beds but will look to see if we can get funding for more if people think it is a good idea.

The question is where should they be?

There are a number of potential sites;

Whites Hill would be an obvious choice, possibly by the Shalford sign by Tanners and the corner of Water Hall Lane May be at the top of the Hill by the seat.

Another possibility is somewhere near the village hall and maybe one on the grass triangle at the beginning of the Panfield road.

I am sure you might have other ideas.

However before we can put any of this into practice we will have to get Highways approval and the locations will have to comply with their restrictions in terms of distance from the road side and not obstructing sight lines for drivers.

So the first steps are to agree locations and generate a location map for Highways approval.

We will then get accurate costings, see how many beds we can afford this year and develop an installation plan.

Taking into account the growing seasons we hope to see Shalford in bloom next Spring.

13 Footpath Map Cllr Oates

Background Shalford has c 22.5 km (something over 14 miles) of off-road footpaths, and about 3 miles of Bridleways

walking dogs along footpaths for many years

cutting grass along paths for many years

map not essential (but I know the way !), but highly desirable; the only available map of S. was the large-format one done by Dave Martin several years previously, which never claimed to be a footpath map, per se.

Galleywood, Felsted, Danbury and even Wethersfield have maps, so why not Shalford ?

Asked around a bit and decided it was feasible to go ahead and produce a map – agreed by the PC at that time, a few years ago.

Liaison with those who did the Galleywood map, in particular; needed to get an OK from the Ord. Survey, find a good Cartographer, and then find a reliable printer.

OS has many do's and don't's, and there are pluses and minuses....

Cartographer from Colchester had a lot of experience in this sort of thing, and was signed-up. We decided to go for 1:10,000scale, and use a 1:25,000 OS Map as a base. Our map would be A2, as Galleywood, etc.

Printer – lots of them around, usually keen to do the map. Went to see at least four, looked at their maps output, etc, and eventually settled on a Witham firm (Tawny Press). Printing on both sides necessary – hence double the area to cover, but only a small increase in cost over a single side. A run of 1,000 maps had been agreed with OS – we needed a licence for this, and another licence for any more maps...

Cart. did all on the face of the map, we (S.) would handle the content of the rear face. What to have on the rear ? Dialogue about S. ? List of streets, people's names, etc ? Adverts ? (No, OS wouldn't like it !); local scenes in photos, etc ?

Most straightforward, least hassle, most eye-catching was the photos idea.

Several S. people helped here, with some photos (and see the cover also), artwork to arrange the photos on the rear, etc, and I'm extremely grateful for their help and interest.

Eventually, the map appeared in Sept/October 2008. S. people seem to like it, and many have got a copy (plus given a donation to the VH Play-Park fund....!).

Four outlets – Village Store, the George, Weth. PO, Gt Saling White Hart.

I've given almost £400 to the VHMC so far – and maps are still available !

14 David Cobb Shalford Local History Association

The History Association are re launching one book and launching a new book on the 21st May Shalford Village Hall.

15 Tim Wilkinson District Councillor

DC Tim Wilkinson is also Deputy Cabinet Minister for Enterprise and Culture.

Braintree District Council are at the moment trying to help out local business that are being hit by the global recession by trying to get business to save money on the rents and council tax reliefs, BDC are also paying companies more quickly.

Local businesses are invited to Business Summit where Business leaders from all over the country are invited to attend, to give practical help and advice.

Boxted Wood

As far as Braintree are concerned at the moment this issue is a company who has some plans, no planning application has been sent in to BDC. BDC has there allocated housing until 2025, BDC would rather improve the facilities in town rather than have a new development out of town.

Uttlesford has there site at the other end of the county.

If the government changes it plans on how many houses are needed in this area things could change.

16 Roger Walters County Councillor

ECC has continued to provide excellent services and secure the future of the County over the last year as it works towards our goal of providing the best quality of life in the UK:

Finances

- 1.9% increase in council tax for 2009-10 is the lowest ever increase since the tax was introduced nearly 20 years ago.
- Due to a stringent review process we have identified £73 million of savings and efficiencies to allow us to redirect resources to our priorities.
- We are seeking a strategic partner to help us to fundamentally change the way that public services are delivered in Essex. This transformation is intended to redeploy £200 million per annum away from unwieldy and burdensome support processes and into front line services.

Adults, Health and Community Wellbeing

- For the second year running our adult social care services were awarded the highest star rating possible (3 stars) by the regulator.
- By January 2009 on track to exceed our Essex Works pledge to increase tenfold the number of adult social care users by giving personal budgets that increase independence and dependency on social services.

Transport

- 12 'congestion busting' schemes – one in each district in the county - have been delivered and have helped to reduce delays by: better use of existing road-space, creating more capacity through localised widening, or through technological innovations such as congestion activated signals.
- 96% of principal roads across Essex are maintained in good condition, the numbers killed and seriously injured on Essex roads are the lowest for 25 years and there is increased use of public transport – passenger numbers having increased by over 3,650,000 since 2003-04.
- Lobbying by Cllrs has resulted in Highways extending the salting of rural roads so that all villages with more than 50 houses have their principal entry and exit roads salted in bad weather and ensured that potholes are dealt with in a more timely manner.
- We will continue to reduce congestion and improve journey times for highways users and to increase already high levels of passenger transport use and service satisfaction. A continued reduction in the numbers of people killed and seriously injured on Essex's roads is also a high priority.

The Economy

- In November 2008 we announced a suite of measures, unique in the public sector, designed to support the local economy and offer assistance to all Essex citizens affected by the economic downturn, including:
 1. We will spend upwards of £220 million this year in partnership with over 1,620 local suppliers – awarding contracts to local businesses
 2. We have attracted over £1.5 million of new funding to support research and development for small and medium-sized enterprises.
 3. Creation of a 'Bank of Essex', a special delivery vehicle to increase lending to small and medium sized enterprises in Essex.

4. Direct financial assistance in the form of a lump sum payment to around 30,000 of the county's most vulnerable households– equivalent to £100 off council tax bills.
5. Creation of a county wide Apprentice' scheme.

Crime

- We have invested over £1 million in shared community safety priorities have contributed to reducing crime and the fear of crime; exceeding our Public Service Agreement crime reduction target, with an overall reduction of 13,017 key crimes since 2003-04.

Waste

- We are recognised as a leader in the field of waste management and our strategy of reducing dependence on landfill by both minimising the amount of waste produced and increasing re-use. 38% of household waste was recycled or composted in 2007-08 (up from 36% in 2006- 07) and we are on track to deliver our EssexWorks pledge to increase recycling to over 40% in 2008-09.

Community Leadership

- We have campaigned vigorously against post office closures and opened the first local authority funded Post Office in the country in November.
- We set up the Essex Rural Commission to build on our Post Office activity and address the issues affecting the 90% of our county that is rural.

Sport

- Working to support young people in Essex to fulfil their sporting potential and have invested in sports facilities and are on track to offer financial support to 70 talented athletes by the end of the financial year.

Trading Standards

- Ongoing investment by the County in Trading Standards has resulted in one of the best services nationally.
- The policing of 7.5t weight restrictions has led to a 50% reduction in offending vehicles.
- Increased activity to keep door step crime to a minimum has helped keep older and vulnerable people feeling safe in their homes.

17 **Question Time**

Q What's happening regarding the parking on grass at Clifffield?

The police have informed us that people need to phone them when this happens as photos and registration no are not always helpful.

Q With the closure of the amenity site we are concern that fly tipping might increase in the area.

A CC Walters informed us that it will be well published before hand. If we have problems with fly tipping, we are to contact BDC Customers Services and report this. The Clean Team go through the rubbish and normally find some information on who's dumped the waste, the culprits are then normally fined and charged with the clean up fee.

Q Have we received the lease for Stoneley Park?

A We are still awaiting the lease from Essex County Council, when is arrives we will get legal advice to make sure everything is to our satisfaction. As we said early since 2000 when the park was to be taken over we have secured an agreement that ECC will continue with the grass cutting and maintenance. The Parish Council will need a lease so they can have a say in what happens to Stoneley Park also the Parish Council will be able to apply for grants to improve the site.

Q How far are we with the appraisal?

A At the moment all the figures are with the gentleman who's doing the analysis we hope to have this back very shortly. The next stage is to look at the Village Plan

18 Meeting Closed at 9.15 pm

Signed.....

Dated.....