

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH MEETING HELD IN SILTON VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY  
31<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2019 AT 6 P.M.**

**PRESENT:**

Col. Chris Woodhouse (Chairman)  
Mrs Lynda Woodhouse  
Mrs Diana Masters  
Mr David Masters  
Mr Hugh Honnywill  
Mrs Marian Honnywill  
Mrs Jill Marsden  
Mr Keith Harris  
Mrs Mandy Burroughs  
Mr Mike Burroughs  
Mr Charles Peel  
Mrs Alison Hall  
Mr Bernie Hall  
Mrs Mary Anderson  
Councillor Belinda Rideout

**1. Mr Peter Martin**

- 1.1 There was a moment's reflection to remember Peter Martin who died in Mid-September. He had lived in Silton all his life and had regularly attended Parish Meetings in the past. In recent years he had been very supportive of the attempts to eliminate Himalayan Balsam from the river. A Memorial Service has been arranged to take place in the Church on 17<sup>th</sup> November at 2.30 p.m.

**2. Apologies**

- 2.1 Mrs Liz Marriot, Mrs Sandra Menzies, Mr David Desborough, Mr Bernie Paul, Mrs Sarah Paul, Mrs Rita Showering, Mrs Michela Metcalf, Mr Mike Metcalf, Mrs Wendy Harris, Mr Ron Harris.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting**

- 3.1 Copies of the Minutes of the last meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019 had been circulated before the meeting and it was agreed that they be signed as a true record.

**4. Accounts**

- 4.1 Copies of the accounts were circulated. The Chairman reported that there was currently £10,712 in the bank and the only expense so far this year had been £420 for grass seed for the field. It was proposed by Mr. David Masters, seconded by Mrs Marian Honnywill and unanimously agreed that the accounts be accepted.

**5. Precept**

- 5.1 After regular expenses each year there is only some £450 left in credit to the Parish. However, with more than £10,000 credit presently in the bank the Chairman considered that an increase in the precept was unnecessary. This was agreed unanimously by the Meeting.

**6. Grants to Church and Village Hall**

- 6.1 The Chairman asked for a show of hands to pay the annual £1,000 grant to the Village Hall, this was agreed unanimously. It was also unanimously agreed that the amount paid to the Church for the upkeep of the Churchyard be increased from £800 to £900 each year.

## **7 Planning applications and correspondence**

- 7.1 There had been 2 applications since the previous meeting.
- 7.2 Mr and Mrs Keith Harris had applied for planning consent to make changes to the property previously called “Valhalla” but now known as “Silvermead”. This had been rejected by Dorset Council on the grounds that there would be too much glass and that it was too large. Mr and Mrs Harris were now in negotiations with Dorset Council to reach a compromise acceptable to both parties.
- 7.3 An application had been received for the installation of a further 3 rows of solar panels at Lower Silton in addition to the 2 rows already in place. The Chairman had consulted Mrs Jill Marsden who owns the only property from where they could be seen and she had no objections. The Chairman proposed therefore to approve this application on behalf of the Parish. This was agreed by the Meeting.

## **8 Highways Matters**

- 8.1 The Chairman reported on ongoing work upgrading the sewage farm just off Waterloo Lane and informed the Meeting that the Highways Department were particularly worried about the bridge which had been damaged by vehicles accessing the site. The work on the sewage farm is not scheduled to be completed until March 2020, so repairs to the road would not take place until then.
- 8.2 The Chairman reported that BT has recently laid a broadband fibre link to Wyndham House which required them to dig up part of Waterloo Lane causing damage to the road and the verges. The Highways Department has insisted BT make good the damage.

## **9 Allotments**

- 9.1 The Chairman reported that the annual allotment inspection took place on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2019. Three of the plot holders were required to “show again” on 21<sup>st</sup> September. Plots that are not as presentable as the Committee would like continued to get “letters from the headmaster” at regular intervals.
- 9.2 There are 44 plots in total and presently all but 2 are rented out at £10 per plot per year. As seen in the accounts £430 in rental fees had been taken so far this year and hopefully there would be more to come.
- 9.3 The Chairman explained that the apparent disparity in the number of plots and the total income is due to tenants taking out plots, deciding they no longer wanted them and the plots being re-let. Refunds are not given, in fact serious consideration is being given to levying a deposit on all plot holders when they first take over their plots to help fund the clearing up that needs to be done when plot holders simply walk away as has happened from time to time.
- 9.4 The Chairman thanked Mr Keith Harris and Mr Tom Trouton for the enormous amount of work they contribute to keep the allotments working as well as they do and also to Mr John Bilby, the Deputy Allotment Warden.
- 9.5 The Chairman encouraged anyone who had not visited the allotments to do so and the code 4781 would gain them entrance.

## **10 Village Hall Field**

- 10.1 The Chairman had written to everyone at the end of August to explain what was happening to the Village Hall Field. The programme of improvement is now complete and it is now a question of waiting for the grass to grow sufficiently before the field can be used it again. The pond, which was put in a few years ago to help with drainage, had been filled in. It was considered that with Cub Scout camps and other children using the field the pond provided an unnecessary hazard. It has now been taken off the risk register.
- 10.2 The Chairman took the opportunity of thanking Mr Keith Harris and the many members of his family for the huge amount of work they had put in to complete this project. This included levelling the field, moving tons of topsoil, improving the drainage, rolling it and sowing 120 kg of grass seed. The only cost to the Parish was the cost of the grass seed at £420. As this was above the Chairman’s delegated powers to pay, he sought the permission of the Meeting to pay this bill. This was unanimously agreed.

- 10.3 The Chairman hoped that the field will be useable soon after Christmas to introduce the proposed dog walking regime Mrs Nicky Waltham Weeks had explained at the last meeting. Those wishing to exercise their dogs on the field would need to register with her and would then be issued with permits. Permits would be free to those living in the Parish but there will be a small charge for all others. All those exercising their dogs are to carry their permit with them and will be responsible for “picking up” after their dogs, bags available in the “Wood House” shelter. Bins will not be provided; dog walkers are to take their bags away with them.
- 10.4 To date Mrs Waltham Weeks has provided the Chairman with bills amounting to £21.70 for producing the permits and the stamp that will be required once the field was useable again. There will be some ongoing costs once the scheme is up and running. However, the Chairman was very confident that the income will be far more than any expenditure that might be incurred. The Meeting agreed to this expenditure.
- 10.5 The Chairman reported that an accident had taken place on the A303 on 29th August when a dog was being exercised on the field and was running loose. Something had taken its attention and it ran from the field through the adjoining field and onto the A303 where it caused a road traffic accident involving 3 cars. The dog was killed but fortunately there were no human casualties.
- 10.6 The Chairman mentioned this incident, not because the Parish was in anyway responsible, but because it would be prudent to look carefully at the fences around the field and secure them as best as possible. However, it can never be guaranteed that the field will be completely secure and dog owners will have to accept this if they want to use the field to exercise their dogs. The Meeting requested that the rules for dog walkers included a non-liability clause that all those wishing the use the field should sign.

## **11 Data Protection Officer**

- 11.1 The Chairman had mentioned at the last meeting that the Government had tabled an amendment to its own bill to exempt Parish Councils and Parish Meetings from the need to appoint a Data Protection Officer and he reported that this had been passed by the House of Commons and is now with the House of Lords. However, until it is known exactly what the situation is, it is necessary to continue to comply with the rest of the GDPR requirements.

## **12 Licensee for Silton Village**

- 12.1 The Chairman reminded the meeting that the Village Hall has a Premises Licence to sell alcohol and that Mrs Marian Honnywill is named as the responsible person. For other events, such as the Flower Festival, the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WW1 the Parish takes out a Temporary Entertainment Licence which is valid only for that event at a cost of £21 each time.
- 12.2 He reported that Mrs Honnywill is content to carry on in this role but she will shortly be moving to Mere and having only one person in the Village named on our Premises Licence seemed a bit precarious.
- 12.3 On behalf of the Parish Mrs Jackie Dyer had made some enquiries of the licensing department at Dorset Council to determine the best way forward which is as follows:
- a. Mrs Honnywill will relinquish her role as our single responsible officer and an application will be made to vary the present licence to include all the officers on the Village Hall Committee. The advantage of this is that no committee members are named on the licence and when a committee member changes no alterations are needed to the licence.
- b. At the same time the Village Hall Committee will apply to extend the Premises Licence to include the “Wood House” shelter, the car park and the Village Hall field.
- 12.4 Although this will be at no cost to the Parish, the Parish Meeting is responsible for the upkeep of the field and the shelter and it is important that any changes are recorded in the minutes.

## **13 Footpaths**

- 13.1 The Chairman had no further information about Footpath N70/10 which joins Church Road between Anstey and 1 Taylor Hayes. As he had informed the Meeting in May the current footpath map is incorrect and will be corrected when the Definitive Map Modification Order is completed. At that stage it will also be known where the stile/gate will be placed although it is likely to be where it is located at present adjacent to the fence beside 1 Taylor Hayes. It is of course the land owner's responsibility to maintain the stile or gate.
- 13.2 Mrs Mary Anderson reported that there was a notice to say that the stile would be installed and she queried the route the path would take. It was assumed that this would be diagonally across the field but this will be checked before the next meeting.

#### **14 Commonwealth Day**

- 14.1 Commonwealth Day will be celebrated on 9th March 2020 and the Chairman had been asked if the Parish wished to participate again. Some 30 folk had gathered in the churchyard last March before retiring to the church for a glass of bubbles or a coffee. He asked if the Parish wished to continue to support this event and it was unanimously agreed that they did.

#### **15 Himalayan Balsam**

- 14.2 The Chairman reported that several "balsam bashes" had been conducted this summer and rather more had been removed than had been expected, largely because there had not been any coordinated clearing the previous year.
- 14.3 He thanked the intrepid gang of balsam bashers, Mr Keith Harris, Mr Peter Williams, Mr Rob Dyer, Mrs Lynda Woodhouse, Mrs Marilyn Clatworthy, Mr Ken Downie and a new comer, Mr Stephen Brown from Milton.
- 14.4 The Chairman admitted that once again he had fallen in the river and had to be rescued by the Dyer family.

#### **15 Broadband**

- 15.1 The Chairman reported that he had recently circulated an email urging parishioners to sign up with Wessex Internet to express an interest in the Rural Gigabit Connectivity Programme. As many were aware Mr David Desborough had done a lot of work about a year ago to get this off the ground but could not raise enough interest. However, circumstances had now moved on.
- 15.2 In particular, Mr Keith Harris had agreed that Wessex Internet could route their cable through Manor Farm to enable them to extend their cable from Cucklington to Mere which should help get Silton onto the Wessex Internet radar.
- 15.3 However, the Chairman had recently circulated a reply from Wessex Internet to him which basically said that there was insufficient interest in the village to make it worth their while. He appealed to parishioners to inundate them with expressions of interest.
- 15.4 Cllr Ridout reported that Zeals had been offered FTTP from Bourton and Mrs Jill Marsden reported that there was a cable presently being laid in Fantley Lane. Cllr Ridout reported that Openreach wanted to do the same. Mr David Masters reported on the trouble he had experienced with Openreach before finally achieving superfast broadband and Mr Keith Harris reported on success with a company called Zen.
- 15.5 The Chairman thought that what is abundantly clear is that if any headway is to be made at all the Village needed a Broadband Champion. There were no volunteers

#### **16 Dorset Council Matters**

- 16.1 Cllr Belinda Ridout ran through her report that had been circulated (see attached) and answered queries particularly about future housing plans. She doubted that there would be houses built in Silton as there was no suitable infrastructure such as shops, schools etc. She informed the Meeting that she is also on the cross-party climate change panel.
- 16.2 The Chairman confirmed that he would be attending the Climate Change Seminar at Dorchester on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

- 16.3 Mrs Mandy Burroughs was concerned about the lack of public transport in the area with no bus stop at all in Silton and offered to be the Silton Champion on bus issues. She also queried the 7 disabled spaces at Gillingham station which left nowhere to park even for a short time to buy a ticket.

## **17 Parish Website.**

- 17.1 The Chairman reported that the website, now up and running, was looking good and should prove to be extremely useful in the future. However, there was room for improvement and he intended to have a meeting with the web master Mr. Mike Metcalf, to whom all requests and queries must be directed at [admin@siltonvillage.co.uk](mailto:admin@siltonvillage.co.uk)

## **18 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day**

- 18.1 This will take place on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May next year. It is being organised nationally by Mr Bruno Peek the National Pageant Master. 8<sup>th</sup> May is to be the May Bank Holiday next year instead of the usual first Monday in May which is 4<sup>th</sup> May.
- 18.2 There are a number of elements to the celebrations:
- a. 3.00 p.m. - Pipers across the country will play a traditional tune, The Battles O'er.
  - b. At the same time there will be a toast to the fallen of WW2 in many thousands of pubs in the country, organised by The British Beer and Pub Association. The Chairman will enquire if The White Lion and the Bell & Crown will be joining in these celebrations.
  - c. 6.55 p.m. Town Criers will be undertaking a "Cry for Peace" around the country.
  - d. 7.00 p.m. Bells in many our churches and cathedrals will ring out a collective celebration.
  - e. At the same time the party would start in Silton if one is wanted.
- 18.3 Mr Keith Harris said that he would light a beacon anyway, and it was thought that the Village Hall would be the ideal place to hold a party and that it should be on the lines of previous similar celebrations with a BBQ, bar etc. and invitation to join in extended to Milton on Stour.
- 18.4 It was mentioned that the Army were once in Silton with a Nissan hut where "Valhalla" is now located.
- 18.5 Mr Hugh Honnywill suggested that there should be a commemorative plaque, but after some discussion it was felt that a tree would be more appropriate.

## **19 Any other business**

- 19.1 The Chairman reported that a spurious pile of stones had appeared at Greenacre in Mill Lane, and that the police had instantly recognised this as a travellers' "calling card" indicating to other travellers that the property may be "vulnerable". He advised people to be on the lookout for any similar indications, and to get rid of them immediately.
- 19.2 The Chairman had received a fundraising request from St John Ambulance and it was agreed that £75 should be donated to them from parish funds.
- 19.3 Mr Keith Harris reported that some older members of his family were in possession, as maybe some others may be, of historic material relating to the village that perhaps should be archived. They would be willing to pay for appropriate secure storage equipment and would like permission to keep it in the Village Hall. However, at a PCC meeting the previous evening this very subject had been discussed relating to the delivery of historic church records to archives in Dorchester.
- 19.4 It was recommended that all historic material should be put together with the church archives in Dorchester so they can all be kept in one place where they can be viewed at no charge by anyone at any time. Mr Mike Burroughs volunteered to oversee this and identify what was available. Mr David Masters volunteered to assist him.
- 19.5 The dangerous bend in the road where Fantley Lane joins the main road to Gillingham was discussed and Mr Mike Burroughs suggested that a metal barrier be installed to prevent drivers going through the hedge.

It was also mentioned that there were an increasing number of motorbikes revving up in that area before speeding down the "Silton Straight", especially at weekends.

19.6 There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.30 p.m.

19.7 This being Mr and Mrs Honnywill's last meeting prior to their move to Mere, they were thanked for all their years' service to the Parish. Both had taken the chair during those years.