

PARISH OF HILLESLEY AND TRESHAM
MINUTES OF 19th PARISH ASSEMBLY
Meeting held at Hopkins Hall, Hillesley on
Wednesday 8th April 2009

Present: Cllr D Darlow (chair)
H Cooke (clerk)
In attendance: 11 other people

1. Apologies for absence:

Cllr P Hemming (District), Sgt Gibbs (Safety community Team), Cllr S Butcher (Parish).

2. Minutes of the last meeting:

The minutes of the meeting on 6th April 2008 were approved and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

None.

4. Presentation on Water Voles

Jenny Phelps Farm Conservation Adviser from Gloucestershire Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (GFWAG) gave a short talk on the work being done in partnership with Gloucestershire Wild Life Trust to preserve and enhance the habitat for the water vole population along the Kilcott stream.

Resolved: To support the project.

5. Report of the Parish Council Parish Council

- a. David Darlow, Parish Council Chairman reported on changes to the Council and thanked the four retiring councillors for the service given to the parish, in particular to Gordon Money.
- b. In addition to the routine matters, such as the maintenance of assets and making comments to the District Council on the numerous planning applications considered, the Council has had to deal with several other issues that are worthy of note.
Progress has been made in the field of e.governance, with the development of a new Hillesley & Tresham parish council website, linked to SDC's own website. Hillesley Village Directory has been updated and is being reformatted so that it can be displayed on the website. In addition to on-line banking, the Parish Council is now registered for tax on line and the process of improving electronic records continues. The Council has resolved to replace the notice board in Hillesley.
- c. Amongst other achievements has been the installation of an additional streetlight, in New Mills Lane, with funding from both the Parish and County Councils. This was done to improve safety by lighting up a dark spot. Ironically, with the aim of saving energy, the Council also agree with the County Council that selected streetlights in the parish can be switched off of during early morning hours. A new contractor for Hillesley war memorial green has been appointed, and there have been favourable comments about the improved in appearance.
- d. Other matter dealt with have included participation in the campaign to save Wotton Sorting

Office from closure, a fight sadly lost, and objection to British Telecom's proposed removal of the telephone kiosks in Hillesley and Tresham – as the former is a listed building, it may be deleted from BT's removal list but the Tresham kiosk, although the same model, is not listed and is at greater risk – the Parish Council has expressed initial interest in adopting the Tresham kiosk but has been unwilling to complete the process until BT have decided whether or not to go ahead with its removal.

- e. A number of residents have raised road safety issues, especially speeding, with the Council. To examine these, the Council set up a working group, which has met with County Council highways officers and continues to work with them to find solutions.
- f. In the year ahead, the Council plans to explore how it might be able to change the way it works with the community to maintain and enhance the life we all enjoy. Regrettably, for several pressing reasons, it has been necessary to increase the precept, which has remained substantially below average for several years.

6. Reports from local organisations

a. Winter Jubilee Field Trust

Steve Hayward, Chair of Trust and the Field Management Committee reported on committee changes and fund raising activities and use of the field and hall. Volunteers continue to assist with maintenance. Progress has been made on the refurbishment of the toddler's area thanks to the fund raising efforts of Linda Frankland. A 2nd grant was received which has allowed the replacement of the old monkey frame with a new safer piece of climbing apparatus. The Pavilion we are trying to make do and mend until the hall is finished. During the year fitting out the kitchen and the commissioning of the new toilets was completed. During the forthcoming year there are plans to remove the old toilet and complete various works to the storage area to give internal access from the Hall.

b. St Giles Church

Martin Crossley, Churchwarden reported that the St Giles' congregation continues to be a small but committed group. Ties with the school are being developed further and Giles Smiles continues to be popular with 'tinies' and families. There is a need for something for older children and the AGM will consider "What can be done for Youth". The Lent house meetings was an initiative to develop an ecumenical group. The church has been open during lent and this is to continue.

c. Tresham Church

Richard Goodenough, Treasurer reported on the state of church funds. The aim is to maintain a reasonable balance on the General Fund of around £3000 to £5000 (currently £3918); and to gradually build the Restricted Fund (currently £8937) so that it is able to meet capital costs over the years to come. It is believed that this can be achieved with the support of local people through the collection box, our fund-raising activities and by grants and donations.

d. Hillesley Baptist Burial Ground Trust

Caroline Webber reported that the year was the most difficult year since the Trust inception. A combination of the wet summer, and illness amongst some members meant that maintenance was a heavier task than usual for a smaller group of helpers. There were two internments at the burial ground in 2008. Burial costs will remain the same as last year. Full details are available from Caroline Webber Tel. 01249760600 email caroline.webber@mypostoffice.co.uk or Tess Docherty Tel.01453872357

e. Hillesley Allotment Association.

Angela Doughty, a member of the Association reported that the association has 27 members and a committee of eight. With the help of a grant from SDC a 5 x 1000l water harvester system has been installed. A communal shed is to be installed. Activities have included seed swaps, a bar-b-q and a Christmas social.

f. Hillesley Primary School

Margaret Plummer, a Governor reported that the school has had a very good Ofsted inspection report, and will be having a Church school inspection soon. The new outdoor infant classroom has now been formally opened.

7. Report from County Councillor

- a. Cllr John Cordwell reported on County and regional events of the past year and changes in charges and services. He continues as Shadow Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Transport matters and for European issues; is a member of the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee; and has chaired a task group scrutinising the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement. He also continues to chair the county's Stroud Road Safety Liaison Group, and is chairman of the Gloucestershire Sustainable Energy Forum. Cllr Cordwell continued as a member of the South West Regional Assembly and a member of its Executive Committee, its Regional Transport Board, Climate Change Task Group and Conformity Panel. He also served on the South West Councils and its Executive.
- b. The county council set a budget which involves an increase in the county council part of the precept of 2.9%, or £30 at Band D. (It was 4.9% in 2008/09.) In this coming year receipts of just £2M are being assumed. The council's debt continues to rise and at the end of the financial year 2007/08 stood at £1,444 per family. The County Council has £12.5M of its reserves invested with Icelandic banks out of a total of £165M.
- c. Regional Spatial Strategy strategic development plan for the South West has been a major concern and continues to be so.
- d. Regional Rail Issues. Funding for redoubling of Swindon-Kemble was refused by the Office of Rail Regulation. However the DfT has put up the money needed for a study and the region has included half the cost of the scheme in its Regional Funding Advice to the Government, which was submitted earlier this year. An announcement last Friday from the DfT seems promising for the complete project.
- e. In February the County Council received a report from the Commission for Social Care that the delivery of the service is poor and capacity to improve is uncertain.
- f. The Children's Centre based at Wotton should be in operation by March 2010.
- g. In seeking support from DEFRA ,the administration have put forward a proposal for a single waste incinerator to serve the whole of the county. This would have a capacity to deal with 176,000 tonnes of waste per year that is not recycled or composted. Land at Javelin Park, potentially for such a development, was purchased in January for £7.4M.
- h. The backlog of repairs to county roads remains at around the £132M level it was at four years ago. Minor roads in the county are in the bottom (worst) quartile of such roads for local authorities nationally.
- i. During the winter, which was more severe than in recent years, the County Council came close to running out of salt, thanks to non-delivery of supplies, and there was less information than desirable to the voluntary parish snow wardens. Extra gully-emptying is being carried out in places prone to flooding.

- j. A second moratorium imposed by the County Council’s administration on new 20 mph speed limits and zones, has now been going on for over two years, waiting for a prioritisation policy was formulated.
- k. Roof repairs to the roof and other improvements to the Wotton Library will now start in mid May and last until mid August, with a library service being available at Wotton Civic Centre.

8. Report from District Councillor

- a. In his absence, Cllr Paul Hemming’s report was tabled. The District Council is responsible for services such as Street Cleaning, Recycling, Refuse Collection, Leisure, Planning, Culture and housing. Most importantly is the aim to provide these services in the most efficient and robust manner possible. Scrutiny is conducting various inquiries at the moment into Housing, Leisure Facilities and Contracts, Packaging and Recycling and the Canal Project.
- b. Full Council backed the proposal to take the lead in the Canal Restoration Project, which may bring benefits to the District in the long term through Tourism and Investment.
- c. The Council website has been enhanced and now offers more services which are easier to find than previously. In particular, sections dealing with Planning and Planning Guidance as well as the ‘Where I live’ information should prove to be of use.
- d. Environmental issues continue to be of concern and the Districts ‘Warm & Well’ Scheme, offering advice on energy efficiency and health problems, which may be encountered, continue to be well received.
- e. The provision of Affordable Housing remains a priority although it will be a challenge in the coming months.
- f. The number of Neighbourhood Wardens once again increased to provide District Wide coverage. The wardens not only operating in their ‘own’ areas but also available to assist within the Emergency Planning Scenario
- g. Stroud increased its cost to Council Tax payers by 3.5% for the coming year and hopefully there will be some visible return. The total that council tax payers will contribute to fund the services that Stroud provides over the next 12 months will be approaching £8m.

9. Items from Public Participation and other issues.

None.

10. Meeting closed at 8.45 pm

I certify that the above minutes are a correct record of the above meeting

Signed:

Date: