

WEST HAGBOURNE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD ON SATURDAY 16TH MAY 2009 at 3pm

in an office at Manor Farm Courtyard

MINUTES

Present:

Cllr Phil Taylor (Chairman of Parish Council),
Parish Councillors: Marion Judd, Sue Totterdell and Tom Barker
Michelle Lightfoot (Parish Clerk), Cllr Patrick Greene (District and County Council),
Ed Vaizey (MP)

Chris Lay, Sue Lay, Tim Lightfoot, Bernard Mead, Margaret Hedger, Betty Kendrick, Ted Kendrick,
Dave Totterdell, Andrea Mitchell, Peter Mitchell, John Baille, Eve Setch, Charles Keevil, Penelope
Keevil, David Clark, Joan Clark, Mike Parker

Apologies were sent by Janet Cockburn, Mary Wiley and Jeff Powell.

1. Welcome by Chairman

Phil Taylor opened the meeting and welcomed everyone attending, thanking Chris+Sue Lay for the use of the room , which was more practical given the weather conditions.

2. Annual reports

Copies of the Parish Reports comprising the Chair's (Parish Council) Report and reports of the Village Association, History Group, William Tyrrell Trust, Parish Plan Steering Group and reports by Patrick Greene (District and County Councillor) were distributed to each household in the village prior to the meeting. A copy can also be found on the website.

A move towards an opt in process for electronic distribution of these reports has been considered, but as some people do not have email/ access to a computer both will be available for the foreseeable future but the Chair felt the wholesale distribution to every house was an unnecessary expense which should not be continued.

3. Development of Didcot/Open Forum

On behalf of the village, PT asked for EV's help in raising the profile of the Hagbourne's bearing in mind the impact the growth of Didcot will have on the two villages. PT also showed a map of the area which will be taken by new housing as it encroaches into the Parish toward the village.

PT also wanted to make sure that the infrastructure was in place for the amount of traffic which will be produced by the extra no. of houses and residents accessing the A34 and travelling to Harwell.

It was noted that no decision has been made regarding a bypass and most effective would be to avoid the village by going from A417 across to Wantage Road, Didcot.

The proposed Southern Perimeter Road is not likely to go ahead as it would not do what is required by Highways, or their consultants, the PC had met the transport planners earlier in the year.

Cllr Greene confirmed that Highways would not want another junction off the A34.

There was a suggestion of a bypass going from the Horse and Harrow, round the outskirts of the village and across to Coscote using the route of the existing byway but it was felt this would not help sufficiently, and would possibly impact negatively on East Hagbourne.

A possible temporary solution to dissuade traffic, would be to reduce the speed limit to 20 mph but it was thought that no-one would take any notice of this, and the PC has requested this on several occasions in the past six years.

Another suggestion was to close Park Road but it was thought that traffic would then end up coming through from East Hagbourne to West.

PT pointed out that the money from the development of Didcot will go towards new roads and it is important the WH influence this process to their advantage as SODC failed to recognise any 106 funding should be allocated to West Hagbourne.

Bernard Mead pointed out that any bypass which is built should be attractive and easy to use to encourage users.

MJ raised the subject of sustainability and how agricultural land is being used up for development. In years to come there will be no land left to farm therefore making the area unsustainable.

ST said that natural countryside is preferable to man-made parks and should not disappear.

EV confirmed that being "green" is very high on his list of priorities.

He said that there will be very fast broadband in cities and by using a company called Community Broadband Network the cost of this has been reduced massively.

PT pointed out that WH is not against the growth of Didcot providing the correct infrastructure is in place, however, WH has been told that it is itself unsustainable and therefore this would go against any plans to build within the village, but apparently does not affect building within the Parish Boundary if it affects Didcot.

MJ said that SODC do not recognise that WH has a school and a village hall which is shared with East Hagbourne. This should be taken into consideration.

PT said there is no gain for WH from the 106 agreement. Cllr Greene is looking at this. Didcot have gained £1 million. Cllr Greene also confirmed that he would like to see the development go to the North East.

The SCOTS Report considered the East to West traffic flow only and the South East Plan did not allow for any infrastructure. It failed to recognise local knowledge, and factor this into its plans for new road infrastructure.

Peter Mitchell raised the subject of a definitive boundary between the village and Didcot and EV suggested a campaign for a 'greenbelt for Didcot' much the same as Oxford, to stop houses merging into the surrounding villages. He thought it would be a good idea to hold a meeting with other villages in the area to put some ideas together. This would raise the profile of Didcot and might be supported by Didcot First as well.

PT presented EV with the book written and published by the Village History Group and he then left the meeting.

4. Land opposite the Horse and Harrow

PT confirmed that he had been in touch with Greene King (again) and that the matter of purchasing the land opposite the Horse & Harrow was no further forward. Chris Lay said there may be a possibility of alternative land for a village meeting place and would consider this if the Greene King land falls through.

5. Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

A Co-ordinator is required. A request for volunteers will be placed in the next Newsletter.

6. Highways

PT raised the matter of potholes and pointed out to Cllr Greene that recently there had been a substantial claim for vehicle damage caused by a large pothole in York Road. There were many white marks painted around potholes which have now been filled. However there is still one on Main Street, near Green Thatch in need of repair along with many other smaller areas which remain untouched.

The meeting was told that the more individuals who complain about damage to roads will help towards action being taken to fix them. A complaint by the Parish Council will only count as one record.

7. Other matters raised

PT confirmed that a replacement Councillor is required as John Thornhill recently resigned. Also a new Clerk will be required in July due to the resignation of Michelle Lightfoot.

As part of its potential 'pandemic' planning, a good neighbour scheme will be introduced to encourage residents to help each other, particularly in times of an emergency. WHPC are producing will co-ordinate this by improving its e-mail distribution list, and adding contact details of vulnerable neighbours in order to set this up.

The website was discussed and the question was asked about what should and should not go on the website. JB confirmed that it should only be things from people in the village. The point was raised that for young people it may be a good idea to advertise events which are on in the area organised by groups outside of the village as there is nothing for them in WH and this would be a way of encouraging younger people to look at the website. The majority of people seemed in favour of people/organisations from outside of the village advertising on the website as long as it would relate to residents and would be of interest to them. There was a suggestion of paid advertising on the website so that it could finance itself. This will be investigated.

PT/ST/MJ urged the people of WH to continue to communicate their concerns/observations to the Parish Council and for as many residents as possible to respond to the recently circulated questionnaire to update the Parish Plan. Responses to go to Sue Totterdell.

Andrea Mitchell proposed a vote of thanks to the Parish Council for their hard work over the past year.

The meeting closed at 4.45 pm