

Minutes of Haydon Wick Parish Council Annual Assembly held 22nd March 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors L Brown (Chairman), D Bower (Vice-Chair), C Armagan, P Booth, S Callen, P Eagle, J Fuller, E Gerrard, R Hailstone, S McDermott, J Stooke, D Smith, C Taylor and M Whelan

WARD COUNCILLORS: None

CLERK: Terry Powell

Public: There was one (1) resident present

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor A Adams, P Martin and D Rodgers

2. WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Councillor L Brown welcomed all those present to the meeting and explained the purpose of the Annual Assembly which is required by legislation to be held annually between the 1st March and 1st June. It is best described as the annual shareholders meeting where the Directors (the Councillors) tell the shareholders (the residents) what we've done, what we want to do and to give a brief financial overview.

In the past, the Chairman has had the stage all to himself. But I've decided to share the responsibility with the Vice-chairman and the Chair of Policy and Finance.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Assembly held 24th March 2015 having been circulated to all those present and were accepted.

Proposed: Councillor R Hailstone Seconded: Councillor J Fuller
Vote: Agreed

RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved as a correct record

4. ACHIEVEMENTS 2015/16

Councillor L Brown as Chairman spoke to this item.

The year 2015 was an election year for us in Haydon Wick with fifteen councillor positions elected and with the remaining three filled by co-option. We welcomed nine new councillors although one of the nine was an ex-councillor returning to the fray. The addition of the new councillors has resulted in a new welcome demographic look to the Council with the average age of councillors being lowered considerably and with a 60/40 split of male/female.

2015 saw us take on a grass cutting trial in the Taw Hill area. The trial was felt so successful that we were not just keen to keep it going in 2016 but to roll it out across the parish. We were about to start an internal dialogue on how we would do it when the Borough approached us to take on the work. With what we now know about European legislation, I personally feel that 6 months' notice was too short a

time period to take on the task. But fortunately for us, the existing contract that we have with Countrywide, includes a clause that allowed us to react within the time scale. More importantly, it gives us, and by 'us' I mean the Clerk, the opportunity to tender for the contract without undue time pressure.

After many years of faithful service, our old minibus has been replaced with a new one. The Council sees this as an important service for parishioners unable to get themselves out and about. As well as regular trips to the shops, the minibus goes on adventures. I've heard even as far as Weston-super-Mare and back!

Hopefully by now you will all have received the latest edition of our magazine Haydon Wick 'living'. I would like to commend Councillor Sarah McDermott and the editorial team for the work they have put in on yet another successful edition. I hope you will find the new map that was delivered with the magazine useful. As the map may be around for many years, the Council decided against seeking funding for it from private organisations that may or not exist in the years to come. The map clearly defines the parish so residents will know whether or not they are parishioners.

2015 also saw the Council become the proud owners of a piece of land out in the far reaches of the parish, on Tadpole Lane, next to the Blunsdon and Cricklade Railway station. Plans for the land include allotments and a community orchard. We have been approached by Swindon 1st Sea Scouts to provide an area to plant trees provided by the Woodland Trust.

Following the last Community Governance Review, the parish grew to include western Moredon and Woodhall Park. This has seen us take on another allotment at Ventnor Close from 1st October last year. We have divided empty plots and reduced our waiting list to 25. For those of you lucky enough to have a plot, be warned, inspections have started!

Twenty-five years of perseverance by previous councillors has now paid off and all but two of the play areas in the 'newly built' parts of the parish have been handed over to us. The remaining two, Doyle Close and Francomes, are still in the ownership of the developers. So although the Borough has responsibility for them, they cannot be handed over to us.

The nineteen play areas came with a dowry that will be spent renovating the equipment. Our amenities team are receiving special training on how to inspect the play equipment. As every play area has litter bins, it makes sense that our guys are best placed to keep an eye on the equipment as they visit them several times a week.

Along with grass cutting public areas, the Borough work also includes some private contracts. We will be using the money generated from these to employ another part time member of the amenities team. Legislation allows us to positively discriminate in favour of a disabled person. We will be using the services of SEQOL to employ a physically fit but otherwise less able person.

SEQOL Supported Employment helps disabled people to secure jobs by working with visionary employers who want a diverse workforce. There are no agency fees and the supported employment team continue to support the member of staff whilst

employed with us. We feel that it is a win/win solution for both the Council and someone who would find it difficult to find a supportive employer.

This year's budget for grants was £6500. Unfortunately we have under spent by £2000 which will be carried over to this financial year. Successful recipients of a grant include Sea Scouts for renovation work on their building; St Mary's Church again for building renovation work; Busy Fingers for equipment storage; SANDS for renovations to the Whitworth Road Cemetery Baby Garden; Wiltshire Bobby Van and Haydonleigh School

And finally, you will all, no doubt, have seen the squirrel. Most of the comments received by the staff have been positive. After years of splendid isolation in Trent Road field, followed by a couple of years bothering the tenants of Goodearl leisure gardens, may he guard the nuts at the parish office for a good few years to come.

Hopefully Damon's speech will be like a ladies skirt; long enough to cover the subject but short enough to keep it interesting

5. AIMS & OBJECTIVES 2016/17

The Vice-Chair Councillor D Bower gave a summary of the expected aims and objectives for 2016/17.

As from 1st April the Council will be taking on the responsibility for all the grounds maintenance in the parish from the Borough Council. This will enable us to provide a good quality service for this work to a standard which the residents have told us they wish to see. The work will be carried out by a private contractor and closely monitored by Council staff. The number of grass cuts per year will be increased to ten and two bush/shrub/hedge cuts. The Council's own Amenities Team will provide a rapid response service where there is a problem and the contractor is not due to be present for a week or so.

This will help us to keep to our three year plan of insuring that the Parish is a place where we want to live and is the envy of Swindon.

As Councillor Brown has mentioned we have taken ownership of the all the play areas in the Parish apart from two but these will we hope come under our direct control shortly. This gives us a total of 24 play areas to look after and maintain. For this work we have ring fenced £60,000 of monies this year for the refurbishment of our parks with the aim of continuing the work in future years ahead.

Due to the continuing success in attracting outside organisations to use the Council's meeting rooms with the increase in income the Councillors wish over the coming year to consider the feasibility of extending the building. This is a long term project with the aim of meeting a community need for a centre for community use.

The Youth Council will continue to be actively promoted by Councillor Armagan with the continuing aim of engaging the younger members of our community in the work of the Council.

Other areas of work where the Council wish to promote are improvements to the

local environment, involvement in community assisted events, clearing of brooks and increased litter picking.

6. PRECEPT 2016/17

As Chair of the Policy & Finance Committee, Councillor S McDermott, explained that the detail of the 2016/17 budget which had been clearly laid out in magazine and the resultant precept levied on the Borough Council. Future budgets will be affected by the outcome of the current Community Governance Review. She advised that submissions were required by the Borough Council by end of the month

7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Councillor E Gerrard added to the 2015/16 achievements mentioned the work undertaken by the Parish Council which resulted in the removal of traffic calming outside of Morrisons. Commented that there was a need to look at mechanical street cleaning in the parish with funding from the Borough Council

Councillor P Eagle commented that he had been a councilor previously and had recently returned and anted to propose that the Council either as a whole or as individuals needs to look at more involvement with the public both through formal and informal meetings

A member of the public (name not given) spoke. Had attended to gain a wider understanding of what the Council covers. Thought the Council needed a higher profile. Questioned whether the issue of failed play area surfaces could be covered by claims against developers

There was a general discussion on the ways to improve involvement with residents. It was suggested more 'Meet and Greet' events and/or attendance at community/school 'Fun Days/fetes,

Councillor J Stooke supported the comments made in regard to mechanical street sweeping and suggested that the hand cart be used to clear some of the worst affected areas. Felt that the presence of the dirt and leaf mould in gutters sets back other good work. Believed there is a need to promote the use of the minibus and the Christmas Parcel Scheme as 85% of the usage. Consider ways of communicating with residents as there are issues with relying on material delivered to the door as people do not always read what comes through the door.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.46 p.m.