

Draft Minutes of the Englishcombe Annual Parish Meeting, held at the Old School, on Thursday 29 April 2010.

Present: Cllrs Brian Huggett (Chairman), Simon Adams, Sue Barber, Margot Gray, Andrew Scurlock, Nicola Jefferies, District Cllr Vic Clarke and 23 members of the Parish plus guest John Yates
Clerk: Kathryn Manchee

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Bland, Tony Salter and Peter Duppa Miller
2. **The Chairman welcomed all those attending and** thanked everyone for their support including help from the clerk and John Davies for the use of the premises.
3. **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 23 April 2009.** The minutes having been previously circulated to all Councillors and being available for inspection and perusal by all members of the Parish, were taken as read.
4. **Talk by John Yates of the RSPB.** John gave an interesting and informative talk on garden birds. His talk generated much interest and questions. The Chairman thanked him for his talk and then stopped the meeting for a refreshment break.
5. **District Cllr's Report.** This year has been dominated by the core strategy and the new housing being planned. District Cllr stated his opposition to development in the Green Belt and outlined how he had spoken at various meetings and is supporting the work of the Newton St Loe Conservation Group. He is also against development on agricultural land. He believes Newton St Loe is vulnerable to development so the residents should continue to lobby against this. Also Cllr Clarke believes that a lot of projections in the core strategy on the need for housing are based on out of date data. Therefore development on brownfield sites should be sufficient. The other major area of activity is the state of the roads. Key areas include potholes and safety of A367.
6. **Chairman's Report.** The Chairman began his report by saying that it had been a very busy and important year. The Chairman continued by stating that the Council had met 6 times in the year 2009-2010 plus some additional planning meetings. Key areas of activity have been
 - **Website** – this has been upgraded and have received communications from as far away as Australia as a result of the website
 - **Consultation with BANES** – in 2009-2010 have responded to public path diversion order, gambling act statement of principles, provision of public conveniences in Bath, operation of Parish Charter, Library Service, conservation area appraisal and core strategy. The chairman reported that our views do make a difference as we provide good quality responses on these issues.
 - **Core Strategy** – The Final document is due out at the end of year. The council response said that development should be brownfield first and not on Green Belt. Also need to develop Western Riverside and MoD land before green belt. Also suggested more accommodation for students on campus. The latter two points are now being worked on.
 - **Other Meetings** – Chairman and/or Clerk and/or Bill Davies attended a variety of other meetings including Parish Liaison, Parish Cluster, PACT, Police Forums, PCAA, ALCA meetings and Environs of Bath.
 - **Conservation Area Review** - 50% completed but progress delayed by BANES reorganisation. The Parish Council is trying to get the conservation area increased.
 - **Planning** – 6 applications dealt with. The parish council is guided in debate by the local plan. In future we will be guided by the Core Strategy.
 - **Parish Charter.** The council doesn't always agree with the case officer re planning applications. Therefore we have the right, via our District Cllr, to request applications go before the development committee. Two applications in Englishcombe – Fairhaven and Inglescombe Farm – are going before the May development committee meeting. The Parish Charter is currently being reviewed.
 - **Parish Plan** – we don't currently have one. The aim of such a plan is to get views from parishioners on what they want. However we need an independent driving force to progress this. If anyone is interested please contact The Chairman of the parish council.
7. **Matters Arising from the 2009 Annual Parish Meeting**
 - **Rat Running/Speeding** – the council hasn't been able to get Community Speedwatch up and running due to a lack of volunteers.
 - **Vehicle Count** - didn't happen last summer. Reorganisation of BANES has delayed this but will be carried out in the next two months

8. Clerk's Financial Report

Total end of year balances rose from £4119.53 to £4379.99 due to a surplus of receipts over payments of £260.46. This is above the £71 surplus budgeted for. The most significant differences in comparison with the previous year were: Receipts: VAT Recovery. Two years VAT recovery made this year compared to none the previous year. Going forward the VAT incurred in any one financial year will be claimed in the following year following the internal audit. Bank interest. Due to lower interest rates much less interest received. Decrease in miscellaneous income. This year the only miscellaneous income received was from the Duchy of Cornwall for planting of some bulbs. In the previous year we received more money for bulbs. Also in the previous year miscellaneous income included half the cost of membership of SLCC from Dunkerton and a donation of £10 from a parishioner. Payments: Decrease in clerk's remuneration as new clerk on a lower pay scale than previous clerk. Also in previous year slight overlap of one month when paying two clerks to ensure a smooth handover. Increase in parish sweepers remuneration in line with inflationary increase in payment received from BANES for this service. However overall staff costs decreased slightly. Increase in administration costs over last year as new clerk lives further away from village leading to extra mileage costs (note new clerk also claims a higher mileage rate due to employed status). Also more meetings attended by both the chairman and clerk. Drop in Section 137 Grants as in the previous year additional money was donated to the fire replacement fund for the Old School. Maintenance and property expenses have gone up as in previous year lumped in with administration costs. In 2009-2010 these were reported on separately. Expenditure on publicity this year was for the cost of the web software for the clerk to allow her to take over updating of the website. Half the cost of this will be invoiced to Dunkerton Parish Council shortly. At its meeting on 1 February 2010 the council decided to ask for a precept for 2010/11 of £4170. They also agreed a budget for 2010/11 which aims at a surplus of £65.

9. Parish Activities

- *Tithe Barn* – Jenni Walker outlined that the Tithe Barn had been used for one ALCA meeting, and several church services. It will be open at various times between 9 and 12 September as part of the Open Heritage scheme.
- *Church* We have continued to have a service every Sunday at 11.15 am as well as special services (eg Harvest Festival and Carols). Our Civic Service will be on Sunday 4 July at 11.15 as part of the Village Weekend Celebrations. We have had 2 weddings and one Baptism service in the past 12 months as well as one Thanksgiving service. We are most grateful for all who help in cleaning the Church and providing/arranging flowers. Also those who cut the grass, but we are in serious need of more help here. Sadly, our Vicar, David Burleigh, is retiring in June, after 10 years of outstanding service to the Parish. He will be a very hard (if not impossible) act to follow. We are also finding ourselves quite stretched financially and do need to generate more income to meet the ever increasing costs of keeping the church in business.
- *Neighbourhood Watch* – Brian and Bill Davies continue to act together as Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators for the Village (other areas of the Parish might well consider having a co-ordinator). We are thankfully pretty crime free, but this is in large part due to the vigilance of members of the community as a whole, one of the benefits of the high level of neighbourliness we enjoy in the Parish.
- *Barrow Castle/Sirrius Wood* The Gardens at Barrow Castle and Sirrius Wood will be open on 12 and 13 June as part of the National Gardens Scheme. Money from teas and plant sales will go to Sirrius Wood. Volunteers are also needed to help on both of these days. Also a reminder was issued about the Friends of Sirrius Wood – the majority are Englishcombe villagers but people can still sign up.
- *Chapel* – All services the same except now have a share a meal service on the first Sunday of every month.

Bill Davies proposed a vote of thanks to the Parish Council which was universally endorsed with applause from all present.

The meeting closed at 10.17 pm.