

**Minutes  
of  
THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**Held in the Parish Council Chambers,  
Station Road, Codsall.**

**On Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

**at 7.30p.m.**

**Present: Parish Councillors:** Mrs M Barrow (Chair), Mrs V Birch, Mrs P Campbell, Mrs V Chapman, R Etheridge, B Holland, S Jenkinson, Mrs C Millar, L Stovin,  
**Parish and County Councillor:** R Marshall

**Representatives of Staffordshire Police:** Sgt C Higgins, and PC Percival

**Members of the public:** Adrian Hill, Roger Marsh, Judy Davies, John Harris, Ian Kenyon, Carol Charnley, Brian Charnley, David Johnson, Jill Gollins, Stephen Skinner, Matt Jevons, Louise Davies, Stacey Khan, Trevor Jeavons, and Pam Allen

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllrs M Ewart, Mrs K Ewart, P Kenyon, John Michell, Mrs E Forster

**2. INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS BY CHAIRMAN**

Cllr Mrs Barrow introduced Councillors Mrs V Birch, Mrs P Campbell, Mrs V Chapman, R Etheridge, B Holland, S Jenkinson, Mrs C Millar, L Stovin, and R Marshall

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

**4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON PREVIOUS YEAR**

The Chairman welcomed everyone for coming this evening and introduced herself and fellow councillors.

The Chairman then went onto to say that '2014/15 has been a challenging but successful year for the parish council. There have been the usual 22 meetings with additional committee meetings, site meetings and seminars to attend. Budgeting for 2015/2016 was also challenging. Councillors had to consider the significance of reduced grant funding and inflationary pressure on the Council's 2015/2016 budget. The withdrawal of grant funding of £11,998 would have left the council with a substantial funding gap if the current service levels were to be maintained.

Various possible options were considered in order to meet the identified funding gap. Members were mindful however of the low precept base for the

Parish and the impact that any budget reduction would have, particularly on the maintenance of village amenities and public open spaces.

The view was taken that the precept for 2015/2016 should be held at the same level as the current year. This however would effectively mean an increase in the council tax base for band D properties of £4.11p, which is equivalent to seven pence a week. Maintenance and improvements to our Open Spaces and the village is the highest expenditure incurred by the Parish Council during 2014/15. Results from the tree survey recently carried out on the 600 plus trees on Parish Council land highlighted that an awful lot of tree work needs to be carried out over the next 3 years, with some urgent work needed to be carried out within the next twelve months. This will of course mean substantial additional expenditure, but we the parish council have a duty of care to ensure that Parish Council land is safe, therefore any reduction in precept would seriously jeopardise our ability to maintain our assets effectively.

An update to the proposed Car park - we can advise that discussions have taken place with the police and other bodies regarding safety and design and we are progressing to final design.

A highlight however for me this year was the commencement of improvement works to the Wheel Field and I am very pleased to advise that with help from a substantial grant received from Veolia, phase one of the Wheel Field is now complete.

The majority of feed-back that we have received since the completion of phase 1 has been very positive. One resident advised us that as they are not as young as they once were, they had to stop taking their dog on the wheel field a couple of years ago, but with the installation of the benches they have been able walk the dog again.

We have seen families not walking dogs but pushing pushchairs, children cycling and wheel chair users all enjoying this open space.

Phase two has already started with tree planting, and there is an opportunity for groups, organisations or individuals to sponsor a tree. Names of sponsors will be included on an information board that will be commissioned and sited within the Wheel Field. Details on applying to sponsor a tree have been included within your information packs this evening. Details will also be made available on our website and noticeboards or you can contact the Parish Clerk.

Phase two also consists of improving access for wheel chair users and push chairs with alterations to the entrances being completed within the next two months. Additional litter bins will be installed.

We should remember that all householders in Codsall, Codsall Wood and Oaken contribute to the maintenance of all our open spaces and I feel we should make the most of what we have got, for the benefit of all our community.

I would also like to say as 2014 marked the centenary of the outbreak of World War One, our war memorial stands proudly at the heart of our community, erected in grateful appreciation of those men from our village

who gave their lives for the freedom of our country. It forms the backdrop of our community's annual service of remembrance. Your parish council takes its responsibilities as custodians of this memorial with great seriousness.

To mark the centenary, minor landscape changes were made and two benches were commissioned and are in situ within the memorial gardens. A local resident wished to mark the occasion by writing a poem, this was read out during the service of remembrance. Pupils from Birches First School and St Nicholas School visited the War Memorial as part of their learning programme and pupils from Codsall Middle School and Codsall High School laid wreaths.

Over the next three years the Parish Council plan further improvements to the War Memorial.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers that contribute to enhance the life of our village. The Parish of Codsall is so fortunate to have such a variety of clubs and facilities available to all ages of our community which are run tirelessly by volunteers. As part of our Civic Sunday celebrations we have used the occasion to thank and help bring awareness to the wonderful service that volunteers provide for our community, I would like also to thank Simon Whitcombe for his support in our Civic Celebrations. The Parish Council during 2014/15 has given £16,700.00 in grants and donations to charities, clubs and societies.

We have heard this evening of just some of the work that volunteers have done for the benefit of the community but what they do not talk about is the **number** of hours given by volunteers, how they only exist because of volunteers and how difficult it can be to get new volunteers. So I give a big thank you to all the volunteers of Codsall Parish.

As we are on the theme of volunteers, Parish Councillors are volunteers and I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank all our Parish Councillors for their support over the last twelve months, and in particular to the following Parish Councillors who have decided to retire from office in May; Councillors Vance Birch, Matt Ewart, Paul Kenyon, Lewis Stovin, Pat Campbell, Elizabeth Forster and Roger Etheridge. The latter two are our longest serving Councillors, serving 20 and 22 years on the Parish Council. We wish you all the best and thank you for your tireless work for the benefit of the community.

Thank you to every one for coming this evening'.

## **5. POLICING IN CODSALL DURING PREVIOUS YEAR**

Sgt Caroline Higgins advised the meeting that she had recently joined the force and would like to take a couple of minutes to advise how the police set their priorities. It is important for residents to report all crime, if we don't know, we then can't deal with it. If we know about particular problems then they can be planned for. Eleven policing teams and a commander will say what trends in crime is happening. If we get lots of crime then we will bring it to a local level. If we know there is a problem within Codsall then we will come up with a plan. The team will roll out a plan on how to deal with the

issue and the Police could bring in other partners to help assist. With these meetings we get a clear picture of what is happening on the ground and we can bring in Specials. Crime is down by 46.2%, anti-social behaviour is also down albeit not in Codsall. Athena Youth Workers can come out on Fridays and Saturdays to specific locations once they know who is causing the problems. The key message is - we have the real opportunity to deal with these problems.

Parish Council meetings and Locality 4 meetings help identify issues. Safer Neighbourhood panels where they can question the police. Sgt Caroline Higgins said that she is impressed by the processes.

Success stories:

Codsall beginning March – theft from sheds – offenders arrested.

Drugs issue – seized 48 cannabis plants. Spate of theft from motor vehicles offender has been arrested.

Anti-social behaviour gets raised here. Flexible working pattern to be able to target when the crime is happening. Codsall has 2½ PCSO in the area – more PCSOs coming through. Local officer attending to the local thefts.

Also dispersal legislation works effectively, two people were recently banned from coming in to South Staffordshire.

The Police have been given extra powers a tool box that can be dipped into.

## **6. THE ANNUAL SUMMARY ON INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR TO THE 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2015.**

**THE ANNUAL SUMMARY ON INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR TO 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2015.**

**The Clerk gave a** brief presentation on the detailed information provided to everyone this evening. The accounts were finalised and approved at the Parish Council meeting of the 8<sup>th</sup> April.

Acceptance of the Income & Expenditure presented this evening, approval proposed by Councillor Etheridge, seconded by Councillor Marshall and unanimously approved by the meeting.

## **7. VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

A report given by Pam Allen.

Looking back over the Golden Anniversary year, Pam Allan said that she had thought she could deliver a report which was entirely positive. However, that would not be a true reflection of 2014 because of changes in staffing.

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations had begun with a memorable Exhibition. Other highlights included Codsall Dramatic Society's Murder Mystery Evening, the Jackfield Band concert and the County Archive Roadshow. The net fund-raising income was £3012, compared to £1102 in the previous year.

In January CVHMC employed two members of staff, but by April it had four, consisting of three cleaner/caretakers who covered most of the early starts and late finishes, and the Booking Clerk, who also did some caretaking and prepared the rotas. This had overcome a lot of previous problems.

In March it was decided to take a lot of the work from Jill Hayward, CVHMC treasurer, by paying someone to do the payroll and the daily book-keeping.

By June, £22,000 had been spent on security measures, of which £6200 had come from grants in 2014. During the year, 3 ramps had been constructed, fencing installed across the end of Gorsty Hayes, a steel door put on the cellar of the bar, and an automatic sliding door across the main entrance. This enhanced the presentation of the building and was felt to be worth every penny of the £6500 it cost.

Pam acknowledged the support of SSCVA in the management's success with grant applications.

In January 2010 there was £1200 in the bank; in January 2015 there was £34,000, a change attributable only to Jill. The net movement of funds for 2014 showed a surplus of £1200 for the year compared to a loss of £2800 for 2013.

Lettings were down by £3000 in 2014 compared to 2013, but overall expenditure also reduced.

The Charity Commission's recommendation is for reserves equal to six months running costs to be maintained. For CVH this is £30,000, but £26,000 is currently on deposit.

One member of the Committee had resigned during the year, and Pam was hoping to recruit someone to take on her role.

The Committee had agreed that it should seek to become a Company Limited by Guarantee in order to protect its Trustees. A long search for a solicitor to do this transfer had resulted in finding Mr Philip Chapman. To do this a cost of £2500 was anticipated.

Pam thanked Chris Greaves, the Chairman, and his son Luke, who, as well as being on the committee saved CVHMC a lot of money by carrying out repairs, and all the other dedicated members, particularly Megan.

The Committee was grateful to its staff, its hirers and especially Codsall Parish Council for its continuing support, both financial and advisory.

Pam Allan (Secretary, for and on behalf of Codsall Village Hall Management Committee)

**8. PRESENTATION OF PAROCHIAL CHARITIES ACCOUNTS**

Accounts for year-end 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 were received and presented.

**9. PRESENTATIONS FROM INVITED ORGANISATIONS**

**First Responders – Matt Jevons**

First Responders are a group of volunteers who respond to 999 medical emergency calls – prior to arrival of ambulance, the first few minutes are essential in serious illness. We cover Codsall down to Kinver. Our vehicles carry all that is required, including oxygen and a defibrillator. Volunteers receive regular training. We are a registered charity, registered in 2005, the group started in 2003. Reliable Volunteers are essential and we rely on donations as no government funding is received. Most adults can be saved from early intervention two minute response time is vital, a 36 male in cardiac arrest used the defibrillation which saved him within the key 8 minutes, ambulance arrived in 9 minutes, he had a rare heart condition. Volunteering covered 1000 hours in 3 months.

The Defibrillator and all on board medical supplies have to be bought by the First Responders, this is in addition to all vehicles cost and the ever increasing cost of petrol.

Matt Jevons advised that he has attended four cardiac cases in the last twelve months. It helps the relatives knowing that they had an early response time.

All their funding comes from the public donations none from Government.

**Codsall Station Preservation Society – David Johnson**

Year 13/14 the waiting room was revamped taking the plaster off the wall. Money has been ring fenced to replace window frames and doors as moisture is getting in and they have to keep the heating on. Heating is paid by Network rail.

Mr Johnson thanked the Parish Council for its continued support.

**St Nicholas Church PCC - Graveyard**

Roger Marsh – in the Church Yard continued twice a year regular clear up and tidy of graves and removal of material not in regulations. The grass was cut 14 times, mole issues therefore they have to control the moles. Lay hedges 4,000.00 left handed hedges. New notice board on Mill Lane has been ordered. Problems with trees within the graveyard. Continual work to the hedge.

New extension – field below has been let at a minimum rent. Keeping the land to a reasonable standard keeps the land ours. Will be available to extend the graveyard once the current extension has been filled.

Last 12 months 46 burials similar to last year. Pretty much filled the old grave yard. Extension being moved. Regulations altered need to comply with.

Colour of writing look to maintain the existing format which includes Bilbrook.

The costs to maintain the graveyard varies from year to year, this year £8,000 but it can be a lot higher, issues with walls can be a problem and expensive.

### **Arts Festival**

Recent events - displays 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Archive roadshow that was a great event, more people came it was a large attendance, filled the Village Hall it was good to see if we are cleaner than our ancestors. We asked for photographs and share them with Shugborough, the Arts Festival has had a successful year.

### **Codsall Community Group**

Volunteers have put in nature boxes, homes for nature as well as removal of barbed wire fence on Oaken Drive Field. The group is looking to raising money for a multi - use games arena to be located at the Village Hall playing Fields.

### **Codsall and Bilbrook Twinning Association - Brian Charnley**

It is crucial for our excursions that we hold social events to raise money such as skittles evenings, supporting the carnival and the arts festival and a French evening. We took a coach party of Codsall residents to France.

In two weeks' time the French are coming to Codsall – it takes 2 years to fund the visit.

We wish to thank Codsall Middle School and the Parish Council for continued support.

The group is looking for families to join the association.

### **Bilbrook and Codsall Work Club: Report from Cllr Mrs Val Chapman, Trustee of the Work Club and Team Leader**

Bilbrook & Codsall Work Club has been running now for 4 years. The emphasis on how the South Staffordshire Work Clubs originally started and where they are now has changed and we are a tremendous support to communities right across South Staffordshire.

This Work Club currently runs on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month and is located at Codsall Library. The Bilbrook & Codsall Work Club is by far the busiest Work Club amongst the 10 Work Clubs across South Staffordshire. The average number of clients through the door is around 18 and, if this high number of attendees continues, we will consider running on a weekly basis. Funding has been secured until March 2016 for our Careers Coach, Brian Morris, which means we can look at extending the Bilbrook & Codsall Work Club to weekly due to the high attendance.

Laptops are required for Bilbrook & Codsall Work Club: Following presentations, I have received £500 from Codsall Parish Council and £500

Bilbrook Parish Council towards laptops for our Work Club as well as an SSDC Member Grant from Cllr Marshall of £500.

The donations are a tremendous boost to Bilbrook & Codsall Work Club and enables us to buy our own equipment, which will be kept on SSDC premises.

South Staffs Work Clubs – Overview:

Over the last 6 months, 281 residents have attended the South Staffordshire Work Clubs:

80% receiving benefit support,

46% IT support

43% advice on volunteering

44% careers advice

52% budgeting advice

47% debt advice

14% support in all areas

The Department of Work and Pensions invited South Staffordshire Council to be one of only 11 Local Authority partnerships in England, Scotland and Wales to take part in a trial to develop Local Support Services for working age people moving onto **Universal Credit**. The trial began in September 2014 and will run until September 2015, aiming to show that investment in local services to support those who need it, helps transform their lives and is value for money.

The outcomes for local working age people in receipt of “out of work” benefits will be:

- Improved financial responsibility – leading to more people being able to manage a standard monthly budget;
- Improved digital inclusion – helping people to get on line and become more confident using digital technology, both to seek work and to manage their Universal Credit claim; and
- Work readiness – removing barriers, both real and perceived, to help people get back to work.

The results of the bidding procedure were announced at the LGA Conference. SSDC submitted a successful joint bid with Job Centre Plus, supported by South Staffordshire Housing Association, South Staffordshire Citizens Advice Bureau, The Work Clubs, voluntary organisations and other partners. Our success is largely down to the excellent partnership work already underway in the localities and in our district Work Clubs – a point that was noted by the DWP selection panel.



### **County Councillor Report by Cllr Marshall**

Highways in Codsall - Divisional Highway meeting – station parking remains a problem. Restrictions will be imposed on Fairfield estate between 11.00 – 11.30 weekdays which will help reduce commuter parking in Fairfield estate. Christmas fair – Mark Keeling will provide an email stating that the roads can be closed off.

Heath House Lanes number of heavy vehicles travelling along the road – traffic enforcement is difficult. A police exercise to stop heavy goods vehicles and ask if they are going into Codsall. This should hopefully reduce the numbers using the road as a cut through.

Arps Road and Loveridge Close is in the list of pavements to be repaired – in 2016.

Codsall Community fun run was a great success.

Codsall Wood reduced speed limit will come into effect next week.

Strawmoor Lane corner turn in to Oaken Lane – a few accidents due to a few cars who misjudge the turn. Official report says the road is not defective.

Birches Road – police will be monitoring the road for speed.

### **10. PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

Resident Jill Gollins expressed her favourable comments regarding work that has been done to the Wheel Field describing the improvements that the paths have made for her and other dog walkers. She estimated that two or three times as many people now use the field, and have seen people having picnics there a massive asset for the village.

Mrs Gollins then said that she was apprehensive at first regarding the improvements but I go to the field between 10-11.30 at night and I have never felt threatened or at risk.

Resident Stephen Skinner asked why the footpath survey was not done although included in the Parish Plan - pavements around the Wheel Estate are very poor.

Advised that he went to every parish meeting in 2014. Mr Skinner raised a query regarding a bank reconciliation.

### **NEXT ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016**