

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting
held on Wednesday 22nd April 2015 at 7:00pm in
Bishopton Village Hall

Present: Lindley MacMahon, Maureen Moses, Ian Robins, Angeline Keightley, Sheila O'Neill, Irene Williams, Pru Wilks, Jayne Robins, Colin Headlam
Cllr. B. Jones [Darlington Borough Council], D. Thorman – Parish Clerk

1. Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report:

The Parish Council [PC] Chairman, Cllr. L. MacMahon, read through her report and handed out copies to attendees. The report is available from any Councillor, and is displayed in the village notice board and on the village website.

2. Parish Council Financial Report:

The Parish Clerk handed out copies of an Annual Income & Expenditure Account [also available for all residents] and talked through its content.

3. Topics to be covered:

3.1 Traffic Calming.

It was noted that the PC's speed monitoring sign indicated that some 10% of traffic in the village exceeded the 30mph speed limit albeit usually by not very much as parked vehicles, although sometimes a problem, tended to deter excessive speed. However, in view of continued concern expressed by some residents, an approach had been made to Darlington Borough Council [DBC] asking if a 20mph speed restriction, or some form of traffic calming scheme could be introduced. A reply had been received that, as the village carried relatively light traffic and there was no history of injury accidents, consideration to such schemes could not be given.

It was reported that, since the introduction of parking restrictions adjacent to the village school, some parents were utilising verges on Mill Lane for parking causing extensive damage. It was queried whether these areas could be converted into parking bays and Cllr. Jones agreed to raise this with DBC.

3.2 Communication with Residents via Email

As part of the PC's wish to improve communications with residents a recent flyer had asked people to provide email addresses with some 17 positive responses to date.

It was noted that at times information was provide to the PC Clerk which might be if interest to residents but could not easily be communicated by the traditional means of flyers, notice boards, the website and the Parish Magazine.

3.3 Work carried out on Village Green [VG] Access Roads and other Improvements.

It was reported that the PC had arranged for major resurfacing work to Village Green access roads as well as a number of minor safety works to paths and steps. This had been supported by a loan from the Public Works Loans Board to be repaid over a four year period at a very low interest rate.

The following issues regarding the VG were discussed.

- Lack of a continuous footpath on east side of High Street behind St. Peter's Church.
It was explained that the section in question is VG and it was therefore illegal to change its character.
- Use of edge stones on VG.
It was explained that the PC had authority to place such stones to deter illegal parking.
- Cenotaph and Village Cross cleaning.
It was explained that the PC was responsible for this which could be arranged via the War Memorials Trust.
- Cenotaph area fencing.

The existing timber fencing was in poor condition and the PC was in the process of arranging its replacement using solid plastic timber effect black posts with white chains. Unfortunately the PC had been unable to source white plastic posts of sufficient robustness.

- Wreaths at Cenotaph
Following an earlier request these were now wired to the Cenotaph to prevent them blowing away.
- Bus Shelter.
This was in need of cleaning out and there had been some damage. IT was agreed that this would be looked at during the parish litter picking operations.
- Storage of Wheelie Bins at property frontages.
It was explained that the PC could only take action on this in cases where the bin was being stored on the registered VG.
- Timing of annual parish litter pick.
It was noted that this coincided with a family service at the church. PC representatives agreed to ensure that such clashes were avoided in future.

3.4 Increased Parish Council income from Wayleaves

It was reported that, following protracted negotiation with utility companies, there had been significant increases in one off and annual payments to the PC.

3.5 Developments on Bus Services.

Concern was expressed regarding the bus service into Darlington in that it provided only limited time in the centre before the return journey was necessary.

The lack of a bus service to Stillington and Stockton was of particular concern. It was reported that, in partnership with the adjacent parish councils within Stockton's boundaries, negotiations to divert the Leven Valley Coaches service via Bishopton had been at an advanced stage when the company had suddenly gone into liquidation. Stockton BC had since arranged for Staged Carriage to take over the route the joint parishes group were in the process of approaching them to see if they would consider rerouting their service.

3.5 Shortage of Parish Councillors

It was reported that only 4 nominations had been submitted to DBC out of a total of 7 possible councillors meaning that a PC election would not be necessary. The PC had 35 working days from Thursday 7th May in which to co-opt additional members and volunteers were urged to come forward.

4. Topics raised by Public [Visitors]: None.

5. Next Meeting: To be arranged.