

COLLINGBOURNE DUCIS PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT
COLLINGBOURNE SCHOOL
ON THURSDAY 12 MAY 2011 AT 7.00 PM**

Present: Cllr M Cox (Chairman), Cllr A Jones, G Chandler, Cllr P Risborough, N Williams, PCSO P Royston Mr R Carter, Mr J Dowsett, Mrs A Cox, one member of the public and Mr P Gill (Clerk)

Apologies for absence: Wilts Cllr C Howard

1. Annual Report of the Parish Council.

Cllr Mike Cox, Chair, presented the following report:

The current Council was elected during May 2007. Since then, there have been a number of movements – all for good reasons such as jobs, health or re-location. There are currently two vacancies. Last year the Council agreed to reduce the number of regular meetings and this has been successful. Both the workload on councillors and the clerk have been reduced and resulted in a useful saving. Two short extra meetings have been called during the year – one concerning the Royal Wedding and one weed control on the recreation ground. As a result of the Royal Wedding meeting, the Council was pleased to have been able to support providing commemorative mugs to the children at Collingbourne School. Planning and development in the village continues to be a major item on Parish Council agendas, though possibly as a result of recession there have been no major developments proposed recently – agenda items have instead tended to be minor developments or tree work. Speeding continues to be an issue through the village, particularly during the late evening. The Parish Council has supported the formation of a SpeedWatch group which now covers both Collingbournes and has successfully been operating for two months. There has been good take-up on 30mph stickers from the parish clerk for sticking to wheelie bins – these are still available from the clerk for a small charge. There is a continuing demand from parish parents to further improve the play facilities on the recreation ground by the addition of swings and a slide. The Council has made some provision towards this in the coming year, though in the present financial climate this is not likely to be easily achieved. The recreation ground again demonstrated its full potential during last September's Village Show for which the council was also pleased to also sponsor the climbing wall for young (and young at heart) people. The show was a huge success and the organisers are to be congratulated. During the past year, the Council re-let contracts both for village grass cutting and for litter picking on the land it owns. Both achieved significant savings and contributed to keeping the increase in household parish precept down to about 0.5% while maintaining reserves at a prudent level. The last winter took its toll on the highways and footpaths in the village and some of these are now in a poor state. Wiltshire Councillor Charles Howard is lobbying hard on our behalf to get something done about them, with some success. He expects most of the work to repair roads and footpaths to be completed in the current calendar year. The provision of grit bins was an issue and, after a bit of an uphill battle, the grit bin which used to be at the entrance to Sunton has now been replaced. As reported last year, the Council co-operated with the Church to connect mains water and drainage to St. Andrews for the first time in over 800 years. This major project was finished in January 2011 with the practical completion of the toilet and the Council is pleased to have been able to help with grant aid for that project. The Church is to be congratulated on the new build fitting in so well with the ancient church. Thanks to the help of Wilts Councillor Charles Howard, the play areas in Saunders Meadow are now out of the hands of the developers and have been transferred to public ownership of Wiltshire Council. They have been offered to the Parish Council but on

terms that included the transfer of costs and liabilities but which did not include any transfer of budget, so they are likely to remain with Wiltshire Council. In summary, this has been a year of consolidation for the council, but there were still some significant developments for the parish.

There were no questions from those present.

2. Summary of the Council's financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2010.

The Clerk presented the following summary:

The Parish Council's finances were approximately £1,000 higher than last year which was mainly due to an increase in burial fees and the early termination of the litter contract. The total expenditure was £21,706 against budget of £22,291; income was £22,714 against budget of £21,008 the end result was an operating surplus of £1,008. Furthermore, reserves now stand at £9,821 against £8,813 for FY 09/10 which the Parish Council considers to be acceptable and in line with a Precept of £16,500.

As part of good financial housekeeping the fees for the Burial and Recreation Grounds have been revised upwards to take account of the actual running costs and as the result of competitive tender the cost of the Grass Cutting and Litter Picking Contracts have been reduced.

There were no questions from those present.

3. Headteacher's Report from Collingbourne C E Primary School.

In the absence of Mr Jeff Mason, Headteacher, no report was offered.

4. Report from Wiltshire Cllr C Howard.

Cllr Howard presented a written report a digest of which follows:

Great progress has been made during the twelve months to implement the changes which were planned when the Council became a unitary Authority in 2009. A major part of these changes concern concentrating the Council's main offices at four 'hubs' located at Trowbridge, Devizes, Salisbury and Chippenham with the workforce working much more flexibly, with many working from home and their cars, using new communications technology. It is anticipated that the savings generated by these changes will be substantial in the medium to long term. The Council has been obliged to make cuts in expenditure of £44 million over the two years 2010/11 and 2011/12. This has resulted in 240 staff leaving the Council last year and about a further 170 to leave this year. These redundancies are painful but necessary, but much less than neighbouring counties. The main reason for this is the efficiencies achieved following the change to a unitary Council. Despite these cuts, the Council is increasing spending on vulnerable and old people, and is carrying out improvements to waste collection and recycling arrangements and increasing expenditure on our leisure facilities and maintenance of the roads. All round, it has been a difficult but successful year, but much still remains to be done. Speaking personally, I continue to carry out important work as the vice-chairman of the Wiltshire Pension Fund, and am now the chairman of the Eastern Area Planning Committee at Devizes. The Collingbourne Youth Group has been established at the school, and has proved to be a popular success. I have been involved in the setting up of this group, and the provision of a grant from the Tidworth Area Board. I have also been involved in the obtaining of Area Board grants for the Church and the Cricket Club. I have been involved in representing the Parish Council's interests over planning applications and enforcement, the replacement of waste bins, the provision of dropped kerbs in Tidworth Road, the replacement of the grit bin at Sunton, road repairs and other matters. Finally, work on the de-priming of the A338 continues. The current position is that we now await the result of a Department for Transport consultation under which responsibility for deciding on which roads should form part of the National Primary Route Network may transfer to County Councils. If this happens, the A338 Working Group will be mounting a vigorous new campaign to persuade Wiltshire Council to de-prime the road between

Salisbury and Swindon, after which it is believed that this should lead to a significant reduction in through HGV traffic. The results of the consultation are expected to be published in the autumn.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Howard for his help and support to the village.

5. Report from Wiltshire Constabulary.

PSCO P Royston provided a report a digest of which follows:

On 4 April the internal structure of our Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT's) changed. Although the change has not affected the local service that we offer at beat level it has resulted in the number of NPT's reducing from 76 to 27 and therefore reducing some of the bureaucracy and allowing more time to be spent on their areas. This change coincides with the upgrading of our Force NPT computer system and in conjunction with new working practices should ensure more flexibility and more efficient working practices. It is pleasing to see that there has been an overall reduction in most categories of crime with the exception of dwelling house burglaries which has seen a slight increase from 12 to 14 reported crimes. However, overall there has been a 2.2 % reduction in crime or 14 fewer victims of crime compared to the same period last year. The local Neighbourhood teams have continued to focus on Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and have run numerous joint operations to try and deal with local issues on the streets. It is clear that ASB has links to alcohol and the use of drugs and the teams will focus on these areas. We continue to develop intelligence on local drug dealers and several warrants under the Misuse of Drugs Act have been executed in the past 3 months. Last year we experienced a slight rise in domestic burglaries in early spring and summer and this was mainly due to residents leaving their premises insecure. Finally there are two areas where the community can help; Report any suspicious activity to police as soon as possible. Always close and lock all windows and doors when you are not in the room, especially when leaving the house or in the garden. Double-check that doors and windows are locked at night before you go to bed. Please do all that you can to stop thieves targeting your homes - Prevention is always better than cure!

PCSO Royston then answered questions after which the Chairman thanked her for her report.

6. Report from the Collingbournes & Everleigh Link Scheme.

Mr R Carter presented a report a digest of which follows:

Our activity over the past year has been very similar to that of last year and we have carried out just under 300 tasks most of them being transport related with just under 200 being medical journeys. The remainder have been shopping trips and home visits. We have 30 volunteers in the Scheme. Our Co-ordinator Dick Edwards (aka 'Mr Vicar) stood down at our Annual General Meeting in March and we have recently managed to find two volunteers to fill this important role. Members of the Committee are also heavily committed in other voluntary work and over half of the number are volunteer drivers. There have been difficulties on the financial front where we have suffered deficits of over £500 in each of the past two years and have not received grants from Community First for these years as we did not qualify owing to balances held when funding decision were made. The situation was been slightly eased by generous support from both of the Collingbourne Parish Councils and a donation from the Ducis and Everleigh Show. Additionally surplus funds were transferred from Chute LINK when they ceased operating as a separate unit at the end of 2009.

The Chairman thanked Mr Carter for the report.

8. Report and Statement of Accounts from Collingbourne Ducis Village Hall Trust.

Mr Dowsett presented the following statement of accounts:

Running income and expenditure – provisional figures.

Income from running ie lettings:	£ 8,872
Income from draw (net), other unrestricted donations, interest:	<u>£ 1,660</u>
Total running income	£10,532
Expenditure normal running	<u>£ 7,892</u>
Cash surplus 10/11 on normal running	£ 2,640
Special income – grants for major works	£ 7,500
Special expenditure – major works	<u>£ 7,051</u>
Cash surplus 10/11 on major works so far (see note below)	£ 449
Total cash income minus total cash expenditure	£ 3,089

Cash in Bank Accounts as at 31st March 2011

Current:	£11,795
Tennis:	£ 212
Savings: Building Loan Repayment Fund	£11,262
Savings: General reserve fund	<u>£ 4,965</u>
Total	£28,234

Mr Dowsett then answered questions after the Chairman thanked Mr Dowsett for the report.

9. Report from the Parochial Church Council.

Mrs Cox presented a report a digest of which follows:

St Andrew's Parochial Church Council would like to thank Collingbourne Ducis Parish Council for the generous grant they gave to the church for their toilet extension project. It is now finished and we are delighted with this new facility. We have had many complimentary comments made by those attending concerts, meetings and funerals about the toilet facilities and particularly complimentary were those who were disabled. The whole project which included the tea bench and toilet facilities are a great asset to the church which widens the scope of opportunities for alternative usage of the church such as the flower festival and Russian choir concert for later this month.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Cox for the report.

11. Written Resolutions.

There being no resolutions to consider the Chairman thanked all the speakers.

The meeting closed at 19.25pm.