

COLLINGBOURNE DUCIS PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT COLLINGBOURNE DUCIS VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 12 MAY 2005 AT 7.00 PM

Present: Cllr P Shields (Chairman)

Cllrs Bale, Carter, Cogdell, Cox, Price, Still, J C Robinson, J W Robinson, and Stone,
Mr M Basinger, Sgt M Woods, PC M Eburne, Mrs L Rogers, Mr J Dowsett
and two members of the public.

Apologies for absence: Cllr Molyneux-Downs, County Cllr Robert Hall, Dr Barbara King.

1. Annual Report of the Parish Council.

The Chairman said that the past year has been a momentous one for the village with the re-opening of the village hall and the move of the school to its new premises. The Parish Council contributed to the fundraising for the essential works on the hall and commends the work of the Village Hall Trustees in achieving their target and carrying out the essential rebuilding and other improvements.

The recreation ground suffered considerable damage in early 2004 resulting in the construction of the bank at the car park end and barriers at both entrances. Regrettably, acts of vandalism continue and dog fouling has also been a problem though this appears to have lessened in the past couple of months.

Much flood alleviation work was carried out in the summer and autumn by both Kennet District Council and the Parish Council, the irony being that the Bourne did not rise at all this winter! However clearing the ditch alongside the Great Mere did highlight the fact that the area could provide a possible amenity for the community. The Council will be assisting the recently formed Conservation Group in their efforts to improve the Mere.

Following the school move the Parish Council is in the process of re-establishing the land on which the old mobile classrooms stood as part of the Burial Ground. Wiltshire County Council will be reinstating the land but the Parish will incur considerable costs in re-fencing and blending the two parts together. However the resultant area will provide the village with sufficient burial capacity for many years to come.

Parish Councillors are serving on various groups in the Tidworth Community Area for the benefit of the Parish but with Tidworth now getting town status this is likely to become ever more difficult. The Chairman welcomed the fact that the Knapp Close Play Area Group is now close to reaching its objective and said the Council will be working to resolve play area issues elsewhere in the village.

Finally, the Council has tried during the past year to adhere to the principles established in the Village Design Statement, Village Conservation Area statement and the Kennet Local and Wiltshire Structure Plans in matters of planning, namely that there should generally be no developments of more than 10 dwellings. The current spate of applications is therefore of major concern as our village infrastructure cannot maintain such a dramatic increase in housing numbers without destroying the character of the community and increasing the existing traffic and parking problems.

The Chairman then answered questions from those present.

2. Summary of the Council's financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2005.

Cllr J W Robinson said he anticipated that the un-audited annual statement of accounts will be available for approval by the Parish Council at the July meeting.

The Parish Council set a precept of £14,000 for the year ended 31 March 2005, there was additional forecast income of £4,486. Forecast expenditure was £17,046.

Actual income was £21,231. The major additional items contributing to the increase over forecast were £2,000 grant to the Knapp Close play area, £348 interest, £580 burials and £170 from the school for additional rent of the mobile classrooms.

Actual expenditure was £20,436. The major additional item contributing to the increase was £5,000 to the Village Hall Trust towards the refurbishment. Savings were made in Councillors' expenses, election costs and the contingency fund was not used.

Reserves at the end of the financial year were £17,384. This has been allocated to the Knapp Close play area refurbishment (£5,141) burial ground refurbishment (£2,000) and recreation ground play area repairs (£3,000).

3. Governors' Report from Collingbourne C E Primary School.

Mr Mark Basinger, Vice-Chair of Governors said that the notable events during the past school year were the move from the old site to the new school last autumn, the appointment of the new headteacher and the Ofsted inspection which had resulted in a good report. There are 104 children on role at present which means no class size is greater than 30 with 5 full-time members of staff incorporating a lot of young and very enthusiastic teachers.

Mr Basinger touched on the problem of unidentified cars in the school car park at night and said that this issue had been resolved by adjusting the street lights to turn off at 9.00 pm. They were considering erecting a gate across the school entrance but there was no money left in the County Council's budget to cover this at present. As the street lighting is on the school's circuit it is therefore charged to the school. Any suggestions as to how to address this problem would be welcome.

Mr Basinger then answered questions from those present.

4. Report from Wiltshire County Councillor.

The Parish is no longer in the Tidworth and Ludgershall Division following boundary changes. It is now one of 17 parishes in the Great Bedwyn and Collingbournes ward. Our new County Councillor Robert Hall offered his apologies as he was unable to attend the meeting.

County Councillor Mark Connolly sent a written report in which he said that he will still have a connection with Collingbourne Ducis in his role as Tidworth Community Area Partnership lead on the transport element of the Area Plan. The transport group has undertaken two surveys in recent months to put together a list of schemes that have been prioritised by the Community Area Partnership. It is hoped that this will gain funding from the County Council's Local Transport Plan allocations from Central Government or other streams of funding through the Tidworth Development Trust. Schemes included within the list from this parish include the dual use footpath/cycle path between the villages, a footpath in Cadley Road and lighting for the footpath from the A338 to Gilberts Piece.

Councillor Connolly wrote of the fund raising and committee work in which he and a lot of people from the village were involved and which had made the new school a reality. The crossing patrol has been moved to the crossroads to help children get to the school. Whilst he appreciated that some people would prefer a more formal crossing, engineers have said that this is not a viable option on safety grounds to both pedestrians and other road users.

Finally County Councillor Connolly wrote that it had been a honour to represent the Collingbournes at County Hall over the last 12 years and hoped that the parish felt he had represented it well over that period.

5. Report from Kennet District Cllr A Still.

District Cllr Still said that Kennet District Council's target is to raise re-cycling to 31%. Green waste bins will not be supplied to this Parish this year as the response has not been sufficient to justify the van going out.

The rates have been capped down to 5% for the second year running, therefore once again money has been taken out of reserves. Kennet District Council has solved its pension problem by paying off the arrears.

The £3.6 million in Revenue Reserves which has been used by the council has now almost gone.

If the proposed developments in Saxon Rise and Bourne Works receive planning consent up to £80,000 will be designated for community funding the bulk of which will be available to this Parish. The developers will spend it on recreational facilities within the village with the help of the parish council. If granted planning permission these developments would set a precedent. Local planning guidelines state that this parish is "suitable for small developments" (up to 10 dwellings). Such large developments put a great strain on existing services and infrastructure.

Cllr Still then answered questions from those present.

6. Report from Wiltshire Constabulary.

Sgt Mick Woods introduced PC Mark Eburne who, together with PC Mark Randle and PC Graham Wilkins cover the area. He reported that the crime figures for the parish are very good over the past year. Statistics show that crime is down in the Collingbournes, Everleigh and the Chutes in every area across the board, with a dramatic reduction in the Collingbournes. There were twelve reported incidents of criminal damage across the whole area.

Nonetheless there is evidence of some anti-social behaviour though criminal damage is done by a very small proportion of the community – one or two individuals. Sgt Woods assured the meeting that if anyone is caught there is now a structured way of dealing with very young offenders. Anti-social Behaviour Orders will be used if there is sufficient need in the area. Sgt Woods then answered questions from those present.

7. Statement of Accounts from the Village Hall Trust.

Mrs Lindie Rogers reported that twelve months ago the village hall was very forlorn but now this meeting was taking place in it. She welcomed everyone to the newly refurbished hall and described its facilities. The Management Committee is now working to raise funds to refurbish the tennis court which is coming to the end of its ten-year life. Also to install CCTV for that area.

Mr John Dowsett gave details of the accounts for the current financial year from July 2004 to the present. This had been a strange time. The hall re-opened in November 2004 and he pointed out that it had therefore had only two-thirds of the year's income but nearly the whole year's expenditure. Without depreciation or putting anything aside the financial situation is quite healthy with capital of around £7,000 left from the funds raised for building and repair work still to be allocated.

Mrs Rogers and Mr Dowsett then answered questions from those present.

8. Written Resolutions.

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

The meeting closed at 8.08 pm.