

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of Stanford in the Vale held on Wednesday 6th April 2011 in the Millennium Hall Stanford in the Vale

Present: P.G.McMorrow(Chair) G.Hughes P.Gill Mrs G.McMorrow
1 Parishioner R.Sharp(District Councillor) D.M.Dew (Clerk)

1. Apologies:

S.Bambury M.Isaacs M.Vallis M.Tilley(County Councillor)
Thames Valley Police

2. Thames Valley Police Report

In their absence the clerk read the provided report:

Overall in the LPA we have reduced overall crime across the Vale of White Horse by 17% this has led to 998 fewer victims of crime in a year.

We have reduced burglary by 7% with a detection rate of 25% - the highest in the force.

Robbery has been reduced by 8% with a detection rate of 27% - the highest in the force

Assaults have been reduced by 24% with a detection rate of 36% - the highest in the force

Theft from motor vehicles has been reduced by 13% with a detection rate of 6.4% - the 2nd highest in the force

Criminal damage has been reduced by 25% with a detection rate of 16.7% - the highest in the force

Theft of motor vehicles has been reduced by 32%

Anti social behaviour incidents have been reduced by 24%

Whilst these levels of performance are a source of immense pride for us all, we have also put in some good work across the LPA this year in order to improve the quality of life within the Vale. Initiatives such as , the delivery of food during the snow, the Vera project and the delivery of Christmas hampers.OP migrate, Tilsley Park football, support for the street Pastors and the support for to youth clubs, to name but a few.

3. Finance Report

The Parish Clerk and Finance Office reports on year end finances. I am delighted to report that at last after many years the Council accounts are now fully audited. This has taken many hours of hard investigative work and my very grateful thanks go to Ms Cheryl White for her outstanding dedication, hard work , support and extreme knowledge in bringing about this successful conclusion.

Once again the interest rates have hit the Council reserves, and there was the loss of the Street Cleaning Grant although there was a slight increase in the grass cutting grant. Salaries and wages saw an increase of £1500 although this was offset by a reduction of 30% in mowing and maintenance costs largely due to the new larger mower.In line with government policy and with staff approval there will be no increase in salaries for the coming year. The government has just ruled that in future Parish Clerks can no longer be classed as “self-employed” and as such all councils have to register as employers and deduct PAYE. Not only does this make more work and recording for the clerk but also involves the council paying employers National Insurance (rough calculation £2000 pa). despite this the council budget calculations saw a precept set at £50 below the previous year.The completion of the Pre-school playgroup building has resulted in the lease for the building producing £1000 pa but the expired lease for the Football Club resulted in many problems both in time and expense. Following the

Club's refusal to sign a new lease due to their disagreement with the new rental, the council were forced to obtain a government valuation and take legal advice at a combined cost of £3600 (£1.80 per head of population) money which could have been used on other village projects and for a lease which was eventually agreed as per originally requested by council. Despite being refused grant funding by WREN for additional floodlighting for youth/ladies football, thanks to the efforts of the Council Chairman and Cllr Isaacs, replacement funding has been found through Hills at Bowling Green quarry and the PPC. This leaves a shortfall of about £2000 but the council is fully committed to seeing this project through and will cover any shortfall from reserves. Vandalism has become either virtually non-existent or has not involved the council in any expense. As can be seen from the Balance Sheet 2010/2011 there has been a loss from reserves of £7870 although this is not necessarily a bad thing as the external auditors were not happy with the amount being held in reserve although we explained that it was being held for purchase of potential recreation land. Despite the shortfall, the council will this coming year keep the standards of cleanliness and tidiness that it has set in previous years and my thanks to Darren Rolls and Chris Stallard for their efforts in helping to achieve those standards.

4. Recreation and Leisure Report Projects-

We have planning permission to extend our floodlighting on the Recreation Ground to assist training facilities for the Junior and Ladies football. Funding is not fully complete but we hope this will happen very soon.

A sincere thank you to all our sponsors but in particular Trustees of the Village Charity (PPC) for their generous financial support for village projects.

Maintenance

- All grass cutting / strimming /hedge trimming has been well under control.
- Skate Park Ramps have been repainted by a Scout led group which were sponsored by the PC (£250) towards the World Jamboree fund.
- Health and Safety checks on our equipment continue as normal.
- The Play Area next to the Village Hall-repairs have been completed to the safety surface and further repairs to the green carpeting.
- **The timber climbing blocks have been replaced with an exiting and challenging new climbing frame.**
- It would appreciated if dog owners could make sure all dog mess is always collected where ever you are walking- pavements/ grass verges / village footpaths /wayside. It is an offence to leave behind and notices have been placed all around the village by the Dog Warden (Vale District Council). Please don't let it be you who is prosecuted. It seems such a shame that Stanford in the Vale is **still** one of the worst offenders in the Vale.

I also remind the Village of the report from last year below:-

'Finally the application to build a new building for the Preschool Playgroup on part of the Village Hall Play Area has been a difficult issue. The Parish Council have been keen to support this project even though some play area will be lost. We look to work with the Playgroup and Village Hall committees to share and overcome issues and difficulties re access and parking. It has to be an asset for the future for our children and we hope an opportunity with County Council support to increase the amount of recreation land for the Village.'

As you know the new building is in place and we have the opportunity to utilise the large field off Cottage Road into the future. All members of our community will have the chance to be part of that future and need to plan carefully to get the most from this venture.

Any ideas you may want to share to improve or extend our leisure facilities will always be welcomed.

Thank you to all who do many things to care for our village in ensuring our facilities are well used and looked after.

Peter Gill- Chair Leisure and Recreation Committee- April 2011

5. Chairmans Report

Congratulations to all involved with our Community Woodland. The participation from toddlers to senior citizens and all between resulted in an "OSCA" Highly Commended (Oxfordshire Sustainability and Conservation Award). The overnight success took only 14 years from initial discussion to establishment. Thank you Craig Blackwell for not forgetting and to David Rees for his expertise. David will be returning to help us again.

Footpath Improvements including Rights of Way. Good progress is being made and land owners are co-operating with the improved access in the form of kissing gates, and paths are being levelled. OCC and Trust for Oxfordshire are our main benefactors, with the Public Purposes Charity also allocating funds. The pedestrian bridges will be replaced but there is a queue for them.

Pre-School Playgroup Building This beautiful , purpose designed and built structure has been funded by central government via OCC. It has been achieved by a partnership between the Management Committee and the Parish Council with the major input from the mothers and County Councillor Melinda Tilley. Very well done to you all ! Thank you Melinda for the compensation for the land we lost to the building. To gain some 20 acres had already taken 18 years – without your part it may have taken the same again.

Floodlights for the Youth & Ladies Football Teams. We have accepted a tender for 4 new floodlights and the necessary controls. The village charity, the PPC will shortly determine the grant total to be allocated. They had previously set aside £4000 but will be reviewing this figure at their next meeting. Planning permission has been granted and contractors will begin installation following the decision from the PPC. A grant has been awarded by Hills Aggregates via "Community First", an organisation similar to WREN and TOE. Grateful thanks to Hills' personnel and, as always, to the Public Purposes Charity of the village.

Finance The report in the last newsletter regarding the “assets worth one million pounds” being achieved has been rapidly overtaken in this financial year. The Pre-School Playgroup building belongs to the community and is leased exclusively to the Pre-School playgroup for 25 years. Taking that, plus the three other projects mentioned above brings a further £500,000 (half a million) in value to our community assets. We are well on our way to a second million thanks to community effort.

At the January PC meeting the taxation cost of the Council was again reduced for the 13th year in succession. The cost of inflation was again absorbed by the council rather than the taxpayer. We still have financial reserves despite the reductions. Our average expenditure/investment usually exceeds £70,000 pa. 2010-2011 will yield seven times £70,000 in expenditure/investment. Well done all. Staff salaries have again been frozen at the staff’s request – thank you very much on behalf of all. Newcomers to our village may not be aware that our staff have never claimed their full entitlement and still do extra work without recompense. They are also remarkably patient even when dealing with matters not pertinent to PC business. Our parish clerk, Mike Dew, recently spent 45 hours on the familiarisation and implementation of a new accountancy package.

This 12 month period is one of, if not “the” best since 1999. My grateful thanks to you all.
P.G.McMorrow Chairman

6. Report of District Councillor

Councillor Sharp report that he had been checking on position and emptying of the Dog Bins to ensure that new contractors were emptying and knew sites.

Vale wide street cleaning was being carried out and urged parishioners and council to contact him if this was not being done on a regular basis.

7. Parishioners questions

What was the future of the recreation ground (Cottage Road) was it to be sold for housing especially as the 20 acre field opposite was marked for recreational use.?

Chairman replied that it had never been discussed as a site for housing and the rumour always seemed to arise when the Football Club lease was due for renewal. It was the stated policy of this council that they would oppose any plans for more housing in this village. Further, this and previous councils had for years looked for land to increase the recreation facilities in the village and the last thing that would be planned was to let some of the existing go for housing.

What can be done about the dog mess and dogs roaming free ?

This can only be dealt with by the District Council Dog Warden. He will need as much information as can be given regarding owner , type of dog and date/time of incident. There are heavy fines if cases can be proved.

Car Parking

Again very little the PC can do it is a police matter. The police have started to “book” people who park on pavements and cause an obstruction but it is thought that the “better off the road” policy is still used

There being no more questions the Chairman thanked those in attendance and the meeting closed at 8.30pm

