

# **ABBOTS MORTON PARISH.**

## **Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2004 at 7.15pm.**

**Present:** Mrs M Brewster (Chairman), Mrs N Holland (Clerk), Mr Patrick White (Rights of Way Officer), Mr T Brewster (Parochial Church Council), Mr C Burton (Residents Association), Mr D Richings (Neighbourhood Watch), Mrs S Dykes (Village Hall Committee), Mrs E Tucker (County Councillor), Mr D Lee and Mrs A Steel (District Councillors), and PC J Watts.

**Parishioners present** – Mrs I Holt, Mr M Izzo, Mrs J Izzo, Mrs R Jones, Mr M Smith, Mr D Humphries, Mrs C Humphries, Mrs Kennedy, Mrs P Ansell, Mr M Brookes, Mrs D Brookes, Mrs V Duck, Mr K Barclay, Mrs S Muscott, Mr G Barker and Mrs J Barker.

**Apologies:** Colin Turner.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2003 were agreed as a true and accurate record and duly signed.

**Proposed: D. Richings. Seconded: D. Humphries.**

The minutes of the Parish meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2003 were also agreed as a true and accurate record and signed.

**Proposed: C. Burton. Seconded: D. Richings.**

The minutes of the Public meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2004 were also agreed as a true and accurate record and signed.

**Proposed: D. Richings. Seconded: T. Brewster.**

**Matters arising:** Nil.

### **District Councillor Audrey Steel.**

**Boundary Inquiry** – it would be several months before the outcome of the inquiry would be known. Cllr. Steel had spoken at the meeting and asked if the constituency changed could it be known as East Worcestershire.

**Local Plan** – public inquiry was due to start next week.

**Quiet Lanes** - has caused Inkberrow Parish tremendous problems, mainly with workmanship. The Parish has asked Wychavon District Council to scrutinise the Quiet Lanes format. This would be held in Inkberrow sometime in June. Cllr. Steel would inform the Parish Council of the date and urged people to attend and find out how the County Council spends its money.

#### **Questions raised:**

- Do you have to be quiet on Quiet Lanes? No, the actually lanes were not user friendly. The area had been made into a widened rat run with lay bys and rumble strips causing noise to those properties nearest them.

### **Rights of Way Countryside Access Officer Patrick White.**

Patrick explained that his role covered the southeast area of the region to include 70 parishes, with 55 Parish Officers. He had previously worked in private industry and explained how different it was to working in the public sector. He is accountable to the public as using public funds. The following points were dealt with;

- Have to use RCS contractor so any work contracted had to be over £300.
- It is the County Council's statutory duty to erect signposts at a cost of £100.
- His budget is £40,000 per year to cover 1100 Km network. Approximately this works out to £38 per mile for maintenance.
- Health and Safety is a high priority.
- Landowner is responsible for replacing broken bridges, stiles, and gates etc. that are on the Right of Way.
- Rights of Way Officers adhere to the Definitive Statement and Map that gives a written description of what a Right of Way is made up of.
- 2000 Act 'Right to Roam' applies to permanent pasture or common land (Bredon Hill, Malvern Hills). It only relates to upland moor, grassland and mountains above 600metres. There is a programme at present trying to improve a network for less

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abled persons and for all age groups. It is a very fine balancing act, which requires diplomacy.

- Patrick's job is limited by money, time and manpower.
- Cropping – DEFRA is hoping to introduce the Cross compliance scheme to Landowners whereby they will receive land payments to maintain Rights of Way, hedges etc. If they do not comply then the grant will be withdrawn.
- Dog owners – need to remember that when walking Rights of Way they are usually entering a working environment.
- The public are only allowed on the footpath.

## **Questions raised:**

- What is a reasonable access to a Right of Way? It was appreciated that some stiles are awkward to get over so phasing out of the old type stile was going on and being replaced with cross steps and a hand post. The Right of Way cannot be improved unless the Definitive Statement allows it.
- Why use the contractor RCS? The Countryside Access team work in a small department with a very limited budget so they do not get involved with tendering for contractors. Hence their contract is combined with the Highways department.
- Do the Landowners own the land? The Landowner owns the Right of Way but the responsibility for the surface to 2 spits depth is the County Councils. There is no defined width.

The Chairman thanked Patrick for attending. Leaflets were distributed and Patrick left the meeting.

## **PC Watts – Local Beat Officer.**

PC Watts introduced himself; he is based at Pershore Police Station and has only been in the post for three weeks after taking over from PC Cavendish who is retiring this month.

- Appointed as rural beat manager covering 25 villages.
- Low crime rate in the village – three reported crimes from the 1<sup>st</sup> April last year to the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2004.
- Advise with the lighter evenings to keep sheds secure. Always get a good description of vehicles with registration numbers.

## **Questions raised:**

Would PC Watts be checking the Licensing of Firearms? Yes.

There were concerns regarding the 40 mph speed limit on the top road. PC Watts said he was able to get hand held speed guns and would be measuring the speed along the C2010 without giving notice.

**Parish Council - Chairman's Report:** See attached.

## **Questions raised:**

Who would be forming the Steering Group for the Parish Plan? The Committee would be Audrey Dunstone (Parochial Church Council), Sarah Dykes (Village Hall/Parish Council), Mike Smith (Residents Association) and Alistair Carew-Cox.

## **County Councillor Report:**

Worcestershire does not have the Area Cost Adjustment which surrounding counties do have.

- Unclassified roads have been improved during the last financial year. C roads will be concentrated on in the next financial year.
- Geoff Cox was retiring from the Highways Partnership Unit and his post would be taken over by Sally Everest.
- Boundary Committee would be asking for recommendations for the proposed revision of the Council divisions. The proposal for the area for Abbots Morton was to put Inkberrow, Cookhill, the Lenches, Abbots Morton, part of Harvington and the top tip of Evesham into one division. Comments to be received by the 26<sup>th</sup> April 2004. Again it was a number s game to make electoral numbers equal.
- Planning Bill – Government will be amending so as to include County Councils input.

No questions asked.

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**District Councillor Report** - Councillor Lee began by saying that it was a year ago that Cllr. Steel and himself were elected. Over that year Wychavon District Council had achieved the following:

- Audit Inspectors had given a good report.
- 93% of the area was using some form of recycling.
- Neighbourhood Wardens in post.
- Evesham Contact Centre was now open at the old Evesham Police Station.
- Pershore Hospital/Health Centre was progressing.
- Improvements to the parks play areas.
- Community Grant Scheme – funding now available to certain groups.
- Government has withdrawn money from the Disability Grant so Wychavon District Council has to find the deficit.
- It costs £32,000 to distribute and print the TWM magazine and Cllr. Lee asked those present if the magazine was worth it. General consensus was that it was. It was asked if instead of using first class post if it could be delivered to a central point in smaller communities.

**Neighbourhood Watch report:** Given by Mr Richings, Link Co-ordinator, who has been doing the role for the last six years and would therefore like another resident to take on the role. If anyone is interested please contact the Clerk to the Parish Council.

- Nil crime rates.
- Pyramid telephone system was introduced after last year's meeting, about half of the village had joined.
- Due to a large amount of migrant workers in the area a multilingual newsletter was soon to be issued.

**Residents' Association Report:** See attached.

**Village Hall report:** See attached.

**Questions raised:**

- ◆ Was there a list of equipment that could be utilised by the parish? Yes
- ◆ Are there any plans to update the Computer System? The Computer has not been used for several years and is now out of date and in need of an upgrade. The Committee were in the process of contacting the Millennium Commission to see if they gave money for its purchase in the past. It there was a need it could be upgraded but security and health and safety were issues that needed to be addressed. It is a wasted asset at present. Mr Burton said that the IT room at Salford Priors had been sponsored by a local company and it might be worth the Committee having a look at it.
- ◆ Was the Village Hall Newsletter still being delivered to new residents? Yes, at present it was being updated.
- ◆ What cash reserves does the Village Hall have? £4,000.
- ◆ Was the Millennium Beacon still being held in the Village Hall in a reasonable condition? Yes, it was stored in the Village Hall.
- ◆ Was the colour of the outside of the building to remain? Yes.
- ◆ Could someone ensure that the lights were not left on in the building after it had been used? If a problem contact either Sarah Dykes or Angela Waldron.

**Parochial Church Council:** Mr Brewster said there was still good support for the Church and it remained a focal point of the village. The Church remains viable and is used on a weekly basis. Lay led services were held frequently. Funds to maintain the Church came from Weddings, Baptisms, etc. as well as events like the Harvest Supper. To maintain the upkeep of the Church it costs approximately £180.00 per week. A profit has been made this year. There has been a change in the quota formula, which could result in a large increase, and a penalty to Abbots Morton, as it is a successful church that is well attended. In 2002 approximately £2,200 was paid to the Diocese of Worcester and the Church of England, 2003 £3,700 and the fees have been increased this year to £4,200.

**Questions raised:**

- What happens if the Church cannot pay the quota? Nobody knows, it could result in closure, or a reduction in paid Clergy's.

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- Would parishes that make a profit have to subsidise others? I doubt it as the quota depends on the number of people that attend Church.
- Perhaps the parish ought to look at a different supplier, as the Church of England is too expensive.
- Does the Church keep all the money it raises? Why give a donation to Charity? If Abbots Morton were running at a loss then they would have to look at this.

**Matters raised by Parishioners:** were raised after each individual gave their report. No further questions.

The Chairman thanked the speakers for giving their reports and everyone for attending.

**Meeting declared closed at 9.20pm.**