

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Costock held on Wednesday April 20, 2011, in Costock Village Hall at 8.00pm

The parish council chairman Coun. Mrs Kath Owen took the chair and welcomed the 33 parishioners who were present.

Apologies were received from parish councillors Chris Brown and Peter Houghton.

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on April 21, 2010, were read by the chairman and were signed as being correct.

Chairman's Report:

The chairman, Coun. Mrs Kath Owen, commented on the various items that had been dealt with by members in the past year, including the question of road safety and speeding traffic. She said there had been ten meetings of the council during the 12 month period and members had discussed a wide variety of subjects. On the question of the bus service in the village, she said the council had feared that the 'war' between two companies could result in the disappearance of one of them, although at present that had not occurred. There were a good number of people making use of the service that was available.

There was some hope now that the village would be provided with an interactive speed sign, saying that Coun. Reg Adair had worked hard to bring this to fruition. Still on the subject of road safety, the chairman spoke of the dangerous situation often caused by heavy parking out the village hall and school by parents taking their children to school or those attending the playgroup. She said this was a major hazard and added the council had appealed to those responsible to be aware of the dangers they caused.

A new item of play equipment had been provided in the form of a springer unit for small children and this was already being well received. The council continued to have all the equipment checked on an annual basis.

Coun. Mrs Owen outlined the situation of the playing field, saying that the council leases the top of the field area from Notts County Council and the school owns the football field area. There was an agreement that this could be used in school holidays and weekends. There was comment on the work that was carried out on the village footpaths and special thanks were offered to Mr David Brown for all the effort he had put into this. Coun. Mrs Owen said the Notts County Council's Parish Paths Partnership scheme had come to an end because of funding problems.

The village website continued to be fairly well used and thanks were offered to Coun. Everard Robinson for his efforts in keeping it up to date. Planning was another matter raised by the chairman, with her pointing out that the parish council was only a consultee and did not make the final decision. She spoke of a meeting held by members of the council with a developer who intended to demolish the Red Lion public house and erect seven homes there. There was no actual planning application submitted yet but one was expected.

The chairman spoke of the decrease in the parish precept for the coming year, the figure going down from £16,000 to £12,000. There would be no election in May because only six candidates had been proposed for the seven seats. The chairman thanked the councillors and the clerk for their efforts on behalf of the village. She gave a special vote of thanks to Coun. Mrs Delia Pickerill who was not standing for re-election and who had given many years service to the council, both as a member and previously as the clerk.

The village hall continued to be well used and this required hard work from its committee, added the chairman.

Financial Report:

The clerk said the council had started the 2010/2011 financial year with a figure in hand of £23,019. During the year the main items of expenditure had been £1,486 for insurance, £713 for grass cutting and £1,831 for maintenance and equipment.

Repairs and other expenditure on the village hall had cost £1,613. In total the expenditure during the financial year was £13,589. Income was £18,450, with £16,000 received through the annual precept. The rest of the income consisted of grants received of £1,386, reimbursement for the hire of concrete blocks of £213 and bank interest of £13. The sum recovered from VAT spent during the previous financial year brought in another £837.

The council ended the year with a balance in hand of £27,880 and the precept for the new financial year was £12,000, a reduction of £4,000 on the previous two years.

Questions to the Chair

The matter of the nature reserve at the Bars Hill development was raised, with the chairman saying this was a matter that had first been raised with the parish council in 2007. She was aware there was a feeling for the need to make progress in it becoming a Nature Reserve and reminded the meeting the council had at the outset been asked by the developer to take over the area of land concerned. She said the council had agreed to look at the request carefully but there had never been a final decision taken because the developers had not kept in contact. And they had yet to complete all that was required of them by the planning condition imposed by Rushcliffe Borough Council and so the parish council had not finally agreed as to what should happen. One outstanding item was the need for hedge planting at one point on the site.

The chairman said originally the developers had offered the parish council £10,000 as a donation towards the ongoing upkeep of the site, but the figure had been increased to £12,500.

The meeting agreed that the parish should progress the matter in relation to agreement being made with the developers as to taking over responsibility for the site once agreement had been reached on the outstanding work to be carried out to meet the planning conditions. It was also agreed a meeting be arranged involving the parish council, Rushcliffe Borough Council, the Notts Wildlife Trust and a representative from the interested residents, to reach agreement on the future of the site. It was requested that when the necessary papers were drawn up for the transfer of ownership, a covenant be placed on the land prohibiting any residential development on the site at any time.

The chairman said she hoped there would be some residents offering to serve on the small committee it was hoped to be able to form.

Other items discussed included the need for a lower speed limit on the road from East Leake to the village, access from the new housing estate to the play area, and a request made for the clerk to write to the Highways Department Manager of Notts County Council in regard to the urgent need for action to reduce the dangers from speeding and other traffic.

The parish council chairman reported on a gift given to the council earlier in the evening in the form of a telegram from Prince Charles and his then bride-to-be Lady Diana Spencer giving thanks to the village and the parish council for its message of congratulation on their wedding.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.20pm.