

ROCK PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the AGM Meeting of the Rock Parish Council held in Callow Hill Methodist Hall, Bliss Gate on **Monday 15th May 2006 commencing at 7.00pm.**

Present: Councillors K Perkins (Chairman)
J C Simmonds Mrs S Tudor-Hughes
J Turner J Nott
Mrs P Harvey Mrs E Batten
C Price D Godwin
G Watson

Apologies were accepted from: Councillor Mrs Pain, Miss Sue Morris & County Councillor John Campion.

In attendance: Mr S Clee, Mrs Joan Simpson, Mrs S Ward, Sandra & David Pugh, Colin Link (Footpaths Officer), Mr & Mrs Davies & PC Nigel Barter.

222 Election of Chairman

The clerk called for nominations for the office of chairman. There was one nomination proposed and seconded that Mr Keith Perkins be elected chairman. There being no other nomination the clerk announced Mr Perkins be the chairman for the new municipal year 2006-07. Mr Perkins signed the acceptance of office declaration.

The Chairman thanked councillors for their support in the work he did on behalf of the parish council.

223 Election of Vice Chairman

The Chairman called for nominations for a Vice Chairman. There was one nomination that Councillor Douglas Godwin become Vice Chairman. The Chairman announced there being no other nominations that Councillor Godwin be Vice Chairman for 2006-07.

224 Parish Awards

The Chairman introduced the first parish award that was proposed by the parish council to Mrs Sylvia Perkins for her work within the parish over many years. The Second award was presented to Mr & Mrs Davies for the Cherry Orchard they had constructed at their Bliss Gate home. Both recipients thanked the council for its recognition to their efforts.

225 Parish Footpath Officer

The Chairman introduced Mr Colin Link the parish footpaths officer and Mr Alan Humphries to the council. Mr Link said there were 334 footways throughout the parish with 65 miles of footway to check. Mr Link informed council that 95% of the footways are walkable and there is an annual May day Bank Holiday walk which has been running 6 years and involves 300 walkers. They have raised £3,000 towards the Village Hall funds. Mrs Ellenor Batten agreed to be the link officer between the parish council and Mr Link.

226 Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman commenced his annual Chairman's report by recording his thanks to the other Councillors for their support over the past year; however this must be tinged with sadness with the sad loss, through the untimely and unexpected death of Councillor Jim Millington, who was also the Vice Chairman of this council. Jim had served locally for many years at Parish, District

and County level and his experience was always most valued by council members. The Chairman recorded his thanks also to Stephen Clee, parish clerk, whose contribution and experience have been appreciated by all.

Actions

Parish Plan

The year commenced with the publication of the Parish Plan, which had been put together by a small working party and again special thanks must go to those involved. The difficult part of any plan is the implementation of the action plan. This has now commenced, albeit a little later than hoped. The inaugural meeting was held in April 2006 with those who responded in the original questionnaire to being interested in participating in the areas of Neighbourhood Watch, Good Neighbour scheme, Conservation and Forming a Trade Co-operative. A report-back meeting will be held on the 27 September 2006.

There is still a need for more volunteers, particularly young people, to come forward to assist with the rollout. This also applies to all other aspects of involvement in Parish affairs; there is a distinct lack of personal involvement in so many things, an issue obviously not unique to this Parish Council or to local organizations in general. A major drive must be undertaken to address the issue, although it was accepted there probably will be no easy solution. Nevertheless urgent attention must be paid to tackling the problem.

Quality Parish

Work is also proceeding with the objective of attaining Quality Parish status during 2007. A small working party has been formed to ensure that the various categories can be fulfilled satisfactorily.

Committees

The budget/precepting committee met and the precept was reviewed and approved during the Parish council meeting of December 2005.

Other committees which have been formed are:

Parish Plan to provide oversight of the Action plan
Quality Parish to ensure that the requirements are met
Planning and Policy to consider issues as and when they arise

These have made for a more regulated approach to the running of the council.

Communication

One significant aspect which is being addressed is the way that the Parish Council communicates, both to Parishioners and those outside the Parish. The intention is to have a regular newsletter at least 4 times per year (to meet a requirement of the Quality Parish checklist) but if the Parish website can be set up and working this would be raised to 6. To date our progress has been slow as we are currently waiting on the developers at the Wyre Forest District Council IT department. A previous attempt came to nothing as the lead that one of the Councillors was pursuing came to a halt when it became apparent that the website host on offer was woefully inadequate for what we were after.

Clearly the need for an effective website is crucial to the council's strategy of being able to communicate effectively and in a timely manner.

Planning

Each council meeting has several planning applications to deal with and it is expected that the electronic trial which Rock, along with Stourport Town council are participating in, will continue its roll out. I believe this will greatly improve the effectiveness of the council. Under these arrangements instead of paper copies of the plans being used the plans are displayed via a computer and projector on to a screen. The equipment required will be funded by Wyre Forest District Council and sourced via Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils (CALC).

Of course the issue that continues to concern the council is the frequent lack of influence that we are able to bring to bear on the District Council regarding decisions on planning matters. Parish Councils are only consultees in the Planning process, the final decision being taken by the District Council/Planners. This is generally regarded as unjust as the decisions often go against the Parish Council view frequently with no apparent reason or justification.

Perhaps if and when greater powers get transferred to Parish Councils (via the Quality Parish scheme) the views of the Parish Council will prevail, after all they do at all times strive to reflect the views locally and to apply impartial judgement on all submissions.

Lengthman

This has undoubtedly been a great success; many expressions of thanks have resulted and recorded in the Parish Council minutes. However at the April meeting our Lengthman, John Priscott gave notice of his intention to relinquish the role due to other commitments. These commitments he considered would prevent him giving the role its proper attention. This was a considerable blow to the Council and efforts will now have to be made to find a comparable replacement - not an easy task. Many thanks to John from us all for his good work.

Chairman's role

In addition to his role as Chairman of the Parish Council he also undertakes the following:-

Chairman Wyre Forest Area Committee CALC
Executive member Worcestershire CALC
Management sub-committee Worcestershire CALC
Training Champion Worcestershire Training Partnership
Committee member Community Safety Partnership
Committee member Wyre Forest Matters part of the Worcestershire Local strategic partnership group.
Representative at PACT meeting

Conclusion

The coming year will focus on the Parish Plan rollout, gaining Quality Parish status plus examining how to get more people involved. It is hoped these goals will be achieved.

227 Close of AGM

The chairman closed the meeting at 7.30pm and invited all guests and visitors to refreshments. The parish council meeting resumed at 8.00pm.

228 Minutes of Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 17th April 2006 and as previously circulated were approved and signed by the Chairman.

229 Declaration of Interest for a) The Meeting and b) Any Changes to be notified to the Registers of Interests and Gifts & Hospitality;

a) There were none.

b) There were none.

230 County Councillor's Report

In the absence of County Councillor Campion there was no report.

231 Public Participation

No member of the public wished to participate.

232 Planning Matters:

Applications considered

06/00447/Full Conversion of barn to form new dwelling at The Barn, Lower Norchard Cottage, Dunley.

The Council RESOLVED to approve the application provided the conversion falls within the district council's barn conversion policy.

06/395/Full Fullwood, Callow Hill, Rock. Single storey extension.

The Parish Council RECOMMENDED approval for the development provided permitted development rights are withdrawn from the site.

06/0393/Full Starrs Hill, Bliss Gate Road. Retention of garage, Lychgate and LPG Tank.

The Parish Council recommends approval with no objections.

06/0399/Full Faerey Barn, Dunley. Retention of link building, revised window to dining room, enlarged cart shed & additional wood stores.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to recommend refusal for this application. The works are retrospective and not in keeping with the adjoining listed building premises. Council believes the works are detrimental to the adjoining property. Council expressed concern for the need for a Cart extension and has concerns for the window overlooking the neighbouring premises. They recommend the planning committee refuse this application and refer the matter to our enforcement officer.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to recommend approval for this application provided the columns do not have illuminated lights on the top of the columns that adjoin the highway.

06/0486/Full

Proposed demolition of single storey rear extension & erection of two storey rear extension at Sycamore Farm, Gorst Hill, Rock

The Parish Council RESOLVED to recommend approval with no objections.

06/0479/Full

Change of use to site 24 touring caravan pitches with toilet/wash facilities at Yew Tree Farm, Pound Bank, Rock.

The Parish Council RESOLVED to recommend approval with no objections subject to Highway approval on the site access.

233 Correspondence Sheet

Council noted the correspondence sheet.

234 Approval of Meeting Dates for 2006-07

Council approved the schedule of meetings for 2006-07 as previously circulated.

235 Parish Lengthman Scheme

Council noted an expression of interest from Mr Colin Link.

236 Recycling in the Parish

The Chairman asked if any councillor had experienced complaints from parishioners relating to recycling? No member had been contacted with a complaint and it was felt the district council's recycling scheme was working very well.

237 Sustainable Energy

The Chairman had received comment from a local resident about renewable energy. It was agreed that Councillor Godwin would provide a written report for the next parish council meeting.

238 Churchyards in the Parish Application for Grants

The clerk informed members that £1,200.00 was available for churchyard grants from Wyre Forest District Council as we had not claimed our £600 for 2005-06. It was agreed to pay £400 respectively to St Peter & St Paul Church Rock, St Giles at Heightington and Far Forest Church.

239 Parish Vacancy

It was unanimously agreed to co-opt Mr Alan Brooks of Highclere, Mary Draper Lane, Rock onto the parish council.

240 Code of Conduct Training Wyre Forest District Council

Councillors, Ellenor Batten, Sylvia Tudor Hughes, Keith Perkins, John Simmonds, Gary Watson and Chris Price agreed to go on the District Council training evening on 31st May 2006.

241 West Mercia Police Authority

Council noted the correspondence from West Mercia relating to the merger proposals.

242 Finances

- 1) The council approved the schedule of payment and receipts for year end 2005-06. And resolved to return the annual statement of accounts to Messrs Clement Keys accordingly.
- 2) Outstanding invoices for payment were unanimously approved totalling £435.66.

243 Date of the Next Meeting

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21.00hrs. The date of the next meeting being Monday 26th June 2006 commencing at 7.00pm in Callow Hill Methodist Hall.

Chairman.....

26th June 2006