

**Minutes of Bishop's Itchington Annual Village Meeting
24 April 2023 at 7.30pm**

Present:

Cllr Dugmore (Chairman)	Cllr Christian-Carter	Cllr Gates	Cllr Kettle
Cllr Thomas	Cllr Tressler		

In attendance:

Karen Stevens (Parish Clerk)
6 Members of the public

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Dugmore who welcomed everyone, particularly residents and those who had not attended one of these meetings previously.

1. Apologies:

Donnamarie Davenport,

2. Minutes of the Annual Village Meeting 25 April 2022:

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Annual Village meeting held on 25 April 2022 as a true and complete record of that meeting. (Proposed Cllr Kettle, seconded Cllr Tressler, four in favour, two abstentions as they were not present at the meeting).

4. Bishop's Itchington Parish Council Annual Report Year Ended 31 March 2023:

Councillor Dugmore (Chairman) drew attention to his report included in the pack of information for tonight's meeting (previously circulated). He then went on to say:

"As you can see from the report, we have had another year of trying to get things done but with only a small handful of people. The fruits of the labours of the playground working group can be seen down at the playing fields and it is good to see a successful project progressing.

It has been good to get the Neighbourhood Plan to a conclusion, having it adopted by the Village and by Stratford District Council. Thank you to Cllrs Thomas and Tressler for all their hard work and to all those who have been involved in this over the years.

There has been the usual involvement in planning activities. There have been a number of contentious applications and one or two decisions have gone in the opposite direction to what we would have liked. The parish council has tried its best to represent the village but sometimes the Planning Committee sees it differently and, in some cases, we have taken the planning team to task to explain their actions.

We are down on councillors as we have the capacity for 10 councillors but presently only have six. This has made it busy for the current team and therefore we have not pushed on with all the projects we would like to do i.e. restoration of the chapel windows etc.

Thank you to all the councillors for the work they have undertaken, not just those mentioned here individually but, we have got small working groups that pull together be it on planning matters, finance, HR etc. Everyone has a part to play, and everyone brings in their own skills which is fantastic. The teamwork we have had and taken advantage of is brilliant and therefore I would like to say thank you to all my fellow councillors for all the hard work they have put in. As previously said, it is not just the councillors. The Clerks (Karen Stevens) entrance last year was on crutches and this

year it is much more fleet of foot. The clerk's determination to push through despite everything that was going on to her was admirable and a bit of an inspiration to us all. I just want to say publicly and, on the record, thank you Karen.

As said in my report, in the next few weeks you get to choose your councillors. For the parish there are only five standing so you get them regardless – do encourage friends and neighbours and people who you think have something to give to come along, introduce themselves and join the parish council. It will be 5 seats and not four as I have decided to stand down and give myself a break so I will vacate this seat shortly and let someone else take the helm. I am sure someone can do a better job and show us all how its done and I looks forward to sitting in the audience and promise that I won't hackle”.

5. Parish council financial report for the year ended 31 March 2023

In the pack there is a financial report for year ending 31 March 2023 which is subject to audit.

Q: Under miscellaneous there is a figure of £145.10 compared with the previous year's figure of £143,908.46 – why?

A: This is because of the payment received from the Furrowfields development and this money has paid for the playground refurbishment.

6. Reports from Village Organisations

WI:

Jane Thomas advised that everything is in the report within the booklet. They advised that they have got four new members but are always looking for more.

Memorial Hall:

Carolyn Went advised that they have had a busy year. Need to say thank you to the parish council and the clerk for pushing on and finding the deeds enabling the Hall to be registered so charitable status can be applied for.

Therefore, although there is a list of things that they want to undertake at the hall, any major refurbishment will wait until charitable status has been obtained so that VAT can be reclaimed as this will make a big difference as it will be a 20% saving.

The hall is being well used by a variety of groups with activities every day, the most recent addition being Line dancing on a Friday.

There was a flood that meant that the kitchen had to be re done. The film nights are proving successful and are good for bringing in new members of the village.

Bingo and particularly the Coronation Bingo has brought in people from all areas of the village and has been a real laugh.

The Memorial Hall has a small committee, and they always need new members.

Thank you to Cllr Christian-Carter for being on the committee for a number of years and thanks to Cllr Tressler who has taken over from her.

There is money in the bank making them as financially secure as you can be in a small village. There is a vision to get the toilets refurbished, maybe a small extension on the back of the hall and a sensory garden to the rear.

Following the flood, several activities/parties were relocated to the community centre and a good working relationship with the community centre is developing.

Pam Reason advised that reports for BIFC, BISA and Friends of the Yellow Land and BING are in the booklet.

BIFC:

As per the report, BIFC had qualified for three cup finals. An update to this is that, unfortunately, they lost the Bethell Charity Cup. The cup competition raises a lot of money for charity and last year, three groups in the village received charitable donations from the organisers (included the school and the playground). They won the Division 1 cup final and then finally, they lost the Challenge Cup final to Long Itchington. The team has also got through to the George Dutton cup final that will be played later this week.

BISA:

BISA is always looking for new members.

Friends of the Yellow Land and BING:

Three new people have joined, and they have received an enquiry from another lady. One young person is working with them to do his community service part of his Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Work to repair the fence on the Yellow Land should be undertaken in the next couple of weeks. Also, Friends of the Yellow Lane are looking at using some of their funds to install a butterfly information board (cost approximately £300). It will have photos and information relating to the butterflies found on the Yellow Land (site specific).

Cemetery and Churchyard:

No additional information to add to the published report.

Planning:

No additional information to add to the published report.

- Carolyn Went raised the issue of the development behind her house and will speak to Cllr Chrisitan-Carter about it.
- Houses in Starbold Road – if there is a Neighbourhood plan, why have these been allowed. The parish councils' position was a clear objection to the development. The application went to planning committee and both Cllr's Dugmore and Kettle were in attendance and put across some coherent arguments based on planning policy, but the committee opted to go with the planning officer's recommendation which was to grant permission. It was not a unanimous decision as three members of the committee did agree with the parish council. This happened after the Neighbourhood plan was voted on in the village but before the plan was formally adopted by SDC.
- Carnival: There has not been a carnival since 2017. A new enthusiastic committee has been formed and a small carnival will be held this year. Road closures have been applied for, insurances are in place, first aid cover arranged, acts, bands and stalls are being booked. The intention this year is to contain it to the pub car park to get an event done and they will build on this in following years. There is also an intention to bring back the Christmas event as well.

Attendances:

There is a summary at the back of the pack of councillor attendances at parish council meetings.

7. Reports from County & District Councillors:

Stratford District Council (SDC):

Cllr Chris Kettle advised that as it is SDC elections this year, (4 May 2023) he is not legally able to write a report.

With regards to planning committee and the Starbold Road application: the process was a 'mockery'. Sometimes these things happen – we have a neighbourhood plan, there are planning policies that clearly dictate what is acceptable/unacceptable. It is however a planning balance so there is not a right or wrong. It is referred to as a quasi-judicial process, so evidence is examined in favour of an application and evidence examined against it. If the parish council and/or ward member are not going to be involved then the decision made by the planning officer, in this case both the parish council and I made it quite clear that we did not think it was an appropriate development therefore it went to committee. Cllr Dugmore spoke very well on behalf of the parish. Sometimes it comes down to the way the planning officer presents, and he has to say he was unimpressed with that individuals grasp of knowledge of this village, and it was disappointing. I received quite a bit of flack from residents on social media regarding the outcome. It would be quite nice if there was a little bit more support from people within the parish.

The merger with Warwick did not happen because SDC became increasingly concerned about Warwick's financial position. A positive to come out of the proposal was the joint contract signed waste collection. The start of the new contract did not go well as it was the hottest week of the year. Stratford is a rural district, and previously all the collections came from the depot in Stratford. When the new contract started, these collections came out of East Warwick, and they were not used to doing rural collections. They initially found this difficult particularly as they did not have the systems that Stratford had (personal digital assistance (smart mobile phones effectively)) and were relying on paper maps. Within ten days of starting the contract, absenteeism had reached 30% so short cuts were taken resulting in chaos. There was no opportunity for training before the new contract started, it had to be an immediate switchover but what was not anticipated was that the Warwick depot would have such challenges, so it was very much the rural areas of East Warwickshire/Stratford that had all the teething problems. The issues got ironed out and as a result, recycling rates are up by 30% whilst the waste that goes to landfill has reduced by 30%. The next stage is to look at much more carbon efficiency and particularly vehicles.

At Stratford, his portfolios have continued to include Environmental Health and Community Safety.

Environmental Health has two side, the Licensing Team, and the Compliance Team (look at issues of noise, smells etc including issues around HS2).

Community Safety is a challenging area as it includes a statutory responsibility to work with crime reduction. The team is led by Karen Stanley who has two Anti-Social Behaviour Officers, two rural crime advisors (look at villages and farms) and a CCTV team and a permanently staffed CCTV room who are in live contact with the police monitor 134 cameras across Stratford district. Some of the larger villages pay SDC to monitor their CCTV cameras. Currently, the impact of county lines (drugs) on the district is one of the main concerns. There were 23 different county lines going into Stratford, this was reduced to 17 because as SDC took out 6 of the smaller

businesses using CCTV etc. It is now down to 5. Unfortunately, this is not due to SDC/police but large drug dealers taking out smaller ones. Unfortunately, every county line effects every community – every member of a community is vulnerable either as a victim or as a family member of a victim or someone who has their home broken into to provide funds for people to buy/deal drugs etc. There is also the issue of human trafficking associated with the growing of drugs.

Warwickshire County Council (WCC):

Painted the new lines outside the school and will shortly be painting lines at the bend on Chapel Street (by the entrance to the playing fields). These have been funded from the budget he gets as a county councillor (approximately £35,000 per annum) for road improvements across the entire county division that he represents (12 villages). The largest project in the village (approximately £5,000) will be undertaken in the layby outside the cemetery reconfiguring the drainage to alleviate flooding/mud at the entrance of the cemetery.

Challenge with school buses particularly to Southam School as during the year, some changes came into effect from the 2001 Act whereby children who had been on a bus, particularly those with facilities to support those with special needs, physical needs rather than learning needs) can not share the same bus unless there were specific features on the bus and most bus companies did not have these features. This resulted in a reconfiguration to find a way to ensure those children who needed a bus to get to school could.

WCC is responsible for pavements. Issues with pavements can be emailed to Cllr Kettle or reported using 'Fix my Street'.

8. Close of meeting

Cllr Dugmore thanked residents for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 20:26

Signed.....Chairman

Date.....