

**Minutes of Bishop's Itchington Annual Village Meeting
29 April 2024 at 7.30pm**

Present:

Cllr Chris Kettle (Chairman), Cllr Amanda Colton, Cllr Adam Dugmore, Cllr Alistair Lamont, Cllr Selena Ogden, Cllr Simon Tagg-Wilkinson, Cllr Norman Thomas, Cllr Steve Tressler

In attendance:

Karen Stevens (Parish Clerk)
15 Members of the public
Cllr Natalie Gist
Cllr Nigel Rock

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Kettle who welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies:

Cllr Horsman, Cllr Howatson, Donna Davenport (Friends of Bishops Itchington Primary School (FoBIPS)).

2. Minutes of the Annual Village Meeting 24 April 2023:

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Annual Village meeting held on 24 April 2023 as a true and complete record of that meeting.

3. Bishop's Itchington Parish Council Annual Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2024:

Councillor Kettle (Chairman) stated that the parish council had had a busy year starting with the election in May. Several changes to the parish council occurred during the year with John Gates resigning as he was moving away. Kate Williams joined but subsequently resigned due to work commitments. We were sorry to have to say goodbye to them both. At the beginning of the year, Adam Dugmore and Judith Christian-Carter, who had both been on the parish council for quite some time stepped down. We are delighted to see we have got Adam back after a short sabbatical, but Judith has decided after many years on the Council that it was time to step down. We would like to record everybody's thanks to her for all her hard work over the best part of two decades.

Cllr Norman Thomas, who is now the vice chair, lead the major work that was undertaken creating the new play area. The feedback we have received has been extremely positive and I would like to thank Norman for the huge amount of work that he did. The only slight sadness was that it did not take long for someone to decide to vandalise part of it. We are looking to put in CCTV and are taking advice from the Community Safety Team at Stratford District Council (SDC).

Thank you to the Clerk, Karen Stevens, for yet another year of unstinted support to the parish council.

We have had a slight change this year in that instead of committees, we are going to try having one individual (Portfolio Holder) supported by the other councillors keeping tabs on various areas.

Biodiversity and Climate Change - Cllr Simon Tagg-Wilkinson:

All councils must have a policy for biodiversity. Previously, most biodiversity plans have been 'wish' lists, and these 'wish' lists need to be turned into actions so there has been a large programme nationally to do a biodiversity national audit to see where everything is, what the corridors are and how different places interact with one another. Recognising that there is an enormous amount of biodiversity lost they want

to do something more positive. There is also a requirement coming in as of this month under planning resulting in if you submit a planning application you must demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity of 10%. What we do not have as a parish is a clear picture of where we are now, what different flora/fauna we have got, where they are, what needs help and how these leaks into other areas of the county. He is therefore in conversation with the ecology department at Warwick and is pulling together lots of information so that we end up with a plan of action. He would like to get all the local groups involved and working together.

Cemetery and Churchyard – Cllr Selena Ogden:

She advised that she was very new to this. It is an area she would like to be involved in and realises she has got a lot to learn and will be relying on help and support from Val Powell (Cemetery Manager) and the village and will be looking at how to support families using the cemetery and churchyard. There are things that need to be assessed and sorted out in time to get the cemetery and churchyard to the standard it should be. It was confirmed that the spinney/woodland next to the cemetery is part of the cemetery.

Finance - Cllr Chris Kettle:

We are very conscious that council taxes are not going down and therefore we are doing our utmost to ensure that when we set the precept in January each year, it is based on a very sound budget. Clearly, we have to meet the obligations of the parish council and any unforeseen bills outside the council's control. We go through a very detailed budget exercise. Some items we can never be quite sure of i.e. VAT refund so when we do get a VAT refund it is a bonus. This year, interest on the accounts was higher as we had been holding the monies for the playground, but this money has been spent so interest received will drop. In terms of expenditure administration and grounds maintenance was slightly lower than anticipated but maintenance in the cemetery and churchyard was approximately £3,000 more. Most satisfactorily, the playground equipment we were within £200 of our overall investment for it. Every year we allocate £10,000 for community grants to allow groups in the village to apply for part funding for various things/activities. This year the overall result is we have done better than budget and this money will be carried forward and put aside for projects we know will require expenditure in the following year.

Planning – Cllr Adam Dugmore:

Seen about 24 applications during the year so not too busy but unfortunately there were two big applications, slightly contentious and with technical issues to be resolved. One of the main ones we have seen are the site of the old car sales that is to open as a Coop with the knock on from this is the existing store will close and be converted into private apartments. The other relatively large one that will result in some change in the village is that Orbit Housing Association has put in three applications to re-develop some of the social housing sites – Gaydon Road, Starbold Road and St Michaels Close. They are looking at the applications as a group as they would use one site to displace residents. Currently the one on Gaydon Road has been granted planning permission whilst the other two applications have been withdrawn to allow some modifications. With regards to the Gaydon Road site, the parish council did push back a little on it because of the environmental sustainability considerations as the applicant had gone for the bare minimum to meet building regulations – we pushed for some more as our Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) asks for more than the minimum. We have been a little frustrated at the way officers Stratford District Council interpreting parts of the NDP and are having ongoing discussions involving our district councillors. Since our NDP was agreed 13 months ago, we see on every application it is referred to in the decisions, so they are using it so the work that councillors put in over a number of years was worth it as it is

being used in some capacity. He advised the public that anyone considering putting in an application should attend the parish council meeting where it is going to be discussed as it really helps as you will get three minutes in the public forum to put your case forward and give the application some context. Finally, thinking back to one of the Orbit applications, the parish council came in for criticism from members of the public about the public forum being restrictive and very limited. He therefore wanted to remind people that if you have got something you want to say about a planning application, write it on a piece of paper, drop an email, pick up the phone, you can get in touch with the clerk at any time and she will ensure the parish council gets the comments/information. You do not have to wait for a parish council meeting if you have an objection or concern. If you have got a concern, it is also very useful if you do attend the meeting and tell us about it.

Play Area/Hardcourts – Cllr Norman Thomas:

You are aware of the play area project and can see on the expenditure sheet the investment the village has made in it so we are very precious in the way it is used and any damage caused. It is worth pointing out that damage is paid for out of the budget, not insurance so in theory, the village pay for any damage from the precept. In addition to the play area that has been completely refurbished, the other the hardcourts have been completely overhauled with the old surface being dug up and a new surface laid so that is a major improvement. The cricket team is in the process of being re-established, so they have put forward a proposal to renew the cricket wicket and this currently under review with the parish council. The installation of CCTV is being looked at.

Cllr's Steve Tressler, Alistair Lamont and Amanda Colton were introduced to the meeting and the meeting was advised that the other members of the parish council are David Howatson and Orlaith Horsman who had both sent their apologies for the meeting.

4. Reports from Village Organisations

Bishop's Itching Carnival:

Selena Ogden said that the carnival had been a part of the village for a number of years but due to various reasons it had stopped. Brian and Selena made the decision to re-start the carnival so arrange a meeting. Following working with an amazing group of people and 16 weeks of planning we managed to bring it back last year and everyone had an amazing day.

This year we are planning a bigger and better event with more entertainment for the children. It will still be a walking procession, due to rules and regulations, weather permitting.

Carnival raffle tickets are now on sale. 50% of the money raised from the raffle tickets goes to the cancer charity Annie's Angels. Any raffle prizes would be more than welcome.

The Christmas event we had last year which was undertaken in conjunction with the church was so wonderful with the lantern possession so we will be doing a similar event this year

BISA Badminton:

Linda Hassall said that the report was in the paperwork. The badminton club is held in the Memorial Hall. There is a lady's session on Tuesday morning for all abilities.

Tuesday nights is run by Steve and that is mixed session again for all abilities. Early

Wednesday evenings is for children/young people followed by intermediate/advanced adults.

BIFC:

Pam Reason advised her report is in the papers for the meeting. A couple of updates are that the first team reached the finals of the Challenge Cup which they managed to win. The senior team has been managed by Tom Cooper for 11 years and this is his last season as manager, and this is the one cup that had eluded him. Tom will be very much missed. The reserves played in the Cancer Cup final last week and played at Leamington's ground. The reserves play in Division 3 and their opposition was Long Itchington who play in the Premier Division so there was quite a big gap and although they got off to a really good start scoring the first goal they lost in the end. The Saturday side did finish as champions of their league and should get promoted. The reserves played in the semi final of the George Dutton Cup on Sunday but unfortunately lost on penalties. She would like to thank the Greaves Club for their sponsorship which helps pay for insurance, first aid, fees etc and they are grateful to the parish council for allowing them to use the pavilion and pitches.

BISA:

The sports association is an umbrella organisation that tries to identify the need for sports and leisure facilities in the village and tries to provide these. BISA is in the lucky position BISA these days as the parish council took over the ownership and maintenance of the hard court, but BISA is responsible for the hiring them out and therefore get the money to reinvest in other things. The courts are all free for villagers unless you want to book a specific time slot. They are used by a tennis group, five-a-side football group, walking netball, a cricket group and a netball team and some boys football teams from outside the village who use it for training as we do not have a boys' team in the village. BISA have again given some money to the school (region of £400) for various items of sports equipment. Also, about to part fund a scout leader to go on a hill walking leaders' course. Cricket group has expanded. Had a couple of new members this year but are always looking for new members/ideas and meet every couple of months unless there is something pressing.

WI:

Jane Thomas advised that they now have 48 members, and everything is going well with crafting, gardening, walking, netball, drama etc. Their darts team won its first game. The WI will have been going for 100 years next year so they will be having a party.

Memorial Hall:

In the absence of Carolyn Went, Kirsty Shakespeare advised that they are undertaking the process to apply for charitable status to help them access grants for works required to the building particularly the replacement of the hall floor. They are trying to get more support for managing the hall. Fundraising is still needed so they are still undertaking things like quizzes, bingo, film evenings, and are organising a murder mystery evening later in the year and are looking for other innovative ways to fund raise.

Cllr Steve Tessler added that the main challenge over the last 12 months and thanks to Karen Stevens as well, has been to get the charitable status over the line as it had

fallen at getting the ownership/land registry sorted. There is a thriving use of the hall, and it amazes him at the number of different people who come in. There are some people using it from outside the village but predominantly it is used by local villagers. The key part of it is that it is all non-paid work so everyone who puts their time and effort in, which is admirable, is doing it for free. The team are very proud of their location and there are opportunities that they aim to continue investing into the property and one of the key areas is the floor.

Community Centre:

Amanda Colton advised that Orlaith Horsman has done a report detailing everything we have at the community centre. Amanada's involvement is mainly to do with the youth groups as herself and a small group of parent volunteers got together about a year ago and managed to re-start the younger children's youth club (ages 8 to 11). It is held once a month and has been well supported with nearly 50 children/young people attending each month. For a similar amount of time, they have been trying to get together a group of volunteers to do something for the older young people (from year 7 upwards to the age of 17). Although there are a number of sporting groups there is not a 'hang out' place for them, there is not a safe place for them to go and as they get to that older age and are wondering around so would like to open up the café area and welcome them in for a older youth club. Happy to say that the first meeting of the volunteers for that older youth club is on 1 May with the first meeting of the older youth club being held on 24 May. They are raising funds for the older youth club in particular on the back of opening the community centre on carnival day and later at the Christmas tree switch on. Has some volunteers organised for this but could always use more.

Cllr Chris Kettle congratulated Amanada as she has now become chair of the community group. It is also worth noting that Pete Wilson for all his work at the centre.

Cricket Club:

Mathew Horsman introduced himself and advised that he is also a member of BISA. The cricket club has been going for two years and meet on a Monday for training at the hard courts. They advertised for new members and now have over 21 members although they do not all come to training. So far, they have arranged 4 away friendlies including Wellesbourne, Long Itchington and Southam cricket clubs and is trying to arrange a few more. Looking for new players aged 12 upwards. Recently had a donation from the Co-op of £345.00 to buy equipment/kit. They are looking at getting funding/support to replace the artificial wicket and Warwickshire Cricket Board are visiting the grounds on 16 May. The goal for next year is to have home and away matches.

Friends of Bishops Itchington Primary School:

Donna Davenport stated that she has been on the FoBIPS for 9 years, eight of them as the Chair and her children are now migrating towards secondary education so is coming towards the end of the natural cycle within FoBIPS. She has put a lot in the report for those who are interested but one of the things she omitted to mention is that they have been really successful in finding volunteers in what they call a 'an hour here and there' group which is basically if you cannot sit in a group at a certain time

but can do various things here and there i.e. wrap presents, buy father's day gifts or create a spreadsheet with teddy bear names on it etc, then we will absolutely use that support because what that does is take away the menial tasks her team have to do allowing them to focus on the bigger tasks i.e. risk assessments or organising inflatables and making sure all the safety elements are right. This has been successful. From this we hope to grow the team going forward and are looking potentially to put out a celebratory event to thank them all for their contributions. By the time she leaves she will have raised £40,000 for the school with her team. Without this funding the school would not have iPads, some of the laptops, some of the experiences and trips the children have been on, coding robots, sports kit etc. The school is really appreciative for what FoBIPS, and this is her opportunity to thank every single business or village community member that supports them because we have huge amounts of support, our fairs run and we see 250 adults and 250 children walk through the doors and support our school. Without the village community that supports and gets behind it we would not be able to achieve what we achieve so thank you.

Friends of the Yellow Land and BING (Bishops Itchington Nature Group):

Pam Reason advised that the group meets at 10.30am every other Sunday morning for a couple of hours and everything is provided except for drinks. There are currently around 10 members but it is very much open to volunteers who come when they can. There are two sites, the orchard and the Yellow Land and it is hoped that everyone knows where the yellow Land is. The Yellow Land is a small parcel of land where the new path goes through to Bishops Hill and currently the cowslips over there are beautiful. The rest of the site is managed by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. We maintain the sites with the Yellow Land being important for the small blue butterfly – there are four rarities, the small blue, grizzled skipper, dingy skipper and brimstone and all are early butterflies so they should be around now, but the poor weather has delayed them. The orchard is apple and pears, and it is there for people to enjoy, not just the site but also the fruit. We have occasionally work with young people undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh Award and people who want to undertake volunteering in the community. For those who do not know, the reason for it being called the Yellow Land is because when it was transferred to the parish council the boundary outline on the map was yellow, hence the name Yellow Land.

St Michaels Church:

Heather Boyd reported that they had started 2023 with a fantastic year celebrating with the village community the 150th anniversary of the current church building. They had a series of events throughout the year starting with a women's breakfast. The passion play at Easter, folk concert, murder mystery, Christmas tree competition and the lantern parade were all very successful. Yarn bombing involved a lot of people from outside the church and provided friendship groups. A tangible legacy of the year is a set of display boards paid for by the parish council which can be used by any village organisation.

The foodbank for Bishop's Itchington/Harbury/Fenny Compton is run by volunteers from the church as part of supporting the community. The foodbank has been busy and last year delivered 186 food parcels to families in the village and Harbury. The church has collections on a Thursday between 2.00pm and 3.00pm when people

come to the church to collect their food parcels. If they cannot drive or are housebound, they will deliver to them if they need it. They are part of the Fosse Food Bank with all groups working together and have received some brilliant contributions. The pub has been collecting used cooking oil, and they use the money to buy goods for the foodbank, the Greaves Club at their Easter raffle raised £170 and the golf club gave them £200.

Crafty Cuppa:

Richard Cox advised that he represents the Crafty Cuppa which held on the last Friday of the month in the Memorial Hall between 10.00am and 11.30pm. They raise funds for the local air ambulance. Last month they gave them a cheque for £3,000 as the monies raised during the last year. The Crafty Cuppa has been running for 22 years. There are table sales, and they have regular sellers, most of it is craft items. They charge £5.00 per table, and this goes towards the fund raising. You can get drinks and cake and there are two raffles, one for a hamper and the other is for various prizes that have been donated.

Senior Residents Organisation:

The Senior Residents Organisation raises funds for senior residents of the village. They have two functions per month – the third Wednesday of the month there is Bingo at 8.00pm in the Greaves Club and on the third Thursday of the month they hold a coffee morning between 10.00am and 12.00noon again at the Greaves Club. Any money that comes in for Bingo we pay back in prizes. At the coffee morning they sell teas and coffees and there is always homemade cakes and biscuits available. We do charge for it but it is a donation which helps raise funds along with the raffle that is held. People can meet/make friends and have a general chit chat. The funds are used to subsidise trips and the Christmas meal.

Public Footpaths:

Gordan Smith advised that he was happy when he was informed that the parish council had taken an interest in public footpaths again. There are a number of outstanding issues with the public footpaths:

- Promised by Folletts and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust a hard footpath coming out opposite the cemetery. Several years ago he had met with Karl Curtis to discuss the possible route of the path, but nothing had come from the meeting and no footpath had been created. There are two informal paths, but most people would not be able to use them
- One long outstanding footpath is from the top of Station Road directly across the fields into the southwest corner of the wildlife area. The landowner is not keen but there is legal application lodged with Warwickshire County Council (WCC) for it to be undertaken
- The long-established path from the bottom Works Lane parallel to the railway and comes out on Ladbroke Road has not been open for some time but was well used. This issue is still with WCC

He also advised that older people find stiles difficult to use and many are in poor condition. Consideration should be made to change stiles for gates giving better access for all.

Baby and Toddler Group:

This is not just for mums and babies/toddlers but also dads, grandparents and carers of young children up to the age of five. They have toys, craft activities, messy play, singing and have snacks as well. They meet in the Memorial Hall on Thursdays between 10.00am and 11.30am during term time. The cost is £2.00 per child or £1.00 for each additional sibling.

5. Reports from County & District Councillors:**Stratford District Council (SDC):**

Cllrs Nigel Rock and Natalie Gist were introduced to the meeting.

Cllr Rock advised that their report had been circulated therefore would not go over it. Due to Boundary Commission Changes, a new ward was created that encompasses Bishop's Itchington and due to the size of the ward, there are now two councillors representing it and they are both here to help anyone they can do and are always available to speak. They work closely with the parish council and the Warwick County Council Councillor and will help anyone they can

Warwickshire County Council (WCC):

Councillor Chris Kettle is the WCC councillor for Feldon patch which incorporates Bishop's Itchington, and he has also been the Chairman of WCC this year which has made life quite a challenge as it includes the whole County. In the Feldon patch, he splits the role between two main issues – constituent issues and Nigel, Natalie and he work very closely in trying to resolve the issues. There are issues that the community have and need help with and that is their role as elected councillors outside the parish council. Some of the cases they come across are seriously challenging and the fact that they are happening within our communities is a big worry. Contact them if you need help and more importantly if you know somebody who needs help who should be talking to them as quite often people won't because they think we are too busy but the reason we stood for office and got elected is because we know we can help but we need to know, need people to talk to us.

The key areas that he often runs into include:

- potholes (in an independent review Warwickshire has the third best maintained roads in the country),
- speeding - every community has a perceived speed problem and want traffic calming measures, cameras etc,
- As a highways authority they do focus on where there is accident track record (i.e. Harbury lane crossroads),
- HS2 (the longest section of HS2 in any one councillor's patch in the country is Feldon). There are two companies one to the north of Southam and one to the south. There are major problems with road closures and the procedures used i.e. removing trees, changing from night road closures to complete road closures for weeks at a time etc. There just seems to be a complete reliance on the Act which enables them to do work, and they think this gives them the authority to do whatever they like regardless of the impact on the community. All councillors in the area have been working continuously since they started building it to try and keep the impact on communities to a minimum including an upcoming meeting with the Construction Commissioner Sir Mark

Worthington who is the one person that the construction sub-contractors are fearful of and all the issues that have been raised will be raised

- Schools including admissions and school transport.

6. Close of Meeting:

Cllr Kettle thanked residents for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 21:15

Signed..... Chairman

Date.....

DRAFT