

BITTERLEY

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Bitterley Village Hall On Wednesday 13th May 2015

PRESENT

Mr HCH Chance (Chairman)

Other members of the Parish Council: Mr RJ Osborne (Vice Chairman) Mr C Chillingworth, Mrs AM Holman, Mr DT Price, Mr HWJ Watkins, Mr P Lawley-Jones, Mr DE Bowen and Mr DW Rogers; Mrs S Jones (Clerk); Richard Huffer (Shropshire Councillor) and 20 members of the Public.

1. Introduction.

Chairman of the Parish Council Mr H. Chance gave a short introduction, informing The Parish that this is an opportunity for the parishioners of Bitterley to raise any matters of concern to them that relates to their local community. With regards to the planning application for the Solar Farm, if there were members of the public who do not live in Bitterley they would have a chance for their views to be heard and the LJC meeting on the 4th June at Knowbury Village Hall at 7.00p.m.

2. To confirm the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 14th May 2014. The minutes were **APPROVED** and it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be signed and **ADOPTED** as a true record. Proposed by Mr P Lawley-Jones and seconded by Mr DT Price, Minutes **signed by the Chairman.**

3. Annual Report of the Parish Council by the Chairman of Bitterley Parish Council and a statement on the Parish Council annual accounts.

Measures have been undertaken to improve the congestion in the middle of the village at the start and end of the school day. A bus shelter has been erected by the parish council at the bottom of Bedlam lane, thanks to cooperation of Shropshire Council and Mr JV Wheeler. Throughout the year councillors have reported on problems with roads and considered planning applications as they arose. Cleestanton road in Bitterley village has been re-surfaced; the Bus Stops signs will be erased. The parish council now has a website www.bitterley.org.uk. It is in its early stages of life but no doubt will grow and flourish. If any groups in the parish would like to have a page on the website then please do get in touch with the Parish Clerk. The Parish Council is working with Shropshire Council to move towards having a parish-wide flood plan. Two vehicle-activated signs which were due to be put up in Middleton in June/July last year have been ordered but have still not arrived. Both the Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council complained in the strongest terms about the proposed sale of the rectory in Bitterley by Hereford Diocese. Now, just a few short months later, the groupings of all the parishes in the Ludlow Team Ministry are being restructured and it is possible Bitterley with Middleton parish might split off from its current group of six parishes into a smaller group and will need the rectory to house a vicar. You can't put the genie back in the bottle and there is nothing we can do about it now but I wish they had consulted us properly, as they had previously promised they would, and not sold off capital assets to be used for priests' wages. In November the parish council took an active role in the annual Remembrance Day service at Bitterley church; this is a civic service and I for one was glad to see the councillors take a prominent lead in recognising the sacrifice of the men of this parish.

This year we lost Neil Ker, who lived at Bitterley House and farmed on the Bitterley Court estate. Neil was at the heart of village life, not only geographically. He was a long time parish councillor and served twice as chairman. Many people will miss his friendship and his wise counsel. The school continues to thrive and might I say how nice it is to see them using the church for their services again. They are currently in the process of converting to an academy whereby they will have more financial freedom and greater autonomy as far as policy is concerned.

Finance Officer's end of year report: The Clerk produced an Income and expenditure account for the year which showed an Income of £5,621.69 and Expenditure of £5,893.93, giving a brief summary of the breakdown, showing a year-end balance of £4,448.69

4. Planning Application – Solar Farm, Henley

Representatives from Kronos and Graham French, Planning Officer were there to answer any questions.

A resident from Angel Lane asked if the site would be seen from his house. He can currently see the Eco Park. Kronos offered anyone to email them their address, and they will find out.

Mr Huffer, (Shropshire Councillor) said that he had called the application in, to go to the next planning committee for the decision to be made.

The Planning Officer agreed that acceptable objections had to be material considerations. The PO said that any comments that arose from the LJC meeting on the 4th June, which will have representatives from Ludlow Town Council, Ludford Parish Council and other groups, would be taken into consideration, and taken to the planning committee.

A resident asked about the deadline for their submissions. The site notice was dated the 12th May, which meant responses could be made until the 3th June, not the 7th May as first indicated. It appears that the site notice is not being displayed as required, but it is on SC website and has been in the newspapers.

A resident commented that the consultation was not wide enough, as they had not been invited to the meeting that Kronos held on the 31st March, and they are one of the properties most affected.

A resident stated that 3 similar applications had been refused on the basis that could be seen from an AONB.

Kronos stated that the site would not be visible from the AONB.

A comment was made that the site was good agricultural land and not the grade 3b as stated in the application, and the land has been successfully farmed for years.

The site will be significantly visible from AONB, the Eco park, A49, High Vinnals and Clee Hill, as you can see those areas from the site. The area is used for recreation by walkers, horse riders, etc. There is a B & B at the southern part of the field, so it will have an effect on tourism.

It contravenes Shropshire Core Strategy 5 and 17, on the same issues that other applications have been refused on.

It has taken 30 years for the Industrial Estate and Eco Park to get to the size it is, this application is on the same scale!

Government guidelines state that Solar Farms should be on brown field sites not agricultural land.

Solar farms are a good idea, but not on good agricultural land.

Kronos's traffic management plan states that 40-tonne trucks will be using Squirrel Lane to deliver the 22,000 solar panels, it is not able to cope with that heavy movement, Shropshire Council Highways have yet to make any comments.

5. Launch of the Parish Plan Review

The Parish Plan should have been reviewed sooner, to look at people's aspirations, views and ambitions for the parish, to see if things have not been addressed. The last parish plan was hand delivered to everyone in the Parish, but it was highlighted a number of people at the meeting had not been aware of it. Residents were informed that it is on the Parish Council website if they would like to see it. www.bitterley.org.uk. The committee has been re-established to review the last plan, to look at for example, the playground is coming to the end of its life, is it something that is needed or not. It was suggested that there should be a notice board at Ledwyche. The cycle path that was suggested in the current plan, has not happened, but may in the future if it is still felt it is needed. Work will begin soon on updating the plan.

6. Parking at Bitterley School

Mr Davies the Headteacher sent his apologies and Chairman of the school governors Mrs Sara Chance delivered a report.

There is no question that the parking outside the school at the start and end of the school day is a problem – difficult for parents, inconvenient to residents and dangerous for the emergency services. It would not be altogether unfair to surmise that in the past the nettle has not been grasped by the school management because technically what happens outside the premises is not within its remit. However the head teacher and governors are determined to tackle the issue on behalf of the whole community and parking will now remain on the agenda of meetings until it is satisfactorily resolved. There is now a Parking Working Group which reports to the board of governors and which includes two parish councillors.

1. Encourage more parents to use the school bus.

a) Through direct persuasion

b) By asking that children who are on the bus route but outside the area for free bus passes have

all or part of the costs paid

2. Provide on-site parking for staff and visitors

The head teacher has identified an area which is not used by the children which could accommodate around 18 vehicles, meaning that none is parked on the road and none on the playground.

3. Alternative parking for parents

We are currently in discussion with local landowners, primarily the Downton estate, to see if we cannot rent a small parcel of land for parents to drop off and pick up near the school. We have already been in discussion with Shropshire Council as to the best options, especially ones which will not exacerbate the risk of flooding in very heavy weather.

The school is working hand in hand with the Parish Council and other relevant authorities to use a holistic, joined-up approach. This is a joint endeavour and we especially welcome suggestions from parents and residents. Progress will be reported in the parish magazine and we will also hold a public meeting before putting anything in place.

Mr R. Osborne has been in contact with SSHA with regard to taking the pinch point out, to create space. A comment was made by a resident to say that there are cars parked all day in the "Drop off and pick up only" space. A comment was also made that when the planning permission was given for the pre-school, it was on condition that the village hall was used to park in. Some days you are not able to post a letter in the post box, because of the way people park. A resident asked why they hadn't been asked about their thoughts on the various ideas, Mr HCH Chance said that is what this meeting is all about, getting the residents' views. Mr HCH Chance suggested that it would be a good idea for a resident to be on the Parking Working Group, and to have a public meeting to discuss what has been looked at. A resident asked what other ideas had been discussed: Parking at the bottom of the sports field, circular around the school, field by Bridge Cottage (dismissed), bigger layby and parking by the pre-school building.

7. To invite Parish Representatives (including the Shropshire Councillor for Cleve) to address the Meeting.

Mr Huffer (Shropshire Councillor) brought to the attention of the meeting potential signage at the bottom of Dhustone Lane. Cleve Hill Wardens have suggested that there should be an information sign at the bottom of Dhustone Lane. It was thought it should be decided where the funding is coming from, before deciding what wording is on the sign. It would also be easier for the proposers to come up with the wording and for the Parish Council then to make their comments. It was commented that this is a lovely part of the country, and a Do's and Don'ts sign maybe useful, but it needs to be in keeping with Cleve Hill.

8. To invite the public to raise any matters of interest.

It was raised by a member of the public that there is a giant hogweed growing by the roadside fence by Mill Farm. It needs to be killed not just cut down, it will spread over the stream if it is not dealt with. Clerk to notify Phil James at Shropshire Council.

A member of the public asked if the decision that Shropshire Council took not to give Parish Councils the Council Tax Support Grant would be reversed. Richard Huffer (Shropshire Councillor) suggested writing to the Leader of the Council – Keith Barrow with the concerns. It was highlighted that SALC had contacted our MP for his views and the response was that it was only advisory that the Council passed the grant on to Parish Councils. The member of the public then asked what SALC did? SALC provides a wide array of important services to local councils. They make sure that they are represented at a strategic and commissioning level through working closely with unitary partners in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. They ensure local councils are provided with a strong support network to ensure that they have training and technical advice available to them at all times.