

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Portbury Residents  
held in the Village Hall, High Street, Portbury  
on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Cllr Weekes            Cllr Langdon            Cllr Romanski            Cllr Randall  
              Cllr Longstaff            Cllr Ireland

**Chairman:** Cllr Phipps

**Clerk:** Cllr Ireland - Minutes taken by Dawn Drower

**Others:** Forty one members of the public  
              Mr Summerfield – ROW Representative

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1. **Introduction** – Councillor Phipps welcomed residents and explained the purpose of the meeting. He also introduced Councillors individually and explained their role within the Council. Residents were requested to turn-off mobile devices and advised of emergency exit locations.
  
  2. **Convening of Meeting** – Cllr Phipps read the Notice to convene the meeting and was accepted as Chairman for the proceedings.
  
  3. **Minutes of previous Annual Parish Meeting held 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016** – The Minutes were signed as a correct record of the proceedings.
  
  4. **Statement of Parish Accounts 2016/17**  
Cllr Langdon presented the end of year accounts. Income received totalled £21884.47; expenditure totalled £18130.22, leaving a balance of £3754.25. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, closing bank balances were £33110.69 including a ring fenced amount of £13786 which has been reserved for the parish plan development, play scheme, village defibrillator and Village Green improvements and maintenance.

He also advised that the Notice of date of commencement of period for the exercise of public rights had been placed, and that residents could view the relevant financial documents and annual return year ended 31.03.17 between 03.06.17 and 14.07.17 at the Council's offices.

A full set of financial statements would be available to view on the parish website.

Cllr Phipps then explained to residents why there has been an increase in the precept this year – the first since 2014. The reason is two fold, firstly the NSC grant has reduced from £5000 in 2013 down to £500 in 2017, and next year will be zero. So the council has had to account for this. Secondly there is going to be a reduction in services from NSC, and although it is not yet 100% clear where, it will happen. Indeed we have already been experiencing a reduction. So we have had to allow for this in the current year if we want to keep the village up together.

## 5. Portbury Parish Council Chairman's Report

"Two years ago your present Parish Councillors took up their posts and made up a full 8 person Council for the first time for quite a while. We have had one councillor, Mrs Hale leave, and a new councillor Mrs Andrea Ireland join this year. Since there had been no election, only 8 people putting their names forward for 8 positions, we had no specific mandate for what residents wished us to do during our term of office. In our first Newsletter in July 2015 therefore, we set out what we considered to be your priorities which had been determined mostly from the Parish questionnaire that had been completed the year before.

After 2 years I feel we have made good headway on a number of fronts and new challenges have also presented themselves. We have carried out a number of further polls in order to find out more accurately what your views are on a number of issues. With our quarterly newsletter and the use of Facebook for immediate topics we have tried very hard to keep you in touch with things you should know about. Everything that we have received from you by e-mail, phone or Facebook has been picked up and we've tried to act on these things and feedback what we have been able to do.

### **Traffic and Transport –**

This was your key concern overall and we have managed to get agreement for a 20mph zone through the village. This is now in the design stage and we hope to see some proposals very soon. Whilst this in itself will not guarantee to cure our problem of speeding cars through the village it is an important first step. We are very fortunate to have Jo Kemmish an experienced transport engineer in the village, who has helped us enormously. Councillors have spent a lot of time talking to NSC about the problem.

We managed to argue priority for repairs to our worst roads and Priory Road and Station Road has been completed. Sheer persistence by residents in Forge End also resulted in repairs being carried out there, despite budget pressures!

We've not managed to prevent HGV lorries coming into the Village but it has been acknowledged by North Somerset that the traffic orders for our roads are out of date. These are being modified so that the Police can enforce against lorries that ignore clear signage. We hope to get improvement to signs on the M5 which might stop foreign lorries taking a wrong turn.

Parking by non residents of our Village remains an issue and we've just had another busy time with Bluebell visitors. Attempts to get better parking areas have not been very successful despite our efforts. The playing field is an option for the future but we don't have enough volunteers at the moment to make this a workable option. We have

considered more parking restrictions in the Village but this was not generally supported in our polls so this idea is in abeyance although some restriction at the School may be helpful to prevent car sharers taking up space that parents need when dropping off children.

Mysteriously the barriers on the footbridge disappeared one day. This became a traffic issue as motor bikes started using this as a route to and from Portbury. It has taken a lot of effort, but we now have replaced the barriers at the Sheepway end, making the footbridge much safer again.

### **Planning Control -**

We have examined every planning application that affects our Village and in many cases have made extensive comments. Our general policy continues to be to defend the green belt in respect of any new building on non developed land. At the same time we will assess any application from the context of the village itself and try to be supportive but we will also try to influence design so that any resulting property or extension fits in well with the established properties. We try to be helpful to residents as long as it's not unreasonable, or in the green belt.

We have not had to resist any new developments at the docks, although expansion pressures there are still clear. Through good liaison with the Docks management team we keep well informed of what developments are in their pipeline.

The most significant planning issue of all time perhaps was the Pylon fight. In January last year we were informed that our efforts had been successful!!! No pylons through Portbury. As well as being a reward for a great deal of hard work this did give new impetus to the Neighbourhood Plan for the Village. Work that was started as long ago as 2007 now needs to be completed. In its embryo form it was a factor in the Pylon fight; it has even more importance in the future if and when the Green Belt comes under review.

The most critical issue for us therefore in the next period is to complete the Neighbourhood Plan and within that to deal with the issue of development sites in our Parish that were identified during 2016.

The Docks are not now going ahead with the multi storey car park, at least for the moment, so councillors have not needed to do anything.

### **Village Facilities and Services -**

Through our poll we determined that there was wide support for the creation of a Village Shop, possibly located near the Village Hall. At the same time however it was clear that there was a lot of doubt as to whether this would be commercially viable. At the present time therefore we are not actively pursuing any initiative for a shop unless an opportunity arises for a commercial company to become involved.

The Polls also showed wide support for the creation of a car park for the Village Hall, although at the moment there is no land on which to locate this. This would not only help with Village Hall activities but also Portbury Service Station and would ease congestion during the Bluebell season.

The Village Green is looking better and better each year. Your response to the poll about repairing the path confirms that this needs to be done; we are obtaining quotes for 2 options and will decide upon the most cost effective solution. A grant of £1000 was secured from the Tesco "Bags of Help" scheme which will be put towards this. There is also £5000 set aside, as previously mentioned in finance for the Green. The great lime tree is now being inspected regularly and is in very good health. We plan to install a seat at its base.

#### **Neighbourhood Watch -**

This now comes under the wing of the Parish Council; a big thank you to Roy Ball and other coordinators for their efforts over many years to keep the community informed and savvy about crime. We now e-mail out to over 100 people to continue keeping them informed about trends and concerns in the Village. Some may have noticed also that we have installed a CCTV camera on the footbridge; this will hopefully deter villains from using this as an escape route.

#### **Communication -**

And finally, we have kept up our efforts to communicate with you about important matters in the Village. It has to be said that the response to our early newsletters was patchy, in that not many people signed up for the e-mail version. We now produce a quarterly newsletter. Some residents have commented that they are not receiving the newsletter by email. If you are not on the list, please let us have your email address after the meeting. Response to polls was similarly poor, only 40 people bothering to give us their views. Nevertheless we shall continue to issue information using all channels including Facebook.

#### **The next 2 years -**

We plan to continue with all the above activities over the next 2 years. Specifically we want to establish more obvious gateways into the Village. This will be part of the traffic calming regime but will also give the Village a little more "presence". Work on the green will continue and we hope to establish another border to complement the one already created by the WI which is successfully blooming. General footpath repairs are needed and we will need to argue for these. The path running from the High Street by the side of the green is getting very bad and outside 13 to 23 High Street is also very bad indeed. Again we will need to fight for this. Play equipment for toddlers is a desire for the Village, most probably located at the Playing Field. We have some funding already for this and plan to move this forward. Dog mess is unfortunately back at the Playing Field, so if anyone sees someone not picking it up, please tell your councillors, and we will act on it. We are trying to keep Jct 19 tidy, but it is tricky litter picking. Brian Weekes, the village lengthsman spends a lot of time keeping Portbury tidy. As North Somerset reduces services so we will take on the cost of some of this. We have already set the wheels in motion for additional street and drainage gully cleansing. These are important services, all linked to the flooding events we have experienced. Extra litter picks are also being requested. In anticipation of the cost of this we have requested an addition to the Portbury precept which hadn't been raised for about 4 years. The average amount paid by each household is now about £49, which is at the lower end of the scale compared to other villages. Blagdon is perhaps the most sensible comparison to us in terms of size of village and our precept is still lower than there.

### **Future of village and Neighbourhood Plan –**

As you are aware, over the past couple of years we have been producing a Neighbourhood Plan. We need to look ahead and think about what may happen. The Plan is not supposed to be about what you don't want. The Plan is about saying what you do find acceptable if and when the Green Belt is reviewed. It's about having some control over potential future development. This is what the recent development questionnaire is about. It's very important that you give us your views. The Green Belt is under a lot of pressure now, indeed Yatton and Nailsea already have areas of greenbelt being brought forward for development.. If housing quotas change again from Central Government, then there will be more pressure on taking land out of the Green Belt. There are already four sites in Portbury in the system registered by landowners. These sites propose a high density of houses which would have a massive effect on Portbury if this went ahead. We need to get ahead of the game"

Cllr Phipps then gave a slide show of pictures showing the diversity of the village.

Cllr Phipps then went on to comment that the Plan would say what design features need to be incorporated. We have already talked to developers and said that 30 – 40 houses per hectare, twice the density of Priory Road, is not acceptable. We would also like to see some other features added in such as a car park and shop

The Parish Council remains completely open to your ideas for what needs to be done in the village. Cllr Phipps asked residents to continue giving their views on anything that is thought to need attention. He said "We can't do everything, and what we do achieve, takes a lot of effort by our dedicated, volunteer, Councillors."

There is still a vacancy for a councillor, and if anyone were to put their name forward they would find it really interesting.

### **6. Open Forum – Q & As**

Cllr Phipps opened a question and answer session, topics included; CCTV cameras, development and traffic.

One resident enquired where the CCTV camera is situated and where are the notices sited? Cllr Phipps explained that the camera is situated by the footbridge and that the required notices are sited in the locality. Advice had been sought on the correct procedures and notices before so installing the camera. If any other cameras are proposed in the future the same process would be followed. Cllr Phipps clarified that the type of camera installed records on a continuous cycle of about 28 days, thus if an incident occurs the camera might hold useful images.

Several residents were concerned about the density of the proposed developments and added pressure on the local school. Cllr Phipps responded that the developers would be asked to contribute pay to any costs involved in enlarging the school and provide additional car parking. There was also a contrary view that the number of pupils at the school is already falling and that children from other villages are being brought to Portbury. Extra houses in the Village might actually provide more children for the school and make it more sustainable.

Residents were also concerned about the increase pressure of additional traffic on the Portbury roads and the junction with A369 if more houses were built, and the lack of public transport. Cllr Phipps responded that this would all be part of the discussions with NSC and developers.

One resident asked once the Plan is complete what happens to it? Cllr Phipps explained that it takes about two years to write the Plan. Then it goes to NSC to be vetted. This then becomes a first draft document. The first draft will be available in about a year. The Plan then goes to the Planning Inspectorate who approve it, or ask for more work. Once in its final form, the residents of Portbury will be invited to vote in a referendum to accept it or not. The result is a simple majority. This eventually becomes a NSC document, not a PPC document, and potential developers have to start their proposals by reference to what the plan says..

Cllr Phipps thanked residents for attending and the meeting closed at 9.15pm

**Signed as a true record of proceedings;**

**Name:** .....

**Position:** .....

**Date:** .....