

Colney Heath Parish Council



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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF THE COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE CHARLES MORRIS HALL TYTTENHANGER GREEN ON THURSDAY 7th APRIL 2011 AT 7.30pm

Present; -Chair-Cllr D Horner -Cllr P Reeves-Cllr C Brazier-Cllr A Cloke-Cllr J Day
Cllr C Gowens-Vice Chair Cllr D Crump-Cllr R Solts-Cllr K Barnes

Herts Police PC Andrew Shepherd PC39

Clerk & Assistant Clerk; - Mr J E Dean & Mrs Kim Parker-Mead

Public Attendance- 43 members of the Parish attended the meeting

Table Top Displays & information provided by the following organisations;-
Treasure Tots Pre School-Colney Heath and district WI - Twinning Association.

APOLOGIES

Anne Main MP- Sandy Walkington- St Stephens PC- London Colney PC.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair Cllr D Horner welcomed everyone and to take a moment after to view the information and displays from the various local groups. He said all were welcome to join in the refreshments and informally meet councillors after at about 8.45

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2009

Copies of the 2010 minutes were available to everyone attending. The Chairman summarised and asked for approval-the minutes were then approved as correct;-

Proposed By Cllr J Day

Seconded by Alan Cloke

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3. OVERVIEW OF POLICING FOR COLNEY HEATH-PC39 Andrew Shepherd

Reading out details of crime figures PC Shepherd was pleased to report reduced figures on crime in "The Colneys" with the usual diverse issues of making sure about community safety a key objective. Other general ward issues in the parish fly tipping operations against rogue traders. Stolen cars where a number of individuals had been arrested as part of a county wide operation, still continuing. The discovery of a cannabis factory in the district culminated in the arrests of several individuals and cessation of the operation He also spoke about the current IT changes in policing based on intelligence led operations and wider use of other communications. He took several questions from the floor from fly tipping raised by Mr Myland. Issues over the rough sleeper on the common. Cllr Gowens asked about the mini supermarket in Highfield and creating an ASBO for some known offenders. Parking on double yellow lines was raised and speeding or speed limits generally.

The Chair thanked PC Shepherd for the information and attending this evening

John Crump
12/4/12

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ANNUAL REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN Cllr Dennis Horner

First let me say how pleased I am to be given the opportunity to address the parish and report on the progress made by your parish council over this past year. I will try to give a snapshot of some things we have debated and decided upon although this meeting is not a debating meeting. There will be an opportunity to raise any matters when we get to Item 7 or over a glass of wine with your councillor after the meeting. Unfortunately some things have not been finally resolved although progress has been made. We had public meetings to try to resolve the problems with the car parking and other issues on the common. As this is something which has been ongoing for some years, and keeps recurring, it would be good to reach a satisfactory conclusion as we are keen to protect the heath and its environment for future generations. I am sure that with this common aim (pardon the pun!) we can move forward on this. The legal issues with Nuckies Farm continue to be a frustration as we await the final decision from the Central Planning Inspectorate at Bristol following their visit to the site and the properties affected by flooding. To help maintain some of our green spaces we have since developed part of Gloucester Park as allotments. Cllr. Gowens will give an update on this. Regarding the Open Land at Oakland Lane, the council has worked closely with The Smallford Residents Association to secure its future. We opposed the Application for Adverse Possession to the Land Registry which was subsequently withdrawn. Now we are trying to secure the land by means of a lease or purchase from the current owners. We are also looking to see what can be done to protect Smallford Station platform office. We continue to work closely with our local residents associations and remind them they are welcome, as are all members of the public, to attend our parish meetings. The work on the High Street and Traffic calming is now underway including raised crossings at the school and by the Cock pub and dropped kerbs to assist with wheelchair access throughout the village. To tie in with the work, the Parish Council has bought three new bus shelters. One has been installed opposite the Grange, one is to go opposite the Cock and the third is replacing the Richardson Place shelter, being moved back to give a clear pathway and to comply with the DDA regulations. Wistlea Crescent bus stop and shelter is also being moved away from the bend. Last autumn the council made its feelings known regarding the work done on the High Street and up Colney Heath Lane. It was clear that the grading had not been checked nor the potholes filled in before the chip dressing was applied. This really was a case of just papering over the cracks. However we are told that the chip dressing will have to see out its life of 1-2yrs. before further remedial works take place. We have unfortunately had that fatal accident on the longabout which we all warned of. Prior to the accident we had met with Highways to assess their proposals to improve safety on the longabout. We are only sorry that a life was lost before something was done about an issue that was identified as our no.1 priority when we did the Parish Plan in 2004. Moving on to planning issues, although the Parish Council is not responsible for the final decisions, this being the remit of the District Council, we continue to carefully consider and comment upon all applications in our area. Nicholas Breakspeare School have just re-submitted an application for building work and a Multi-use Games Area. Although we have not met since this re-submission, I can say council's stance in opposing the application has not changed. On a more pleasant note, let me thank all those who help make our events like Larks in the Park and the over-60s Christmas Lunch such a success. I know how much effort goes into it-so much appreciated, and to those who keep our grasses cut, flower beds flowering and volunteer litter pickers a very well done. A word of thanks to our faithful team of drivers and couriers who man the Community Bus every Friday helping to provide a much needed service to some who would find it difficult to shop without it. We are always looking for new helpers. So finally, get your cosies and Hawaiian shirts ready for this year's Larks in the Park as the theme is Beach Parties. I will now hand over to the Clerk, John Dean, who will give us an overview of finances and other matters-Thank you.

5. ADMINISTRATION & FINANCIAL REPORT-20010-11 & BUDGETS 2011-12

Clerk to the Council John Dean

Thank you Chair we start in publishing a copy of the Parish Year financial report ending 31st March 2011 You will find a copy on the chair, we also published in the Chronicle last autumn Looking at this year we expect to finish up spending about £197,600 as we are at the moment un-audited and literally days after the end of the finish of 2010-11 financial year. I have been very busy in compiling the figures so you can have details tonight, noting they are un-audited accounts, but may be subject to change. After my several years in this job and knowing CHPC style of spending is familiar to me how and the figures run. We Precept for £155,850 and with grants and other payments have received about £184,000 in the year so we are just short of break even taking into account some write back sums and VAT yet to be repaid. This new parish year 2011-12 we have Precept for £159,840 up just on 3% in order to maintain our services and money to go towards the newly created allotments. Grant Aid for those of you who request help towards your organisation will see the awards this June will be about £7000 in total to 8 organisations. We do scrutinise all applications which should be with us in October November. Your council agreed to maintain the Grants again this year in spite of the financial constraints we are all in. Our Payments and Receipts info is before you, no surprises. I can answer any questions after. Another matter on line Banking-just started Kim is looking after that I have to say so far it works quite well, but we shall see how it saves our time on cash flow with the investments in mind Usual busy time for us in producing the Audi figures and HMRC year end Payroll data to do for all of the 16+ employees we have.

Other non budgeted expenditure

Legal fees expenditure this year are £15,157 mainly defending our long standing issues of a building set on the local flood plain for the parking of static caravans.

Treasure Tots Pre School

Entering our 7th year since starting in 2004 with children taken on both at government funded rates and individual parent funded. Leader Debbie McHale is supported by an excellent team. Please spare a moment to see their table top display set out here this evening. With OFSTED approval for 34 children we continually improve the popular community school aimed at all local families and those from further a field.

Council are very committed to this community pre school benefit to our community. Cllr Dennis Horner is Chair and the Parish Council representative on management committee, both his and my time as Pre School Treasurer given free of any charges. Last year T/T turned over £61,000, again subject to final audit in August. The majority of the expenditure is the payroll. This-year we expect to exceed last year and likely to be nearer the £53,000. Staff Payroll costs are £46,800 our charges are affordable in the comparison locally with commercial schools. Any profit is reinvested or held over. We employ 5 part time permanent and 4 bank staff. We have Audited accounts available for public inspection, your council suggest this is a quite a unique successful business supporting children and all the young families in Conley Heath partially funded by government grants bring in around £32,000 this year and other fees £17,000 per school year. Lunch Club-Walking bus generate another £4200.00

Community Bus

This council runs the regular Friday shopping Bus, Cllr Horner also looks after this with his band of volunteer drivers-it is a very popular facility. We have budgeted this year for running at cost of £1500. Fares set at £2 a passenger and about £14 per week is generated making a small contribution of about £750 to the council subsidy.

Grant Aid

Last year we funded Grant Aid to value of £7,200. For this year 2009-10 in this year we will be giving £7500 and setting a maximum grant of £2000.

Investments

By investing the parish funds we can make our money go further, the Clerk explained

Precept 2011-12

This year's precept is £159,840 representing a slight increase on last year.

Web Site

More plans to create links to other local organisations and generally improve.

Conclusions

With the parish finances are in good shape, we will publish our full accounts after the audit, concluding the issues on finances thank you for listening- My thanks go also to Assistant Clerk -Kim Parker-Mead plus all the other hardworking staff who look after the gardens, commons and recreation areas. No questions were put.

The Chair Cllr Horner thanked the Clerk for the overview of the parish finances.

6. GLOUCESTER PLAYING FIELDS-Cllr C Gowens

Cllr C Gowens gave a brief overview, now been converted to about 20 allotments; it will shortly have a provision for running water paid for by the council at a cost of some five thousand pounds. We have 15 plots now taken and there is a waiting list. Adding there will be some 40 more allotments off Hixberry Lane via Highfield Park Trust who are developing the land for this.

LARKS IN THE PARK: - Assistant Clerk -Kim Parker-Mead

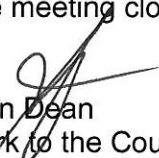
The event that was so successful last year is going ahead again the date is 26th June at Roestock Park. The general organisation is progressing.

QUESTIONS & MATTERS RELATING TO THE PARISH & PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- Access to the Alban Way has seemingly been denied with SCADC not wishing to have a mixed use, claiming it has in part always been used for equestrian recreation and children's ponies. Stakeholders were going to write Cllr Brazier suggested this was a rights of way issue with HCC and SCADC.
- A question over the green belt was answered by Cllr Brazier
- Improving public transport in Colney Heath, the rural bus service is poor.
- What about the problems of the A414 Longabout-a question from the floor.
- Mrs Falk wished to thank Andrew Shepherd for his police work on the recent neighbourhood issues in Springfield Close. But still work to be done on HGV use of the road for turning and the bridge weight restriction being ignored.
- Boundary issues were raised regarding residents on the Franklin Close and Bullens Green Lane parts not in Colney Heath. Cllr Brazier was confident of seeing a resolve to this long outstanding request from residents.

The Chair in summing up said we had covered a lot of parish topics, in the questions that were answered. He thanked those Councillors for their contribution that have or will be deciding not to stand for parish council elections again in May, when we might have a totally new council. He thanked all attending, and providing the displays, the parish staff for their hard work. Finally that he was closing the meeting and all are welcome to stop & enjoy the food and a glass of wine with us from the refreshments.

The meeting closed at 8.42 pm


John Dean
Clerk to the Council

Refreshments served for all attending until 10pm.

Copies available on the parish web-site;-Note no responsibilities accepted for errors typos or mistakes or statements until this is approved by council @ Mtg-Published-2011- © Jed/full-CHPC- MINS- 2011-@ 23/05/11--No copies to be made or alterations without permission of Clerk- Word count -2420-4, pages- E&OE-