

# Drayton Parish Council

## Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting Held on Monday 2nd APRIL 2012 at 7pm At DRAYTON VILLAGE HALL, LOCKWAY, DRAYTON

**Present:** Parish Councillors: Daniel Scharf (Chairman); Heather Morrison; Jenny Pooley; Richard Webber; Richard Williams; Laurence Zipson. **In attendance:** David Perrow (Parish Clerk)

**Parishioners:** 42 members of public attended during the course of the meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES:** Naomi Broomfield; Julian Fowler; Robert & Jackie Walker

2. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2011**

The Minutes were agreed (Proposed: Jenny Pooley; Seconded: Richard Webber) and were signed by the Chairman, Daniel Scharf

3. **PARISH COUNCIL. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT. The Chairman of the Parish Council, Daniel Scharf, gave his report:**

*(a) The Present Parish Council*

This is the end of this Council's first year out of four. We end it with 8 councillors out of an allotted 11. This means that we could either be doing less for the village than could be expected or are all overworked. What is more certain is that the Council is less representative of the village than it should be which is the stand out reason why we need volunteers to get as wide a section from the village as possible involved in some very important debates – I am thinking of the Localism Act and the potential for community or neighbourhood planning in particular.

*(b) Housing Supply Policy*

Without wanting to tread on Heather Morrison's toes or pre-empt the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting, I need to highlight the Interim Housing Supply Policy (IHSP) and the Housing Needs Survey (HNS) as important past and present issues for the village. Every household should have received a questionnaire for a survey the results from which should give a relatively clear picture of where there is housing need, possibly leading to a development of affordable housing. The Parish Council would probably like to supplement this with further survey work to establish what the village feels about less acute housing need – what if any new housing is wanted and if so, what kind and where it might be built.

This leads onto the IHSP consultation (details in the April Drayton Chronicle) which shows which landowners are keen to build houses in the very short term. This will be discussed later but please note that the Parish Council needs to know your views asap as it will be discussed in time for our reply to be submitted before 20 April.

*(c) Charging for Transport to School*

The next most important issue has been the change of policy by the County Council to charge for taking children to John Mason from inside a 3 mile walking distance. Sincere thanks are due to Karen Sharman (who joined the Parish Council briefly during the year and I hope will do so again at some time in the near future) and Jackie Cook for taking this fight to the Council and whom, with the support of other parents, attended a 'village appeal' and persuaded OCC to look again at the safety of the route – if this appeal fails individual appeals will follow. The Parish Council followed where they and other parents have led and have raised other issues relating to the process followed in making this change of policy. The Parish Council is very concerned that this transport policy (amounting to an annual charge of £240 per child) is extremely divisive and discriminatory.

*(d) Land for Recreational Use in the Village/Manor Farm Development*

The third item to highlight is the possibility of obtaining land suitable for providing extended sports facilities. Over ten years ago permission was granted for 16 houses to be built on land at Manor Farm (opposite the Red Lion) subject to a legal agreement requiring about half the remaining land off Henleys Lane to be transferred to the Parish Council. The cooperation of the Parish Council was secured to enable access to this housing using one of the roads across the village green. In response to a request for a supplementary agreement, the Parish Council questioned the value of the land being offered in the original agreement. The Earl of Plymouth suggested as an alternative that the field between Lockway and the A34 might be made available. Many of the residents on the western side of Lockway attended a Parish Council to express concerns, claiming that the land would be unsuitable for recreational use. At a later meeting a resident of Steventon Road expressed concern about changes which might then occur to the existing recreation field. Apart from a further negotiation with EoP that established that the whole (and not just half) of the field would be made available and an argument about the size of a cash payment, that is as far as the matter has gone. The site is now being considered by the VWHDC for housing under the IHSP. If it is not accepted as being suitable for housing and offered again to the Parish Council, a public meeting is likely to be held to discuss the merits of PC land ownership and use.

*(e) Other Issues*

Other issues which have engaged the Parish Council are blue commemorative plaques (one for Rev Robinson is recommended for the Church Tower), the village web site, the bus service, rights of way issues, grants and the playground upgrade.

*(f) Thanks*

Thanks to Steve Sadler our (relatively) new caretaker, Julian Cook for continuing to cut the grass who between them keep the village looking good. I am very grateful to those taking care of the allotment management - primarily Tim Atkins. I should say at this point that the growing waiting list could be a challenge to the Parish Council in the coming months or years. We should all be grateful to Ann Webb and Sheila Cook and their helpers in the management of the Village Hall and Day Centre respectively and to those running the Alms houses and other clubs and societies, with special mention to Rita and those running the Damascus project, which contribute to the social glue of village life. Can I extend a warm welcome to Revd. Rebecca Peters and I hope that her stay in the village will be a long and happy one. Thanks to all the councillors particularly in their roles as chairs of committees and working groups. Especial thanks to David Perrow our clerk for his expert handling of the very complex regulations and processes under which this lowest level of the Country's democracy operates.

*(g) Need for More Community Involvement/Volunteers*

I would like to end this report on the topic of democracy. I applaud all the work done by and on behalf of the village societies. I must also thank our County Councillors Mike and Marilyn Badcock and District Councillor Richard Webber for their diligence and work on our behalf. But – and it is a very big but – I am more nervous than ever about the future of your Parish Council. At the beginning of this report I made the distinction between the work to be carried out by the Parish Council and its representation of those resident in the village. Yes, there are jobs which have to be done and more helping hands would be good. However, the greatest concern is to make the Parish Council more representative in the very important decisions it will be required to take in the next year or two, including those in respect of new housing and recreational facilities.

*Daniel Scharf (Chairman)*

#### **4. REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS**

**(a). FINANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE.** The Clerk presented and commented on the Parish Council's Finances as follows:

**Comparison of 2010-11 Outturn and 2011-12 and 2012-13 budgets**

<b>Income (VAT excluded)</b>	<b>2010-11 Outturn</b>	<b>2011-12 budget</b>	<b>2012-13 budget</b>
Precept	£32,000	£32,000	£40,000
Allotments	£237	£510	£450
Burial Ground/Memorials	£1405	£1200	£1500
Interest	£251	£150	£50
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£33,893</b>	<b>£33,860</b>	<b>£42,000</b>
<b>Expenditure (VAT reclaims excluded)</b>			
Administration	£11,314	£12,000	£11,085
Grants and Donations S19	£10,947	£12,500	£17,400
S137	£1,200	£3,500	£1,500
S142	£560	£600	£1,000
Burial Ground/Allotments	£1,886	£1500	£2,050
Play/Recreation	£1,447	£1750	£2180
Public Amenities/Open Spaces	£5,611	£5460	£5475
ROW	£430	£700	£1,100
Miscellaneous	£827	£0	£210
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£34,222</b>	<b>£38,010</b>	<b>£42,000</b>

**Grants 2011-2012**

Drayton Boules Club	£100
South and Vale Carers	£300
Caudwell Day Centre	£500
Drayton Football Club	£60
Home Start Southern Oxfordshire	£200
DAMASCUS	£3,000
Drayton Village Hall	£3,000
The Abingdon Bridge	£500
Abingdon Citizens Advice Bureau	£1,000
Ryder-Cheshire Volunteers	£350
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>£9010</b>

**(b) PLANNING COMMITTEE. The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Heather Morrison, gave her report:**

*(i) The Planning statistics for 2011-2012*

For Drayton we received 28 planning applications in 2011-12. Of these the Parish Council fully approved of one and did not object to any, although for 7 applications we did set out concerns we had about them and/or suggested conditions or amendments that should be made. Of these 28 applications, 4 were withdrawn and 3 are still pending a decision by the Vale of White Horse District Council. The VWHDC permitted 19 of the remaining 21 applications, refusing 2.

*(ii) VWHDC Interim Housing Supply Policy*

As can be seen from the above statistics, there have not been any applications which have caused great concern during the past year. However, the Parish Council has considerable concern for the future, through a combination of the changes to planning law being brought in, and the draft Interim Housing Supply Policy (IHSP) moved by the VWHDC. In the immediate future, the IHSP is of greatest concern, and may be compounded by the planning law changes. The Parish Council sent in a consultation response to the VWHDC on the IHSP, listing 15 points of concern. The IHSP has been brought in by the VWHDC to cover the period before the next formal Plan comes into force, and as a way to meet its house building quota. To meet this target the VWHDC is intending to “relax” its present guidelines on acceptable development, and the consequence could be permanent detriment to the environment of villages such as Drayton, by imposing inappropriate one-size –fits-all development quotas upon them, with little regard to the consequent shortfalls in infrastructure that additional population will bring – especially our already congested roads and availability of places at the already oversubscribed village school.

*(iii) Additional Housing Proposed for Drayton by VWHDC*

This could result in significant development outside the village, removing protection for the countryside – the Parish Council is very concerned that to meet the short term horizon of achieving a target over the next 2 years the long term character of the Vale – and Drayton in particular - could be sacrificed with potentially permanent degradation of the environment. For Drayton the IHSP has calculated an additional 68 extra dwellings (in fact 88, which includes the as yet unbuilt Manor Farm development) as “proportionate development”, with the 15 house development limit for larger villages being scrapped as a consequence. The scrapping of this upper limit of 15 is in itself a concern as it could lead to a very large single additional development which would radically change the character of the village for ever.

*(iv) ‘Screening’ Requests from Developers Received by VWHDC*

“Screening” requests have been invited from developers, which will be considered by planning officers. It is not made clear where the democratic process fits into this. The implications appear to be that planning officers will examine the requests and if they fit within the IHSP they will then be invited to make a planning application and only then will the plans be available for comment by residents, parish and town councils, and possibly ultimately a decision before the planning committee. The consequence so far is that 7 screening applications have so far been received for Drayton, totalling over 400 houses. 3 sites are for 30 to 40 houses, but another 3 are suggesting developments of around 100, 170 and 200 houses respectively, well outside the IHSP “quota” and which would have a devastating impact upon the character of the village.

*(v) Effect of the IHSP/Screening Applications on village plans*

Even if all these proposals are turned down at the screening stage, it will have the inevitable consequence of raising hopes and expectations amongst landowners and developers and will mean that plans the Parish Council had to find suitable land for recreation in the village are almost certainly undermined, as landowners will not want to sell as agricultural land what they might hope to sell for much more for development. For example the Parish Council was in discussion with the Earl of Plymouth Estates and taking soundings within the village for possible swap of the land to be received by the Parish Council by Henleys Lane as part of the Manor Farm planning consent, with land behind Lockway. The Lockway site is now one of those put forward for screening for development of around 100 houses under the IHSP.

*(vi) Extra People needed to cope with local planning*

Going forward, there is therefore clearly some uncertainty about how things will unfold on the planning front within the village. The Parish Council, already under strength, would therefore welcome new members to help deal with what could be a considerable threat to the existing character of the village.

*Heather Morrison (Chairman of Planning Committee)*

**(c) RIGHTS OF WAY AND CONSERVATION WORKING GROUP. The Chairman of the ROW&C Working Group, Jenny Pooley, gave her report:**

*(i) State of Footpaths/Dumped Litter and Waste*

Thanks to the moderate winter weather and the work of our caretaker, Steve Sadler, the footpaths and bridleways have stayed in good condition this year. Sadly there is always the problem of bottles and cans being thrown along the paths, and during the year the bridleway alongside the A34 was completely blocked to horses by someone irresponsibly dumping a large quantity of concrete; after much negotiation it was finally removed by Biffa.

*(ii) Rooks Nest path steps improvements*

Perhaps the most satisfying achievement has been the installation of steps at the end of Rooks Nest path, so that the descent on to the B4016 is now easier and safer. This success led the Parish Council to suggest to Sutton Courtenay PC that similar work should be carried out on Footpath 17, almost opposite the turn towards Milton; though in Sutton Courtenay parish the path is much nearer to Drayton. In cooperation with the OCC this has been done and what was once quite a hazardous drop is now hugely improved.

*(iii) Stimpson oak*

At the end of 2010 the Parish Council planted an oak tree in memory of long serving Councillor, Norman Stimpson. Unfortunately lack of rain and an unsatisfactory method of watering meant the tree did not survive. We are grateful to Richard Ballard, VWHDC Parks Officer, for the recent planting of another, larger tree at no charge. Having learned a hard lesson, it is hoped we shall do better at ensuring this one survives. We also have plans to plant a tree in the burial ground this year to replace one that had to be felled.

*(iv) East Way*

The Parish Council had received representations again about the state of the footway at the entrance to East way, and what action to take in talking to OCC about this was on the agenda for the PC meeting following.

**(d) LEISURE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE. The Chairman of the Leisure and General Purposes Working Group, Richard Williams, gave his report:**

*(i) Lockway Playground Refurbishment*

The biggest single project undertaken in the last year was the refurbishment of the children's playground in Lockway. It was felt that, although the playground was in a serviceable and safe condition, it was looking a little tired, and could do with some new equipment and a general sprucing up. Funds did not permit a complete replacement of all items, and in any case some, such as the swings, continued to be popular and well-used. Four firms were approached to supply proposals and costings for the refurb. and three responded. The Parish Council then carried out a consultation exercise with the most important people concerned, i.e. the children, and visited Drayton School and a number of youth groups as part of this process. Together with the whole Parish Council, it was eventually agreed that the best combination of new equipment and value for money was offered by Wicksteed and the contract was accordingly awarded to them.

The plans included the removal of the existing climbing frame, and the installation of four new items. Work was carried out towards the end of September last year, in what many will remember was unseasonably, and blisteringly hot, weather. This immediately gave us some problems with the bedding in of new turf, which was difficult to keep adequately watered, but as the weather cooled, we were able to resolve the difficulties. As part of the deal, we secured a cache of paint from Wicksteed for future touching up or re-painting, and our new caretaker, Steve Sadler has done an excellent job in giving the whole playground a face-lift. As far as one can tell from general observation, the playground is getting a lot more use since the refurb. was done, and therefore the project appears to be a success. It's possible that other older items might be replaced in a second phase but nothing is definitely planned at the present time. Total cost of the refurb. was approx. £16,650, which with VAT came in at just under £20K. The VAT however is reclaimable.

*(ii) Maintenance of open spaces in the village*

Elsewhere, Julian Cook continues to do the grass-cutting around the village, while Steve Sadler the caretaker looks after general maintenance, collection of litter etc. Between them, they are doing a fine job in looking after the village, and the burial ground in particular, I believe, is a credit to Drayton. Robin Butler is no longer a Parish Councillor, but he lives nearby the burial ground and kindly continues to keep a close eye on hedges, trees and plants in and around the burial ground and allotments, and has advised and assisted with a number of maintenance issues.

*(iii) Allotments*

Allotment rents have not been increased, and although receipts were down this year, this is due only to a re-timing in collection dates, meaning that most of this year's rents were collected last year. Normally income from the allotments is around the £450-500 mark.

*(iv) Burial Ground*

Income from burial ground fees was £1245, although obviously this amount varies from year to year. As residents will be aware, in the previous year, the Parish Council spent a substantial sum to have headstones made safe, so as to comply with Health & Safety legislation. This exercise has not had to be repeated, but Julian Cook has now attended a training course in memorial testing and maintenance, and the Parish Council hope that regular checks will prevent further problems from arising.

**(e) Press & Public Relations Working Group**

At the first monthly meeting following the election of the new Parish Council it was proposed and approved that a new working group be created with specific responsibility for Public Relations and & Press activities. The first action of the new working group was to draw up its Terms of Reference which

included defining how members of the Parish Council in their official capacity will communicate with the Press.

**(i) Village website** - the group assisted the Community Trust with the launch of the website in June 2011 and has provided input into the sites working practices.

**(ii) Blue Plaque proposal** – it was the working group that put together the official nomination following the suggestion made by a Church Warden at St Peters re the Revd. F.E. Robinson which is pending approval.

**(iii) Village News** - the Group provides important news via the village website and ensure that this is also communicated to the Drayton Chronicle and wider press as and when required.

**(iv) Village Hall** - the Chair of the Working Group is currently providing some assistance to the Village Hall with its communications and publicity activities

The Group is more than willing to offer support and advice to any of the Villages organisations with its communications. Please contact the Parish Clerk in the first instance.

*Laurence Zipson (Chairman - PR & Press Working Group)*

## **5. Parish Accounts**

- The final accounts for the Parish Council for the year 2010-2011 were available for public inspection
- The latest accounts for the DAMASCUS Youth Project were available for inspection.
- The latest accounts for the Millennium Green Trust were available for inspection.
- The latest accounts for the Village Hall were available for inspection.
- The latest accounts for the Caudwell Day Centre were available for inspection.
- Drayton Parochial Charities

## **6. REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS FOR THE PARISH**

### **(a) DISTRICT COUNCILLORS'S REPORT. Richard Webber gave his report:**

- Cllr Webber reflected on the May 2011 elections and his dual role as District & Parish Councillor. At VWHDC level there was a change in political control
- The most important recent issue raised by the VWHDC was the Interim Housing Supply Policy (IHSP). This was necessary of a 2 year gap between the expiry of the last Core Strategy in 2011 and the availability of its replacement in 2013. The VWHDC had to demonstrate to government that it had a 5 year land supply in place to meet target housing numbers. Site plans for 568 houses had been submitted for Drayton under the IHSP screening process. Only a target of 68 houses (plus 20 at Manor Farm) were proposed under the IHSP.
- VWHDC was proposing to reduce the number of district councillors from 51 to 38. A consultation had just been launched to obtain public views on this proposal.
- Biffa Waste Contract. It was pleasing to report that amongst district councils in England the South and VWHDC are now ranked 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> for recycling waste, both over 70%
- Rate charges. Both the VWHDC and Oxfordshire County Council had not increased their rates, but each had received a 2.5% increase in government grant for not doing so. The Parish Council had increased its precept from £32k to £40k (£8k, or 25%), largely to meet inflation in costs and also to support local organisations with additional grant in the light of others cuts in their funding.
- Localism. The Localism Act was now in force and gave powers to local communities.

- Jubilee Celebrations. There was to be a Sunday Jubilee Picnic which would be a bring-your-own food with soft drinks and a Jazz band laid on, and games for young people.

**(b) COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORT. Neither Mike nor Marilyn Badcock was able to be present at the Annual Parish Meeting, so no report was received on Oxfordshire County Council matters.**

## **7. HOUSING SUPPLY**

Daniel Scharf outlined the IHSP screening applications – currently 7 in number – made by landowner to the South, East and West of Drayton. A number of residents contributed to the discussion on the IHSP before the Chairman suggested that the matter was too important for the limited time now available and invited written comments to Parish Council before 17 April. One resident suggested that there might be some benefit in a small amount of planned growth with community benefits. Another took comfort from Cllr Webber's assurance that the number of dwellings to be permitted would be less than those being screened by VWHDC.

The Parish Council - and other concerned individuals/parties – had been invited to respond to the screening applications **by 20th April 2012.** Drayton residents were invited to email their views to the Parish Clerk ([draytonclerk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:draytonclerk@yahoo.co.uk)) as soon as possible, and/or to make their own representations to their District Councillor (Richard Webber) or direct to VWHDC.

Daniel Scharf reminded residents that in a parallel exercise the Parish Council had distributed a Housing Needs Questionnaire to be returned **to ORCC by 30th April 2012.** The results of this questionnaire would allow the Parish Council to make representations to VWHDC about the demand for affordable – as opposed to luxury – homes in any scheme agreed for Drayton.

Richard Williams outlined the process of Neighbourhood Planning, based on the experience of three local councils who were already engaged in drawing up plans. They can cost between £17k - £60k to draw up (though govt. grants are available for part-funding), and do require a great deal of voluntary effort – Woodcote have 15 extra volunteers helping the Parish Council with theirs. The Plan, once drawn up, must be put to a village referendum and needs 50% of those voting in favour to be adopted and usable under the new planning law.

## **8. TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER MATTERS RAISED BY PERSONS PRESENT AT THE MEETING**

Some 42 members of the public were present. 12 members of the public spoke.

- **Damascus Project (Rita Atkinson/Gary Hibbins)**

Rita and Gary outlined the current work by DAMASCUS, which has a 5 year grant from the Big Lottery Fund supplemented by grants from Champion Recruitment and the local parish councils. Rita discussed the targets and projects agreed with the Big Lottery, and Gary focussed on the Young Leaders programme, introducing Chelsea Dennis, Liam Harris and Harry Latimer who have recently started work as volunteers under this programme. Chelsea, Liam and Harry gave a PowerPoint presentation on their work of engaging with young people, building positive relationships, mentoring and taking part in local drop-in sessions.

- **Football Clubs – Drayton Wasps (Gary Hibbins)**

Gary reported that the WREN grant application for the planned refurbishment of the Football Pavilion had been refused with reasons given being lack of sufficient consultation with the local community and co-ordination with the Village Hall. The Football Club would now be applying for a grant from Support England, which has a deadline of end July.



- **Drayton Community Trust (Andrew Bax)**  
Andrew reported that the main activity during the past year was the setting up of the website with the kind assistance of Alastair Grundy as the developer and webmaster for the first few months. Laurence Zipson had now agreed to take over as the next webmaster.
- **Millennium Green**  
Nick Hamilton was not able to be present at the meeting. Daniel Scharf reported that Nick had indicated that he wished to stand down as Millennium Green chairman, and that anyone interested in taking over the role should talk to Nick. Jenny Pooley reported that the Parish Council had provided a rubbish bin near the pond on the Millennium Green. Sadly, this was being abused by people putting dog faeces in with the litter, even though Dog Bins are provided by the Parish Council at several points on footpaths at the entrance to the Millennium Green.
- **Allotments (Tim Atkins)**  
Tim reported that 6 people are now on the waiting list. There had been one new tenant in the last year. There had been several break-ins to sheds this year, with some tools stolen but in other cases just what appeared to be petty vandalism. Crops had also been stolen.
- **St Peter's Church (Revd. Rebecca Peters)**  
Criminals had also struck the Church this year, with some lead removed from the roof and recently with the theft of a rare medieval panel. The Church has had to be closed, though it would be open during Holy Week, and would hopefully re-open when additional security measures being discussed were put in place.
- **School Transport (Jacky Cook)**  
Jacky reported that OCC had told parents that they had received new guidance from the government (not yet disclosed to parents) and that another re-assessment of risks on the walking route had now been undertaken following this guidance. The Appeal hearing will re-convene on 28<sup>th</sup> April.
- **Twining Project (Stephen Fearnley)**  
Stephen reported that last year had seen the 36 visitors from Lesparre-Madoc visit Drayton. In August 2012 Drayton residents would make the return visit. All welcome.

## **8. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS**

Daniel Scharf thanked everyone for coming to the meeting, which closed at 8.40pm.

**Refreshments were served and the regular monthly meeting of the Parish Council followed on at 9pm.**

**Signed:**

**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

**Name: Daniel Scharf**

**Role: Chairman, Drayton Parish Council**