

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PARISH MEETING HELD  
26<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2010 IN THE MEETING ROOM, PUCKLECHURCH COMMUNITY  
CENTRE, ABSON ROAD.**

**Present.** O.A. Beg Parish Council Chairman, Diane Bailey Parish Clerk, Mr. P.J. Green, Mr. & Mrs. Humphrey, Mr. M. Smith, Mr. R. Symons, Mrs. E. Stone, Mr. M.S. Watson, Mr. L.J. Whittock, Mr. A. Woods.

Mr. Beg presided welcoming everyone to the meeting.

**NO 1. Apologies for absence.** Mrs. E. Webb.

Copies of the minutes of the previous meeting dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 2009 were available and those present asked to confirm they were a true record. It was proposed by Mr. Watson and seconded by Mr. Whittock that the minutes be signed.

**NO 2. Parish Council Chairman's Report.** Mr. Beg gave the following reported. A year ago I began with issues around the Regional Spatial Strategy and its impact on the Parish – particularly Shortwood. I recently received an email confirming the RSS has been scrapped, this is good news but we should perhaps ponder what alternative proposals the new Government might have for housing in South Gloucestershire and particularly our area.

Housing. Council recently met with representatives from Sovereign Housing and S.G.C. who showed us a new outline plan for the proposed Oaktree Avenue development and Doctors Surgery. The new plan differed little from the previous one which did not go down well with Councillors. After some searching and incisive questions I then presented five requirements which Council expect SGC to take seriously before they come back with further proposals in the autumn? Once a scheme has been presented to SGC by Sovereign a period of consultation will be held to which you will be invited.

Proposed Park and Activity Area. Last November SGC held a consultation so that village views on the proposed Park and Activity could be raised. Most members of Council were present for the majority of the time in which the consultation took place so I was less than amused to read 'Parish Councillors had left the meeting when it became heated'. The two representatives from SGC who were available for discussion and to offer information were given a very hard time and I was personally embarrassed by the behaviour of some villagers.

Grants. Thanks to Cory Environmental Trust we have been able to complete the fencing around the recreation field. This not only improves the visual aspect but also increases safety. The grant meant we were able to use Council funds for other projects such as bus shelters.

Colleagues have continued to work not only on Parish matters but on S.G. wide groups such as Safer, Stronger Communities Group and Avon Local Councils Association. We

have also had additional meetings to discuss the Parish Plan and will do so again in the near future. Colleagues have also dealt with many individual parishioners concerns. Their dedication, commitment and expertise has enabled Council to work to improve village amenities – give SGC our views on planning and other matters and ensure we have used the budget wisely. Diane Bailey has again a source of much advice as our Clerk and without her we should not be able to do our work effectively.

I have again had the privilege of Chairing Council and following our annual internal election earlier this month I was again elected as Chairman whilst Alan Holder continues as Vice Chairman and I especially thank him for all his work for the Parish.

Next year is election year for both South Gloucestershire and Parish elections – now is the time to begin thinking if you have a part to play in the running of our Parish Council – the village needs a Council to continue the developments which have been started during the last few years – so please think about your possible role in this important activity.

**NO 3. Financial Report of Audited Accounts 2008/9.** The clerk confirmed the accounts for 2008/9 had been audited and that £12,383.00. was carried forward.

The accounts for 2009/10 have been prepared and the Annual Return completed and signed at the Parish Council Meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> May. Income including precept was £40,649.00. expenditure £41,139.00. The carried forward figure minus the deficit means £11,893.00. is being carried forward to 2010/11. The clerk confirmed the external audit would be carried by Mazars LLP and that the accounts will be available for inspection by the electorate between 1<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> July.

Mr. Beg advised that the £2000.00. payment received per annum from Hutchinson 3G for the communication mast erected on Lyde Green Common would cease after this year. The title Lord of the Manor of Westerleigh that includes the common has been bought by Norft Ltd to whom future payments will have go.

**NO 4. Report of Unitary Authority.** See addendum.

**NO 5. Report for Pucklechurch Primary School.** Mr. Andy Woods advised he is Chair of the Governors and that the Governors have for 2years been working closely with staff and children to bring about the £1.7m. rebuild. The work will start on the first day of the summer holidays; they are working closely with local people as there will be some inconvenience to neighbours.

The summer production is in full swing, years 3,4,5 & 6 are focusing on South America and as the audience has to play a part the whole production will be an interactive experience.

The School hosts some community events and it would like to host more clubs once the new build is complete.

The two reception classes are putting in a float for Revel and School Sports days will be taking place during Revel week.

The School Fete will be held on 27<sup>th</sup> May between 6 – 8pm.

The School is working to improving children's writing ability and has for the past 12months been developing school values. People were consulted about the Schools key values. Mr. Wood said most people thought they were Integrity – Respect – Compassion.

Mr. Smith suggested the school enter event dates on the community calendar on the web site. It was a useful way of making sure dates don't coincide with other events.

Mr. Humphrey expressed concern that building sites were a magnet for thieves and wondered if there would be security people on site, especially during the school holidays. Mr. Wood confirmed there would be security on site and the School has also made the Community Police Officer aware.

Mr. Watson asked if the number of children starting School was lower. Mr. Wood confirmed the number of children in reception was generally lower but revised figures indicated numbers rising.

#### **NO 6. Report from Local Organisations.**

St. Thomas a Becket Church – Clerk received the following written report.

All the special services at Church have been well received. They had a very full Church for Remembrance Sunday, the School Concert, the Carol Service, Christingle, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. They also have good congregations for Easter and All Souls Services; special times like Messy Church, Light Party, Harvest and Patronal Festivals continue to be popular.

The average Church attendance in 2009 was 36 adults with 14 young people [excluding the Festival Services]. Fund raising efforts help to keep the building in good repair and the Scarecrow competition was again very successful and raised £2200.00; the Church was very active with lots of people out and about taking part in the competition, the money raised will be used to extend the present toilet facilities.

Work to remove the remaining pews will start at the end of June they will be replaced with chairs.

The Union Flag at the top of Tower is not flying at the moment for health and safety reasons.

The Church Council is investigating the possibility of a suitable fall arrest system to fix to some of the very high wall mounted ladders.

They would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued support by way of a grant of £800.00. towards the upkeep of the Churchyard.

They try hard to keep the running expenses of the Church in the black, from weekly giving but with high fuel costs, insurance, etc this is not always possible.

Twinning. Mrs. Elaine Stone was invited to give the report. She advised twinning was in its 22<sup>nd</sup> year, friends from Pringy had visited at Easter and this on visit there had been a lot of young people. Pucklechurch would be going over in October (half term) there were some spaces and they would be very pleased to have new families join them. They have lots of social events ie. race evening, wine & cheese, bar-b-que, Twinning is great for children and families a good group to join.

Good Neighbour. – See addendum.

Revel. Mrs. Stone gave the following report. Last year's Revel was very successful in terms of the amount of monies raised, the support of local organisations, the amount of sponsorship raised and the numbers of people who flocked to the field on Revel day. Almost £7,000.00. was distributed between 20 village organisations towards projects, equipment, and starting up groups.

Plans for this year started after the AGM and are now coming together they hope to have another successful revel with the community not only raising money but coming together - particularly on Revel Day. The Beer Festival will be as last year at the beginning of the week with live music and a wider range of beers and ciders. Other events through the week include a children's treasure hunt, a ramble, thanksgiving service, quiz night, junior folk dance, skittles challenge, bingo night, fancy dress pram race and two school sports days. The theme this year is 'celebrations' and the parade kicks off at 12.00 led by the African Samistas a Bristol based dance and percussion group and our own newly formed majorette group. They will also perform in the arena along with a dog agility display. Once again we have a craft fair, fun fair and cream teas etc.

Although many letters have been written it has been harder to get sponsors this year. Draw tickets are out so please buy some or sell some outside the village. The leaflet giving further details of Revel events will be delivered with the next edition of Pucklechurch News.

Besides Revel week the Revel Committee also put on a photography competition and exhibition, a Christmas Tree lighting ceremony and a newcomers evening to which newcomers are invited to find out what is on offer in the village.

Community Plan. Mr. Martin Smith made the following report. After over three years of effort the steering group are in the final stages of completing the plan. The four working groups represent the following areas:

- Environment.
- Community Spirit.

- Traffic & Transportation.
- Sustainability.

Each of the groups has already presented an outline of their conclusions to the Parish Council and will have detailed discussions in June with the objective being that the plans are adopted by the Parish Council at the July Meeting.

Once adopted the plan will be used by the Parish Council to guide its decisions in the coming years. It will also be distributed within South Gloucestershire Council and used to help their decision making.

Much of the detail of the plan has already been completed and is available on the community website. In fact the results of the survey have already been used extensively, such as - the importance of the Green Belt, affordable housing needs within the Parish, fly-tipping hot-spots as well as being the catalyst for the formation of the Good Neighbours Scheme and the Sustainability Group (although this group is currently in the process of being reformed).

Once the plan is adopted a printed summary will be produced and distributed with Pucklechurch News.

Community Website. Mr. Smith made the following report. The website now has nearly 200 pages of information. Information about your organisation can either be hosted on Pucklechurch.org or a link provided to your own website. I have noticed that some organisations information is out of date so please remember to send changes when they occur as I try to update the website every few days.

Just a reminder for groups who are organising events to please send information so it can be included in the Village Calendar. Even if the event is not open to people outside the group it does help other organisations to plan their events without them clashing.

The website gets approximately 9,000 visits each month and at the end of each month an email newsletter goes out to subscribers with details of all the events on the village calendar. If you haven't already done so it is easy to subscribe – just visit [www.pucklechurch.org](http://www.pucklechurch.org) and click on the link on the left of the page.

Safer, Stronger Community Group. Mr. Watson made the following report. The S.S.C.G. for the Boyd Valley area took a long time to get established and to be running effectively due to the size and different communities. Sarah Turley stood down as Chair and I took over, the next meeting is the 1<sup>st</sup> June in the Community Centre and before the meeting there will be an opportunity to see the S.G. Core Strategy Consultation Document.

Any Other Business. Mr. Beg said if anyone was looking for a wooden seat for their garden they could contact St. Thomas a Becket Church as they are selling pews.

Mr. Smith said he has noticed that some Parish Councils publish draft minutes of their Annual Parish Meeting and as the minutes contain lots of information he proposes Pucklechurch does the same. Seconded by Mrs. Palmer, voting - all in favour.

Mr. Beg said he thought this was a very useful forum, he has noticed that the closer an event is to Pucklechurch News being delivered the better the event is supported. He thanked everyone for coming and sharing their reports.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

### **Addendums.**

The following reports were received after the meeting.

Report of Unitary Authority. This year I have continued to Chair the Public Rights of Way and Registrations Committee which fulfils the role of deciding diversions, closures and creation of public rights of way throughout South Gloucestershire. We also deal with Village Green applications. Our work has also included providing better consultation between planning applications and local councillors especially in the case of major planning applications.

The work of Select Committees within the council includes leading Reviews of a particular service, chosen by Councillors as being important. There are current reviews looking into Childhood Obesity and how green infrastructure and urban design can compensate for the loss of countryside and lack of community. The recommendations from reviews last year have influenced the policies in the Draft Core Strategy which will replace the Local Plan and the Structure Plan. The actions from a review of antisocial behaviour in South Gloucestershire are being implemented both by the Council and the Police.

I am delighted to see that the work of my fellow councillors has paid off in the improvements in recycling, which includes the weekly collection of food waste to start throughout South Gloucestershire in the winter and the fortnightly collection of plastic bottles. Other good news comes from the Councils decision to remove the proposed in-vessel composting facility which was planned for Tormarton from its future waste plans. This is something I personally have played a part in and with other councillors pushed for the council to rethink this scheme, not only because of the inappropriate locations but also the out of date technology and its risk to our local community.

Although the Council's financial situation was not quite as bad as originally feared, we are all well aware of the implications of the recession for public expenditure. This has led to embarking on a series of service reviews. The aim of these is to cut back, largely through the use of IT and new working practices, on the staff needed to provide services,

thus avoiding as far as possible, any reduction in 'front line services'. How successful this will be remains to be seen.

Most of us were relieved that the Secretary of States' proposals for 32,800 new homes for South Glos between 2006 and 2026 were put on hold due to a successful legal challenge in the South East of England. It soon became apparent, however, that the Core Strategy which has to identify where future development will go had to be progressed, if the council was not to end up losing planning appeals. Formal consultation has started and there will be two sessions in Pucklechurch (1<sup>st</sup> June 6.30pm – 7pm and 13<sup>th</sup> July 11am – 3.30pm both in the Village Hall).

The new council offices in Badminton Road, Yate, has brought together parts of the Council's departments that were previously housed in various parts of South Gloucestershire. This is already reported as bringing about more efficient working within council departments as well as avoiding the escalating costs of new leases and reducing very significantly the energy used for heating, cooling and lighting.

Sarah Turley.

Good Neighbour Scheme. The Pucklechurch and Shortwood Good Neighbour Scheme launched in July 2009 and has been running for nearly a year now. The good neighbour scheme came about following the community plan in 2007. There are three co-ordinators and twenty volunteers who all live in the village. This is the first scheme of its kind in the south west which is why it took so long to establish and it has been set up by members of the community for community. The scheme aims to support those in the community who are vulnerable. We will provide contact and support to elderly residents, single parents and/or residents with learning difficulties. There is not an exhaustive list of people we would or wouldn't help and that also goes for the tasks we would do. The aim is to carry out small tasks and help out where there is not a local authority scheme in place. For example, it may be that a single parent new to the village would like advice about activities that take place and would like introductions to others or an elderly resident who needs help changing a smoke alarm battery or a resident with mobility issues who would like help putting their bins out on bin day. The volunteers are CRB checked, we hold public liability insurance and there are also various protective policies in place. We have had five requests for the scheme. These range from helping residents putting bins out; re-tuning digital set top boxes and providing company for elderly residents whose family live far from the village. We have forged very good links with the local neighbourhood policing team and they have made referrals to us. We also have a volunteer who is a gardener by trade. As a result of one of the police referrals, we will be helping some residents feel safer and more secure by tidying their garden and showing the property is maintained and lived in. The good neighbour scheme communicates information from Avon and Somerset Constabulary to its volunteers where this is relevant to community issues. The volunteers also recently attended a meeting at The

Star where South Gloucestershire Council Emergency Planning department gave a presentation about emergency planning. The scheme is now applying for further funding so we can purchase public liability insurance for a further year and continue with the good work we have started.

Larisa Hunt, Sarah Turley, Ross Goodison.

Pucklechurch Community Association. Two very pleasing themes for this year. The first is the amount of time and effort put in by voluntary labour, in particular the painting and decorating of all the external and internal doors, the replacement of the roof tiles and the installation of new radiators and the brightening of the entry lobby. The second theme is the rise in the number of bookings, so that it is becoming more difficult to accommodate all the requests for space.

The third theme has been that financially the year has been a roller coaster, we have received generous grants from the Parish Council, Revel and the Bowls Club, and revenue is up, but due to the incomprehensible system operated by British Gas, that stops sending invoices if they cannot get access to gas meters, we owe them about £7000. We are now negotiating the position.

Despite British Gas we can see a way ahead, as all user groups have been most co-operative, but it will be very hard work, needing close attention to detail.

Alan Holder.