

POULSHOT PARISH COUNCIL
POULSHOT ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING 24th May 2016, 7:00PM
THE VILLAGE HALL, POULSHOT
MINUTES

Present: Councillors: Mr G Collett (Chairman) [GC]; Mr A Baber [AB]; Mr S Housby [SH]; Mr B Hamilton [BH]; Mr T Nixon [TN]; Mr T Coleman [TC]; Mr N Hunloke [NH]

Apologies: None

Also present: ~15 members of the public; Cllr J Seed (WCC), Parish Clerk, Mr J Martin [JM] for Mrs E Martin [EM]

Meeting commenced 7:10pm.

Apologies for absence.

No absences

Welcome Message From Parish Council Chair, Cllr. Geoff Collett

Cllr. Collett told the audience that in the past year Church Farm has been sold to Mrs Annabelle Beaumont-Shaw for equestrian use. The old farm buildings are currently being renovated to a high standard to stable horses. A large ménage has been constructed and work is about to commence on the old coach house at the entrance to convert this into a small dwelling. Plans for the main farm house are currently with the PPC for consideration. People have expressed concern about the state of the access road which has been used to deliver materials for the build. Cllr. Collett had a meeting with Mrs AB-S yesterday and she has agreed to make repairs as soon as possible.

The proposed development around Higher Green Farm rumbles on and is now in the 7th year. The amended plans have yet to be approved and deregistration of the village green access track in exchange for 1.2 acres of land on an adjoining field for public recreation use has still to be agreed. At present the draft agreement is with solicitors and seems to be taking a very long time. Once all local approvals are done, the final signoff will be with the Secretary Of State. It is likely to take another year.

Higher Green Farm House itself is currently adding an extension on the west end. At present the development has not reached above the boundary wall. This extension was approved by WCC and supported by PPC and is to help support the daughter of the owners, Gavin and Eve Curnow, who needs assisted living support, preferably on one level. The extension will enable her to move around the house more easily and improve her life and those caring for her. The PPC wish the family well.

The restoration of Stansfield Cottage, which has been causing much concern over the last year, has now had the necessary permissions to proceed with the work and is finally moving forward. The roof should be thatched by the autumn, which will make a big difference to appearance and a huge improvement overall.

The track on the south side of the Village Green, which for a number of years has been in a dreadful state with huge deep ruts, has been resurfaced. It's not quite up to the standard we hoped for but the farmer, Jim Butler who did the work has agreed to return and make the required improvements. Overall though, it is much better than it has been for years. The middle section of the Green has seen more love and attention in the past few weeks than its ever had and is looking very good indeed. Cllr. Collett congratulated Mr Declan Gaule and his team for the hard work they have been putting in the make the new cricket club a success.

During the last year Poulshot lost five of its long-term residents all of whom contributed a lot to the village throughout their lives. They will be sadly missed.

Message From Cllr. Jonathon Seed, Wiltshire County Council

Cllr. Seed addressed the village to say that the general message from WCC is that everyone will need to do more with less due to the reduced funding from central government. WCC has worked very hard to ensure that libraries and leisure centres remain open, whereas neighbouring counties have been closing theirs.

SH raised the issue of the quality of the counties roads when compared to those in Oxfordshire (during his recent foray into Mr Cameron's constituency). JS replied that indeed they could be worse but they are still better than his experience of Gloucestershire and it's a matter of prioritisation of council monies. GC raised his concern that lorries were increasingly using Poulshot's roads and this would lead to further damage. TC mentioned that now that new contracts have been signed for highway maintenance he had hopes for improvement; JS agreed that it would hopefully be better than before and as mentioned better than neighbouring counties.

JS went on to mention that villages could expect to be asked to more themselves. The advantages to living in a village outweigh those of living in larger conurbations at times of austerity as those who often choose to live in a village have a tendency to self-sufficiency whereas elsewhere they have a heavy reliance on the councils to provide the services for maintenance. GC raised the issue of the lack of spraying of road edges, saying that the contractor had told him he had not received the correct permissions yet. JS replied that the contractor should be ready to go, and that he had heard similar comments from the Salisbury area – he would investigate.

Message From Cllr. Tim Nixon on behalf of the Poulshot Bonfire Club

Cllr. Nixon stated that the Club was carrying a £250 balance from last year's event that will be used for this year's event. The Poulshot annual bonfire is usually the first Friday before the 5th November and this year it will be held on the 4th November. Cllr. Nixon stated that normally no advertising is done on the roadside as the event is intended to be a Poulshot only event. Cllr. Nixon also wanted to publically thank Mr Mike Davies for his repeated loan of the fire pit. Last year's event was a great success again, and many stayed after the event to enjoy social time despite it being a rainy night.

Message From Mr Alan Webber on behalf of the Village Hall Trust

Mr Webber told the audience that the Village Hall is being used more and more and feedback has been that the hall is comfortable and well equipped and that Poulshot should be proud of what it has. Last year a folk band, The Bonfire Radicals, were hosted and the evening was a great success and a departure from the normal events seen at the hall. The Trust intends to invite them back, and they are keen to come. Last year there was also a Halloween Party for children (afternoon) and adults (evening). This event was also a great success attended by almost 30 children.

The hall has been decorated inside and cleaned extensively outside by the Community Payback team. The exterior lighting has recently been upgraded to low energy and brighter LED lighting.

The Trust's finances are sound with income from the 100 Club, quiz and other events. There have been some personnel changes recently and the Trust is trying to encourage members of the younger Poulshot community to get involved.

The Trust also intends to apply to the Melksham Area Board to attempt to secure funding for replacement/cladding of the fascia, soffit and gable ends with UPVC to reduce the cost of maintenance and improve the appearance of the building. Mr Josey, Chair, has written to the PPC.

Finally Mr Webber mentioned that the next Quiz is planned for 11th November and extended the Trust's thanks to Mr Brian Arnold, who has now left the Trust, for his strong stewardship of the finances over the past few years.

Message From Cllr. Tim Nixon on behalf of Poulshot Cricket Club

Cllr. Nixon thanked the Poulshot Parish Council for its support in the re-establishment of the Poulshot Cricket Club who played their first match recently; a narrow loss. The age group of the club is 14-60 with others encouraged to join and get involved. The Green looks great and their cutting rota is working well. The club will contract the Village Hall regarding use of the toilets during home matches and for use of the hall for refreshments as needed. Cllr. Nixon said that it would be nice to use temporary benches on the Green for watching matches.

The club has received funding from the Melksham Area Board, Landfill Fund and Poulshot Community Fund, but is around £3,000 short and may return with further requests later this year but at present they are trying to see what funds they can raise themselves. The Cricket Club intends to support the Air Ambulance during the Vintage Rally on the Green.

Message From Mrs Pam Gilles on behalf of Poulshot Friends & Neighbours Group

Mrs Gilles told the audience that in late 2015 the Poulshot Ladies Group was looking as if would go extinct. The Club had no funds and declining membership. In Early 2016 they decided, at their AGM, to change their name and configuration to broaden their appeal; becoming Poulshot Friends & Neighbours.

Membership of the new group is £10p.a and their events are published in the Village Magazine. So far their events have been well supported; 12 people came to the Devizes Museum tour, 19 to the Brandy tasting, and 30 people are signed up to the canal trip in June.

During a recent Dutch Auction the group raised £45 in support of Alzheimer's. They have £195 in subscriptions and £114 profit has been raised during their first quarter – finances are looking good and the club continues to strengthen.

Message From Mr Mike Wilson on behalf of the Poulshot Community Speedwatch

Mr Wilson told the audience that the Community Speed watch for Poulshot was made up of five individuals at present. During 2016 so far they have found that 12% of cars are exceeding the 35mph threshold and unofficially 50% of cars are found to be travelling at 30mph or more. Most speeders appear to be those using the village as a cut-through although some villagers are also being found to be speeding.

Unfortunately one individual has been recorded travelling at over 60mph outside the Raven, and one unofficially recorded at 75mph in the same place. There has also been a near miss with a child at Sillington Lane. Wiltshire Police have expressed grave concerns at the level of speeding through the village and have been visiting speeders where possible. The Police will also be asked to attend at times to support the team and may then issue fixed-penalties on the spot. The Police are also intending to increase their speeding patrols at other points in the village.

Mr Wilson said that the ideal number of volunteers would be 12 and they are currently looking at getting four more people trained. Mr Wilson asked that PPC provide more support to the team and would like someone to champion the cause at each PPC meeting.

Options for further helping to reduce the speeding problem are the installation of white Picket Fencing at the start and end of each speed limit to more clearly demonstrate that people are entering a village area – this has proven to be successful elsewhere. Mr Wilson also stated that he is looking at Roundels reminding you of the speed limits that can be stuck on wheelie-bins. Also under consideration are portable radar signs to monitor the speed throughout the village. The option of using a speed camera to record and report vehicles throughout the entire length of the village is not available at the present due to support issues at Police headquarters.

Message From Cllr. Steve Housby on behalf of the Poulshot Community Fund

Cllr. Housby stated that everyone needed to help spread the word that the fund was accessible to all projects and to try and encourage more applicants. There have been four successful applications so far, Cricket Club, Fireworks for the Queen's April birthday, forthcoming June birthday and for the Poulshot Friends and Neighbours.

Message From Cllr. Nicky Hunloke on behalf of the Poulshot Village Trust

Cllr. Hunloke told the audience that there is significant work need to the trees in the Green Gardens (this will be discussed at the PCC meeting later). The trees need to be thinned out as they are beginning to crowd and this will affect their future growth. This is something that was understood when they were first planted and is the norm – but it will require work. Around half of the trees will need to be removed.

Cllr. Hunloke mentioned that work has been done this past year on the two ponds on the Village Green and that the majority of trees planted by the Trust around the village are doing well.

Mr M. Hues asked if it were possible to transplant the trees in the Green Gardens rather than fell them. BH responded that it may be possible and he will investigate. BH will also look at what is needed for permissions and present to the PPC.

Public Participation

The upcoming Defibrillator awareness course was raised, Cllr. Coleman hoped many would attend. The on-going checks for the Defib need to be better organised as currently only Cllr. Coleman is checking and we will lose support from the Ambulance Service unless we keep it regularly checked. The Parish Clerk will organise a rota and checking method.

Meeting closed 8:05pm