**OAKLEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2018**

Minutes of meeting held on 3rd April 2018 in the Village Hall, Oakley.

**PRESENT:**

Cllr Phillips (Chair), 9 Parish Councillors, the Clerk to the Parish Council and 19 members of the public.

**1. Apologies:**

Cllr. Walker

**2. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 4th April 2017:**

Copies of the minutes of the last meeting were circulated and there were no matters arising.

**3. Speed Watch Scheme:**

Chair welcomed residents to the meeting and he & Cllr. Nicholas reported on the work of the scheme during 2017/18. Speed Watch was set up following the 2017 Annual Meeting to improve safety in the village. The equipment was loaned to the volunteers by the police and at present Oakley was the sole user of their equipment. The police had approved each location, of which there were eight in the village and their specific approval was needed prior to each event. Results were sent back to the police who would send two warning letters to those speeding and on the third occasion pursue. Cllr. Nicholas demonstrated the equipment and explained that familiarisation training had been undertaken in July. Signs were placed on the road warning motorists that Speed Watch was operating and two or three events were held each month. Events were not held when poor weather created challenging road conditions. Although average speed cameras had been operating for over a year there were still motorists who were speeding. Over 200 notices of intended prosecution had been issued for Lovell Road in January and 9 motorists were speeding on Pavenham Road at the latest event last month so education was still needed. Chair thanked the volunteers for their efforts and asked if anyone else was interested in joining the team.

 **4.** **Neighbourhood Development Plan:**

Cllr. Olney reported that the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was nearing completion. It was hoped that it would be adopted in Spring 2019 and it would then become a statutory planning document. Regular consultations and reports had been issued throughout the process and the policies, which had been circulated, were based on residents’ views. Green space, affordable housing and community assets e.g. Post Office, Village Hall, Sports & Social Club, pub etc. were important to residents which was reflected in the Plan. Developers had presented their proposals to Council and the NDP Group and consultants had been engaged to assess green spaces and potential development sites. The NDP was compliant with the Borough Local Plan and would be considered at the May Parish Council meeting. A booklet would be circulated to every household and a public exhibition held on 13th May in the Village Hall. The NDP would need to be approved by an independent Planning Inspector and Bedford BC would then organise a referendum in the village. Hopefully this would take place in the Autumn. If the NDP was not accepted at the referendum, Bedford BC would make decisions on development in the village. Cllr. Olney thanked the NDP Group for their work, in particular, Mr. Atkinson who was leading the project and the Clerk and thanked residents for their input.

**5. Report of the Parish Council:**

1. **Chairman’s Report**

In keeping with previous years, 2017/18 has been very busy indeed and before I speak briefly, about our activities throughout the year, I would like to say a very big thank you to each and every member of the Parish Council, Councillors and Clerk. We should all be so grateful for all that they do, much of which is never seen by the masses. I would also like to thank the residents who regularly pick up litter in their part of the village, help on the allotments, with Speed Watch and the Neighbourhood Plan. Thank you all very much.

One of the main aims of the Parish Council has been to get as close to the residents as we can. We have tried very hard to enhance our excellent lines of communication from word of mouth to upgrading our village web site, the quarterly Newsletter and the village Directory. We also want to involve as many residents as possible and to this end we are constantly trying to involve volunteers in many of our activities.

At the start of the year two of our main objectives were to improve the equipment in our play areas for our youngsters, both on the Village Green and at The Furlong and the introduction of Community Speed Watch which was discussed at last year’s Annul Parish Meeting. Unfortunately, the installation of the play equipment on the Green has been delayed because of problems with the suppliers but will hopefully be ready to use very shortly.

The Oakley Neighbourhood Development Plan and the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2035 have been constants throughout the year. Councillors attended meetings regarding the possibility of local settlements in North Bedfordshire and our views on the plan to 2035 have been submitted to the Borough. As detailed by Cllr. Olney, there will be a consultation on the draft Oakley Neighbourhood Development Plan on Sunday 13 May 2018 at the Village Hall.

We appointed a new litter picker and bus shelter cleaner and as in previous years enjoyed our annual Christmas lights and carols. We encountered numerous problems with our grass cutting contractor and have therefore appointed a new company this year, so hopefully the standard of work will improve.

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We have agreed to support the World War 1 Beacon lighting event on 11 November this year and our allotments continue to be well used, as does our very successful youth club. We made a number of grants to local organisations and had our say on numerous consultations including East Midlands Train, Borough Council budgets, rights of way, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service budget and a Council Tax reduction scheme.

We replaced the old seat near the Bedford Arms in the High Street and installed two new dual-purpose bins. Overflowing Highfield Road drains, compounded by leaking diesel created many problems in February and March particularly during the cold weather. Highways and Police matters were discussed at every meeting.

Next year we hope to repair and put collars on the bollards around the village green and support further the activities of our Community Speed Watch Team.

My summary is nothing more than a flavour of our business throughout the year and should anyone wish to ask a question about these or any other matters we will do our best to answer them.

1. **Parish Precept 2018/19:**

The Borough Council top up grants for Parish Councils whose tax base was reduced in 2012/13 ended in 2017/18. The precept for 2018/19 was therefore set at £51,195 and the band D rate remained at £53.54.

**c) Draft Accounts for 2017/2018:**

In 2017/18 income amounted to £75,937.77 and expenditure to £68,444.71 as the new play equipment had yet to be paid for. Income decreased by approximately £5,079 largely as a result of the reduction in grants. In 2016/17 a £15,700 Borough Council Rural Grant was paid to the Old School through the Parish Council account and in 2017/18 Council received Neighbourhood Plan grants of £10,060 compared to none the previous year. Expenditure decreased by approximately £65,500 largely due to the payment of £60,000 for the average speed cameras in 2016/17. The £15,700 Bedford BC Rural Grant to the Old School in 2016/17 was mostly offset by an increase in 2017/18 of £4,700 in play equipment repairs, £2,600 in donations, £1,960 for the village signs and £1,500 in VAT payments. Donations totalling £5,058 were made to Autism Bedford, the Day Centre, the Youth Club and the Royal British Legion for a poppy wreath.

**d) Planning**

During 2017/18 the Parish Council was consulted on and commented on a total of 42 planning and related applications, compared to 47 in 2016/17. Most were for relatively minor works or tree works but Council objected to 4 applications on the grounds of impact on neighbours, that proposals were out of keeping with neighbouring properties and unsuitable access. Council also objected to the Parrott’s Yard development because of highway safety issues and to a proposal for housing between Bromham and Oakley as it was outside the Settlement Policy Area and land was available within the SPA.

**6. Questions from the Floor:**

Residents asked how the Neighbourhood Plan would be influenced by housing along the Oxford/Cambridge arc and for more details on the referendum. Cllr. Olney advised that Bedford BC was intending to adopt their Local Plan before the new Government housing calculations were introduced so additional houses would not be needed up to 2035. The consultation on the draft Local Plan had just ended and Bedford BC was considering the comments. The Borough Executive and Full Council would then consider in May. The referendum would be organised by the Borough and if the NDP was supported by residents it would be adopted as a statutory planning document. Turvey had recently been able to use their emerging NDP to defend against a large, speculative development in their village. NDP Group emphasised that if the NDP was rejected the village would have no defence against developers.

Residents also requested updates on the Parrott’s Yard development and the relocation of the Lincroft Playing field. Cllr. Olney commented that planning permission had been granted for 15 houses and office space at Parrott’s Yard. Council had objected because of highway safety issues and a revised scheme for footways & crossing points would need to be approved before construction began. There was no timetable for works to begin at present. The development could not be included as part of the Oakley allocation of 25 – 50 houses as it had received permission under the current Local Plan. The relocation of the Playing Field was still being considered by the Department for Education and would be more likely to go ahead if the village had no NDP. If the NDP was adopted, the housing associated with the relocation of the Field would exceed the allocation of 25 – 50 houses. Given concerns that the relocation scheme might encourage residents to vote against the NDP, the NDP Group would consider making reference to the proposal in the Plan.

A resident asked why there was a derestricted zone between the 40mph limit along the Pavenham causeway and the 30mph limit in Pavenham Road. Cllr. Olney explained that Pavenham PC did try to have the 40mph limit extended to the Oakley 30 mph limit but the derestricted section did not meet the criteria for speed limits. She added that a flashing speed indicator would be installed in Spring.

Chair thanked everyone for attending, encouraged residents to spread the message about the importance of the NDP referendum and closed the meeting.

Chairman