

**Minutes of Nether Wallop Annual Parish Meeting
held on Thursday 21 April 2011 at Nether Wallop Village Hall**

Attendance: The meeting was attended by Cllrs Atkins, Hind, Souter and Whitaker, HCC Cllr Gibson, TVBC Cllr Boulton and three members of the public.

Apologies for absence: Cllrs Carpenter, Roach and Young and Mr Williams (Footpaths Officer).

Declaration of councillors' interests: none.

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 26 April 2010: These were unanimously agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

Neighbourhood Watch update: Cllr Whitaker reported that it is very quiet with the major issues being reducing anti-social behaviour in Pound Lane, Over Wallop, speeding in Broughton and shed thefts. Farmwatch is reporting a lot of crime. Residents are reminded to lock their houses whilst working outside. Vehicles parked in such a way as to cause obstruction should be reported. TVBC Cllr Boulton said PC Beecroft has stickers for tanks to say that the diesel has been dyed and is re-traceable. These are available to parishioners who contact him.

HCC Report: HCC Cllr Gibson reported that the last few months have been really busy and difficult as HCC tries to meet its budget obligations amounting to a £55M funding shortfall, while minimising the effect on front line services. As an Audit Committee member he has close involvement in the process. The target to find next year will be £50M which will be even more difficult. HCC has a turnover of £1.78 Billion but most is ring-fenced hence the £55M is a significant number.

Regarding Test Valley the roads were kept gritted during the bad weather and have performed well trying to keep up with the maintenance work to combat the deterioration of the roads due to the snow and frost, however we can always improve. There has also been a lot of positive feedback from the village parish councils for which he was grateful. The introduction of grit bins was also a successful initiative and has been really well received by villages and has had a significantly positive effect.

Key points to note are:

1. **Grit bins** - This programme has been a great success and HCC are now embarking on one final purchase of bins to meet the reserve list and ensure that they are prepared for future bad weather. If the parish council has any additional grit bin requirements HCC Cllr Gibson would like to know immediately.
2. **Pot Holes** - The new portal for reporting pot holes has proved a great success and if the website is used the average response time is around 48 hours. This is a great improvement on the previous verbal reporting process which can be inaccurate and sometimes take months to get action. The website bypasses the paper systems and puts the complaint directly onto a work programme. HCC Cllr Gibson is aware that some pot holes have not been repaired but these are often because major work on that particular is scheduled in the near future. Additionally HCC

- has received £6M from Government for pot holes and are now scheduling a programme of work which should be evident over the next few months.
3. **Village conversations** – There have been forums in several of the villages recently including Age Concern and TVBC to ask peoples’ opinions about buses and general issues within the village and also to discuss the local volunteer groups helping to take the needy to Hospital to meet appointments. Any feedback on these initiatives would be welcomed.
 4. **Members Devolved Grants** - HCC Cllr Gibson is pleased to say that it looks very likely that the devolved grants will still be available in 2011/12 but for less money. The 2010 system was very successful and HCC Cllr Gibson was pleased to have been able to help.
 5. **Footpaths** – No actual issues that are open.
 6. **Parking** - Stockbridge has a serious parking problem which will need either parking charges or parking restrictions. This would need to be linked to an area where a parking facility could be introduced close to the main street. Without a resolute desire for change the parking situation will simply continue to escalate. It is becoming critical today. In other villages it is the school parking that is the vexing issue and has caused confrontations between parish councils and local people.
 7. **Lengthman** - this project has been a success primarily due to Stockbridge acting as the Principle Parish Council. He hopes that the project will be continued and expanded to include the likes of Nether Wallop and other parish councils.

He concluded by stating that Stockbridge Police Station is closing and asked that parishioners contact him on Andrew.gibson@hants.gov.uk if they have any issues that they would like to discuss.

TVBC Report: TVBC Cllr Boulton reported that he was pleased to be bearing some good news; that there is to be no tax increase in the council tax bill at all in this parish, county or borough. Even better there will be no loss in the frontline services the borough council provides. There have been four years of rationalising and re-organisation of the various functions delivered leading towards the possibility of shedding a whole layer of middle management posts. There has been some outsourcing of functions such as pay and conditions of staff, which is now undertaken by HCC and the substantial IT functions. This itself a big saver of manpower and is now shared with Winchester. TVBC values their staff but as a result of the judicious “pruning” it now has manpower levels that existed in 2007. The process was seen to be necessary at that time because Test Valley relies heavily on the interest earning a substantial amount of investments as interest rates for the past several years have been minimal.

TVBC Cllr Boulton praised the top management, and the understanding and co-operation of staff, and councillors at all levels. This would not have been achieved without a spirit of-- “we are all in this together”. TVBC Cllr Boulton went on to say its not all over yet as the government expects another substantial cut in next year’s expenditure and another round of savings will have to be sought but there is just a hint that interest rates will start to rise and that may ease the burden.

Returning to other TVBC services, one service that is seen as essential is waste collection and twice in the last year there were times when the teams had to cope with some extremely difficult weather conditions. Refuse was collected with the minimum delay whilst most other services in the country ground to a halt. Even more importantly there were no accidents to themselves, vehicles or to the public. TVBC were the first waste collection service in Hampshire to get back to normal collections. TVBC Cllr Boulton also thanked the public, for their forbearance during those now mercifully distant cold winter days.

Regarding the parish of Nether Wallop developer contributions which have been collected by TVBC planning department each time a new property is built, these can be diverted to the Parish Council and help achieve very useful additions to play equipment and new leisure facilities. TVBC Cllr Boulton urged the council to keep its green spaces strategy up to date by adding any other desirable facilities so that planners can seek a contribution from any further new developments. These developer benefits can also include highway improvements where they are appropriate, again make sure the parish access strategy is kept updated.

TVBC Cllr Boulton is pleased to see the refurbished Wallop Parish Hall in use and glad that the Borough was able to help financially. TVBC Cllr Boulton reported that the Co-op are about to take up residence on the Andover airfield site with the roundabout works were finally completed a week or two ago.

Both TVBC Cllr Busk and TVBC Cllr Boulton continue to prioritise the wishes that parishioners find important. In a series of surveys undertaken last summer across the Borough they clearly identified that jobs and economy were top of the list of residents concerns, followed by environmental and leisure facilities.

They both hold a place on the TVBC Cabinet, and TVBC Cllr Boulton's particular responsibility is the Environmental Service. This service has a number of different responsibilities including grounds maintenance and waste collection such as recyclables, household waste and green waste, plus street scene responsibilities including litter and fly tipping. Another of his roles on the council is 'sustainability' that is working with the planning department to take the lead on 'green issues', including reviewing sustainability in all aspects of council work, as well as working towards reducing CO2 emissions within all our services, and supporting other green initiatives within the borough.

As well as cabinet commitments, TVBC Cllr Boulton also sits on three planning committees with around 40 meetings a year and look at probably 500 applications each year which are either permitted or refused. Nether Wallop Parish Council always plays its part in commenting responsibly on local applications. Some decisions can be very difficult and contentious.

Finally he thanked the council for its support. The Chairman enquired whether there would be any change in the frequency of waste collection. TVBC Cllr Boulton replied that it would cost £360,000 to do a weekly collection during the four months in the summer. There had been very few complaints in the last few years. He suggested that double wrapping controls bin smell and to disinfect bins!

Wallop Primary School: Cllr Hind read the Headteacher's report as follows:-

This year Wallop Primary School has continued with the cross curricular approach to teaching and learning as the central vehicle for curriculum delivery.

Some of the topics covered have been:

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| Reception: | Animals and Sea creatures; Harvest; Handa's Surprise; Going on a Bear Hunt, Chinese New Year. |
| Year 1 | Billy Goats Gruff; Three Little Pigs; Mexico |
| Year 2 | In a Land Far, Far Away; Gunpowder Plot; Titanic; Pirates |
| Year 3 | All about me; Local study; Weather |
| Year 4 | Expeditions and Settlements; Invaders and Settlers |
| Year 5 | Superheroes; Tudors |
| Year 6 | World War 1; Victorians |

Provision of sport: Pupils have continued with their 2 P.E. lessons per week. Children have also taken part in a number of sporting activities, including the cluster cross country event, a girls football tournament and a range of after school clubs.

Educational Experiences: Pupils at Wallop School have a busy and enjoyable time learning. Year 5 and Year 4 have visited Oxford Natural History and Pitt Rivers Museums as well as Winchester Cathedral. Year 3 carried out a local study around Nether Wallop.

Three Year 6 pupils (Gifted and Talented) visited the Museum of Army Flying and took part in a workshop on interviewing and collecting first hand experiences. Year 6 have since had visitors in class to talk about their experiences of WW2 and about the history behind the war graves.

A number of Year 5 and 6 children went on a very successful residential, adventure week at Calshott Centre. The children thoroughly enjoyed their experience and the range of activities and challenges. Mrs Bailey came back exhausted! The team at Calshott was really professional, well organised and knowledgeable. Year 6 also visited Leckford Farm earlier this term.

Reception children have continued with their welly walks.

The Reverend Vanessa Cole has been in to support RE sessions within the classroom, as well as to lead assemblies.

Prior to Christmas we had the two Christmas plays: Hansel and Gretel, and The Stable Boy. Each key stage had their parties and the choir performed at Winton House.

More recently, Years 5, 2 and 1 have had a visitor as part of their topic work. Year 5 had a Tudor character helping to explain life in Tudor times. A roguish pirate sailed into Year 2 and a Dickensian commentator showed Year 1 what life was like in Victorian times, including how hard children would have had to work!

A mutinous day was had by Class C as the pirates took over the classroom.

Year 5 also carried out a local study around Nether Wallop based on the Tudors.

Reception children have continued with their welly walks this term, including going on a 'bear hunt' as part their topic. They also 'took a flight to China' to see what life was like there!

And finally the Easter Bunny visited the school leaving footprints and Easter Eggs for the younger children to find.

Footpaths Report: In the absence of Mr Williams, the outgoing Footpaths Officer, the Chairman read his report as follows:-

“I have learnt a lot over the past three years and I have really enjoyed the responsibility for looking after the footpaths in the parish. One of the key things is to start the maintenance of the footpaths early in the season – preferably in April. If new growth is not tackled at this time, it is generally an uphill struggle to keep things in check for the rest of the season. Climatically, the weather pattern and relatively dry summer in 2010 helped and a series of strimmings during the spring & early summer made the task more manageable than usual. In addition to an early start on the maintenance, it has been really useful and rewarding to find a number of volunteers who have taken on responsibility for certain parts of the footpaths network.

The early work on the two Restricted Byways off Hollom Down Lane in 2009 really paid off and they were kept clear for the whole of the summer in 2010. The Byway from Hollom Down to the A30 has been adopted by Barry Morris and his mower from Jacks Bush; the results are there for all to see. Apart from a number fly tipping incidents dealt with promptly by the Council, 2010 preceded without major incident. I will continue to volunteer, but I will be stepping down as Footpaths Officer in 2011 and handing the lead role back to Mr James who recently returned from a posting in Dover. Finally, I would like to thank all volunteers who have given their time to help keep the footpaths clear for the enjoyment of all.”

The Chairman thanked Mr Williams for all his hard work over the past three years.

Finance: Cllr Atkins reported that the draft accounts for the year to 31 March 2011 have been prepared and will be presented for approval at the council meeting on 9 May. The accounts have not yet been audited. The accounts show a large excess of income over expenditure. Part of this relates to the Village Green Fund, which has increased its fund by £1,347 from donations and renting the marquees, which are proving great assets to the village. However, the general fund has also risen by £2,379. The budget showed a £650 surplus to increase the low reserves, but expenditure was below budget, especially for the cost of running the village hall. The general fund balance is now £5,624 which is back up to the recommended level a year or two earlier than anticipated.

Once again, Cllr Atkins wished to express his thanks to Mr Shoesmith for voluntarily carrying out all the parish council’s bookkeeping, monthly financial reports and preparation of accounts.

Highways: Cllr Hind reported that in July last year the council were pleased to hear that Hants Highways were keen to improve their communication with parish councils by setting up face-to-face meetings with councillors. Our own meeting took place in the village hall where she, the Chairman and the Vice Chairman were able to have their questions answered. They were told of the new website www.hants.gov.uk/roadproblems which could be used by members of the public as well as parish councillors to report maintenance problems. It was clear that budgets were going to be considerably reduced and that prioritization of funds would mean that pot holes would mostly be temporarily filled and it was more cost effective than closing roads and re-surfacing.

The severe weather both last winter and this winter inevitably took its toll on our roads with potholes opening up all over the village. All of them were reported on the official Hants Highways website, but despite a promise that requests would be responded to within a short time-frame, many holes remained unfilled for long periods, mainly because of the unprecedented volume of defects reported throughout the country. Most of our potholes have now been filled, but one area of major concern has been the condition of Five Bells Lane outside Gastons Farm where the surface has been very badly eroded for a long time. The temporary fillings have only solved the problem in the short term and it is clear that complete re-surfacing needs to take place. Cllr Hind has been informed however, that a request has been submitted within Hants Highways for a road closure and complete re-surfacing to take place and it is hoped that this will happen in the near future.

Cllr Hind is very grateful to Cllr Gibson for acquiring three grit bins for the village. They are in areas where residents have cited a particular need and these are Five Bells Lane, Duck Street and Bent Street. The actual location of the bins is decided by Hants Highways and has to be council land. Another bin has been requested to replace the damaged one at the junction of School Lane with Farley Street. All our grit bins have been topped up by the council throughout the winter.

The Wallops Primary School has become a victim of council cuts. Mr Brown, Headteacher, had put a great deal of effort into preparing a Travel Plan which would have attracted funding to enable him to restructure the school car park. This would have reduced the danger of parents parking on the road, putting children's safety at risk. Unfortunately the funding has been withdrawn and the school is now looking at alternative sources of finance in order to carry the plan through. The county council has agreed to extend the zig-zag lines outside the school and it is hoped this will go some way to improving safety outside the school.

The parish council has donated a new Community Cup for citizenship to be presented at the end of the summer term. Cllr Hind would remind them that to notify the council of the date so that a representative can sent.

Village Green: Cllr Souter read a report prepared by Cllr Roach as follows:-

“This was another successful year for the Village Green, which continued with its usual events such as the May Fair etc. This year there was an additional event, a charitable fundraiser organized by Mr Reeve. It raised a lot of money for both the Cleft Palate Association and for additional sports facilities on the recreation ground. Another popular event was Jazz on the Green, very well attended and blessed by exceptionally fine weather.

In June, the Church Building Trust had the usual drinks party on the Green, again well supported by the whole village. In July the Village Market was held, again with good weather. It was followed on the same evening by the Village Picnic. As ever Mr Trowsdale did sterling work as DJ, the evening culminating in the now almost traditional Last Night of the Proms finale. In September Mr Curry repeated that success of last year's Curry and Rounders, a very popular event with families, proceeds going to the ongoing maintenance of the Green. On the subject of maintenance, once again thanks to the many volunteers who help keep the Green in pristine condition.

The final event of the year was Carols on the Green, this provided via I-Pod and our new sound system. General Toyne Sewell did sterling work as our MC, and kept things moving along on a bitterly cold evening. The tree was criticized as being a bit skimpy but this year Mr Pond has promised to provide us with something a little more magnificent! Our marquees continue to be a great asset for village (and private) events, and by the end of 2011 will have paid for themselves. Volunteers are always welcome to help erect/dismantle them.

Last but not least, many thanks to all the generous people who give of their time and talents to organize the many events described above. They really do make a difference to village life.”

Playing Fields: In the absence of Cllr Carpenter the Chairman reported that there are two football teams who use the playing fields. He expressed thanks to Mr Richardson who continues to look after the football bookings. The sports pavilion was cleaned by members of the council last year (and probably needs doing again!). As a future project the pavilion needs upgrading. The tennis courts are in regular use and the council makes sure that maintenance issues such as working nets are addressed. The courts are a wonderful facility for the village.

Chairman’s Address: The Chairman wished to thank all councillors for the time that they have given to the council in carrying out their specific responsibilities. The fact that there are so few parishioners at the council’s monthly meetings is a measure of success for if they were unhappy they would be there. There would be a new council after 5 May election and there are six nominations for the seven places on the parish council. The outstanding vacancy would be filled by co-option. The Chairman admired the community spirit in Nether Wallop. This was evident in such projects as the Village Green. Taking part in village life and activities means being active and enjoying the environment thus improving the quality of life!

Points from the floor: none.

There being no further points, the Chairman concluded the meeting at 8.40pm. Refreshments were served afterwards.

THESE ARE DRAFT MINUTES PRODUCED FOR REVIEW BY THE PARISH COUNCILLORS PRIOR TO BEING APPROVED AT THE NEXT ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL