

MINSTERWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday, 16 April 2009, in
Minsterworth Village Hall.

PRESENT:

Councillors - Terry Bourne
Rod Crisp
Richard Few – Chairman
Steve King
Simon Ruffley – Vice Chairman
Lynda Simms
Cathy Thomas
Borough Councillor Davies
County Councillor Awford

Mrs F Wallbank – Clerk

Parishioners: approx 20

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone and pointed out the Fire Exits. He thanked the following for attending:

Richard Gray, Gloucestershire Highways
Rob Gee, Police Community Safety Officer

Apologies: Angie Ritchie.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday, 14 April 2008 were amended page 3 item 9 line 9 Mr & Mrs Rigby rather than Mr & Mrs Sellwyn the minutes were then agreed and signed.

3 Matters arising from the minutes:

60mph Speed Limit for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile through Minsterworth – The Clerk reported that Richard Gray, Stakeholder Manager (West) had advised that speed limits on A & B roads within rural areas are currently under review as part of a National Initiative which is due to be completed by 2010-2011. Until Glos Highways has the outcome of this review they are reluctant to initiate the priority assessment process for the formal consultations needed to have the existing Traffic Regulation Order amended.

Bus Stop – Hygrove Lane – The Clerk read out an email from Richard Gray:

He noted the concerns of the Parish Council regarding the potential conflict between passengers waiting for the bus and motorists using the slip road. Whilst he could appreciate the concerns that have been expressed he was of the opinion that given the lack of accidents, the frequency of the public transport and the passenger usage the potential for conflict is limited, however he was mindful that this was a safety hazard which required investigation. The possibility of narrowing the slip road had been investigated and found to be unfeasible, he had discussed and agreed with the Parish Council the removal of the kerbing "nib" on the central island to allow a waiting bus to pull off the A40 and wait thus providing protection for passengers. These works are awaiting inclusion within next year's works programme, however they are of a low priority. He would also have his colleagues in the Integrated Transport Section investigate the possibility of relocating the bus stop.

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He would arrange for his colleague Chris Townley to priority assess this junction to have the slip road closed and a standard "T" be constructed, although not optimistic that this will rank sufficiently high enough to attract funding.

The Clerk reported that this matter had been discussed at Parish Councils meetings throughout the year at PC meetings.

Richard Gray reported that he had a meeting with Road Safety colleagues to review the situation and he had a number of possible options.

4 Richard Gray, Gloucestershire Highways – Introduced himself as the Stakeholder Manager for Minsterworth and when he took over the role he inherited a number of topics and he was looking at these with the Parish Council to try to resolve some of the issues.

Q Councillor Bourne raised a problem on the A40 with the phasing of the traffic lights for the bus lane, these appeared to turn to red even when there was nothing in the bus lane and this caused other traffic to be stopped for no necessary reason.

A Richard Gray said that although was not Gloucestershire Highways responsibility he would contact the Highways Agency about this matter.

Q Mr Moore-Scott asked why there was a full set of lights when coming out of Gloucester with the junction of the Newent Road.

A It is a pedestrian crossing and for people to cross onto the cycleway.

Q Chairman referred to Watery Lane – following a recent site visit to look at the state of the road Bob Nightingale of TBC advised the Parish that the responsibility for maintaining the carriageway ditch's lies with the adjacent landowners and once these have been reinstated the excessive surface water problems on the carriageway should be resolved. The Chairman pointed that one of the riparian landowners would be unable to clean the ditch outside her property as she was an elderly lady. The road has got even worse since the site meeting.

A Richard said that Bob Nightingale said he would have a look at his budget to see if he could part fund cleaning the ditches. Cathy Thomas said that in previous years GCC had cleaned out the ditches – Richard said that this would have been done on a without prejudice basis.

Q Mrs Allford reported that a manhole had sunk when coming from Highnam roundabout near Minsterworth garage (opposite the property Appithorne)

A Richard said he would investigate this and see which body was responsible for this manhole and would report it.

Q Councillor Simms reported a drain had sunk outside the front gate of 3 Cathedral View, Main Road.

A Richard said he would investigate.

He encouraged residents to report any Highways issues direct to 08000 514514.

The Chairman thanked Richard Gray for coming to the meeting.

5 Phil Awford, County Councillor said that as his report had been circulated he was willing to take any questions on his report or any other matters. He said that he had already taken up the phasing of the traffic lights with David Stock of the Highways Agency.

6 Derek Davies, Borough Councillor said that his report had also been circulated and was willing to take any questions. He would like to draw to people's attention

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that a county-wide Housing Needs Assessment will be starting this month. The six District Councils together with Supporting People have jointly commissioned Fordham Research to carry out this Assessment. The aim of the assessment is to provide primary evidence of housing need which will help inform and shape strategy, policy and the delivery of housing throughout the County. Fordham Research will be sending out a housing questionnaire to 8,000 households and visiting some randomly selected households in the District. Response to the questionnaire is voluntary. It was suggested that a note to this effect should be put in The Villager and Parish Magazine.

7 Report from Rob Gee PCSO he introduced himself and said he was based at Cinderford and works 6 days on and 4 days off. He was responsible for Minsterworth parish along with Westbury, Littledean and Newnham. He normally travels to the Parishes on the bus and then is on foot during his time in the Parishes. He could be contacted on 0845 0901234 or email rob.gee@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk. He asked if there was a Liaison Officer for the travelling community? The chairman said there was not so Rob Gee said he would see if one could be appointed.

He gave the Clerk a copy of the crime figures for the period 1-14 April 2009 and there were two traffic incidents.

Mr Bourne asked for assistance in dealing with a white van that parks on the grass verge opposite the school and on occasions has one or two wheels on the pavement. PCSO Gee took the vehicle registration number and said he would speak to his colleague Sean Clarke who had previously spoken with the owner of the vehicle.

8 Matters Raised by Electors:

Terry Moore-Scott asked why the Parish Council held such a high surplus of funds in the bank and this has been the case over the last 4 years. The Chairman said that this was for contingency purposes but would look into the matter.

Roger Dauncey raised the following:

- He asked if there was a report on the Charity Foundation? The Chairman said that the Charity report had been circulated at the meeting. Mr Selwyn, Trustee of the Charities said that he had nothing new to add to his report however some grants had been made since writing his report.
- Councillors Areas of Responsibility – This had been in place for about 20 years but for several years when there was not a full contingent of Councillors this has not been in place. One of the roles was when a planning application was received the councillor whose area it was in would visit the adjoining neighbours to seek their view etc. Cathy Thomas said that in practice when Councillors went to visit adjoining properties to a proposed planning application sometimes they were out/unavailable and a fair point of view was not always given. Now Plans were available at Parish Council meetings to view from 7pm prior commencement of the meeting at 7.30pm. Mr Dauncey proposed that Councillors Areas of Responsibility should be reinstated. This proposal was seconded by Mr Selwyn and 11 voted in favour with 3 against.
- He gave a vote of thanks to the Council and Clerk for their work during the year.

9 Close of Meeting: The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Refreshments were served.

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COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Phil Awford- Severn vale

Despite the tremendous challenges facing all Local Authorities the County Council Administration has kept to its pledge of keeping Council Tax low.

This year's increase of 2.3% is below the increase in State Pension despite extra investment in Adult Care and the Highway Network. Despite the demands of a very long and cold winter the Administration is pushing on with making savings over the next 3 years without impacting on frontline services. This will not be easy but we know we can expect reduced funding from Central Government as the recession continues to impact on the Public Sector

Locally I have been and remain committed to making those improvements that residents have highlighted particularly in relation to Highways where we continue to fight with the Highway Agency for a workable compromise at Linton where the hatching is causing such tremendous delay to commuter traffic. I am also keen to see some change at the roundabout where improvements could be made to benefit both the A48 and A40 and obviously support all initiatives to combat speeding.

I enjoy working closely with the Parish Council and continue to try and resolve the issue of provision for Travellers across both the Borough and the County given the guidance we have to work to and am delighted to be able to invite this Parish Council to a major workshop in June where many of the concerns can be raised with a Specialist team who have been assembled as a direct result of a request from Minsterworth Parish Council. You will be joined by other Parish and Town Councils for two sessions at the beginning and end of June and it is hoped that solutions will be an outcome.

The Administration is continuing with its resilience work in relation to flooding and we are now seeing the benefit of the 1.4 % of Council Tax increase that has enabled crucial work to be done , we would not stand a chance of raising that now and I continue to remind Ministers of the need for major works in protecting Minsterworth as more and more upstream improvements are made .

I also work closely with my fellow Borough Councillor and the Elected Member of Parliament, their help is crucial given the challenges we all face both now and in the future, it is obvious that more and more joint working and partnerships will be required to deliver the services you rightly expect and in closing may I thank both this Parish Council and the residents of Minsterworth for their continued and valued support

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BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Derek Davies

Last year I commenced my report with the torment of the Highways Agency and the inconsideration of the local people in charge of the remaking of the A40. Well the road is finished and true to style without any consultation after a period of reasonable traffic flow the cursed Highways decided to cause problems with the now famous hatching creating a slowing of traffic with long tailbacks on both the A40 & A48.

Despite letters from Parish Councils including lengthy correspondence from our MP Mark Harper, the dear people choose to ignore pleas to correct the situation. To add insult to injury rascal motorists are now defying the Law driving over the hatchings and suffering the penalty of a £60 fine and three points of their license. My latest scheme is to start a campaign aptly named " HIGHWAYS START LISTENING " and I ask everyone feeling aggrieved to write to the Head of the Highway Agency graham.dalton@highways.gsi.gov.uk. Judging from the response to date - nil return, it may be fair to assume that Mr Dalton is shaking up his staff to come up with a solution. Thank you to all who did email this gentleman. I have advised him that a Petition would follow if there was a lack of action.

At the time of writing this report Minsterworth is under pressure from TBC Planning to approve more traveller sites. As a member of the planning committee I am unable to comment on the applications themselves, but wait with interest the outcome of the applications.

Tewkesbury Council in 2006 was placed in Voluntary engagement, which meant all things of relevance must go through the Government Office. The Minister for local Government has now released TBC from that special condition.

Council Tax! Once again, despite the lousy Government financial restrictions your Tewkesbury Tax for 2010/11 is kept below £100 at £99.36 still the lowest in the County by a mile & in the top half dozen in the Country.

TBC has appointed a new Chief Executive, Mike Dawson, who with the help from our new top echelon Staff - Officers recently promoted in the restructure are actively engaged in raising the profile of Tewkesbury. A small beginning is winning a bid for Our Master Plan; we were awarded £24,000 in competition with many other Districts in the Country.

Finally may I thank the Parish Council, & clerk Fiona under the Leadership of Richard Few chairman for the kindness shown to me over the past 12 Months.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Richard Few

In my second year as chairman, I would like to thank the clerk and my fellow councillors for all the support they have given me. Meetings have been well attended and I hope this will continue.

We have ongoing planning issues with TBC and I am hoping the reorganisation and new chief executive at Tewkesbury will bring improvements.

Highways and road safety are always a major concern of residents and although we have had several meetings with Highways, improvements asked for, are coming very slowly. We are hoping to rectify the salt shortages, which caused problems recently.

I am pleased to say that the website is up and running and all minutes are on the website.

Many Thanks.

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PAROCHIAL CHARITIES

Allan Selwyn

HIETTS' CHARITY, FOUNDED BY WILL DATED 1719

The aim of this charity is:-

"To assist persons who have not attained the age of 25 years, resident in the ancient Parish of Minsterworth, who are in need of financial assistance and are preparing for, entering upon or engaged in any profession, trade, occupation or service by providing them with outfits or paying fees, travelling or maintenance expenses, or by such other means for their advancement in life, or to enable them to earn their living as the trustees think fit"

In otherwise promoting the education (including social and physical training) of such persons.

At the time of going to print one grant has been made in the current financial year.

The most recent bank statements show:-

30 day account	£872.60
Current account	£327.28
Total	£1199.88

WINKLES CHARITY FOUNDED BY WILL DATED JUNE 1722

This charity issues small grants towards heating costs to persons of state retirement age who live alone.

December 2009 saw four payments being given making a total of £100.00

As at 23 December 2009 there was £241.20 standing in the Lloyd TSB bank account.

Further information on grants can be obtained from the Trustees:

Mrs Jane Fraser-Hook	01452 750288
Mr Gerald Savage	01452 750401
Mr Allan Selwyn	01452 750384

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SNOW WARDEN REPORT 2009 – 2010

Well the Snow fall this winter, has brought childhood memories flooding back of ‘proper winters’ – so lets hope we get a ‘proper summer!!

Late December & early January saw heavy snow, the A.48 coped, but the lanes in Minsterworth were pretty bad. Snow had fallen, after a long freeze, onto 3inches of Ice on some lanes, making driving or walking treacherous, happily help was on hand, with Richard collecting grit from Cannop, on his tractor & trailer & Andrew, Rod & I distributing the grit along the lower lane, we probably didn’t make a very tidy job of it, but the benefits were gratefully received by the residents using the lane!

For information:

In the event of heavy snow forecast, I am notified by the Highways Agency of their expectations & then I liaise with our trained snow plough operator to discuss tactics etc. In the event of very heavy snow and difficult situations or snow blocked roads the snow plough operator is at the ready to assist us. (Since becoming snow warden I have discussed the situation frequently with the snow plough operator and so far we have not had to call him out!)

I would like to take this opportunity to Thank Mr Gordon King for his willingness to continue as our Snow plough operator. If any villager requires assistance during snow conditions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Councillor Cathy Thomas

FLOOD WARDEN REPORT 2009 – 2010

Although the end of 2009 saw heavy prolonged rain and flooding of farm land, which was very difficult farming wise, I am happy to say that no house flooding occurred this year.

The issues of flooding are always on our minds and The Parish Councillors are mindful to watch for any changes to the Tip at Hempsted and any planning, further upstream, in the floodplain, we know the knock on effect this could have on our village and will voice our concerns when needed.

For Information:

After heavy rain, especially upstream, the Environment Agency, have a telephone system in place for all households who may be at risk of flooding, and they are contacted.

In addition to this information County Councillor Phil Awford, can be relied upon to contact me with his thoughts & news from Tewkesbury Borough Council on the anticipated risks. Once I have this information I contact local farmers, who may have stock out and residents who could be affected. (This may seem as though the message goes out twice, but better that than no message!)

I then contact the duty manager in the Environment Agency, who has up to date information on heights at Sharpness and the position in Gloucester. There have been numerous occasions when I have liaised with the duty officer after the tide has gone

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through to confirm what actually happened in our village, this is all very helpful data collection for future incidents.

If a resident feels they would like to be contacted during 'flood predicted times' please contact the Environment Agency. If anyone is affected by flooding and requires urgent assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me & I will do my best to get help directed to you. I would like to thank Councillor Phil Awford for his help and support of our village at times of flood risk.

Councillor Cathy Thomas.

HAM GREEN & CALCOTTS GREEN REPORT 2009 – 2010

I am sure all residents will agree, that the Greens look better this year than they have looked for a long time!

This is the opportunity for the Parish Council to say a very big THANK YOU to the local Farming community namely Messer's Dowding, Watkins, King & Few for continuing to mow our Village greens and keep them in tidy state. The hard work and commitment put in is very much appreciated.

I am sure Villagers who use the Greens for Dog walking, exercise & general pass times enjoy this asset of our community.

The Parish Council & local residents continue to be vigil, keeping an eye out for fly tippers, unfortunately there have been some again this year, thankfully these were reported to TBC & dealt with. It is well known that fly tipping is an offence & the Parish Council urge Villagers to report any suspicious vehicles and any incidents of fly tipping to either a member of the Parish Council or direct to TBC or our local Borough Councillor, to perhaps help stop this practice.

Councillor Mrs Cathy Thomas

COMUNITY EMERGENCY ADVISER AND HOME GROUP REPORT

Terry Moore-Scott and I are not making a formal report on what were routine matters during the past year; however both he and I will be happy to answer any questions concerning our fields of work during that period.

R M Dauncey
01452 750372