

MINSTERWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Monday, 14 April 2008, in Minsterworth Village Hall.

PRESENT:

Councillors - Rod Crisp
Simon Ruffley
Lynda Simms
C Thomas – Chairman
Borough Councillor Davies
County Councillor Awford (partial attendance)

Mrs F Wallbank – Clerk

Parishioners: approx 53

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. She thanked the following for attending:

Sean Clarke, Police Community Safety Officer
Ken Haines, Newly appointed Village Agent
Jo Worthy-Jones – Compost Officer
Stephen Osborne-Brown - InterRoute Communications Manager
David Stock – Highways Agency Project Sponsor
Graham Lyons – InterRoute Project Manager

Apologies: Councillor Few, Mr & Mrs Savage, Angie Ritchie. County Councillor Awford would be late.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 25 April 2007 were agreed and signed.

3 Matters arising from the minutes

Speed Limit through Minsterworth – The Clerk reported that Gloucestershire Highways had agreed with the Parish Council that a request for a 30mph speed limit through the village was unrealistic and more importantly would not be supported by the Police. Although the County Council sets the traffic regulation orders for speed limits they have to be agreed by the Police (as they are the only ones who can enforce them). The Government has asked for all highway authorities to review the current speed limits on A & B classified roads by 2010 and it may be pertinent to see what this reveals for Minsterworth.

4 Representatives from InterRoute to talk about major roadworks on the A40 commencing May 2008 and lasting for approx 26 weeks – Mr Osborne-Brown introduced himself along with the other members of this team. Unfortunately there was not a representative from GCC present who would be able to address the aspect of the bus lane. After a slide presentation of the works to be carried out a lengthy discussion took place with a large number of questions being raised which Mr Osborne-Brown and his team answered as best they could. This matter was of extreme concern, as it would affect all residents of Minsterworth.

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The Chairman thanked those present for attending.

5 Phil Awford, County Councillor said that as his report had been circulated he trusted it had been read and was willing to take any questions on his report or any other matters. Somebody said that it was disappointing that there was no one from the County Council present.

Terry Moore Scott said that a priority was being given to a bus lane when it will be a long time before a park & ride is provided. Phil Awford said that the bus lane would be operative 24/7 and may be used for car sharing.

Travellers – Most of the travellers sites in Minsterworth are privately owned. TBC have a remit to more sites – definite imbalance in Minsterworth with one third of inhabitants of the travelling nature. He encouraged all parishioners to be ever vigilant and to report anything untoward to TBC on 01684 295010

6 Derek Davies, Borough Councillor

Recycling – he made people aware that paper recycling could now take junk mail, telephone directories, yellow pages, catalogues, brown envelopes and gummed envelopes.

Various questions were asked - When will cardboard be included in collections? Would TBC consider recycling boxes with wheels to help the elderly? Derek Davies said that kerb side boxes were costly to produce but the best solution would be to ask for another box to lighten the load.

Brown Wheelie bins have proved to be very successful – John Jenner asked when these would be free? Derek Davies said it was very unlikely they would be free.

Council Tax - TBC is still one of the lowest Boroughs for Council Tax however it was proving more and more difficult to keep Council Tax low

7 Report from Sean Clarke, PCSO

Sean introduced himself and said he was the Police Community Support Officer for Minsterworth. He read out crime figures for 1 April 2007- 1 April 2008 and a comparison of crime statistics for 06/07 there were 23 crimes with 10 for 07/08 (if anyone wants a breakdown of the figures they should contact the Clerk).

He reported that a neighbourhood-policing panel had been set up and met once every 4 months and local issues in parishes could be raised.

Terry Bourne said that he hoped that Sean would be policing the “rat runs” in the Village. Sean said that regarding speeding he has no traffic powers and the only people that can take action are traffic officers but he would be a deterrent. Photo vans are used for speed checks and a number plate recognition patrol van, which can detect tax and insurance evasion, and this vehicle is unmarked and has been working in the Village.

Sean reported that with the Borough taking up the role of Civil Parking Enforcement he cannot issue parking tickets any longer in Minsterworth.

8 Jo Worthy-Jones, Glos Wildlife Trust, Compost Officer – Introduced herself and said that there were 7 other officers in the County on a 2 year contract funded by GCC Waste Management team. The main responsibility is reducing the amount of kitchen waste that goes into landfill with the object being to keep waste in the household. She gave a brief outline of what happens when composting with home composting the best way. Home composting includes fruit, veg, teabags, dog hair, dust cardboard – a good mix of different items is required to generate heat. The finished product of composting when put on plants helps them to take up trace elements and minerals.

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John Jenner said that when he called in the TBC pest control officer he told him to get rid of his compost. Jo's response was that to avoid using cooked waste and potato peelings, which can encourage rats. Apparently rats don't like elder so you can put elder branches around the compost bin.

9 Matters Raised by Electors:

Bernadette Hughes asked when the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile stretch of road in Minsterworth that is currently 60mph would be reduced to 50mph as it is the only section of the A48 that is 60mph. County Councillor Awford said he would take this up at County level.

On behalf of Mr & Mrs Sellwyn Mr Jenner asked why the PC were giving low priority to the problem with traffic turning right out of Highgrove Lane and cutting in front of the bus shelter narrowly missing on several occasions people waiting for the bus. The Clerk reported that Councillor Few and Borough Derek Davies had met with Scott Macaulay Lowe from Gloucestershire Highways on Thursday, 28 February 2008 to discuss the problem and the recommendations are that the short-term solution to the problem could be to install bollards outside the bus shelter to create a safe area for passengers to wait in. This would have to be passed by Accident Investigation & Prevention team, as there can be issues with installing physical measures in the carriageway. Also a request for south tip of reservation to be trimmed as this would make it easier for buses to pull out from lay-by and bus stop. Scott will meet with the Asset Management Team and Schemes Delivery to propose a workable scheme. A possible long-term solution is for Gloucestershire Highways to look at blocking off the lay-by and creating a traditional T-junction for Hygrove Lane and the A48, this would mean the removal of the grass verge reservation. However, any potential scheme would have to be priority assessed and compete with other proposed schemes for capital funding.

Roger Dauncey gave a vote of thanks to the Council and Clerk for their work during the year and urged those electors present at the meeting to support their Council by attending monthly Parish Council meetings. He also requested an agenda to be published in the Annual Parish Assembly report.

10 Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.

Refreshments were served.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

My first year as Chairman has been quite a steep learning curve, but the support of the Clerk and the now full complement of Councillors have given me great support.

It would be nice to see a few more parishioners at our meetings, to ensure their views and problems are recognised. Soon, we hope to have our own website to allow people to have access to all the relevant Parish business via the internet.

Minsterworth's traffic problems were made significantly worse by the A40 roadworks, causing massive queues and adversely affecting many local businesses. Thankfully, they finished just six weeks late, in time for Christmas, and the traffic does seem to be moving better through rush hour times.

In the Summer, Highways lent the Parish a Speed Indicating device, which was positioned in several sites along the A48. The device itself had quite an impact in reducing speed, but there are still a small number of motorists who drive too fast.

The traffic calming outside the school seems to work quite well, but again there have been reports of people overtaking on the wrong side of the islands.

It would be nice to see the Police being more proactive on the A48, considering the number of accidents that have occurred in recent times.

At last, the Post Office has reopened after its rebuild, and now The Apple Tree pub is reopening at the end of March, under new ownership. Good luck to the new owners, and I hope the Village will give full support to both of these vital elements of village life.

There has been some dissatisfaction with Tewkesbury Council concerning Planning and Enforcement, but hopefully these issues will be resolved soon.

Many thanks again for your support throughout the year.

Richard Few

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COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

I will shortly complete my term as your County Councillor and must start with my most grateful thanks to your Parish Council and the residents of Minsterworth. During this time I have sought to deliver on the commitments made by the Administration at Shire Hall. We have maintained our pledge to keep Council Tax low without impacting on frontline services, this we have achieved despite the major impact of the 2007 floods.

This year, our precept rose by 2.9% one of the lowest in the Country and the lowest ever set in Gloucestershire. We have saved over £40 million in the costs of running the County Council and yet funded 63 more Police Officers. We have also spent 25% more on road maintenance than our predecessors and our Education performance is in the top 15% in the Country.

This is a tough Budget but given the National climate it would have been unreasonable and unacceptable to have asked taxpayers for any more. Gloucestershire is still under funded when compared with other Shire Authorities through Government Grant.

Locally, I have supported the Parish Council in its aspirations and continue to deliver on those issues that are priorities; I also would wish to thank those involved in the A48 group who share the common goals.

We still face challenges around Highway safety and the constant concern around future flooding, I continue to work with others including our Member of Parliament, my fellow Borough Councillor and the Lower Severn Drainage Board

I am grateful to have had the privilege of serving Minsterworth as your County Councillor.

Philip Awford

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DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

This year has been one of torment caused by the highway repairs of the A40, not helped by the inconsideration of the people in charge of the operation. Meetings were held to alleviate problems to the driving public and were in the main ignored. Unnecessary traffic jams created missed appointments and time lost sitting in cars by thousands of motorists, not to mention children trying to get to exams at a critical time of their lives and the ruination of the minor roads by enforced rat runs. Both Phil and I spent more time arguing with the Highways Authority in an effort to improve the traffic flow at peak times with precious little success, mainly due to the arrogance of the personnel allegedly in charge. Now we are informed that little or no landscaping is planned and the net result of that is urbanisation of what was pleasant countryside. They even managed to remove the ancient cattle trough wall at the cross without as much as simply asking, did it have any significance?

On TBC matters, with regard to our Chief Executive Bob Austin, we initially shared him with Cotswold District and then intended to engage him full-time. Unfortunately Bob fell ill and passed away in Gloucester Hospital. Gordon Mitchell is now our interim CEO. We are at present undergoing a study to restructure the Council with the aim of smarter, fitter, faster, working. When completed we will be in a better position in serving you the Electorate.

The situation with Travellers is still of concern to everyone but the Secretary Of State has just ruled on an appeal for the Ryders to be occupied. This was the subject of a judicial review in London. The judgement was to refuse the appeal.

The current Government's new planning system RSS; (Regional Spatial Strategy) is now in its final stages and is likely to become planning law in the summer of this year. Our planning department is currently working with Gloucester, Cheltenham, and the County Council, to produce joint working arrangements which will encompass the final RSS. Part of the RSS on Travellers in the South West, states that all Authorities must participate in securing Travellers sites. This is to prevent an over burdening of sites in one area. The County Council will bear the main responsibility for carrying out these tasks.

I am pleased to state that while, due to a poor allocation of funds from central Office and yet further demands on our resources, we are still the lowest Council tax Authority in the County and still in the top half dozen in the Country for holding the line in low taxes. Examples:

Cheltenham	£182.56	Gloucester	£176.01
Cotswold	£141.13	Stroud	£183.44
Forest Of Dean	£158.64	Tewkesbury	£95.57

This is a record to be proud of, and with the recession now hovering over the Country, Tewkesbury is intent on delivering maximum service at minimum cost.

Now as your District Councillor for more than twenty years I would like to express my thanks to all the residents of Minsterworth for your kindness shown to me throughout that time. Also I would like to thank the Parish Council under Richard's Chairmanship, for the consideration and help given to me in the past year. Finally I am happy to answer any questions at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Respectfully Derek Davies

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FLOOD REPORT 2008 2009

Although the Gloucestershire Flood plain, namely Minsterworth Hams have been very wet and flooded at times this season, I am happy to report that we have not seen the extent of the flooding we saw last year, and residential properties have been safe.

Councillor Mrs Cathy Thomas

HAM GREEN & CALCOTTS GREEN

Residents will, I am sure, agree that the Hams have been kept tidy by the regular cutting regime carried out by Messrs Dowding, King & Few and our grateful thanks go to them for continuing to preserve our Greens for the pleasure of the whole village. Thanks should also go to all the villagers who continue to be vigilant in reporting all incidents of illegal parking, fly tipping of garden waste and other items, and the illegal bonfires. Long may we enjoy our heritage!

Councillor Mrs Cathy Thomas

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY ADVISER AND HOME GROUP REPORT

As in previous years as the CEA I have continued to keep the directory of residents in Minsterworth up-to-date; essential information if a community emergency arises which I hope is unlikely.

The “**Property Map**” distributed to each house in Minsterworth has proved its worth by delivery agents asking for directions to another property located in the village.

The “**Welcome to Minsterworth**” handout is also kept up-to-date and anyone wanting a current copy should give me their name.

Profit from the sales of Terry Moore-Scott’s “History of Minsterworth” and the Community History project’s (CHP) “**Minsterworth in Old photographs**”, together with the sale of **notelets**, is set to reach £3,000 which goes to assist the Village Hall with its fund raising for the required disabled facilities and other additions. Detailed plans of these were on display in the Hall, as were photographs held by CHP relating to the Hall, at its 80th celebration last year.

Publications and notelets will again be available at this year’s Annual Parish Assembly.

R M Dauncey
01452 750372

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SNOW WARDEN REPORT 2008 2009

Snow fell on 3rd February in Minsterworth, although the village turned white this did not cause too many issues for residents of Minsterworth!

By February 5th Minsterworth had 3" of snow and the Country was in total chaos! The A48 had been gritted well and posed no major problems, although one accident was recorded when a large van slipped into the hedge of Pound Cottage, however the lanes and footpaths were pretty lethal. Unfortunately the gritting reserves within the County were by then running low and so the roads failed to cope with a further night of snow fall, the A.48 was reduced to 2 tracks and driving on the compacted snow and Ice was treacherous.

The social side of snow was excellent!! Children young (and older) took full advantage and sledges were out in force! The village looked pretty wonderful too!

Pound Lane



St Peters Church



Councillor Mrs Cathy Thomas

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NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

This reporting period has seen a decline in the number of “Watch Word” messages being issued; with those that have initially being related to the usual thefts from garden sheds, the dangers posed by bogus officials and distraction burglaries.

However, with increased oil prices and the current downturn in the economy, there now appears to be a subtle increase towards Heating Oil theft, lead stolen from roofs and Household Burglaries. It is a sad fact that, as times get harder, we could see an increasing number of these types of theft.

I am very pleased to report that our local Neighbourhood Watch community is continuing to grow with new members registering to receive Watchword messages via email. All “Watchword” messages are sent out via email to registered members as a “blind carbon copy” (Bcc), so no individual can see the email addresses of other recipients or even their names. Thereby ensuring that, for those people who would not wish their email address to be known by others, there is no danger of the disclosure. If you would wish this facility to be extended to you please notify me by email at NHW@Minsterworth.org

Please remember, if you do see a crime being committed ring 999 immediately. However, if you see any other unusual or suspicious activities around our community please ring the Gloucestershire Police on their non-emergency local call rate number: 0845 090 1234. Speed of notification can be a great advantage and can prevent or help the Police solve a crime.

Please stay vigilant and help keep your community free from crime.

Pete Thomas
Tel: 750136

CALOR VILLAGE OF THE YEAR 2009

Is anyone willing to enter the Village in the CALOR Village of the Year competition? The deadline for entries is Friday, 8 May 2009. Further details are available on www.grcc.org.uk or contact the Clerk for information.

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MINSTERWORTH CHARITIES

Following the resignation of Mrs Joy Johnson, who has moved out of the district we welcome Mrs Jane Fraser-Hook as a new trustee.

HIETTS' CHARITY, FOUNDED BY WILL DATED 1719

This charity's aims were changed on March 4 1996, with the charity commission's approval, to widen it's availability.

From that date the aims were:-

"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 person.

At the time of going to print no grants have been made in the current financial year.

The most recent bank statements show:-

30 day account	£325.60
Current account	£647.11
Total:	£972.71

WINKLES CHARITY FOUNDED BY WILL DATED JUNE 1722

This charity issues small grants to persons of state retirement age who live alone towards heating costs. December 2008 saw two payments for solid fuel and two towards heating costs, making a total of £112.00.

As at 23 December 2008 there was £225.87 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

Mr R Allan Selwyn