

Stinsford Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Electors Held on Monday 16th May 2011, at 7pm in the Old Library, Kingston Maurward College

Present: Mr David Ruston (Vice-Chairman of Parish Council), five other members of Stinsford Parish Council and two members of the public

In attendance: Mrs V Gifford (Clerk) and Cllr S East (District Councillor)

1. Welcome

The Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council, David Ruston, welcomed everybody to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from the Parish Council Chairman Cllr Pat Pollard, due to illness, and from County Councillor, Mrs J Haynes.

3. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

Written Report from Cllr Pollard attached, which was read by the Vice-Chairman Cllr Ruston.

4. Report from County Councillor

Written Report from Cllr Haynes attached which was read by the Vice-Chairman Cllr Ruston.

As Cllr Haynes had not attended for two meetings it was agreed that the dates of future meetings be sent to her, with a request that she guaranteed attendance at one, as many questions were outstanding on County Council issues. The questions would be sent to her in advance so that she was prepared.

5. Report from District Councillor

Cllr East reported the following:

- A good election for the Conservatives, but with the loss of Fred Horsington to this ward and as Chair of the Planning Committee. A positive message was re-emphasised; no cuts to the voluntary sector, freeze in car park fees and council tax.
- New swimming pool will open 2012
- The new Charles Street development will invigorate the town centre, and the offices will save money and running costs
- WDDC and Weymouth & Portland are completing the management structure for their partnership. Four Directors and 16 Managers have now been appointed and it was thought there would be a 10% cut in staff when the procedure was complete.
- Affordable Housing is top priority with Buckland Newtons affordable housing scheme nearing completion as a Community Land Trust
- The final phase of Lyme Regis Coastal Protection Plan commences in 2013 with secured government funding.
- New housing developments in Bridport and Charmouth.

It was agreed that a card be sent to Fred Horsington to thank him for his support to the parish.

6. Report of the Village Hall Trust

Cllr G Armstrong advised that a financial statement had not been prepared as the bank statement had not been received to date.

It was agreed that details of the Village Hall Trust would be incorporated within the current Parish Council website

Discussion took place on changing the name of the Trust, with Stinsford Community Trust being the favourite option.

7. Speaker

Ms Jo Witherden, the Local Policy Team Leader at West Dorset District Council gave a very interesting presentation on the Localism Bill and Neighbourhood Planning. The presentation would be circulated to all members for information.

8. Public Discussion Period

Mr Thomas of Higher Bockhampton requested that the Parish Council be proactive in the Hardy Birthplace Project. It has been promised that the council would be part of the Steering Group but it was understood that this was no longer going forward. It was agreed to contact the County Council via Cllr Haynes to establish the plan. The applicants were required to consult locally as part of the Heritage Lottery funding. If no answers were established from the County Council, there was the possibility of writing to the funders to explain that consultation had not taken place.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.55pm

Chairman.....Date.....

Stinsford Parish Council Chairman's Report 2010 - 2011

This has been a busy year for the Parish council. As well as regular bi-monthly council meetings, planning meetings are held on a regular basis in order to cope with the increasing number of planning applications. There is always a public half hour at the beginning of each meeting which gives parishioners an opportunity to air their views. The PC are always mindful of the Parish Plan and uses it as a reference document. At each PC meeting we aim to have a speaker, topics have included Resilience Planning, the Dorset Cycleway Strategy, Consultation on the B3143, Hardy's Birthplace Project and the River Frome Rehabilitation Plan. We also welcome our community policewoman on a regular basis. The PC approved the purchase of a replacement computer and wireless printer for the Clerk.

Planning Matters

There have been 19 planning applications within the Parish over the year, some more contentious than others. The saga of the paintballing activities in the ancient woodland of Greys Wood continues. Although an enforcement notice was placed on the activities, paintballing continued and an Article IV Directive to stop permissive rights has now been issued. However activities are still continuing on adjacent land. The PC supported the application at Higher Kingston for the change of use of agricultural building into a children's play centre. This application has now been approved by WDDC. There was discussion as to the possible listing of structures on the water meadows. This initiative was deemed to be fraught with difficulties as there appeared to be no provision for such structures within the Government guidelines for the listing of Historical Monuments.

Roads and Transport

Road safety and traffic management within the parish continues to be a regular item. The PC sent a dossier to the relevant road agencies outlining the problems faced in the Parish and offering solutions none of which were deemed acceptable. Inappropriate traffic, traffic using narrow lanes when there has been an accident on the A35, and the speed of traffic through the parish still remains a problem. The authorities will not consider 30mph signs approaching the College entrance or boxes on the Stinsford roundabout. The new roundabout at Stinsford is now complete; we shall have to reserve judgement on its safety particularly for pedestrians. Signs restricting A35 traffic to Weymouth using Cuckoo Lane during Olympic weeks is still being considered by the Highways Agency. The Olympic Route Network which will affect the parish continues to be a concern as there as yet appears to be no co-ordinated planning for our area. Representatives from the road agencies are to be invited to future PC meetings. When the new park and ride site for Dorchester is in operation it is envisaged that the toilet facilities at Kingston Pond will be moved to this site.

The Community and our links with Kingston Maurward College

We continue to enjoy a good relationship with KMC and are grateful to the college for the continued ground maintenance of our playing field, their help within the parish and for the way in which they assisted in winter snow clearance particularly in Lower Bockhampton and Knapwater. As a result of the bad weather and lack of gritting and snow clearance on our parish roads the PC and KMC have formed a Parish Bad Weather Contingency Plan.

Finally I would like to thank my councillors for their time and support during the past year, to our District and County Councillors. And to Vanessa for all her dedication, hard work and unflinching good humour a big thank you.

Annual Report to the Parish Council

Jill Haynes, Three Valleys Division, Dorset County Council

The Comprehensive Spending Review of the Government looked to considerably reduce the deficit budget of the Country and quite rightly this was something that every Local Authority had to play a part in as well. After the review DCC found that it had, due to grant reductions, a deficit budget of £55.5M to be spread over 3 years. £31M had to be found in the financial year 2011/12. Contrary to press reports Dorset was not a winner somewhere along the line someone in a press office could not add up! The Schools budget has also been reduced but is ring fenced in is not included in the above calculations.

It has certainly been a considerable challenge to tackle these cuts as we must set a balanced budget; we are not allowed to borrow against future years or to set a deficit budget. The situation was made even more urgent as we did not know the total of our grant allocation until early January 2011 and the budget had to be set by 17th February!

It was agreed by Councillors and Officers that it was better to look at a single major change which could be then built on to give future stability. Reviewing the costs for each Directorate was very difficult as many services are statutory and may not be cut or are hard to change. e.g. children's homes. It is estimated that there will be the loss of 500 posts with the possibility of some others in later years if the current proposed savings are not met. The situation would have been considerably worse if we had not already been running a savings programme called "Fit for the Future" that brought in savings for this year, before the review, of some £8M.

Environment

There has been the set up of the Dorset Waste Partnership which began at the beginning of April. Now the waste collection and the management of waste for the rest of Dorset are merged. West Dorset is currently working with Weymouth as a joint collection service and will be joining the partnership in 2013. There is a possibility that Bournemouth and Poole may join as well. This Partnership reduces costs by minimising waste movement, joint purchasing, increasing trade waste collection and shared staff and vehicles.

Highways

We are currently having a total review of this service. Dorset Works Organisation and Dorset Engineering Consultancy will no longer be stand alone agencies and will be brought back in house. This section alone has 70 redundancies although many have volunteered for early retirement. There still may have to be some compulsory redundancies. There will then be area teams that go back to the greater use of local knowledge of their patch. (Hopefully the person checking out the potholes will also fill it in there and then!)

Adult Services

This Directorate has particular problems due to the aged population of Dorset and our rural area. There has been a lot of work with the NHS to help rehabilitate people after a hospital stay so that they are able to live in their own homes and not have to move into expensive care homes. There is currently underway the introduction of personal care budgets where each individual decides how their budget should be spent and what services they need. It is quite complicated and I will be pleased to discuss this further on a case by case basis. We do not look to close day centres unless those people using them currently decide they do not wish to pay to go there.

Children's Services

There has been a complete re-organisation in the upper management here and now area managers based on District Council areas will be responsible for all children from 0 -19. This has incorporated the Youth Service, Sure Start and the Children's Social Workers, to name a few areas, under one manager.

You may have seen in the press that there is a big rise nationally of Children in Care. We are lucky that our situation is relatively stable with numbers staying around 280 for the County. However, we are finding that there are many more young children coming into care. This is partly due to a greater vigilance after the Baby P case but also reflects a weakness in parenting skills as we are seeing a growth in cases of neglect.

Libraries. There is a major review of the library service with proposals to close or hand over to other organisations some 20 of our 36 libraries. Many of these facing the cuts are only open between 10 and 20 hours per week and do not have a high turnover of visitors. It is the cost of the buildings and staff that are the problem. It is hoped that a way of working can be found to keep books in these communities although possibly not in the current buildings. There will not be just one solution but many, in some cases involving joint working with schools. The consultation process for this is ongoing.

Lollipop Crossings. These patrols are greatly appreciated by the communities they serve but are not a statutory obligation of the Council and we are looking at alternative ways of funding the patrols. There is the possibility that business sponsorship may be one route. The consultation process for this is extended until the end of the year.

Part Night Street Lighting. The County council is looking to save money by switching off some street lights for some of the night. Local communities will be consulted and their views about unsafe areas taken into account.

Weymouth Relief Road. This road is finally open on time and on budget!! There are still some holdups and further works in Weymouth but the bulk of these should be completed for the summer season.

Youth Opportunities fund. The County Council has agreed to fund for the current the Youth Opportunity Fund with £100K. This grant money allocation is agreed by a Youth Council for applications from our young people for grants up to £15k.

Good News! Our Schools have been shown as the most energy efficient in the country. If all schools were as efficient as ours the country could save 1 Billion Pounds!!!!