

WHITBOURNE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting Held on Wednesday 6th May 2020 at 7.00pm

Present:

Note: Attendance was by remote video conferencing as necessitated by the Covid-19 lockdown.

Present: R James (Chair); J. Bromley (JB); G. Cupper (GC); T Hunt (TH); P. Wood (PDW); S. Knowles (SK); M. Clark (MC); C. Wier (CW); P Davis (PD)

In Attendance: Cllr N Shaw; K Phillips (Clerk). Five members of the public.

1. Apologies for Absence

All Councillors were present.

2. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

See attached report given by Cllr James

3. Public Discussion of any matters relating to Whitbourne

The following items were raised:

- The verges on the top lane were now quite prominent, making a narrow lane even narrower.
- The idea of a skip for village use was discussed. Previous experience of doing this was not favourable as volunteers needed to clean up the mess and glass left behind.
- A suggestion of local recycling bins was made (bottles, clothes etc). NS noted that these would need funding if they were to be installed. The closest recycling centre was on the Linton Trading Estate.
- There was no progress on the Rosemore Grange planning application decision.

Meeting Closed at 19:28

Signed Cllr James (Chairman)

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Annual Report from the Chairman of Whitbourne Parish Council.

This is a historic occasion, in that it is the first time ever that the Chairman of Whitbourne Council has given his report via the internet. But then so many things are now being done completely differently than we would have imagined even a few months ago. We have already held two planning meetings via zoom which were surprisingly very successful, in that all PC councillors that were available were present, and members of the public who logged on had the opportunity to contribute to the debate when the meeting was opened. I am sure that we will see the internet playing a bigger roll for PC business into the future, even after this present crisis is over.

The PC did not take part in the local government elections in May due to the fact that there were only eight nominations for the nine available posts. Therefore all nominations automatically gained their seats. The new councillors who joined the council were: Mark Clark, Paul Davis, Sally Knowles and Chris Wier. Then Tess Hunt was co-opted during an extraordinary PC meeting on the 12th of June. These new councillors have also took on other responsibilities as the PC representatives on other village groups and committees. The working party led by Peter Wood, set up to decide the most beneficial use of the S106 funds have been hard at work, and we now have a new very smart and substantial bus shelter set in the centre of the village, along with a far more practical and attractive litter bin in the same location. The PC were so impressed with the litter bin that we have purchased another out of PC funds to replace the one positioned by the village notice board. This bin has been delivered and is in storage until the lockdown is over and we are able to get a working party together to put it into position. Maureen Williams, the new chair of the playing fields committee and her team are intending to purchase some adult exercise equipment from the allocation of funds set aside for sports facilities. Peter and his group are hoping to go ahead shortly with improving pedestrian safety in the area of the village shop and also investigating what other measures could be put in place to reduce the speed of traffic around the same area.

The PC set a precept of £12000 for the next year, this is the same as previous years, but it is quite likely that it will have to be increased for the next financial year. We have agreed to continue to pay grants to the DCC, to go towards the costs of maintaining the church clock and upper churchyard (cemetery) and also towards the costs of managing Bringsty Common. We have also agreed to cover the costs of insurance and hedge trimming for the playing fields, this is in addition to paying for the grass to be cut on the sports field. The village hall committee have set out a plan for maintenance of the building and are in the middle of redecorating the main hall. The playing fields committee are busy applying for grants to replace some of the play equipment.

Both of these committees have managed to recruit a couple of new members but would welcome any more volunteers that would like to help them take forward these new initiatives.

The PC has had a lot of planning applications to consider during the past twelve months, which have often resulted in holding extraordinary PC meetings in addition to the normal meetings. We are still concerned about the deteriorating condition of the Wheatsheaf Inn. In July the PC was asked to comment on the latest planning application for this property to be converted into two apartments. We agreed to support this application with certain

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restrictions. This application was refused by HC planning and we are now awaiting the results of an appeal by the applicant.

I would like to thank some of the volunteer groups that have been set up to improve or help the parish. In particular the litter picking group led by Rachel Freeman who have improved our hedgerows and verges tremendously and also Noelle Wilson and Sue Bayliss who have set up the Covid 19 assistance team giving support to the community at this difficult time.

Finally, on behalf of the PC I would like to express our thanks to our Clerk Kevin Phillips who has had a very busy year. The bit the public see with the production of agendas and minutes are just the tip of what goes on behind the scenes. In the last year all the S106 correspondence, the new data protection legislation, the increase in planning applications and a minor but time consuming complaint have all added to his workload. We are fortunate that Kevin has considerable IT experience so he has been able to guide us through this conversion to online meetings and hopefully I will be successful in giving this report via this means at the Annual Parish Meeting.

During this lockdown on my early morning walks along the deserted roads and footpaths of the village, it has reminded me of how important it is that whilst the Parish Council helps to improve and take this village forward we must try to preserve what we already have. The English countryside at its best.

Ron James, Chairman Whitbourne Parish Council