

# TAPLOW PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF TAPLOW PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 24<sup>th</sup> MAY 2013 AT 8 P.M. IN THE READING ROOM TAPLOW VILLAGE CENTRE HIGH STREET TAPLOW

### Present

Cllr. George Sandy (Chairman)    Cllr. Rachel Gainey-Corcoran  
Cllr. John Bamberg                    Cllr. Joy Marshall  
Cllr. John Kennedy                    Cllr. Louise Symons  
Cllr. Elizabeth Forsyth                Cllr. Iris Midlane  
Cllr. Marina Grazier  
Mrs. Hilda Holder –Clerk  
Nine members of the public. The Chairman declared the meeting open at 8pm.

### **1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies from Cllr. Josie Corio, Cllr. Euan Felton and Mr. Karl Lawrence.

### **2 To confirm minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013**

Proposed by Cllr. Midlane and seconded by Cllr. Symons. These were **approved** and signed by the Chairman.

### **3 Report from Thames Valley Police**

- 3.1 PC Trevor Walker presented a written report on crime statistics throughout the year. He highlighted that most of the statistics showed crime was reducing. Burglaries to dwelling were going down but 'shed breaks' appeared to have risen. This was mainly because there had been a spate of such incidents at one hotel site which had now been resolved. Crimes involving boats had peaked earlier in the year – mainly because of metal thefts- but this had now come down substantially. He added that the high number of criminal damage to vehicles reflected the fact that stealing car parts were now recorded in these numbers not just the theft of personal possessions from cars.
- 3.2 He added that a campaign to notify owners of the number of personal possessions on display in their cars was underway. Police were touring pub car parks to this end but he confirmed that no photographs of vehicles were taken.
- 3.3 Some of the success in reducing criminal damage was because of working with youths from the Maypole estate and planting shrubs in places where they used to gather.
- 3.4 He ended by saying that, in comparative terms, crime was not a big issue in the Taplow area. Hot spots in South Bucks were in the Iver and Denham area because of criminals accessing those areas easily from the Metropolitan area.

### **4 Report from the Parish Council**

- 4.1 The Chairman began by welcoming everyone. He introduced the new members of the Parish Council to those present – namely Cllr. Rachel Gainey-Corcoran who joined the Council since the last APM and who has just been elected as Vice Chairman of the Parish Council. He added that she worked in the pharmaceutical industry and had- in a relatively short time - shown herself to be a valuable member of the team. He also introduced Cllr. Marina Grazier who had just been co-opted at the AGM of the Parish Council held earlier that evening.

- He advised that key members of staff present were Hilda Holder, the Parish Clerk, appointed just over a year ago and Olive Straw who managed the Village Hall lettings diary. Sue Griffin, the assistant clerk was unable to be present. He thanked all the Councilors and the staff for all their support over the past year.
- 4.2 He also thanked County Cllr. Dev Dhillon who had worked extremely hard on our behalf at Aylesbury and who had just succeeded in winning his seat back at the recent County Council Election which had been a hard campaign.
- 4.3 He advised that notable issues with which the Parish Council had dealt during the past year have included footpaths, Carols on the Green and the Bishops Centre:-
- 4.3.1 The Parish Council was still battling with BCC over the maintenance of footpaths, which are their legal responsibility. He invited resident to report problem areas to the Clerk.
- 4.3.2 He expressed disappointment that for the second year running the Christmas Carols on The Green had had to be aborted. This time it was discovered that, in spite of advance notice of plans, both the Church and the School had arranged their own Christmas events for the same evening. These clashes would have resulted in grid-lock and parking made impossible, so the Parish Council had no alternative but to abort. However, an enthusiastic group of villagers had got together and held their own spontaneous event. The real losers of cancellation were the various charities to whom the proceeds are distributed.
- 4.3.3 Residents had raised a great deal of objection to Land Securities plans for redevelopment of The Bishop Centre and following heated debate at the May Council meeting it was agreed that the Parish Council should write to The Secretary of State requesting that their application be called in for consideration. However, it was not, and subsequently, SBDC's Planning Committee approved the application by a very small margin. So it will only be a matter of time before the construction of yet another out-of-town supermarket. Land Securities have said they will donate a significant amount money to the Parish to use as it best thinks on local needs, but nothing on this will be decided until it is known for certain that the money has been paid into our account. We shall be giving thought to our priorities, and of course, any suggestions from residents will be given due consideration.
- 4.4 There has certainly been a burgeoning of public spirited works in the Parish:-
- 4.4.1 The Telephone Box in Rectory Road has been restored by volunteers.
- 4.4.2 The Parish agreed to take a 125 year Lease over the area known as the Old Priory Garden, which lies between the bottom of Wellbanks Garden and the footpath from Boundary Road to Berry Hill. Again, a group of volunteers, aptly named The Friends of OPG together with the Taplow & Hitcham Recreation Association, have started clearing areas and transplanting brambles onto Wellbank's boundary which in a year or two -at the most- should create an impenetrable barrier between the two areas.
- 4.5 The Village Hall has been improved by the installation of acoustic panels fixed to the ceiling.
- 4.6 On Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> June, the whole Nation celebrated Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the parishioners of Taplow joined in whole-heartedly. After congregating on the Green a procession carrying flaming torches headed by MP Dominic Grieve wound its way up Rectory Road behind a large Union Jack being stoutly waved until the throng reached Taeppa's Burial Mound. On top was the prepared beacon, lit by Dominic at 10pm, the National Anthem was sung heartily by all and this was followed by an impressive firework display. Children were

- given commemorative Crown Medals. It was estimated that over 600 people had attended what turned into a fabulous celebration of our Queen's Reign.
- 4.7 The Chairman had represented Taplow at The Lord Lieutenant's Jubilee Party held in Henley which was graced by the presence of The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh. The event was jointly sponsored by the Counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire and the venue was Henley Management College where there was a sail-by pageant of historical Thames craft ranging from a scary long-boat of Viking Invaders to Dunkirk Little Boats. Even Three Men in a Boat, and Ratty, Toad and the cast of Wind in the Willows were all there. The Queen arrived on the 130 year old steam launch 'Alaska' and all round, it was a splendid event with choirs, dancers and military bands.
- 4.8 Not long afterwards The Olympics came to Dorney Lake, and strangely, in spite of dire warnings of resulting traffic problems, it was almost as though the Games didn't happen. Virtually no disruption..... A credit to the planners who organised the travel arrangements and access routes.
- 4.9 However, parts of Taplow had been completely blighted by traffic problems that arose from the National Grid's replacement of the gas main along the Bath Road. Most of the local village roads and country lanes were regularly blocked leading to some rather strong exchanges between drivers. We were asked time after time to do something about it, and so the contractors agreed to put up signs saying 'access only for residents' which actually inflamed the situation. Unfortunately, the fact is the utilities are legally able to dig up the roads whenever they choose, and in this case they didn't even give us any warning. Thankfully, it's all over now.
- 4.10 During September a Survey of Residents views regarding possible traffic calming measures had been carried out. The main conclusions were;  
Two thirds of respondents were against speed humps  
60% were in favour of Speed Advisory Signs, which the PC is considering using periodically at problem sites  
Almost 70% were in favour of a 20mph area around the village roads including Berry Hill and a reduction to 30mph along Boundary Road  
Chicanes or throats were only supported by one third of respondents  
Policed speed-traps were surprisingly popular with 61% in favour  
Overall 59% were in favour of the High Street becoming one-way with 70% of High Street residents for, but only providing that a 20mph limit was imposed otherwise, speeding would continue uninhibited with there being no possibility of cars meeting approaching traffic.  
Our County Councillor has undertaken to drive some of these issues through on our behalf as they are all matters that need to have the approval and hopefully financial support of BCC
- 4.11 The Council continues to work closely with BCC to resolve the parking problems around Taplow Station, Institute and Station Roads. The County proposal, which the Parish Council adamantly opposed was to create Pay & Display Parking. Hopefully, agreement will be reached whereby double-yellow lines in appropriate areas will encourage more commuters to utilise the station car park.
- 4.12 The Green will again be the venue for the traditional Midsummer Ox Roast organised by the Hitcham & Taplow Society...details of which will be advised in due course.
- 4.13 And at Christmas, with better luck, on 14 December there will be a successful Carols on The Green Party by the Christmas Tree.

## **5 Report from the Chairman of the Planning Committee**

A report had been submitted by Cllr. Felton which was read out by the Chairman ;-

- 5.1 Mill Lane –the last year has seen the ongoing process of the production of the Development Brief. The draft Sustainability Report still requires further work but it is expected that the Development Brief will be adopted on 30<sup>th</sup> July. The rumour that Barratts' option has expired is true but they remain the preferred bidder.
- 5.2 Berry Hill – gravel extraction has restarted and a committee of local representatives has been formed to monitor the situation. The committee meets twice each year.
- 5.3 Crossrail – in the next few years residents will be able to see some construction starting in relating to this which will be in place by 2017. Stops will include Taplow.
- 5.4 Bishops Centre – The owners had applied for a change of use as a non material amendment. The Parish Council had objected to this on grounds of increased traffic and SBDC had refused this. The owners had since then successfully applied for a variation of condition. As a result of the Parish Council's intervention however there is at least a more realistic traffic benchmark in place. Redevelopment will take places within months.
- 5.5 Ellington Gardens – The Parish Council had objected to the proposed development on Green Belt issues and the application had been refused by SBDC.
- 5.6 Marshmead – an application to regularise importation and distribution of agricultural products had been refused and an enforcement process started. The owners then applied for a large chicken farm. The Parish Council objected on the grounds of the industrial scale of the plans and Green Belt issues.
- 5.7 Dropmore House – this had been in the process of being converted into flats when the developers went into administration. The Parish Council supports the plans of the new owners to restore it as a family home.

## **6 Report from the Friends of the Old Priory Gardens**

Roger Andrews reported that he was in charge of the works at the Old Priory Gardens. He said some 40 volunteers (adults and children) had already undertaken several days of work. They had transplanted brambles to the Wellbank boundary to create a barrier to protect residents. They had also created two new pathways to the Pond in the middle which will become a wildlife pond although further consideration will need to be given to safety issues concerning the Pond. 30 bird-boxes had been made and installed and reports were that most were being used. Bat boxes are also planned. Another working party will be formed at the end of the Summer. Further work to create more new pathways and clear the greenhouses is planned. The school will also become involved in working on the old allotments. Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed remain an issue but they are being hand sprayed and it is expected that it will take a couple of years to get on top on them.

## **7 Report from County Councillor Dev Dhillon**

- 7.1 Cllr. Dhillon started by expressing his sympathy over the Woolwich incident. He said he had close ties with the military community and supported help the Heroes. He encourage those present to continue to show support for the charity and to stand together as a community on this issue.
- 7.2 He thanked the Parish Council for its support over the local County Council elections. He said he had been elected to a diverse and wide ranging Division with 9211 residents and a lots of anti-social behaviour issues.

- 7.3 He said his priorities this year for Taplow were to focus on issues on the Bath Road and then Institute Road and Taplow Road and the proposals for new 20mph areas.
- 7.4 He reported that the County had now signed a contract for high speed broadband.
- 7.5 He said the total budget for County was £850million which after the education budget left £329M but there would be cuts from Government funding going forward and all Government grants- which amounted to about £90M -would end completely in the next few years. The County was seeking to ask the Government for more money for highways.
- 7.6 With regards to overgrown hedges, he was touring the area next week with the Local Area Technician. He would be specifically looking at Hill Farm Road. He was asked to look at the footpath along Cliveden Road and Hill Farm Road verges.

## **8 Report from District Councillor George Sandy**

Cllr. Sandy reported that SBDC had held council tax charges at the same level for 3 years and indeed the Parish Council had also reduced charges for 5 years and stayed the same for this year. He said further savings at SBDC were being made by amalgamating a lot of services with Chiltern District Council. Also by 2015 it was intended to reduce the number of councillors from 40 to a figure to be agreed between 28 and 34 councillors. He added that Farnham Park Golf Course was about to be redeveloped and renamed 'The Buckinghamshire' . Work should be completed in a year's time.

## **9 Further questions and comments**

- 9.1 Cllr. Marshall wished to thank the two volunteers, Mr. Grazier and Jessie, who had walked the footpaths with her last year.
- 9.2 Mrs. Sandy was concerned that if High Street became a one way system it would increase speeding. Cllr. Sandy agreed that further consideration would be needed but this was up to the Highway engineers.

The meeting closed at 9pm

*This concludes the Minutes*