

STOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk – Lorraine Green

Stock Village Hall, Common Road, Stock, Ingatestone, Essex, CM4 0QW.

Tel. No. 07757 114952

www.stock.org.uk/council

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 19TH APRIL 2007 AT RECTORY HALL, HIGH STREET, STOCK, AT 7.30PM.

Present: *Cllrs. Johnson, Elliott, Tully, Watling, Otter & Phillips*
In The Chair: *Cllr. Easton*
Minute Secretary: *Lorraine Green*
Also Present: *9 Members of the Public, Inspector Callow, PCSO John Gipson and PCSO Jon McDonald*
Apologies for Absence: *Cllr. Bob Hale and Chelmsford Borough Councillor Ian Grundy*

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. PRESENTATION BY INSPECTOR CALLOW.

Inspector Callow advised that there is one Sergeant dedicated to this beat and his name is Sergeant Neil Marshall. The Police Mobile Telephone is for community issues and not for emergency calls. The main contact for enquiries is P.C. Alan Davey.

The Police are looking to hold monthly beat surgeries and are looking for any buildings they can use in the village to use as a permanent place to hold the surgeries.

Inspector Callow advised that Open Forums are Police Consultative Meetings, which are held in South Woodham Ferrers. These meetings are being revamped and are going to be called Have a Say Day.

Inspector Callow advised that the Police have Problem Oriented Meetings, which are all about multi agency working, and holding problem solving meetings.

The mobile Police station now visits the village on a monthly basis and Inspector Callow is waiting to receive the rural timetable from July to the Autumn from her Officers.

Inspector Callow reported on Door Knocking. She advised that PCSO's are going to be knocking on doors and speaking to parishioners about any problems they are experiencing. This matter is tied to the Neighbourhood Action Panel. The Police started the Neighbourhood Action Panel. Eventually it will be chaired by the community with a representative from the Parish Council. The idea is to deal with all local issues. Inspector Callow suggesting running a meeting one month in Stock and the next month in Ramsden Heath but that she would need help and advice from the Parish Council.

Inspector Callow advised that Hard to Hear Groups had been set up to make sure that the Police are listening to this section of the public's issues.

Inspector Callow reported that she had been put up as a Centre of Excellence for the work she has put into Every child Matters. Inspector Callow is holding two day workshops and bringing other Inspectors up to speed on the issue. Inspector Callow advised that her team are visiting local schools.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Callow for her presentation and said that changes had been noted since her arrival and were greatly appreciated.

2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2006.

The Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting were taken as read and the Chairman confirmed that they were signed as a true record at the May 2006 meeting. All agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

None.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

The Chairman had prepared and circulated the following report:-

Council Membership

Once again during the past year we have seen changes, with the resignations of Keith Blackburn and Judy Williams as councillors. As no elections for these vacancies were requested, the posts were filled by advertising for applicants. Accordingly Charles Phillips and Bob Hale were appointed councillors. Since the resignation of Judy Williams was within 6 months of the elections we were not permitted to fill this vacancy. We should like to take this opportunity to remind you that the elections for the Parish Council are due shortly and we would very much like to see new faces bringing new ideas, so encourage you to consider standing.

Both our County Councillor, Lord Hanningfield and Lord of the Manor, Lord Petre attended meetings last year. Ian Grundy, our Borough Councillor, continues to attend all our meetings and provide updates each month of any news or developments which concern our village. We are all very grateful for his active and practical support.

Planning

Planning continues to be a difficult issue because of the sheer scale and numbers received each month, requiring a great deal of consideration. Consequent building works result in changing street scene, disruption and noise, with damage to verges. The Parish Council has always stood by the parishioners' will that the Green Belt and the village's rural aspect be maintained, and we have had some success in this regard. However we cannot change statutory planning laws.

Policing

The Parish Council has made great progress in establishing a good working relationship with the police, thanks to the committed and ongoing support of Inspector Cheryl Callow. As a result there has been an increased police presence in the village and a police representative now attends every Parish Council meeting, or provides a detailed report. Additionally, a mobile police station has visited the village and future dates for this are planned. We are pleased to announce that Inspector Callow will be the key speaker at the Annual Parish meeting on 19th April at 7.30 p.m. in the Rectory Hall, which we urge you to attend. The Neighbourhood Watch scheme continues to play a key role, but more coordinators are needed: please consider if you could help.

Local Amenities

After many years, and through the work of the Essex Rural Housing Trust, we have succeeded in fulfilling the wish of the majority of villagers for Affordable Housing. The application for 10 units of Affordable Housing for residents with Stock connections was recently approved. We understand Stock has been praised by Chelmsford Borough Council for being only the second Parish in the Borough to work towards providing Affordable Housing, which is much needed.

The Parish Council totally supports the retention of the Post Office and will continue to fight against any threat to the existence of such a key amenity.

We continue to support the Cricket and Football Clubs by making substantial financial contributions towards the grass cutting of their pitches. It is our hope that the village, like so many others, may be able to have its own playing field which could also be a permanent home for the Football Club. Any suggestions as to suitable land would be greatly appreciated.

Another future project requiring land is that for allotments: both the Parish and the Borough Council have received a number of requests for allotments in the village and we are pursuing a couple of possibilities, but again any suggestions as to suitable sites would be gratefully received.

The Parish Council has been active, in conjunction with the school, in planting spring bulbs around the green and pond. These can really be appreciated at this time of year. Trees will be planted around the green to replace those that have died. We continue to place benches, notice boards and litter bins where requested, and maintain existing street furniture. The historic crossroad sign in the village has been restored to a high standard, making it a key feature of the High Street. Recently work was completed to reinstate the track in front of the Almshouses, which had been badly eroded by inappropriate traffic: after discussions, Chelmsford Borough Council has agreed not to drive the heavy refuse collection lorries along it. We thank Gary Stringer for his most helpful assistance with this project.

Jenny Berkley is in the process of producing a map of all footpaths in the village, together with a booklet of suggested walks, which will be funded by the Parish Council. We thank Jenny for all her hard work and effort in producing these.

Village Environment, Village Design Statement and the Best Kept Village Competition

The Parish Council is disappointed by the apparent lack of volunteers prepared to contribute to the Village Design Statement, which is key if we are to maintain the heritage of Stock. There seem to be only a few people prepared to give something back to the village.

We were not successful in Best Kept Village competition last year so we will be making even greater effort this year, but we cannot do this alone. Accordingly could we please ask you all to do your part by tidying-up around your property, particularly those that are undergoing building work. Our annual 'bin-it' day is scheduled for 21st April, starting at 10 a.m. on the Common and we would be delighted to see more volunteers this year.

But a pleasant environment is not achieved by a once a year event and we are discouraged by the amount of litter around the village and a general lack of interest in maintaining a pleasant environment. We look to everyone to do their bit on an everyday basis by picking up litter, not parking on the verges and reporting any council property that requires attention. Additionally we are looking into running a "Stock in Bloom" competition this summer to encourage people to enhance the appearance of our village through having more hanging baskets, plant containers and attractive gardens.

Traffic

Together with the police, we continue to work towards addressing problems of speeding traffic. The temporary speed device on the High Street a few months ago received positive feedback, so we are investigating the possibility of erecting permanent devices. At the Annual Parish Meeting we will discuss whether it would be appropriate to impose parking restrictions by having yellow lines painted on certain roads to improve congestion caused by inconsiderate parking.

Website

Cllr Watling continues to do a sterling job compiling the data for our excellent website, www.stock.org.uk, where you can find all our notices, agendas and minutes that are instantly available to download, along with contributions from various organisations and villagers.

Thank you

We work hard to maintain a pleasant village environment and to represent the views of the village in our interaction with the Borough and County Councils. Accordingly I should like to thank all the councillors for their support and our Clerk, Lorraine Green for her invaluable assistance.

We would appreciate much more active participation from everyone in the village, particularly at our meetings, which are generally held on the last Monday of each month at 7.30 p.m. at the Village Hall.

5. TWEEDY CHARITY.

The Clerk read out the following report that had been prepared by the Trustee, Mr Tony Barker:-

The Trustees of the Tweedy Charity are pleased to make their Annual Report for the year ended 31st March 2007.

The year has been exceedingly quiet, for which we are grateful, with little of interest to report.

Full occupancy has been maintained, and one of our residents has now achieved the great age of 99. Next year will be a milestone for her. Two others have happily been able to take holidays with their families, one in Australia, and one in America. We feel they are able to do this due to the very real subsidy reflected by the level of rents, helped by the Council's grant and other donations, and are so pleased they could go.

We have also had two applications from prospective residents, which, bearing in mind the difficulty experienced at the last vacancy, is satisfying.

The Parish Council has had some work done to the track in front of the Almshouses, and this has made a much welcomed improvement to the corner with School Lane.

As a result of the improvement to No. 1, the Resident at No. 4 asked for a handrail in February last year: final approval was obtained at the end of March, and we are hopeful it will be in place shortly.

The accounts for last year have been checked by Stan Elgar, to whom we are most grateful, and showed a small but healthy profit of some £250.00.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

A parishioner, Richard Allan, said that there is less reported about traffic and the efforts the Parish Council are making in the monthly minutes. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council have been liaising with Inspector Callow and her team and that the matter is still on-going and site meetings have been held. Mr Allan read in the Millennium Report that issues on traffic are not being addressed and felt that nothing gets done in Stock at all. Mr Allan stated that traffic is moving at speed and in high volumes through the village. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council had asked for traffic calming but had been told they could not have it as the B1007 takes emergency vehicles, buses etc. A temporary speed indicator had been trialled and the Parish Council are looking into having a permanent device as it proved very effective. Inspector Callow advised that soon PCSO's will be able to deal with speed as there is a new speed programme coming in and the PCSO's are currently being trained. Inspector Callow also advised that the majority of villages are taking part in the Community Speed Watch whereby the community are being trained to use a speed gun and wear a reflective jacket. The index details are taken down of any offending driver and given to the Police to deal with. It was reported that when the Parish Council attempted to get a weight limit on the road the Police did not support it because they could not enforce it. The Chairman stated that there was a complete discontinuity when the road responsibilities were moved from Chelmsford Borough Council to Essex County Council. A parishioner reported that when there were alterations in the High Street to coincide with the A130 the traffic lessened. The parishioner stated that between the bus stop and Antique shop the speed limit should be 20mph as the orange flashing lights have been taken out which used to be used when the children were going to and from school. Inspector Callow suggested inviting Adam Pipe to the next meeting to discuss the various issues. The Chairman reported that the B1007 was classed as a strategic road. It was suggested that the road markings are taken out between the gates. The Chairman advised that removing street furniture and removing road markings had been trialled in other areas.

A parishioner, Jenny Berkley, enquired as to why the Chairman's Report had not been hand delivered to all households this year. A parishioner, Chris Finch, reported that the time was stated incorrectly in Stock Press. The Chairman advised that it had not been practical this year due to her health problems and the fact that the Parish Council was down one member, which would make the distribution very onerous for the remaining Councillors, given the size of the parish and the remoteness of many houses. Enquiries had been made in previous years to get Royal Mail to deliver the Reports but the cost was astronomical. A parishioner, Richard Allan, suggested putting up a banner in the village next year advertising the Annual Parish Meeting.

The subject of putting yellow lines in the village was discussed, particularly in The Square and Common Road where there were parking problems. Inspector Callow had attended a site meeting with Cllr. Elliott and Adam Pipe and they had looked at all the areas. Inspector Callow advised that if there were yellow lines Chelmsford Borough Council need to do enforcement. If, however, a vehicle is causing obstruction then the Police can give out fixed penalty notices. A vote was taken and the majority of the meeting was against yellow lines as it creates urbanisation and detracts from the rural area. Inspector Callow advised that it is an offence to park within 15 metres of a junction. Inspector Callow suggested that parishioners take photographs of any vehicles causing parking problems and give to the Police.

A parishioner requested for lights to be put in the bus shelters outside and opposite The Hoop as it is very dark in the Winter. The Chairman asked the Clerk to speak to Chelmsford Borough Cllr. Ian Grundy to see if he had any contacts in Chelmsford Borough Council who could deal with the matter.

A parishioner, Diane Buers, asked for an update on the pavement outside the Doctor's Surgery. The Chairman had been advised that the work is due to be completed by the end of April.

Cllr. Johnson informed the meeting that the Chairman was not putting herself forward as Parish Councillor for the next term of office due to her ill health. Cllr. Johnson said that the Chairman had worked extremely hard, been extremely efficient and had got a lot of things done.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming; the meeting closed at 9.04pm.

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN).....DATE.....