

# NEWBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Annual Open Parish Meeting held in the Youth and Adult Centre on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009 at 7.30pm

**Councillors Present:** Cllr's. Brenda Skipper (Chairman), Andrew Nelson (Vice Chairman), William Prince, Richard Oakley, Paul Macpherson, Phil Spencer, Annie Briggs. District Cllr. Tim Corbett. Ian Colclough - Clerk

**Public Present:** 21 members of the public were present.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** None

2. **Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2008:**

The meeting was given a few minutes to digest the minutes of last years open meeting. They were taken as read. Proposed by Mr Jerry Peck and seconded by Mr. Brian Beck. All in favour.

3. **Matters Arising from the Minutes:**

### Street Lighting

A question was asked as to whether further street lights would be installed / replaced. Cllr. Nelson said they would be as and when funds became available. It was suggested from the floor that there ought to be more debate before going ahead. The Parish Council undertook to do this.

### Speedwatch

Mr Peck, the coordinator, said that 12 volunteers had come forward, 11 of who have now been trained. No surveys have been undertaken over the winter period, as reasonable weather is required for the equipment to function correctly and for the safety of the volunteers. Mr Peck said he will have to stand down as coordinator and asked if there was anyone else that would be interested. He said he would e-mail the other 11 volunteers to see if anyone was interested. The equipment is shared with Yoxall on a 2 week about basis.

The chairman thanked Mr Peck for his involvement to date but said that unless a suitable coordinator could be found the project would not now go ahead.

### Church Wall

The floor commented that the re-building of the church wall had made a huge improvement to the village centre not only in increasing safety at the junction but also aesthetically.

4. **Reports from Other Village Organisations:**

### Village Hall

Cllr. Phil Spencer said they were still waiting for planning permission and that he had chased ESBC last week. Once he hears then a public meeting will be called to inform everyone of the outcome and to discuss the best way to progress.

The floor raised concerns over the current parish room and its possible demolition before other facilities are in place. The chairman suggested that perhaps the church could be used in the interim but that the parish council would ensure that something was in place.

A question was asked about the land take for the new hall and whether it would affect the playing field. Cllr. Spencer said that the drawings showed the entrance to be at the very top of the playing field where it would then enter the new site and that the planning department at ESBC were happy with the proposal.

A comment was made from the floor that the current building is in fact a youth and adult centre not a village hall.

Cllr. Nelson asked if any costs for running the new building had been determined. Cllr. Spencer replied that on a like-for-like basis cost are likely to be around £200,000 per year. This was met

with surprise and Cllr. Spencer said he would consult other bodies and produce a breakdown of likely charges.

Mr Peck said that the cost of running a similar sized hall at Barton was around £50,000 pa.

**Action: Cllr. Spencer.**

#### Well Dressing

Preparations are on track for this years well dressing celebration. The organisers have been told that they can use the school for meetings if the youth and adult centre is not available in future. A point was made from the floor as to why the village was pursuing the building of a new village hall if the school could be used instead.

#### Happy Circle

The situation is much the same as last year with only 15 members. More participants are required.

#### Youth Club.

The club is doing well with new children joining and some coming along from neighbouring villages. There are around 15 attending but this number is expected to grow.

#### Flower festival

This years theme is Victorian and there will be around 20 arrangements in church.

#### Womens Institute.

The situation is very similar to the Happy Circle in that they are desperately short of members. Anyone wishing to join please come along.

#### All Saints Church

It will be another two months until the regular vicar is back from illness. In the meantime there is a stand-in taking the services. The work on the church wall is complete and a vote of thanks must go to Cllr. Skipper for her hard work and dedication in bringing the project to a satisfactory conclusion. However, some brickwork requires remedial re-pointing and Cllr. Skipper undertook to get this done.

**Action: Cllr Skipper**

The new sound system in church is working well. The footway outside the church requires regular sweeping, as it has not yet been tarmaced. It was asked if the County Highways would be reinstating the surface but Cllr. Nelson said that would only happen if the Parish Council were to pay. It was suggested that the parish Council ask the community gang to attend to this and Cllr. Nelson undertook to add the request to the list.

**Action: Cllr. Nelson**

#### Best Kept Village.

Newborough has entered again this year. Notices and posters will be posted by the start date which is 1<sup>st</sup> May. Everyone was requested to keep the village tidy and the Clerk was asked to make sure the village notice board was up to date. One area of concern is the amount of dog fouling in the village particularly in Dark Lane. If anyone witnesses this please inform a councillor so that appropriate action can be taken against dog owners. Mr Peck said that the District Council does have an enforcement team but that to date they have not taken a single case to court.

#### **5. Newsletter / Matters Arising:**

Cllr. Skipper said there were three minor errors in the Newsletter. Firstly Cllr. Nelson is vice chairman not Cllr. Macpherson. Secondly Jim Barks did not cut the grass in the churchyard and finally the telephone number for the police is 0300 123 44 55.

A question was asked from the floor as to why the Newsletter was posted out. It was suggested that it could have been circulated with the parish magazine or the local paper. Cllr. Skipper said that would be difficult to administer as not everyone takes these items. She said that delivering them was very time consuming and that the councillors all had their own jobs to do. The cost of postage was only around £70 and this ensured that every household in the parish received one. It was suggested that e-mail could be used but not all parishioners have computers.

Cllr. Nelson made reference to the amount of grant monies the Parish Council had secured over the last twelve months. This amounted to around £20,000 all of which was raised through the endeavours of the chairman, Cllr. Skipper. Cllr. Tim Corbett was also thanked for his support and donations and for his persuasive abilities when it comes to supporting applications. These thanks were reiterated from the floor.

## **6. Annual Accounts: Balance Sheet**

An un-audited balance sheet was available for parishioners to see. It showed an increase in the balance from £17,952.22p in 2007/8 to £19,727.31p in 2008/9. Grants obtained in the year amounted to £20,395.00p. The work on the church wall cost £31,822.26 and the replacement of the streetlights amounted to £3,389.14p. The balance was made up mainly from 'refunds' and the early return of VAT for which the Clerk was thanked. The chairman asked if there were any questions concerning the financial statement. The only comment was over the incorrect spelling of stationery. The chairman asked if the accounts were to be accepted. Proposed by Mr Tony Spencer and seconded by Mr Brian Beck.

The Clerk was thanked for administering the finances and producing the balance sheet.

## **7. Questions from Parishioners:**

### Grass Maintenance.

A question was asked about the grass cutting now that Jim Barks has retired. Cllr. Oakley said that the council had advertised the vacancy and that there were initially 3 respondents, however, only 2 came for interview and one provided a price. The contract would be awarded this week and the first cut requested before the well dressing weekend. The contract is going to cost around £1800 per year to cut the grass on 5 sites. We are able to reclaim around £600 from the County Council.

### Playground Improvements.

Cllr. Skipper thanked Neil and Vicki Boothby for their help with the working party that cleared much of the debris from the river in the playground area. Several fruit trees were in a poor state and had to be removed. Some parishioners were happy with the work and some not. A question was asked regarding the removal of trees in a conservation area. Fruit trees can be taken down without consent. The chairman had spoken to East Staffs Planning Department who said that the council could go ahead and remove the trees where necessary. She has also spoken to the Environment Agency about the installation of the proposed footbridge. All they ask is that they are informed when the work is about to commence.

It was stated by Mr. Jeffries that work on trees in a conservation area requires a report from an arborist and that fines can apply. He has written to the Parish Council to complain that there is one rule for some and not for others. He asked if the Parish Council had formal permission to take down the trees. The chairman said she had obtained verbal permission. Cllr. Nelson asked if the meeting wanted the Parish Council to seek retrospective planning approval. No one was in favour. It was asked if the Parish Council intends to plant replacement trees. The chairman replied that the area was designated as a playground and that too many trees would hinder that activity. Several parishioners said they helped in the working party and spent a day clearing debris from the brook. The work was done in good faith and the general feeling was that the playground was now much improved.

Cllr. Nelson said that the Parish Council understands the feelings in the village. A comment was made from the floor that to apply for retrospective planning permission would now be a waste of time and money but that the Parish Council must take the points on board in future. It was said that to take verbal agreements is dangerous and discussions must be recorded in writing.

**8. Any Other Business:**

Footpaths

Cllr. Skipper informed the meeting that the Parish Council has applied for grants to enable the reprinting and revision of the footpath leaflet. These will be made available at The Red Lion and through tourist information outlets.

Footways.

The Highways Department is being reorganised again and the contacts at Streethay may change. However, the Parish has assurances that the proposed new footway beside The Red Lion will go ahead although no date is fixed as yet. The proposal to construct a humped zebra crossing will have to be debated within the village and will cost in excess of £40,000. The proposal is to take the crossing from the bus stop to the central island then across the main road. Cllr. Nelson said that the Parish is required to maintain some funds in its accounts to help towards funding this.

A comment was made that the Parish Council should not lose sight of the need to join up the footways in Yoxall Road as many children walk along this section on their way to school. Cllr. Nelson said that the problem was with land ownership in that boundaries were not defined and the purchase of the land would be required.

Finally Cllr. Nelson was thanked from the floor for the tree-planting project he has undertaken on his land.

**Close of Annual Parish Meeting:**

There being no further business Cllr. Brenda Skipper, the chairman, thanked councillors and parishioners for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 9pm.

Signed: ..... Dated: .....