

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
OF  
FECKENHAM**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD  
16 MAY 2013 At 7:00pm**

**Present:** S Knowles, J Eaton, B Hamilton, A Bedford-Smith, P Eaton, F Hawker, L Atkins, K White, W Poole & R Williams (Chair)

**Apologies:** Officer Waterhouse and A Pulsford

**Minutes of the 17 May 2012 Annual Parish Meeting were approved.**

**Chairman of Parish Council & Amenity Trust Report – Mr R Williams:** Another year passes and Feckenham Council continues to promote the interests of the Parish.

This year we saw changes on the Council with the retirement of our tireless supporter Antonia Pulsford who has served the Parish well and who even in retirement continues to offer encouragement and support to the Council. On behalf of the Council I would like to congratulate her for all of her hard work and to welcome her continued support in the future.

We have promoted improvement works to the highways in and around the village with reworking of the kerbing and landscaping to the paths and in particular at the corner of Swansbrook and Astwood lane.

Plans have been formulated for maintaining a clear flow of the Plack Brook which seems to be working well with land owners being encouraged to keep brooks and ditches well maintained.

Planning applications being considered by Redditch BC include a large development outside the Parish border within Webheath district. Whilst not directly relevant to the Parish, it is causing major concerns to the Council and residents over the possible increased flows of surface water through Plack and Swansbrooks, and the ability of Priest Bridge Sewage works to cope with additional discharge. The Council has been monitoring the progress of the Application and has written to RBC to voice these concerns and urge them to ensure adequate measures are put in place to cope with discharges running through the Parish.

A major project this year was the support given and membership to the Redditch ARC consortium formed of this and 4 neighbouring Parish Councils, to bring high speed broad band to the Parish and after countless meetings with Worcestershire CC, legal difficulties and usual red tape, the roll out programme commenced in March and the Parish is now connected to the Air Band network and many households are already subscribing to and benefitting from a much improved service.

Another project has been the provision engineered by the Parish but erected by the County Council of Estate Gates at the entrances to the Village on the roads from Redditch, Cookhill and Droitwich. These have been constructed in a sad fashion by the WCC Highways team and are presently a disappointment but we have been working closely with Highways to effect improvements and these are booked into the WCC's highways programme for the summer. I offer this Council's thanks to WCC Phil Gretton who supported funding of the Gates at no costs to the Parish.

Following central Government initiative a Development Planning Committee was formed to consider putting in place a local development plan to self regulate planning and development in the Parish. Unfortunately the size of the task and the cost of employing professional consultants were considered too great for the Committee who decided to defer any proposals for the time being.

Traffic through the village continues to be monitored and a recent initiative by the Council has been the distribution of 30 mph speed restriction signs to be attached to the sides of refuse wheelie bins, reminding motorists of the speed limits.

Once again the Council has continued the tradition of supporting local groups with grant aid and those benefitting have included WAKE FM; Conservation Garden Society, Feckenham Shop, St John's Church.

On a final note, having achieved full strength on the Council after Antonia's decision to retire, we lost a member during the course of the year and a vacancy presently exists if anybody would like to volunteer their services.

**Statement of 2012/13 Parish Council Accounts – Mr S Arble:** The Clerk reports that the precept received was £8300 and the total income was £13,502 which includes VAT recovery. The balance of funds carried forward to 2012/13 is £20,747. A significant percentage of these funds are ring fenced in Reserve Accounts.

The accounts were internally audited by Mr R Fletcher. An external audit will take place after a four week period ending on 16 May in which the public have the right to inspect the accounts.

**RBC Cllr Report:** No report.

**WCC Cllr Report:** No report

**Chairman of the Square Management Committee: Vice Chair, Mr B Hamilton,** reported the following in November 2012:

The Management Committee has again worked throughout the year to ensure that The Square remains in top condition and is available for the use and enjoyment of the villagers of Feckenham as stipulated in the Trust's governing document.

It has been a busy year with regard to events taking place on The Square. In December the annual Carols on The Square attracted larger numbers than ever before. Members of the Committee served mulled wine and mince pies to an estimated 300 people as they enjoyed carol singing around the brightly illuminated Christmas tree. The Christmas lights were officially switched on by our former chairman Peter Masters. This event and the tree are provided by the Committee as a gesture of thanks to the villagers who support The Square all year round. A bucket collection yielded £413 for the County Air Ambulance charity.

In May the three yearly Flower and Garden Festival took place and The Square was used as a venue for plant sales. The Parish Church kindly made a donation of £150 towards the upkeep of The Square. This was closely followed by a successful Jubilee Barbecue when The Square was used for a simple but enjoyable celebration. The organisers donated £120. The Wake in June also attracted large numbers for the traditional selection of attractions and a donation of £100 was contributed. In July the Committee organised its own fundraising event which this year took the form of a Wild West Fun Evening. The Redditch Westerners constructed part of a western town at one end of The Square whilst Cow Pie and other desperate dishes were served at the other. A handsome sum of £720 was added to The Square's funds

as a result. Finally, the annual Scarecrow Weekend saw over 3,000 visitors viewing scarecrows around the village and enjoying teas in a tent erected on The Square. The Entertainments Committee, which organises the event, is working with the Committee to purchase a new set of lights for use at events held on The Square. The Committee is extremely grateful to the residents of The Square for their understanding and patience with all the activity taking place on their "front lawn".

The Committee continued to mow and maintain The Square and this year decided to dispense with the expense of the use of contractors to stock the flower tubs. A Committee member is doing the vast majority of the work herself. A working party of Committee members replaced and restocked many of the tubs in the spring and other vital maintenance jobs were done at the same time.

Looking ahead, it is likely that some expense will be incurred due to essential work on the trees. Two of the chestnut trees at the High Street end of the site are unwell and it is likely that they may have to be removed. The Committee is of the opinion that the appearance of The Square would be substantially altered if these were replaced by small, young trees and is likely to opt for replanting with mature stock. It is anticipated that grants and donations will be sought if this proves to be necessary.

Finally, the Committee thanks the Trust for its support over the year and looks forward to continuing to work with Trust Members to ensure that The Square is maintained for both current and future generations of villagers.

**Chairman Feckenham Allotments Society: Mrs J Hooker** reported the following in November 2012:

It has been a good growing year at the Moors Lane Allotments. The wets summer has meant very poor harvests. Fortunately nobody has been dispirited that they have given up their plot and the site is still fully occupied.

We have continued to improve on our financial position and we now have an adequate safety net in case of foreseen expenses. The largest expense this year was for a lawnmower for the footpaths between plots.

Looking forward to next year, we hope to continue to tidy up some of the plots and extremities where junk has built up. E also intends to improve the hedgerows we are responsible for and to make improvements to some of the pathways on the site.

**Feckenham Improvement Group (FIG) – Mrs A Pulsford:**

This has not been a year for major new initiatives but for following up projects already started. The most noticeable of these has been planting of the grassed area at the junction of Swansbrook Lane and Astwood Lane with wild flowers last spring, a project that was totally financed by the Borough Council and carried out by children from the First School and some villagers under the supervision and with the help of Chris Franklin and his staff. This was a great success and much appreciated, so in November another planting exercise was undertaken, this time of bulbs, again by the First School, villagers and Borough Councillors, and with a great deal of help from Chris and his staff. The ground was very hard. The Parish Council paid for the bulbs and we had first of all a very good display of crocuses and then daffodils. When these die down, which should be soon, Chris and his staff are coming to scratch over the ground so that we can plant some more wild flower seed, paid for by the Parish Council, again involving children from the First School, villagers, Councillors and most importantly Chris and his staff.

The planters at the junction of the High Street and the B4090 have continued to flourish under Pam Eaton's supervision and our thanks are due to Sue Darby who has organised a watering rota which keeps them going in dry periods. The

appearance of the area would be greatly **improved** if the County could be persuaded to replace the broken wooden bollard near the planters, and also to dig out the stump of a fir tree next to the broken bollard, and to replace it with a wooden bollard

Finally we have had the new Coupass Cottages street nameplate replaced with one that makes it clear that the entrances to 7, 9 and 11 High Street are up the lane as well as houses whose postal address is Coupass Cottages. The Coupass Cottages nameplate that was removed is in excellent condition and is being kept in store in case at some future date it is possible to get permission from the occupants of 5 High Street, to place it on their patch of grass just opposite its original site, where it would be very useful for people driving down the High Street looking for Coupass Cottages. At the moment this permission is not forthcoming.

**Mr. A Bedford-Smith:** concerning the Webheath development.

Key planks, are *two* items;-

- i) The NPFWk stipulates that local Authority should have something like 5.25 years deliverable supply of houses, and this must be tested against proposals.
- ii) LAs should be able demonstrate that they have liaised productively with ADJOINING Authorities in Redditch case, Bromsgrove and Stratford according to Para 110 Localisation Act, and there is now at least two Plans Sent back by Planning Inspectorate e.g., Coventry and North Worcestershire, where this cross-border cooperation hasn't happened.

The *FPCC* should,- in my view, make representation to **Mr Chapman**, the Case Officer DCLG, dealing with Redditch, 5, St Philips Place Colmore Row Birmingham B3 2PW, Making this point considering the derelict nature of the former 'Griffon' pub and surrounds in Studley. Together with the immense SUSTAINABILITY and in-accessibility of this site.

Commenting Upon P/Appn, 207/Webheath is to repeat the worries over:-

1) **Traffic**, in effect, in ruining decent and useful homes in Heathfield Road, commenting that it doesn't seem very clever to use 106 Money for Affordable houses from Developers profit in Redditch at the cost of torturing the ambient here?

Moreover, with the everlasting potentially lethal threat of heavy construction traffic, over Foxlydiate Lane, and anxieties over portage thereon of toxic material from any clearance of the redundant Webheath Sewage Farm at which developers are likely to swing onto STWA. Prejudice to Cur Lane Wells and its water gathering grounds by said Development and Bromsgrove's Plan No 4.

Traffic Dangers -uncontrolled by Enforcement Action, - are anticipated along Green Lane and Swansbrook Lane, yes, passing Feckenham School with lethal consequences, witnessed by the death of a decent householder at Callow Hill Cross roads crushed by a builders lorry. With consequent fears over Child safety.

2) **Flooding:** The Applicants piously suggest that by provision of Spill Ponds, - they call Attenuation Reservoirs *able to contain 100 year Storms*, by digging out the foul Sewage Works, - however what is to be fear is that because of the congestion and annual blockage by detritus and the local high water table, blockages in the connecting network will cause Flooding downstream. Exemplified by the continual SURCHARGE 5 feet in the Air of the Combined Inspection Chamber 5203 in B4090, the Droitwich Road. Flooding the *Saltway Cottage, subject of repeated Complaints by Mrs Victoria Nicod*

The developers moreover, have the idea of swinging these legitimate builders **cleansing costs** onto the Ratepayer under the ADOPTION Procedure, something of which WCC are aware.

3) SUSTAINABILITY; the NPFWk requires a test of Sustainability; therefore the Developers struggle to avoid this charge. However a pumping main is required with constant threat of **failure** so Foul Cisterns for 24 hour Retention in the event of failure are required under the Approved Document of the Building Regulations. **There is no mention of these.**

Moreover, -To add to costs of energy is the ANNUAL COST OF PUMPING WATER FROM **CUR LANE WELLS** into the Bow Brook,-in order to dilute the Stream, a cost which appears to the writer at about £37,000 per year

4) A Sustainability Study is apparently available from Council's Papers which is regarded as suspect.

Bromsgrove Plan No 4

Basis for this is to bolster up a flagging retail turnover in Bromsgrove, at Redditch's cost from the Kingfisher Centre. There is likely to be Bromsgrove's deliberate foot dragging delays in the notional road construction that connects eventually to the A441 and M40. The more frustrating when there is ready made existing highway network and Amenities of Shopping, Recreation in the BORDESLEY Area, and **gravity drainage.**

Ratepayers and Consumers point out that **STWA CORDIALLY DISLIKES BOTH Webheath and Bromsgrove's Plan No 4.**

Flooding Considerations

This envisages some 2.800 dwellings draining directly to **Feckenham** via the BOW BROOK.@ 2.47 p/dw\* = 6,918p, or @ 3.1 p/dw = 8,680p. (\*2001 Census Webheath Ward.)

=Since Run-off may be attributed directly to area occupied by total dws the proportion from the 200 dws at Webheath /207 is 200 dw @ 2.47p/dw=494 Or say 500 p.

6,918/500= 13.838.

**MS Rachel Whiteman (Environment Agency) Shrewsbury** corrected Wimpey's Webheath Submission for Spill Ponds to 3048 m<sup>3</sup> for 200 houses. - on this premise, 200 x 2.47 p/hld\* is about 500 persons, on this basis of a 60 % Run-Off and severe storm is 7000/500= 14 approx Multiplying this by 3048 m<sup>3</sup> is 160,680 m<sup>3</sup> which I make as a provisional estimate 666,330 gallons x 14= 9,328,600 gallons. Theoretically this means providing 9,328,600/ 4 Spill Ponds of 2,43,150 gallons each cascading down the hillside, compared with the Tardebigge Canal Reservoir of about 250,000 gallons approx likely also to be prejudiced by these proposals.

Since there the STATUTORY FLOOD MAP issued by RBC shows encroachment south of B4090, however Netta Farmer has struggled to cope with flooding in her horse manage beyond this area shown on MAP. We are all going to be affected by the ruinous discharge AND what's more we will have to pay for BROMSGROVE's excesses through County Rates for Contractor's cleansing and monitoring through any claim for ADOPTION again. Among the flooding issues are serious fears over the vulnerability of the Feckenham Switching Station to groundwater located at fault junctions adjacent. **See BGS Sheet 183.**

**Flooding is regarded as so serious that SUBSTANTIAL IMDEMNITY SUM should be deposited against flooding dangers and Harm.**

Policy;

*The 2,800 houses at 5.25 year is some 533 dwellings/year. This transposes agreeably enough to associate with housing preferably at LOCATIONS, BROCKHILL, Birmingham Road, Weights Lane, Lowans Hill Farm, BORDESLEY, Frankley AND the shockingly derelict 'Griffon' Site in Studley.*

*Notwithstanding marginal arguments of coalescence between Redditch and Studley, it is inevitable that as the original new town plan by Hugh Wilson and MOHLG envisaged modest use of land for housing in the 'GRIFFON' Area.*

*There is reason to believe that to deposit some 2,800 dwellings as Bromsgrove in one location is to deny any economies of scale, with problems of land assembly, the Dangerous Constructional traffic in country lanes, arguments between partners, and sheer burden of staffing and resources given the commitment Wimpeys already have APPROVED for their large 2,500 DWELLING development in LEICESTERSHIRE.*

*Noting that Wimpeys recently caused ruinous flooding to homes at St Assaph in North Wales.*

*Reference to National Building Agency 'Housing Productivity 1968' is taken as confirming the Staffing levels necessary for a large development and represents a substantial argument for more modest tranches of house building more manageable and best matched to the restrictions locally and with benefit of GRAVITY DRAINAGE and **the existing 'new town' infrastructure.***

*Thank you for the opportunity to write.*

**MEETING CLOSED AT 7:30PM**

Minutes prepared by Sean Arble, Clerk to the Council, on 20 February 2014.