

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
OF  
FECKENHAM**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD  
21 MAY 2015 At 7:00pm**

1. **Present:** 12 members of the public, FPC Clerk S Arble & WCC Cllr Gretton
2. **R Williams** chaired the meeting.
3. **Apologies:** RBC Cllrs Potter & Clayton
4. **Minutes of the 15 May 2014 Annual Parish Meeting were approved**
5. **Chairman of Parish Council & Amenity Trust R Williams Report.** After a number of years on the Council, this will be my last Annual Report as chairman. I am pleased to note that Feckenham Council continues to promote the interests of the Parish.

This year we have seen more changes on the Council with Pan Eaton, Liz Atkins and I retiring. But new councillors have come forward to close the gaps and I am to welcome some old die hards joining the cause. Antonia Pulsford stood both for this Council and also for the Ward of Winyates on the District Council where she was successful. Well done Antonia. However that means we now have a vacancy and if there are any of you out there who live in or within 3 miles of the Parish who would like to make a contribution to parish

Once again, a major part of our efforts have been directed to seeing that the roads and drains around the Parish are kept in good order and although the annual pooling's of water in Astwood Lane continue to cause concern, recent works carried out in the Spring have gone a long way to alleviating the problems. I think the District and County Councils have done their best in these financially challenging times and despite the cutbacks. In October we reminded all riparian land owners of their responsibilities to keep the watercourses and ditches clear and this seems to have worked well with no reported incidents this year.

After renewed pleas and the much appreciated assistance of WCC Councillor Phil Gretton, High Speed Broadband is at last coming to Feckenham but not for a while yet. See his report.

The Planning issues at Webheath persist but the outcome remains to be seen.

I was pleased to see that the Mill Lane resurfacing is wearing well and hope that the frontagers in Mill Lane are also pleased with the great improvements the Council brought to lane.

We saw the Council lending its support to concerns over the over intensification of user on the Playing Fields. The matter aroused heated debate and we were graced by the presence of our MP and District Council officers and Councillors at a meeting to discuss a proposed agreement with

the Football Club. Much hard work was put into this by members of your Council and it remains to be seen if this will result in better relations all round.

The Neighbourhood Development Planning Committee has been working hard throughout the year and we have now seen the Area Plan accepted by Redditch District Council

The Council has arranged for a mobile Defibrillator unit to be purchased and stationed in a Cabinet on the rear aspect of this Village Hall – training soon to be offered and our thanks go to Phil Tricklebank who installed both the electrical supply and the cabinet. Our thanks also go to the Village Hall committee for providing the use of the Hall for this purpose.

The Bench on the corner of High St/The Square is shortly to be replaced after some repositioning to avoid the attempts of the bird population to deter users.

During the year the Council approved the installation of a Vehicle Activated Sign to warn motorists of their speed through Droitwich Road and this is coming soon. It is hoped that this will assist in reducing the speed of vehicles passing through the Village. Enquiries were made with WCC Highways officers on the possibilities of reducing through put of articulated and heavy goods vehicles along High Street and diversion of such vehicles. There already is a weight restriction but this is being ignored and your Council continue to press for a resolution to this problem.

I remind the Parish that grants are available and we welcome applications from any interested parties in the Parish– this year we supported the parish church, the youth club, the purchase of ceramic poppies, and the refurbishment of the War Memorial.

Following last year's initiative by English Heritage, a committee has now been formed to raise awareness of our ancient ditches which are all that remains of the Feckenham Hunting Lodge reputed to have been used by King John many centuries past. We shall be seeing some progress later this year perhaps.

6. The Clerk provided un-audited 2014/15 **Statement of Accounts**. The precept received was unaltered at £8,300 and the total income was £13,952.78, which includes VAT recovery. The balance of funds carried forward to 2015/16 is £21,161.43. A significant percentage of these funds are ring fenced in Reserve Accounts.

The accounts will internally audited by Mr R Fletcher to whom I am thankful for once again offering his services. An external audit will take place after a four week period ended on 7 May in which the public had the right to inspect the accounts. The inspection period is closed, but any parishioner wishing to examine the accounts is invited to make an appointment with the Clerk.

7. **WCC Cllr Gretton Report:** The Conservative administration is half way through its 4-year life with the next elections in 2017. Its focus continues to be on achieving £25m-£30m savings required each year (out of a budget running at £332m) to offset reduced government grant income and costs increased though modest inflation and significant pressures, particularly increased numbers of children in the council's care, and also pension costs. Most of the savings have been through efficiencies and "commissioning-out"

services previously provided in-house; but there have been cuts in services such as activities for young people. Council tax has risen by 1.94%.

The long-awaited Energy-from-Waste plant to burn Worcestershire and Herefordshire's nonrecyclable domestic waste is being built at Hartlebury and is scheduled to be commissioned in 2017.

### **Matters affecting Feckenham**

**Superfast fibre-optic broadband** should be installed in the village between 2016 to 2018 under the final element of several contracts with BT Openreach to provide the infrastructure in areas not commercially viable, funded by WCC and the Government. Caveats: not all properties in the parish will be superfast enabled, especially outlying properties; and all is subject to "exceptional circumstances".

**Road condition and speeding:** Swansbrook Lane has been resurfaced. Astwood Lane has been much improved but continues to be vulnerable to flooding. Other road surfaces and pavements need attention. The Highways Liaison Officer has agreed to install a vehicleactivated flashing sign by the Shop.

**Rockhill Lane:** there is glimmer of light in the long-standing battle to divert HGVs travelling to/from Astwood Bank by encouraging them to use Rockhill Lane rather than the High Street by signage, by improving the visibility and smoothing the corners where HGVs exit/enter the Saltway. The Highways Liaison Officer is on-side but need pushing and requires the Parish's support

It is good to see the village thriving, with places of worship, places to shop, places to eat and drink, this village hall, Feckenham First School, Feckenham News and an amazing number of other activities and events.

- 8. P Mott, Treasurer of the Feckenham Allotments Management Committee Report.** Receipts for 2014/15 were £887 against expenditure of £471. The balance carried forward to 2015/16 is £2125.
- 9. A Jones, Chairman of the NDP Working Party Report.** In 2012 the Parish Council formed an NDP Working Party which considered producing a NDP, but was persuaded by RBC that there was no point as no development was planned for the parish of Feckenham. This 'historical reference is included as it underlines the low chance of major development in the parish.

In the late summer of 2014 an NDP Working Party was re-formed and a Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation under the Localism Act of 2011 was sought. It is important to remember that the designation was applied for by the Parish Council and not the Working Party.

A scoping session was held by Kirkwells and this was attended by almost all the members of the WP.

Funds were available from Government to assist in seeking designation and whilst awaiting it the WP produced a leaflet and in cooperation with RBC a leaflet was delivered to every residence in Feckenham Parish. The leaflet gave details of WP officers and of the NDP website which is part of Feckenham.com. RBC sought the views of parishioners and others about designation and received replies from WCC and a local resident.

In mid January 2015 Area Designation was granted and at a later meeting of the WP resolved to produce a survey to seek the views of all parishioners. A

small group of the WP have been working on this and a draft copy has been sent to the full membership of the WP for approval.

It is planned to hold an open meeting on 27/28 June 2015 to launch the survey and the survey will be delivered to all residents shortly after.

All adjacent parish councils have been contacted, the WP worked closely with officers of RBC and District Councillors have been contacted and expressed their support. Two members of the WP have attended an additional training course and a 'mountain' of legislation read together with the NDP's of other parishes.

Development is a controversial subject and several parish NDP's have been challenged by major developers and this explains the long and legal processes that have, and will need to, take place.

**10. J Matthews, Chair WWI Commemoration Group Report.** The WW1 Commemoration Group was formed in November last year, following the successful bid for funds from the National Lottery. Chaired by Jeff Matthews and supported by Kathy Gee, Steve Fletcher, John Eaton, Liz Atkins and Richard Pearce (and for the first three months by Ian Bellion, now resigned owing to other commitments) the group has made progress.

- The design and printing of a commemorative walk leaflet, showing the houses of those of the fallen who live in the village
- An installation in the church designed by Barbara Wheatley and James Barrett and made and installed by James and family. It has been lit by Phil Tricklebank and makes a startling vehicle for the ceramic poppies purchased with the grant money given by the Parish Council. Poppies will be added to mark the centenary of the deaths of the fallen over the period to 2018, when the sculpture will be complete.
- The graves in the church yard of those who are buried there have been marked, appropriately
- A website is in the process of being created, based on Richard Pearce remarkable archive
- A piece of music and various musical and theatrical performances are currently being planned for 2016
- Further research into the village at that time, the change it went through, the family histories and stories (not only of those who lost their lives and who served) is being undertaken by the group and will be variously shared and communicated on the website, in displays and exhibitions.

We would like to take the opportunity of thanking the Parish Council for its support.

**11. MEETING CLOSED AT 7:25PM**