

Iron Acton Parish Meeting 2012

Minutes of Iron Acton Parish Meeting held on 31 May 2012 at 20:00

1. Attendance. Councillors; P Bellis, L Blanchard, C Heal (part of meeting), P Huish, R Lomas, R Sheppard (Chairing), D Taylor and approximately 20 other Parish Residents/Members of the Public.
2. Apologies. Apologies had been received from Councillor H Gawler.
3. Minutes of Iron Acton Parish Meeting held on 23 May 2011.

Due to the disruption caused by the resignation of the Parish Council Clerk and the very recently appointed replacement away on previous holiday commitments, the minutes were not available at the meeting.

The Chair apologised to the meeting and asked for the meeting's agreement that the formal acceptance of the minutes be deferred until the next Parish Meeting. This was agreed without dissent.

4. Chair's Report.

The Parish Council Chair reported to the meeting a summary of the Parish Council business through the year to date including:

- A Committee of the council had been set up to coordinate the maintenance and improvement to the Parish Meadows. Various works had been undertaken and more will follow.
- The usual May Day Celebrations had been cancelled due to the weather at the time making it impossible to use the Village Green.
- Heavy vehicles using weight restricted roads like North Road and others in the Parish was still a problem. The Council was asking South Gloucestershire Council to improve the restriction signage.
- Work was ongoing to tidy up the Nibley Lane Allotments. Clearing of the large rubbish heap had been completed and it was planned very soon to clear the area between the Burial Ground wall and the allotments. Then, leaving just sufficient space for access, the allotment holders will be invited to use the freed up space. (Councillor Heal explained at this point that this work was planned for 11th and 12th June and he hoped the message could be got around to allotment holders who had items in that area and wished to keep them to please relocate them).
- The Council recently lost the services the Clerk, Mrs Paula Evans, who resigned, much to the regret of the Council. A new Clerk, Mrs Donna Beal has been appointed. However due to the pressure of meeting various financial accounting deadlines and previously booked holiday commitments, many of the function normally carried out by the Parish Clerk have been delayed. However matters will be fully sorted as soon as possible. The old phone number is no longer available and a new line will be set up for contact with the Clerk. This will be disseminated via notice boards, web site and perhaps "Focal Points".

5. Other reports.

Local Authority; A written report from Mr Howard Gawler, South Gloucestershire Council representative for part of the Iron Acton Parish area was read out. This included reporting that: South Gloucestershire Council was changing its decision making organisation from the previous “Cabinet” style back to the more traditional Committee system. The Core Structure plan (the development plan for South Glos for the next 15 years) had been completed and was awaiting final approval by public examination. This examination will be held in the summer. Of local interest, in the Plan around 3000 extra houses are planned for the Yate/Chipping Sodbury area. All this development is planned to be east of the Bristol/Gloucester main railway line, hence outside the Parish. However a developer has applied for permission to develop on “Engine Common”. North of Iron Acton Way and between North Road and Dyers Lane including Yate Town football Club. The developer is appealing for a change in the plan. This development is unlikely to be approved so long as the Core Strategy is not amended by the examination inspector.

The Chair of the Parish Hall Committee reported that the Hall is going from strength to strength and bookings are very satisfactory.

6. Audited accounts for 2010/2011.

Copies of the Audited Financial Accounts for Iron Action Parish Council were distributed to the meeting. The Chair asked for any questions on the accounts. There were none. On the proposal from the Chair that they be accepted, the meeting agreed without dissent.

7. Unaudited accounts for 2011/2012.

The Chair explained that due to the delays caused by the resignation/appointment of the Parish Clerk and the need to meet pressing financial deadlines the accounts were currently being internally audited and then will be externally audited over the next few days and therefore not available at the meeting. He apologised and suggested that as they will be shortly presented for approval at a Parish Council meeting. Anyone wishing to see them could do so then.

8. Charities Accounts.

The Chair noted that the “Iron Acton Charities” were not actually part of the Parish Council but it was usual to report on them at the Parish Meeting. The secretary to the Charities has resigned due to work commitments etc. and the charity was looking for a replacement. One donation had been made in the year via a school in the Parish to assist in the costs of a school educational trip by a pupil.

9. Any New Business.

The Chair invited questions/comments from Parishioners present.

The problem of thefts and vandalism on allotments was raised. It was explained that while reports of this could be passed on to the Police via the Parish Council It would be better going direct from the complainant to the Police. In response to a question as to why a signpost had been erected but no sign posted, it was replied that the signpost was intended for the use of an allotment association. A Parishioner/Allotment Holder

Any new business (Cont).

reported that it was intended to form such an association, but they were waiting for the new clerk to be able to find time to contact all the holders. Data Protection meant that it was not appropriate to disclose the details of allotment holder's names and addresses to third parties without getting their permission.

- A problem of litter on Nibley Lane was raised, particularly when verge grass cutting pushed this litter into the road. The Chair said that the Parish Council will see what it could do about litter in the village. However he explained that litter clearing on roads, was the responsibility of South Gloucestershire Council and direct complaint to South Glos' Street Care when litter is noticed, would be appropriate.
- A Parishioner raised the issue of grave monuments in the Burial Ground being damaged, apparently in the process of grass cutting. The Chair promised to raise this matter with the grass cutting contractor.
- A Parishioner asked; what were the costs to the Parish Council resulting from the resignation of the previous Clerk? As Peter Bellis (Vice Chair) had been involved in this matter he explained that so far, the costs had been limited to the cost of publishing an advert for a new Clerk.

The Chair re-iterated that it was very sad that the previous Clerk had resigned as she had provided an excellent service to the Parish. He had received several E mails and a petition signed by around 100 parish residents complaining about alleged pressure by an individual Councillor upon the Clerk. He also noted that he was constrained in his responses due to the requirement of confidentiality. There followed a series of questions and responses from various Councillors and Parishioners. In this exchange individual Councillors explained their side of the issue. In particular Councillor Huish explained that he believed that he was the Councillor in question but felt what he did was robust but acceptable questioning of the Council's business. This he explained had been referred to the South Gloucestershire Council Standards Committee, who concurred with that view.

A Parishioner proposed a motion that was duly seconded that:

The Parish Council should now put any internal divisions behind it, minimise as far as possible the costs to the Parish and the disruption following the resignation of the Clerk and move forward in a united way for the benefit of the whole Parish.

This motion was voted on by show of hands and carried overwhelmingly.

A Parishioner proposed that a poll be taken at the meeting that:

The meeting wishes to show a vote of no confidence in Councillor Huish.

With the permission of the Chair, this motion was put to the meeting, and on a show of hands carried 12 for, 5 against with a number of abstentions.

There being no other business the Chair thanked all present for attending and closed the meeting at 21:32.

Signed.....

Dated.....

DRAFT