

MINUTES OF IRON ACTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 11TH MAY 2010 IN
Iron Acton Parish Hall, Iron Acton

The Annual Parish Meeting for Iron Acton was held in Iron Acton Parish Hall commencing at 8.04pm.

Councillors Present – Councillors Sheppard, Bellis, Aplin, Weldrake, Blanchard, Lomas, Taylor and Mrs. P. Evans (Clerk), Mr. H. Aplin and Mr. A. Driver. Councillor Sheppard presided.

Parishioners Present – Ms. C. Blick, Mr. A Pullen, Mrs. B. Bennett, Mr. J. Bond, Mrs. C. Bellis, Mrs. P. Thornton, Mr. H. Aplin.

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Pat and Dave Hockey. Councillor Gawler would be arriving later and PCSO Katie Radnedge would also be late.

2. Minutes of 2009 Meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 8th May 2009 had been distributed, read by all and agreed to be correct, and signed. Proposed Councillor Weldrake, seconded Councillor Aplin and all agreed.

3. Chairman's Report

New Houses, Engine Common:- The Parish Council are pushing to protect the parish boundary and ensure that the development stays on the Brimsham side of the railway line. By doing this there would be a buffer so that North Road keeps its own individual identity. There are meetings planned for later in the year, which the Parish Council will be attending.

North Road:- The culvert/drain outside Hinder scrap yard, which has been a bone of contention for some years has now been repaired. Councillor Sheppard thanked Councillor Gawler for his assistance in getting this done.

Manor Road:- Stage 1 of the footpath has now been completed down to Tanhouse Lane.

Morrisons Depot:- A number of complaints had been received from occupiers of business units opposite the Morrisons Depot that lorries were approaching from the roundabout and trying to turn around in order to join the queue waiting to enter the depot. A letter had been sent to the Depot manager requesting the lorries use Iron Acton Way, turning right into Churchward Road and approach the Depot from that direction. Supplier lorries are now using this route and everything appears to be in order.

Parish Meadow:- There has been some vandalism to the slide in the play area. The Parish Council are in the process of obtaining quotes in order to get this repaired.

The Parish Council were approached in November 2009 by Acton Aid with a proposal to build a multi-functional open structure on the Meadow. The Parish Council has been made aware of objections to this building by some local residents. This is an on-going subject of discussion and no decision has been made one way or the other. The Parish Council is also aware that conflicting advice has been given to Acton Aid and the Parish Council from South Gloucestershire Conservation Officers.

Village Green:- Residents of Fairview Terrace approached the Parish Council requesting that the access track behind their houses be repaired. The Parish Council sought advice from the Planning Inspectorate and South Gloucestershire Council as to what could be done to remedy the potholes, as this strip of land is registered Village Green. Unfortunately the advice received was that it could not be completely resurfaced (as requested by the residents), but could only be repaired with material that was already there.

Highways:- There has been a marked increase in the number of lorry movements along the Wotton Road and Latteridge Road. Representations have been made to the Parish Council regarding this increase and the damage articulated lorries are causing. Some seven years ago, the Highways Department of South Gloucestershire Council stated that traffic movements will definitely increase over the forthcoming five years and the Government has also confirmed that there will be an increase in traffic numbers.

The Iron Acton by-pass was surface dressed during 2009. However the cold winter weather has caused a great deal of damage and the surface dressing has lifted. South Gloucestershire Council are in consultation with the original contractor in order to remedy the situation.

The Wotton Road was also resurfaced during 2009.

Park Street:- During 2009, an application was received by the Parish Council from South Gloucestershire Council to widen the footpath outside Puddle Cottage. The Parish Council responded that to do this would mean that residents would be unable to park their cars in Park Street and therefore force the problem of residents parking onto the High Street where there is already a problem.

Also, the boundary wall along the footpath from Park Street through to the Village Green is in a seriously bad state of repair. South Gloucestershire Council has been informed of this problem.

Dog Fouling:- This continues to be a problem around the Parish despite dog bins being available for owners. Particular areas include North Road, the High Street and outside the church entrance. The Dog Warden has been informed of the continued problem.

Cassey Railings:- During the summer of 2009, the Parish Council employed the services of HMP Leyhill who provide a supervised six-man team of labourers. The railings and posts were in needs of painting and the Leyhill Team did an excellent job. A letter of thanks was sent to the Governor of Leyhill.

Iron Acton Parish Hall:- The Parish Council was approached by the Parish Hall Committee who were seeking a grant towards kitchen equipment for the new extension. The Parish Council agreed a grant of £5,000 excluding VAT, as the VAT element of the grant was recoverable by the Parish Council.

New 88 Bus Service:- The new 88 bus service is now up and running. The service runs from Chipping Sodbury, through to Yate Shopping Centre, Cranleigh Court, train station, the new Badminton Road Council offices and on to Iron Acton routing through the High Street. It is an hourly service, Monday through Friday.

Parish Council Web Site:- The new Parish Council web site is now up and running. The Chairman thanked the Clerk for all of the time and effort she has spent in developing this site.

4. Other Reports

South Gloucestershire Councillors – Pat & Dave Hockey

This year we both have continued to chair Select Committees which fulfil the dual role of advising on policies and scrutinising the work of the Executive Members and Council Departments. Dave chairs Communities Select Committee and Pat Planning Transport &

Strategic Environment. Dave is delighted to see that all the work he has done to get improvements in recycling, including kerb side collection of plastic bottles, appears to be about to come to fruition. The Select Committee work includes leading Reviews of a particular service, chosen by Councillors as being important. Dave is currently involved in a review which is looking at Childhood Obesity. Pat is leading a review which is looking at how Green Infrastructure and Urban Design can compensate for the loss of countryside and lack of private gardens in providing for biodiversity, healthy living and a sense of community. The recommendations from the reviews we led last year were accepted by the Council and have influenced the policies in the Draft Core Strategy which will replace the Local Plan and the Structure Plan. We hope that these next review recommendations will also be able to help with planning for the future well being of our fast growing area.

As we have reported in last year, although no longer involved in the administration of South Gloucestershire Council we fully participate in its partnership working with representatives of the business sector, other public bodies and voluntary organisations.

Although the Council's financial situation was not quite as bad as originally feared, we are all too well aware the implications of the recession for public expenditure. This has led to embarking on a series of Service Reviews. The aim of these is to cut back, largely through the use of IT, on the staff needed to provide services, thus avoiding as far as possible, any reduction in "front line services". How successful this will be remains to be seen.

Most of us were relieved that the Secretary of State's proposals for 32,800 new homes for South Gloucestershire between 2006 and 2026 were put on hold due to a successful legal challenge in the South East of England. It soon became apparent, however, that the Core Strategy which has to identify where future development will go had to be progressed, if the Council was not to end up losing planning appeals. Working on this to prepare the Consultation Draft as part of a Policy Advisory Group, has taken up vast amounts of Pat's time throughout the year. Formal consultation is about to start.

The new Council Offices at the junction of Stover Road and Badminton Road, have brought together parts of the Council's departments that were previously housed in various parts of South Gloucestershire. This is already reported as bringing about more efficient working within the PT&SE Department, as well avoiding the escalating costs of new leases and reducing very significantly the energy used for heating, cooling and lighting.

South Gloucestershire Councillor – Howard Gawler

Mr. Gawler addressed the meeting. In addition to those Committees mentioned in his 2009 report, Mr. Gawler also sits on the Appointments Panel of the Licensing Committee. He is also a Governor at North Road Primary School and acting Chairman of Yate Community Transport.

In connection with the Core Strategy, there is no housing developments planned for Iron Acton and the proposed development for the Brimsham/Tanhouse area will not cross over the parish boundary. Initially the Core Strategy suggested approximately 32,000 new houses for South Gloucestershire, however this has been revised down to 22,000.

There is a new DPD coming out towards the middle of year and the suggested Tanhouse Lane site will not be put forward, hopefully. During consultation, Network Rail (along with local residents) was vehemently opposed to this site as it ran along side the railway line.

The Head Teacher of North Road Primary School resigned with immediate effect at Easter. The leadership of the school has been taken over by Mrs. Jo Williams who is currently Head Teacher of Rodford Primary School. Rodford School is due to be amalgamating with another local school. Mrs. Williams has been given a contract which will run through to the end of the year, and as an Ofsted Inspection is due, it is hoped that this course of action will provide a smooth transition for the pupils. The teaching staff at the school are very appreciative of the

new Head Teacher and Mr. Gawler reported that the school is running very efficiently and there are currently 92 pupils registered.

Councillor Heal asked Mr. Gawler whether the proposed housing development in the Brimsham area will provide local employment, or will people be travelling outside the area to work. Mr. Gawler responded that industrial units will be added to the Armstrong Way Business Park, however Yate is not suitable for warehousing, hence all new warehousing is going down to Severnside. The South Gloucestershire Council Broad Lane depot will be moving out and all Streetcare operations will be based in Almondsbury. Mr. Gawler emphasised that the Business Park is an employment site and will remain as such and not go for housing.

Iron Acton Primary School – Mrs. Jill Bendeaux

The highlights of this year have been; the whole school languages day with dressing up and fun languages activities; the ever popular Book Week with story time evening and dressing up day; May Day with our May Pole dancers. This year we were fortunate that Charlotte White (a student at Chipping Sodbury School) worked with the brass band to produce a fanfare for the crowning of the May Queen.

Parishioners may have noticed lots of children and teachers taking photographs around the village. We are part of a two-year project linking with schools in Crete, Hungary, the Netherlands and Sweden. Each term there is a joint theme looking at different aspects of the local area. As well as regular newsletters the schools have exchanged local recipe books and are now working on village traditions and playground games. In March three staff went to Crete and in May three staff will be going to Sweden.

We continue to work closely with ten local small schools. This year we have shared an Orienteering day in Iron Acton Parish Meadow, a small school parliament at the University of the West of England, a dance day at Tortworth, a Maths day and a writing workshop at Rangeworthy. Joining together allows children to meet other children and allows us to put on events we could not afford to on our own. In June, year 6 pupils from Iron Acton, Rangeworthy and North Road will be going to a residential camp in Torquay.

We certainly had an unusual but exciting start to the New Year with the arrival of the snow. The children had a wonderful time and were sad to see it go. It certainly must have been easier for the head teacher in the days when they lived in the school house and most of the pupils lived in the village and could walk to school. We are very fortunate to have our wonderful caretaker, Pat Taylor, who worked tirelessly with her husband Dave to keep the school grounds clear.

We are working hard to further develop the school church link. We are well supported by Rev. Harrex, Open Air campaigners and Yate Assembly Team. Pupils were delighted to sign carols in the St. James Christingle Service. Several of them acted in the Nativity play as part of the Victorian Evening. Our older pupils joined other South Gloucestershire schools at the Clifton Carol Concert. We have a strong trio of Foundation Governors (ably led by Mrs. Rona Wright) who carry out school duties, meet diocese staff and attend PCC meetings. Next year we are hoping to introduce a project whereby local community members come into school to support Bible reading.

We are fortunate to have such a beautiful building and grounds. However it is sometimes a challenge to retain its unique character whilst ensuring it meets modern security and health and safety requirements. We would like to thank the Parish Council for supporting our boundary wall repairs. We now have planning permission and aim to carry out this work in the summer holidays. We also gained planning consent to build some play mounds and a spiral garden in the field. We have extended the tyre play area by adding more horizontal tyres, vertical tyres to climb through and wobbly tyres to try and balance on. The children really enjoy playing on these. These all give pupils a more exciting and fun outdoor learning

environment. Thanks to the hard work of our newly formed field working party we now have neat hedges and a clear, weed free pond area.

Our Growing Club goes from strength to strength and meets after school on a Wednesday, planting seeds, weeding and occasionally eating what we have grown. We now have a greenhouse and three raised flower beds (with plans for three more).

Reducing energy consumption is a key focus for all schools. We have installed automated meter readers and a new oil boiler. We have had a few problems with water leaks and blocked sewers this year. I apologise if this has affected anyone.

Every school is now being asked to review site security. Questionnaires were sent out to all families. Although most parents were satisfied with all aspects of school, some parents asked for improved fencing around the maze area. The fence has disappeared in many places and needs replacing. We also had a site meeting with Dave Ashworth from the police. He suggested we move the school office to the front of the school. This project will be quite challenging and need to be properly planned and approved by the local authority.

Finally I am often contacted by people researching the village or their ancestors. We have many fascinating historic school documents including log books. These are stored at South Gloucestershire records office where they can be kept safe and in proper storage facilities. You can go on-line and see what is there.

St. James the Less Parent & Toddler Group

St. James the Less Parent & Toddler Group was set up a decade ago and the values and objectives of those leading the group has remained largely unchanged. Meetings are held every Friday during term time in the Marshall Rooms and whilst fluctuating birth rates in the parish have sometimes caused membership to dwindle, we currently find ourselves operating at maximum capacity with a manageable waiting list. A recent baby boom has reduced the average age of our young charges considerably and we find ourselves having to adapt our activities to cater for a broader spectrum of capabilities and interests.

Whilst the primary purpose of the group is to provide a supportive environment in which children can play, meet new friends and develop social skills, it has always been the intention of the group to play a valuable and active part in the community. Wherever possible, group members lend their support to village activities eg the Church Christmas and Summer Fayres and the Victorian Evening.

Running costs for toddlers are kept deliberately low to try and ensure fair access for all local parents and carers. When group funds allow, we take the opportunity to invite people in to run dedicated sessions that we feel will benefit our young members. The visits from Sarah from the Jazzy Jamboree (a Company that provides musical classes for pre-school children) are a hit with children and carers alike and are always well attended. Recent meetings have offered up a plethora of new ideas about how things could be further improved. Suggestions include; more frequent use of the toy library at Playlink in Winterbourne, subsidised trips to local child friendly amenities and dedicated evenings out for carers.

The group is in the process of examining ways to maximise the satisfaction of it's members and in looking to the future, hopes to run as more of a co-operative with different members taking responsibility for different aspects of the group. It is our hope that this will secure its continuing success.

Parish Hall Committee – Mr. Tony Pullen

Mr. Pullen addressed the meeting. The new extension is nearing completion with the new bar area being about 99% finished. Mr. Pullen thanked the Parish Council for their grant of £5,000 towards the kitchen equipment, which had been very carefully spent as the Parish

Hall Committee had received exceptional discounts from local companies. The total spend on the extension has come to over £60,000 in total, of which they have received a grant of £25,000 from SITA as well as a small grant from South Gloucestershire Council. The Hall has also received an additional contribution from the Actonians. All of the work has been completed by local contractors and Councillor Heal has been very supportive during this project and provided a great deal of assistance.

Neighbourhood Watch – Bridget Bennett

Mrs. Bennett addressed the meeting. Neighbourhood Watch is a way of ensuring and sustaining a close, active liaison between residents and the Police. By increasing awareness, information sharing and supporting each other everyone can contribute to ensuring our Parish is a safe place in which to live.

Iron Acton Neighbourhood Watch Scheme has now been re-established in the Parish and 48 residents responded to a leaflet drop and articles in Focal Poyntz, from a total of 13 roads. All members have now received Neighbourhood Watch window stickers, property marking kits and are kept up to date with current crime information by their Street/Road Representatives. The Scheme is still looking for Street/Road Representatives in Wotton Road, Latteridge Road and Yate Road.

Locations around the Parish for new Neighbourhood Watch signage is currently being sought and permission applied for. To help with the funding of these signs, a donation of £100 was received from the Parish Council.

To gain up to date information Mrs. Bennett attended the Safer & Stronger Community Group, the Annual Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinators Meeting and receives monthly crime details and newsletters from Avon & Somerset Constabulary. It is Mrs. Bennett's intention to hold a series of Neighbourhood Watch meetings so that members can be provided with crime prevention advice and meet the Beat Manager and PCSO's.

There are a number of benefits to being a member of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Participants will receive current and relevant information concerning specific areas of concern, enabling them to take appropriate action to minimise the risk of becoming a victim of crime. Everyone can benefit from collective awareness and observations which will be provided to the Police to assist them. In addition, most insurance companies provide a discount for home insurers who are members of such a scheme.

Criminals are less likely to commit crime in an active Neighbourhood Watch area because they are more likely to be seen and reported. Any new members to the Iron Acton Scheme would be greatly appreciated.

5. Audited Accounts for 2008/2009

Copies of the Audited Accounts for 2008/2009 had been circulated. Councillor Bellis proposed and Councillor Heal seconded that these accounts be adopted. All agreed.

6. Unaudited Accounts for 2009/2010

Copies of the Unaudited Accounts for 2009/2010 had been circulated for consideration and discussion. The Clerk highlighted the reduction in interest received on the National Savings Accounts.

7. Charities Accounts

The Charities Accounts were presented to the Annual Parish Meeting by Mrs. Bridget Bennett. The Charities committee is only allowed to spend the interest received on the accounts which had fluctuated considerably over the previous twelve months. These accounts date back

hundreds of years and would originally have been looked after by the Church. The Chairman thanked Mrs. Bennett for all the effort and hard work she has put in to update these accounts as it has taken a long time to sort them out. Mrs. Bennett said that even Rev. Harrex had commented that this was an extremely small charity and was surprised that it was still functioning. Mrs. Bennett went on to say that not many parishioners are aware that the Charity exists and are not aware that they can receive money from the Charity, and more importantly they don't know that they can also give to the Charity. Mr. Pullen commented that he felt that the money was held in a particularly volatile account considering the current economic climate. Mr. Pullen agreed to liaise with Mrs. Bennett to look at alternative accounts where the interest rate does not fluctuate as much.

8. Any Other Business.

Mr. Pullen addressed the meeting regarding the proposed multi-functional open structure on the Parish Meadow which had been proposed by Acton Aid. Mr. Pullen spoke for the five residents on the lane leading to the Meadow who felt that any suggestion of this type of structure was totally inappropriate, unwanted, unwelcomed and not needed. The residents felt that the structure would be vandalised and is totally out of keeping with the environment as a conservation area. Mr. Pullen queried why there was a need to have this structure as it would only potentially be used for one event a year. Mr. Pullen also expressed his concern at the Acton Aid web site which suggests that the Parish Council is supportive of this structure. Councillor Bellis responded to Mr. Pullen's and the residents concerns. Mr. Pullen felt that the Parish Council should take a stronger stance as this structure is totally out of context in the conservation area. Councillor Bellis had chaired the meeting of the Parish Council when Acton Aid had attended the meeting and requested support for this structure. The Parish Council had agreed to consider the proposal, but had asked Acton Aid to carry out a fact finding process. Three Councillors had been proposed to liaise with Acton Aid, and the Parish Council had requested that at least one Councillor be present when Acton Aid consulted with the planners and conservation officers. Currently the Parish Council is waiting for Acton Aid to come back with detailed information so that the Parish Council can make an informed decision. It was also pointed out that this subject is placed on the Parish Council agendas which are duly advertised on the notice boards and the Parish Council web site.

The Chairman took the opportunity to remind those present about the new 88 bus service. If the service is not used then potentially it could be withdrawn from coming through the village. It is basically a case of 'use it or loose it'.

9. Close of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked the Parish Councillors for their support and hard work over the past twelve months, and also thanked parishioners for attending the Annual Parish Meeting. The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Signed:- _____ (Chairman)

Date:- _____