

MINUTES OF IRON ACTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD ON FRIDAY 8TH MAY 2009 IN
North Road School Hall, North Road

The Annual Parish Meeting for Iron Acton was held in North Road School Hall commencing at 8.00pm. Present – Councillors Sheppard, Aplin, Weldrake, Blanchard, Lomas, Pat and Dave Hockey, Mrs. P. Evans (Clerk), Mr. H. Aplin and Mr. A. Driver. Councillor Sheppard presided.

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Gawler, Bellis, Heal and Taylor.

2. Minutes of 2008 Meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th May 2008 had been distributed, read by all and agreed to be correct, and signed. Proposed Councillor Weldrake, seconded Councillor Lomas. The only amendment being that Councillors Pat and Dave Hockey had attended the 2008 meeting.

3. Chairman's Report

Planning:- The Parish Council had considered some 65 planning applications during the course of the year. The property at 319 North Road had been the subject of planning enforcement. South Gloucestershire Council's case had been upheld by the Court. However this case has cost thousands of pounds to pursue.

North Road:- The sewerage and pumping station had been upgraded by Wessex Water. This work had caused considerable inconvenience to residents and traffic. A Skip Contractor continues to use his property on North Road as the base for business. The problem is escalating as the contractor is now bring spoil and waste to the property to store overnight. Some of this waste is causing a smell. There is no operators licence for this property, and the Parish Council will pursue this with South Gloucestershire Council.

Mission Road:- The flooding problem in this areas had in the main been resolved by the clearing of ditches. There is a requirement for approximately 10ft of pipe to be installed under the road to help the flow of water away from the area. The Parish Council will ask South Gloucestershire Council if they are able to assist.

New Houses, Engine Common/North Road Area:- The Chairman and Clerk had attended various meetings in connection with the Governments proposal to develop this area, with approximately 1,500 new homes (the railway line being the buffer). The Parish Council had objected to this proposal in the strongest possible terms. The amount of houses suggested would cause extreme traffic problems, and it was also felt that there would be problems with surface water drainage. All of these concerns had been passed through Councillors Gawler, Pat and Dave Hockey, and it was felt that the Parish Council were fortunate to have these South Gloucestershire Representatives.

Dog Fouling:- This continues to be a problem within the parish, particularly the Village Green and Parish Meadows. Regular dog walkers have been asked to notify the Parish Council of offenders, whose names will be passed on to the Dog Warden for possible prosecution.

Parish Meadows:- The Parish Meadows have been vandalised on a number of occasions during the year, with the nuts being taken from the bolts securing the shoot of the slide and most recently with excrement being left under the slide. All of this has been notified to the

Police. The Parish Council has employed the services of a local contractor to clear out the overgrown boundaries of the Parish Meadows, including the play area. Once cleared, these edges will be planted with native plants, bulbs and shrubs. In some places a depth of 20ft has been recovered.

Police:- The Parish now has a new Beat Office, PC Ian Matthews. Unfortunately at present there are no PCSO's for the Parish, however it is hoped that they will be recruited by mid-May 2008.

4. Other Reports

South Gloucestershire Councillors – Pat & Dave Hockey

A written report was provided by Councillors Pat and Dave Hockey. This year Councillors Hockey 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. Councillor Dave Hockey chairs Communities Select Committee and Councillor Pat Hockey chairs Planning, Transport and Strategic Environment. This includes leading reviews of a particular service, chosen by Councillors as being important. Councillor Dave Hockey will be reporting soon on a review of the partnership work to address Anti-Social Behaviour. Councillor Pat Hockey will be reporting on a review of Council planning policies to deliver sustainable communities and healthy lifestyles. The recommendations from this will influence the policies in the Draft Core Strategy which will replace the Local Plan and the Structure Plan.

As Councillors Hockey have reported in previous years, the Government is committed to Councils working in partnerships, particularly the Local Strategic Partnership made up of representatives of the business sector, other public bodies and the voluntary sector and also the themed Partnerships which have a membership drawn from various statutory and voluntary interest groups, as well as the responsible South Gloucestershire Cabinet Member with the relevant Select Committee Chair involved in a non-voting capacity. As well as receiving and discussing reports and proposed strategies, eg the Review of the Safer Stronger Community Groups and South Gloucestershire Councils Environment Strategy, they are responsible on behalf of the Local Strategic Partnership for ensuring the targets agreed in the Local Area Agreement are delivered. The LAA is an agreement which the Council makes the Government, through the Government Office for the South West to make measurable achievements in priority aims, eg reducing teenage pregnancies and carbon emissions.

Although the Council's financial situation was not quite as bad as originally feared, the implications of decisions made to meet previous cut-backs mean changes within the department and that several long serving officers have taken retirement while those remaining and those replacing them have somewhat different responsibilities.

The Council continues to work with Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset and North Somerset Councils on Strategic Transport, Waste and Housing. Formal working arrangements with Executive Committees for Waste, Transport and Housing, Planning and Economic Development are almost complete and Joint Scrutiny to scrutinise and advise on their decisions and on their parent body, The West of England Partnership, is now in place. Further consideration is being given as to whether forming an Integrated Transport Authority, rather than the Transport Executive Committee will enable greater advantage to be taken of powers available through the Transport Act, eg better control over bus services.

Most of us were horrified by the findings of the Panel considering the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy which would require 30,800 new dwellings for South Gloucestershire between 2006 and 2026. The Secretary of State proposed that this should be increased even further. The huge number of objections to these proposals has led to a long delay in the publication of the final decision which is now anticipated next month. The Core Strategy will have to identify where these will go. The consultation document "Issues and Options" was the first round of consultation on this. It took into consideration the discussions that took place at workshops

and other public sessions. This showed that development could well be creeping up towards North Road as an “urban extension” proposed for Yate/Sodbury. It will be important to take advantage of the further workshops and consultations which will be arranged over the coming months.

Assessments carried out by the Audit Commission have designated South Gloucestershire as a 4* Authority – the highest grade!

South Gloucestershire Councillor – Howard Gawler

A written report was provided by Councillor Howard Gawler. Councillor Gawler has now been Iron Acton’s South Gloucestershire Councillor for six years and is currently Chair and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats and Chair of Corporate Select, Audit and Accounts, Overview and Scrutiny. Councillor Gawler is also on the Appointments Panel and has been on Communities for the past year, and will be substituting Communities for Licensing for the forthcoming year.

This time last year South Gloucestershire thought they were going to have to suffer 30,800 more houses, which subsequently rose to 32,800 following a review by the Secretary of State. South Gloucestershire, along with other West of England Councils have challenged this figure and are hopeful, with the help of the ‘credit crunch’ and migrant workers returning home, that this figure will be reduced or at the very least put back so that more are built in the second ten years than in the first. Currently half of Engine Common is still within the preferred area even though the 5000 houses for Yate/Sodbury have been reduced to 3000 and may go further.

The Manor Road footway has unfortunately, not yet been started. The current Conservative administration ran out of money and so it had to be delayed. Stage 1 is in the budget for this year (2009/10) and Stage 2 for 2010/11. This means that the length from Tanhouse Lane to the Chaingate Lane junction will be completed first which was always the dangerous length. Councillor Gawler is pushing to get the footway completed as soon as possible and is currently awaiting a start date.

The Iron Acton by-pass and the Wotton Road, mainly through Rangeworthy are in places rather like going on a big dipper as they have sunk to such a degree or subject to many potholes. South Gloucestershire Council Streetcare has applied to the Government for a grant to dig up both the road through Rangeworthy and the Iron Acton by-pass, but the money has not been forthcoming. Streetcare are therefore moving to Stage 2 which will have to be a patching job in the worst areas. This should be done during the summer and will mean digging up lengths of road, perhaps up to 2m wide and relaying. The worst bit, Councillor Gawler believes, is through Rangeworthy. The by-pass will have similar work done and then be top dressed. This will only last a couple of years but will buy Streetcare time to apply for a grant again.

The whole area between North Road and the railway has had a blanket Tree Preservation Order issued. This is so no developer can remove any trees or hedges prior to any planning permission being granted. Over the next 2/3 years the tree officers will carry out a thorough examination of every tree and hedge and then create individual TPO’s instead.

Parishioners may be interested to know about the riding stables in Tanhouse Lane, even though they are across the road in the Rangeworthy parish. These stables ended up being owned by a demolition company several years ago when a family member died. They have failed to get any planning permission to use the site as a yard or maintenance depot. It has been up for sale but they have told Councillor Gawler that no bids were received near the asking price. Councillor Gawler has since learnt that offers in the region of £250,000 have been received but not accepted as yet. Councillor Gawler understands that Yate Town Council are interested in part of the site for allotments but they would only require a couple of acres. The whole site totals some 27 acres and includes a substantial agricultural building and hard standing area.

Finally Councillor Gawler thanked everyone in Iron Acton who has supported him over the past year.

Neighbourhood Watch – Bridget Bennett & Carole Dickson

The Neighbourhood Watch scheme had been dormant for such an amount of time that the scheme had to be started afresh. As a result subscription fees have been collected from all members to help with the purchase of marking packs and stickers which are now in the process of being distributed. It has come to the attention of the Scheme Co-Ordinators that there is a significant lack of Neighbourhood Watch signage within the parish which includes all entrances to the village, the village itself, Nibley Lane, Latteridge Road, Bristol Road, Wotton Road and North Road. The cost for these signs amounts to £145.00 for which the Scheme would appreciate financial help due to lack of funds. It was agreed at this point that the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme would approach the Parish Council for financial assistance.

5. Audited Accounts for 2007/2008

Copies of the Audited Accounts for 2007/2008 had been circulated. Councillor Sheppard proposed and Councillor Weldrake seconded that these accounts be adopted. All agreed.

6. Unaudited Accounts for 2008/2009

Copies of the Unaudited Accounts for 2008/2009 had been circulated for consideration and discussion. Mr. Howard Aplin thanked the Parish Council for their frugal management of the Parish accounts.

7. Charities Accounts

The Charities Accounts were presented to the Annual Parish Meeting. There has been one change in the constitution of the Trustees of the Charity during the year, namely Mrs. Bridget Bennett taking over as Secretary/Correspondent. One meeting had been held on 24th July 2008 and there had been no request for a grant within the Parish during this financial year. As at the 31st March 2008 the closing asset of the Charities Account was £4,201.85.

8. Any Other Business.

No further business was reported.

9. Close of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending the Annual Parish Meeting and the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Signed:- _____ (Chairman)

Date:- _____