

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF
IRON ACTON PARISH COUNCIL
MONDAY 16th March 2009**

The meeting of Iron Acton Parish Council was held in the Marshall Rooms, Iron Acton commencing at 7.30pm.

Present:- Mr. Bellis (Vice Chairman), Mrs. Aplin, Mr. Lomas, Mr. Taylor, Miss. Weldrake, Mr. Heal, Mr. Gawler (Councillor & South Gloucestershire Council), Mrs. Evans (Clerk)

Action

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Twenty-six members of the public attended the meeting in connection with the withdrawal of the X27 bus service as notified by First Bus. The following points were raised; First refused to give specific times/occasions when the bus had been stuck in the High Street; the most affected people will be the elderly and bus pass users; residents/parishioners will be unable to attend doctor/hospital appointments as there will be no bus service; younger residents will be unable to get to college/school; residents have an extremely long walk from the Chilwood Close/Algars Drive area to reach the Station Road bus stop; people will have to give up their jobs as they will be unable to reach their place of work; elderly residents will have no independence; SGC are trying to encourage people out of their cars, and with no bus service they will have to use their cars. It was emphasised by members of the public that the bus service is a necessity for the parish.

Councillor Gawler asked those present what type of service they wished to see in the village, and which direction they would like the service to go - to Yate or Bristol. Those present said that they wished to have a service in both directions in a similar vein to the existing X27 service. Councillor Gawler also emphasised that SGC are in dialogue with alternative service providers to ensure that a service exists within the village. This was further discussed under agenda item 06-03-09.

Councillor Bellis thanks all those who attended and put their concerns to the Parish Council.

01-03-09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Sheppard, Blanchard and Hockey.

02-03-09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - Personal and/or Prejudicial

None declared.

03-03-09 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Copies of the minutes of the meeting held on 16th February 2009 had been circulated. Councillor Lomas proposed and Councillor Taylor seconded that these minutes be approved and signed. All agreed.

04-03-09 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Vice Chairman reported that he and the Clerk had liaised during the month on various issues, which the Clerk had fully reported in her Clerk's Report.

05-03-09 CLERK'S REPORT

Allotments, Nibley Lane:- On the evening of 2nd February, the Clerk received a visit from Mr. Collett who rents an allotment in Nibley Lane. He had caught two youths on his allotment poking about in a recently burnt-out bonfire. He asked the youths if he could help, the youths then ran off, only to turn around and shout some verbal abuse at Mr. Collett. Mr. Collett reported that he had previously seen the youths messing about on allotment 9b. It was dark and Mr. Collett did not recognise the youths

Cemetery, Vandalism:- On 27th February, whilst escorting one of the grasscutting tenderers to the cemetery, it became apparent that some vandalism had taken place.

Most of the newly flowered crocus heads had been kicked off and were strewn down the cemetery footpath. Further, somebody had been taking shots at the notices erected on the cemetery wall, with what looked like a 'b-b gun' or a .22 rifle. The signs were shattered and beyond repair. Councillor Taylor kindly removed these on the Saturday morning and cleared up the debris.

Cemetery, Bins:- Bearing in mind the above vandalism, the Clerk had taken the decision not to put the green recycling bin in the cemetery yet. The Clerk was concerned that it may be set alight, or that unspeakable items may be found in there! Hopefully, when the vandals have got fed up with causing a problem and nuisance, the Clerk will put the bin in place. The Clerk is still awaiting a response from SITA regarding the black bin, despite a number of telephone calls to their office.

Cemetery, Dog Bin:- Yet again, the dog bin has not been emptied for some time. This has been reported this to Streetcare.

Works Around Parish, Park Street:- The overhanging ivy in Park Street has been cut back.

Parish Meadows:- The Clerk had been in touch with Rob from Tremendous Gardens regarding the damaged boundary fence between the Parish Meadows and Mr. and Mrs. Bourns field. He will be coming out to have a look at it and give us a price.

Parish Meadows:- Over the past four weeks, the Clerk has spent a considerable amount of time dealing with vandalism in the play area. The Clerk received an initial telephone call from Mrs. Tovey to say that the five pots of flowers on the gravelled area to the rear of her house had been thrown into the stream and were completely broken.

Whilst walking around with a grasscutting contractor we came across one of the picnic tables precariously close to the edge of the stream. The bench by the stream had also been ripped out of the ground and was lying close to the stream. It appeared to me that someone wanted to put the benches in the stream. The Clerk therefore felt that the only course of action was to return the picnic bench back to the play area and chain up the large five-bar gate. The Clerk therefore purchased a metre of heavy-duty, galvanised chain and a combination padlock from B&Q, and returned at 5.00pm in the evening with her two sons, returned the benches to the picnic area and padlocked the gate.

The following morning, 28th February, at 9.00am the Clerk received a further telephone call from Mrs. Tovey to say that all the benches had been turned upside down. The Clerk went down to the meadows to find that three of the benches had been turned upside down, and one was pushed up close to the chained gate as though someone had been trying to lever it out over the gate. Also, it was evident that someone had been trying to work out the combination to the lock. The Clerk returned the benches to their usual place. Over the course of the weekend, the Clerk and her sons periodically checked the play area to ensure that nothing further had occurred.

On Monday 10th March 2009 at 6.45pm, the Clerk received a telephone call from Mr. Pullen to say that there was some sort of disturbance in the play area. Mr. Pullen said it sounded as though there were a number of children in the play area who throwing stones at the slide, as there were loud bangs and crashes. The Clerk was by herself and as it was dark, immediately called the Police to report this. At the same time, the Clerk also reported the previous vandalism we had experienced over the past couple of weeks. The Police said they would send someone. At 7.00pm, the Clerk plucked up the courage and walked down to the play area with her eldest son.

As they walked out of the house, they witnessed three youths riding their bikes up the High Street, shouting and laughing as they went. When the Clerk got to the play area everything was quiet. The Clerk returned home and rang the Police again to tell them that there was no need to visit the area.

Further Vandalism:- It has been reported to the Clerk by Councillor Taylor that Iron Acton Primary School suffered vandalism this week. Somebody had thrown a barrel through the recently erected greenhouse and had smeared excrement on the climbing frame.

It has also been reported to the Clerk that during the night of Friday 6th March, ten cars had their wing-mirrors vandalised. This vandalism stretched from Holly Hill down to Park Street. The Clerk has left a message for PC Dave Barraclough to give me a ring to discuss this situation.

Annual Parish Meeting:- The Clerk has invited both Mrs. Bendeaux and Mr. Handley to the Annual General Meeting. The Clerk has also asked for the Annual Parish Meeting to be notified on the village web site.

Parking - High Street:- A meeting has been arranged for Friday 13th March 2009 at 3.00pm with Peter Hart. Mr. Hart will also be accompanied by Tracey Hamblett from SGC. We will be meeting in the Parish Hall car park. The outcome of this meeting will be further debated at our meeting on 16th March under agenda item 18.

Training:- The Clerk had been advised by Community Action that there is some free training available for Parish Councillors regarding Parish Plans (Community Led Planning). This training is going to take place on Wednesday 25th March in Yate from 10.30am to 2.30pm. If any of the Councillors are interested in attending, please let me know.

Bank - Deeds/Documents:- The Clerk had previously mentioned that an email had been received from Mr. and Mrs. Huish regarding the stone wall through the cemetery, part of which, they consider in imminent danger of collapse. The Clerk has checked the wall and although it is bowing, it is towards the Old Rectory. Mr. and Mrs. Huish consider that there is a 'party wall agreement' between the Parish Council and the previous owners of the Old Rectory. The Clerk had spoken with ALCA who suggest that it would be unusual for a Parish Council to enter into such an agreement. Their advice is to obtain copies of all deeds and documents held by the bank, scrutinise these to ascertain who is responsible for the wall. The Clerk had therefore prepared a letter, for signature by two Parish Councillors, to the bank manager requesting that the Clerk be allowed to take copies of all documentation held.

First Bus:- As you will be aware from the news on Thursday 12th March, First Bus is pulling the X27 service from the village. The letter outlining these changes arrived on 11th March 2009. The Clerk had spoke with Councillor Gawler and Hockey and Councillor Bellis to keep them informed of what was happening.

On Thursday, Councillor Hockey phoned the Clerk to say that the BBC wanted to interview a resident who used the bus to ascertain their views. The Clerk spoke with Councillor Aplin, who suggested Wendy Dowding. Wendy very kindly went to Yate and did the interview, which was broadcast on the lunchtime news. The Clerk then received a telephone call from the Evening Post asking for her views, as a resident.

It was agreed between Councillor Bellis and the Clerk that it would be beneficial for a flyer to be prepared and delivered to the houses in the village, informing residents of what is happening and that this will be discussed at the Parish Council meeting on Monday 16th. This flyer would also be put on the village web site. Councillor Taylor

will deliver to those residents in Chillwood Close and Algars Drive.

On the morning of Friday 13th March Councillor Hockey phoned the Clerk and suggested that she speak with Richard Kemble, Bus Service Officer of SGC, to see what is happening. The Clerk spoke with Mr. Kemble at length about the withdrawal of the bus service. Mr. Kemble said that SGC are in dialogue with other bus operators with a view to providing a replacement bus service for the village. SGC are waiting for figures to be provided, they will then be able to assess what service can be provided.

The Clerk had also received a copy of a letter from Yate Town Council, expressing their concern over the withdrawal of the service.

06-03-09 **SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

Following the discussions under Public Participation, **it was agreed** that the following issues would be raised with SGC; that the withdrawal of the X27 bus service would leave no travel facilities for the village during the day; insufficient notice had been given by First Bus; there had been no consultation; could First consider the re-routing of the 327 through the village, or perhaps another service; that SGC may like to consider a 'shuttle' style service connecting the village with Yate and Winterbourne. The Clerk would ensure that these points are put in a letter to SGC.

Clerk

07-03-09 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Clerk reported balances as at 12th March 2009 of:-

National Westminster Current Account	£3,360.73
National Westminster Reserve Account	£10,453.50
National Savings Accounts	£15,892.87

The Clerk reported that following a couple of visits to the bank and a number of telephone calls, she had spoken with our account manager regarding the reinstatement of bank charges for handling cash and cheques. Our account manager confirmed that our current account had the correct status of 'Groups & Charities', and could only apologise for the recent charges notification. Our account was refunded the £10.00 worth of charges. Our account manager also asked that a copy of the notification be sent to him at the branch. The Clerk will see to this.

Clerk

The Clerk also reported that she has started preparing the year end accounts in readiness for our independent audit in May.

The Clerk also suggested that the Councillors consider transferring some monies from the Reserve Account to the Current Account, as our precept of £7,000 will not be received until 30th April 2009. **It was agreed** that £2,000 would be transferred. Proposed Councillor Bellis, seconded Councillor Weldrake. All agreed. The Clerk will present the transfer slip to the bank.

Clerk

08-03-09 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS/PRIOR NOTIFICATIONS/TREE WORKS**

PK09/0361/F - 319 North Road, Yate - Creation of vehicle access from North Road (retrospective). Erection of canopy to front elevation. Erection of 1.8m high fence and 1.8m high gates fronting the highway. The Clerk reported that an amendment had been received regarding the final sentence of the application, which should now read 'Erection of front boundary wall and entrance'. No objections.

PK09/0440/F - Units 45-48 Waverley Road, Yate - External alterations to 4 no. industrial units. Erection of galvanised metal fencing with gates. No objections, however would respectfully request that rubbish is cleared away prior to erection of fencing.

09-03-09 **PLANNING CONSENTS**

- PK09/0116/F – Rose Cottage, Dyers Lane, Iron Acton (minute)
- PK09/0033/F – 1 East View Cottage, Nibley Lane, Iron Acton (minute)
- PK08/1750/F – Cherry Lodge Veterinary Clinic, Bristol Road (minute)

10-03-09 **PLANNING REFUSALS/WITHDRAWALS/APPEALS**

None received.

11-03-09 **PLANNING APPEALS**

- PK08/2770/O – 314 North Road, Yate – Erection of 2 no. dwellings (outline). All matters reserved.

12-03-09 **CEMETERY**

The Clerk reported that an application for permission to amend an existing headstone within the cemetery had been received from Summers Memorial Masons. The request related to the existing headstone of Peter Lewis Dyer with the addition of “In Loving Memory of a Beloved Husband and Father Leslie William Dyer Died 3rd December 2005 Aged 75 Years and a Loving Wife and Mother Kathleen Irene Dyer Died 8th October 2008 Reunited Forever”. No objections were raised to this additional inscription. The Clerk will inform Summers.

Clerk

13-03-09 **ALLOTMENTS**

The Clerk reported that March is the annual time of year when the Councillors give consideration to an increase in the allotment rents for the next financial year. This is because 12 months notice has to be given to allotment tenants. In 2004, allotment rents were increased from £6.00 to £12.00 (OAP’s £3.50 to £9.00). The Clerk pointed out that income from the allotments for the current financial year was £426.00. Expenditure in the form of water rates was £228.00, with an additional spend of some £650.00 on clearing rubbish from Nibley Lane. SGC charge £17.00 for a similar sized allotment and £1.45 towards water charges. **It was agreed** that the allotment rents would be increased from £12.00 to £15.00 (OAP’s £9.00 to £10.00) for the financial year 2010/2011. Proposed Councillor Aplin, seconded Councillor Heal. The Clerk will notify tenants of the increase for 2010/2011 when collecting rents for this coming financial year 2009/2010.

Clerk

14-03-09 **ANNUAL GRASSCUTTING TENDER 2009**

Tenders had been received from Landscape Services (£4,591.69/annum), Maple Leaf (£4,730.00/annum), D.R. Howse (£5,220.00/annum) and SGC (£6,521.65/annum). Following discussion, **it was agreed** that Councillor Bellis and the Clerk would liaise in order to obtain satisfactory references for Maple Leaf, as their work was unknown to the Parish Council. Upon receipt of satisfactory references Maple Leaf would be awarded the contract for this season. If unsatisfactory references were received then the contract would be awarded to Landscape Services. Proposed Councillor Aplin, seconded Councillor Heal. All agreed.

**PB/
Clerk**

15-03-09 **SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE CULTURAL STRATEGY CONSULTATION**

Following discussion at the February meeting, Councillor Aplin had prepared a response to SGC. A copy of this had been circulated to all Councillors at the meeting and read as follows:-

“Iron Acton Parish Council consider that South Gloucestershire is a rather amorphous area, where many of the most exciting cultural events in drama, dance, art and music lie outside our boundaries in nearby Bristol, Bath, Cheltenham and Cardiff. There is, for instance no substantial venue for the performing arts within South Gloucestershire, so we have to travel over the boundaries to experience them. How much this is valued could be seen, for instance at the recent

performance by the Kneehigh Company of Don John at the Bristol Hippodrome. This performance was packed with school parties of young people from this area.

One of the attractions of living in South Gloucestershire is its easy accessibility to such venues. However, when one of our Councillors wrote to South Gloucestershire in connection with the crisis and closure of the Bristol Old Vic, the response received was very negative – obviously prepared to take advantage of being nearby, but not prepared to help out.

The recent proposed cuts to the bus service will help to limit access to these facilities, to people who can afford to drive.

This means that we must, for practical purposes look at community or touring provision for the performing arts within South Gloucestershire, which is not great. The new hall at Emersons Green is barely fit for purpose. The provision is principally within local community halls, often run by small trusts or charities and the standard is as good as the local activists can provide, sometimes excellent and sometimes supported by matching grants from the Small Grants Fund. This is however, very welcome and much appreciated. The music, dance, art, history, worship, sports, playgroups and other activities that go on there are instigated by local people – people who get up and ‘do’ rather than write about cultural strategies.

An Arts & Cultural newsletter, readily available, that encompasses these individual efforts and even some workshops that would help people raise their standards would be welcome.

Regarding libraries, South Gloucestershire library is well-staffed and run, but it is noticeable that Yate Library re-building is on Lottery funding and that if the South Gloucestershire spend per capita on books (surely an essential component of a library), is compared with that of other local authorities, we are down near the bottom of the list.

Anyone who has attended as a volunteer, any meeting on the Cultural Olympiad will have been dismayed at the amount of official-led waffle. We believe that the money spent on local government employees writing a ‘Cultural Strategy’ document would be better spent in helping those in the community who are actually doing something to advance and preserve our culture”.

It was agreed that the above response be sent to SGC. Proposed Councillor Bellis, seconded Councillor Taylor. All agreed. The Clerk would prepare a letter accordingly.

Clerk

16-03-09 **NATIONAL SALARY AWARD 2008-2009 – CLERK**

The Clerk had provided the Councillors with information relating to the recently agreed pay award for Clerks. An award of 2.45% had been offered in October 2008, which had been rejected. Following arbitration and additional offer of an extra 0.3% (2.75%) had been accepted. The National Joint Council for Local Government Services recommended that the 2.75% be applied as from 1st April 2008. This equates to an additional 32p per hour for the Iron Acton Clerk. **It was agreed** that this pay award be accepted by the Parish Council, with this being backdated to 1st April 2008. Proposed Councillor Lomas, seconded Councillor Weldrake.

17-03-09 **FIRST BUS – WITHDRAWAL OF BUS SERVICE X27**

This had been fully discussed under Public Participation, and agenda items 05-03-09 and 06-03-09.

18-03-09 **PARKING – HIGH STREET**

A meeting with Peter Hart of SGC and his colleague Mrs. Hamblett, had taken

place on Friday 13th March 2009 to discuss the issue of parked cars in the High Street. Councillors Heal, Aplin, Bellis and the Clerk had attended. The whole length of the High Street had been walked. Congestion caused by parked cars outside the primary school had also been witnessed due to parents picking up children from the school. The recently painted white lines at the junction of the High Street and Nibley Lane were pointed out to Mr. Hart. Mr. Hart agreed that because the white line did not go all the way to the junction, it gave the impression that parking was permitted at the unpainted part. Mr. Hart would look into this matter.

The low kerb level opposite the Gazeley Clinic was also pointed out to Mr. Hart, which allows cars to mount the pavement. Mr. Hart confirmed that he would be raising this issue with his colleagues in the Highways Department to see what could be done. Traffic bollards (the black and white ones) were discussed, but it was pointed out by SGC that the footpath was too narrow at this point. During discussions, it was agreed that parked cars tend to slow traffic down; 'pinch points' or 'traffic calming' tend to cause cars to speed up through the narrow sections; and yellow lines would not be enforceable. Mr. Hart confirmed that a Traffic Management Review would need to be conducted by SGC following confirmation that this was what the Parish wanted. If the TMR was requested, then in all probability it would take place in the Capital programme for 2010/2011.

It was agreed that the Clerk would prepare a letter/questionnaire to be distributed to residents along the High Street to seek their opinions/observations on the parking situation on the High Street.

Clerk

19-03-09 **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

BWBSL	Water Rates - Nibley Lane allotments	£96.55
ALCA	Membership 2009/2010	£274.92
SGC	Rates - Cemetery	£145.50
CPRE	Membership renewal	£29.00
Mr. Keith Cole	Works around Parish	£125.00
Mrs. P. Taylor	Bus Shelter Cleaning	£29.00
Mrs. L. Angell	Bus Shelter Cleaning	£29.00
Iron Acton PCC	Hire of Marshall Rooms x 2	£30.00
Mrs. P. Evans	Clerks Salary, Stationery, Chain & Padlock, Back Dated Pay Award	£1,938.87

Proposed Councillor Bellis, seconded Councillor Taylor, all agreed that the above accounts be paid.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The full Parish Council Meeting will take place on **Monday 20th April 2009** in the Marshall Rooms, Iron Acton, commencing at 7.30pm

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Signed:

Dated:
