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# MINUTES OF WALTON-IN-GORDANO ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 8 PM ON MONDAY 13TH MAY 2019

**Present:** Brian Cannell (Chair), Don Hill (Minute Taker),  
Nick & Trudi Gwynn, Nigel & Barbara Wilyman, Tom Chown, Deb Tovey, Robin Hek

## 054/19 APOLOGIES

Rachel Dickinson, Colin Medus (NSC Liaison), Nigel Ashton (NSC Cllr), Rosemary Brace, Sue Betts, Andrew Francis.

## 055/19 MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF MAY 14TH 2018

These were circulated to attendees and approved in June 2018.

## 056/19 MATTERS ARISING

None

## 057/19 REPORTS TO THE MEETING

Reports were presented from the Parish Council, St Paul's Church, The WI, The Village Hall and The Social Club: they are attached to form a part of these minutes.

## 058/19 DISCUSSION

**Parish Council Finances:** After the delivery of the Chair's Report questions were asked about the criteria against which the annual budget was put together. *(Note: Council Tax is made up of the Local Authority (North Somerset Council) budget - the one that receives the publicity - and add-ons submitted by other bodies to cover their funding needs (precepts): e.g. services such as fire, police, internal drainage authorities and parish councils).* Brian Cannell explained the changes that have been emerging over recent years against two inter-related realities. Firstly, the implicit threat of a 2% cap, that has been in place for Local Authority budgets over recent years (*it was actually 3% for the current year*), might be imposed upon Parish Councils if they 'overstepped' their annual precept increases. Secondly, the fact, because of their own financial squeezes from Central Government, that Local Authorities, either by agreement or default, are ceasing to provide many parish-based services that must consequently be provided by the individual parishes - or be forgone. Traditionally, Walton-in-Gordano has kept its reserves to a minimum and, year-by-year, budgeted on a needs basis - adding the cost of a notice board or election to a specific year's budget and adjusting the following year's budget in relation to the uptake of the previous year's provision. The consequence is that, whilst historically requesting one of the lowest precepts in the North Somerset, we have no base of reserves from which to provide the services being 'put down' to parishes, and no significant level of precept from which to 'grow' at around a rate of 2-3% per year. Everything we want to do for our future will have to await the accumulation of funds from a relatively low base.

**Reparations post completion of Barton's Lorraine Field Development:** site access issues have led to significant erosion of Coast Road verges in the region of Lorraine Field. Whilst this is to a degree understandable, it will be expected that the planning authority - North Somerset Council - will demand appropriate reparations from the developers after the completion of works, to bring the Coast Road back to its previous harmonious state.

**Utility Covers at Coast Road/Two Acres Junction:** these are Bristol Water Covers; they are persistently failing to support highway traffic. As they disintegrate post-repair, they cause noise nuisance and, by 'impact-bouncing' a potential hazard to traffic. **Brian Cannell undertook that the Parish Council would press for a long term solution from NSC.**

**Village Hall Car Park:** this possibility was referred to, but as currently on the 'back-burner'.

**Election Turnout %:** Do we have a % figure for the May 2nd local elections? No, but it was believed to be in the region of 30% of our 279 electorate - 93.

**Speed Limit Along the Coast Road:** Might this be reduced? Hopefully, but pressure over - a long - time will be needed to bring it about. It is being kept on the Parish Council agenda, and the previously researched signage to highlight a community (albiet hidden below the horizon of motorists) along the Coast Road is being prioritised.

**There being no further topics raised**, the Chair thanked everyone for coming along to the meeting and for taking part.

**The meeting closed at 8.55 pm**

# REPORTS

## Walton-in-Gordano Parish Council - Brian Cannell

**The Council:** This last year the Parish Council has dealt with the usual mix of planning, road maintenance and local event issues. As of May 13th, Walton-in-Gordano Parish Councillors are Mr Mike Ralston, Mr Brian Cannell, Mr Nigel Wilyman and Mrs Rachel Dickinson. After discussions, Councillor Mike Ralston was elected as Chairman at the May Parish Council AGM. Councillor Brian Cannell was also elected as Vice Chair. I need to give some explanation to this change. Since becoming involved in the PC in the late 1970's it was apparent that even as a very small PC, we didn't have a robust succession plan for councillors. The Chair of the PC usually stayed in post being re-elected year on year, until they retired from the PC. This would leave a void of experience. I was minded to change this when I was given the privilege of Chair in 2004. When Mike Ralston joined the PC, I recognised someone who could ably lead the PC in the future. Following discussions with Mike, Don and the other councillors, Mike has agreed to take over the mantle of Chair. I have no intention of retiring or leaving the PC anytime soon (unless you want me to!), but will be here to support Councillor Ralston and the PC. As I said earlier, it has been a privilege to be Chairman, and I commend Councillor Ralston to you. Councillor Dickinson will continue to represent the PC on the Village Hall management committee (Councillor Wilyman stood down from this responsibility in April). We have no representative on NSC Standards Sub committee. North Somerset Council is regularly represented at the Parish Council meetings by Colin Medus. Councillor Nigel Ashton, as Leader of North Somerset Council has not been able to attend the Parish Council meetings during the year: however, both his and Colin's advice and support have proved invaluable resources that the Parish Council greatly appreciates.

**Policing:** We were sad to lose our local police beat manager, PC Jenny Clark, during the year as she moved on to higher things. She was a loyal, assiduous and well liked officer. Whilst we do have access to PCSO support, police finances no longer make meeting attendance and regular monthly reporting possible. Neighbourhood watch schemes continue to operate in various parts of the Parish.

**Planning:** This year, we have seen only a few applications for planning consent review, but it pleasing to see that some of these are for improvements to existing properties such as extensions. Lorraine Field redevelopment has started, after approved variations to the original planning consent. Compliance to these conditions is being very closely monitored by North Somerset Council planning officers.

**Broadband:** Internet speed continues to be a problem with most of the parish. Following last year's hope in Fibre Broadband infrastructure provider – Gigaclear – problems with the realisation of this functionality to many areas in North Somerset have come to light. A second supplier – Truespeed – has come on the scene. Andy Moore, the Community Engagement Manager for Truespeed, provided a presentation to the Parish Council in Jan 2019. This meeting was attended by a number of parishioners where a Q&A session was held. Despite this session and further communications to the parish via the Cross Tree Chronicle, on more than one occasion, take-up on the Truespeed offer is disappointing. All that was required was a notification of interest to initialise the process of Fibre Broadband provision. Thank you to those who responded to the presentation, but currently the trigger point has not been reached, even though the numbers required were low. Thus, unless something changes, Walton is unlikely to get fibre broadband in the near future. This is extremely disappointing with a number of people regularly commenting on the poor broadband speeds but only a few of them doing anything to facilitate rectification despite being presented with a viable solution. Councillor Ralston is our expert on this subject.

**Gordano Greenway:** Activity has been quiet during the past year, but continues to be monitored by the council.

**Community SpeedWatch:** Kevin Edwards is leading a group of volunteers that is running the activity in the Parish. The statistics from the sessions make interesting reading. If you would like to be involved please contact Kevin. Discussions continue on how best to both reduce the speed of vehicles through the village and enhance the parish at the same time. Walton Street now has a 20mph speed limit. There are varying opinions of it's effectiveness – those who obey it probably went at a suitable speed before the limit was posted. Those that regularly drove fast along this section of road, probably still do, taking no notice of the speed limit nor the multiple hazards and blind entrances that justified this change. Work is underway on erecting some village gateways. Quotes and site visits have taken place, but we appear to have a 'Catch 22' situation regarding where the current speed limits are and the positioning of the gateways on N Somerset land. Discussions continue with North Somerset.

**Passing Friends:** We have experienced the loss of so many Parish stalwarts over recent years, and it is with real sadness that we now have to record the recent death of Ray Redmore. Ray was a kind man, a man of ideas, and, as its Chair, a key contributor to the maintenance and improvement of the Village Hall. As with all these people who have become so happily woven into the fabric of the Parish, Ray will be sorely missed.

**Finance:** The Budget for 2019/20 was set during the January 2019 Parish Council meeting at £4004. After including provisions for future election expenses (£300) and capital expenditure (£500) the amount of the precept from North Somerset was £4804. We continue to be in the cheapest 1/3 of all parishes in North Somerset by precept. I would like to thank those who have shown an interest in the Parish and its Council over the last year and encourage those who have yet to do so.

Finally, on behalf of the Parish, I would like to thank my fellow Councillors: Mike Ralston, Nigel Wilyman and Rachel Dickinson - not forgetting the Clerk to the Parish Council, Don Hill - for their hard work and support over the last year.

## **St Paul's Church - Sue Betts** *(read by Don Hill)*

2018 was a sad year for our village church, it's impossible to express how the loss of so many dear friends in one year has hit our church community. This, of course, has made a big impact on church numbers because not only have we had a number of people who have passed away but we also have those who had to move away or can no longer easily get to church. Even with all this happening it has not taken away the wonderful spirit of St. Paul's.

Last year we introduced our Come and Join Us service, a simple service followed by a bring-and-share lunch on the first Sunday of every month. This has proved to be popular and has been made far easier by the addition to our church of a great little kitchen. You are all welcome to join us.

We have continued to support a number of charities including Toilet Twinning. We have now completed the challenge to become a Toilet Champion Village; if you go to their website you can see Walton-in-Gordano is literally 'on the map'

After our church building survey a number of jobs have been highlighted, fortunately none of them major problems. Some jobs have already been done thanks to a group of willing volunteers but some work will need outside help. Sheri and Steve are putting together a list of jobs which you may like to sponsor; the list will be available at our Flower Festival in August.

As well as our annual Flower Festival, this year celebrating Our Glorious Gordano Valley, we have a number of events coming up including our Open Gardens and Flower Power Fun on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May and another celebration of village life at our Rogation Sunday service on Sunday 2nd June.

This year has seen Brodie stand down as churchwarden and Sheri taking on the role. Brodie has done a brilliant job as churchwarden and we all think she is a saint. As you may remember Sheri has been churchwarden before – we are very environmentally conscience at St. Paul's; we even recycle our churchwardens!

## **Womens' Institute - Rosemary Brace, President** *(read by Don Hill)*

As you may have read in the "Cross Tree Chronicle " we no longer have any resident from the parish of Walton-in-Gordano as a member due to the ill health of our last two ladies who lived in the village. That said we are a very happy institute: as they say, the best things come in small packages. We have a varied programme of meetings throughout the year - speakers, social events, meals out, an annual outing on which villagers are invited to join us, etc. Next spring we celebrate our 90th birthday, we certainly are the longest continuous users of the Village Hall, and we have seen many changes over the years, as our minute books record. They make interesting reading. We welcome all ladies to come to our meetings, and welcome you to join our group, whether resident in the village or not.

## **Village Hall - Deb Tovey, Chair**

In 2018, we continued with our programme of refurbishments at the Hall. The front doors were painted which made the outside of the Hall more attractive. We followed this up by redecorating the front lobby, tiling the kitchen, installing a new wall heater in the kitchen, and putting up a new noticeboard. The next thing on our "To Do " list is the replacement of the flooring in the rear lobby, kitchen and toilets. The Hall continued to be hired regularly last year, including a few events held by the Social Committee and Sue Bett's extended family having their Christmas Dinner there – a joyous occasion. Bob and Val Baldwin looked after the hirings and cleaning very well on our behalf, resulting in many hirers coming back again and again. The Hall is currently in good repair and we look forward to its continued use by the local community in 2019.

## **Walton-in-Gordano Social Club - Andrew Francis** *(read by Barbara Wilyman)*

The current Chair of the Walton-in-Gordano Social Club is Andrew Francis and he is supported by a great group of villagers who form the committee. New members are always welcome and we are always looking for volunteers to assist with events and activities.

The club has once again arranged and hosted a number of events in the village over the last 12 months.

This has included the Christmas Quiz Night with a Cheese Supper, Pop-up Pub Evenings in the Village Hall and the annual Fete, which was one of the largest and best attended in recent years.

In addition, we have again added to the village Xmas lights and supplied and maintained planters throughout the village and we continue to produce the monthly Chronicle which is paid for by the Social Club and distributed by volunteers.

In February we arranged for a group of volunteers to clean up the village collecting rubbish, trimming back roadside verges, weeding flower beds and clearing the Brook, something which it appears has unfortunately been left to volunteers in the village to undertake without the support of the local Council.

As a result of these events we have once again donated significant sums to the Church and Village Hall. This was achieved entirely from and by the Social Committee and volunteers without support or donations from other village groups or bodies and is a fantastic achievement for the village as a whole showing we have a very vibrant community.

We retain a balance of funds which is used to arrange and fund the annual fete and which is also available to support other village events, clubs or activities and we are happy to receive requests for funding.