

POULSHOT PARISH COUNCIL
POULSHOT ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING 6th June 2017, 7:00PM
THE VILLAGE HALL, POULSHOT
MINUTES

Present: Councillors: Mr G Collett (Chairman) [GC]; Mr A Baber [AB]; Mr S Housby [SH]; Mr B Hamilton [BH]; Mr M Wilson [MW]; Mr T Jalland [TJ]; Mrs S Wright-Hurn [SW]

Apologies: None

Also present: ~20 members of the public; Parish Clerk, Mrs E Martin [EM]

Meeting commenced 7:10pm.

Apologies for absence.

No absences

Welcome Message From Parish Council Chair, Cllr. Geoff Collett

Cllr. Collett told the audience Congratulations to the new Councillors elected in May. Please welcome Mike Wilson, Tim Jalland and Samantha Wright-Hurn.

Thanks were given to the three Councillors that have retired from the Council this year. Their contributions to the Parish are invaluable and much appreciated.

Special thanks were given to Tim Gravina and Nicky Hunloke for the on-going contribution of mowing the grass in the Green Gardens.

The Cricket Club continues to grow and is being enjoyed by many in the Village. Continued success and good luck to the team.

A reminder that the Fete and Vintage Car Show events are being held this month on the Green and it is hoped that many enjoy both events.

Message From Mr Alan Webber on behalf of the Village Hall Trust

During the 2016/17 financial-year the Village Hall increased its income by 50%. This was due to increased lettings and some successful events. The Village Hall welcomed another table tennis team (From Bradford Upon Avon) giving the Hall 4 regular teams playing at Poulshot. (One of the best venues on the circuit, Apparently.)

The Village Hall is also the host for French classes and upholstery classes once per week throughout most of the year and have seen an increase in the one-off bookings – mainly from the outside of Poulshot.

The Halls expenses have also increased by around 50% mainly due to a number of maintenance activities that were overdue. The fire alarm had not been serviced since 2007, many of the emergency lights needed replacing and this was a costly exercise. However, it was needed to make the Hall compliant. The Hall has suffered from a number of years with a lack of heating in certain areas, such as the men's toilet, the disabled toilet and kitchen. These have all been fixed with every room now having heat directly to it.

The heating was run at 16 degrees through the winter to get better efficiency from the heating system and to make it more welcoming for people. The Hall has received a lot of positive feedback on how cosy it has been this year – but obviously at a cost.

All in all, there was a slight increase in the profits.

During the year we received a grant from the Poulshot Community Fund and from the Melksham Area Board to cover a lot of the cost for replacing the facias. This work has been completed and makes the Hall look significantly better. However, some areas were not covered due to their inaccessibility so the Committee will need to look at that in coming years.

There is now a rolling maintenance programme for cleaning the windows and increased the general cleaning of the Hall through the winter to take account of the increased rentals at that time of year.

The Village Hall received a grant from Dan Baber's estate to be used on a project in the coming year.

There is still a lot of maintenance work to do, chairs with arms have been requested, fixing floors and better storage solutions.

During the year there have been a number of successful events held in the Hall. A Halloween party for over 30 children, two plays, the return of the Bonfire Radicals Folk Band, the Quiz in November and the St Patricks Day Quiz!

At the end of the year the Committee saw some changes with the departure of the Chair, Ray Josey, replaced by Sam Wright-Hurn with Nicole Neismeyer as the Secretary.

The Committee has also opened a Facebook page to help in advertising events being held. This has been extremely successful with one post achieving over 200 "hits".

Message From Mr Ray Josey on behalf of the Village Trust

The Village Trust has had a recent change of officer. Tim Jalland is now the Vice Chair and Tim Coleman was given thanks for his contribution as the previous Vice Chairman. Over the year the VT has worked with Wiltshire Council on the public footpaths in the village. The gates/stiles have been replaced at Poulshot 24, 25 and 3. The Ramblers, a local group of volunteers that help to clear pathways, are currently clearing the Broadway.

Future work for the VT will be the replacing of the Stiles at Poulshot 6 & 7, utilising the Community Pay Back team in Wiltshire for additional help on some maintenance of the ponds closer to winter. Dankay Cleverly will be contacting the Council in due course to organise the pond-clearing event.

Membership fee is £5 per family and all are welcomed to join.

Message From Mr Declan Gaule on behalf of the Poulshot Cricket Club

This is the Cricket Clubs second year and things are going well. Membership has risen from 30 to 50 members.

The artificial cricket strip is holding up well and the Club is now moderately cultivating two natural strips. Home games are becoming more widely supported providing a great opportunity for the Village to come together for some social time. The Tractor is currently being worked on and fitted with new parts keeping the equipment in fit order.

The Cricket Club would like to extend a word of "thanks" for all the hard work and support of everyone over the last two year.

Message From Mr Ian Gilles on behalf of the Poulshot Friends & Neighbours

PF&N has had a rewarding year. The group re-branded last year to include anyone in the Village to attend. At the moment there are 25 paid members in the group with several villagers attending as and when they are able on an ad-hoc basis.

This year events have seen Tim Jalland provide an evening talk on what it is like to be a Steward of the Salisbury Plain to a day at the Hawk Conservancy.

Going forward the group will be working with the "Tusk Foundation" and authors in support of conservation such as Dawn Lawrence to in hopes of securing an evening on the plight of the elephants and the work being done to protect them. The group are also hoping to plan a trip to the Royal Mint and Wiltshire/Swindon Museum as well as a Christmas outing at Bowood to conclude the year.

The accounts for PF&N are healthy due to a grant from the Community Fund, and a donation from Dan Baber's estate. The group hope to go from strength to strength and welcome any new members that would like to join. Thanks put forward to all those who continue to support the group.

Message From Mr Mike Wilson on behalf of the Poulshot Community Speedwatch

The Poulshot speed watch group comprises 10 volunteers (one awaiting training), the group has access to a speed gun for two weeks in every six weeks. There are 5 authorised locations in Poulshot now. The gun is shared between Poulshot, Rowde and Bromham.

In every two-week period on average the group conducts 11 daytime sessions; (nights are prohibited) that gives an average of 572 sessions of 1hour per year. That's a lot of volunteering dedicated to the serious problem of speeding in Poulshot. We are still seeking an additional 2 volunteers.

Turning to the statistics, the first thing to say is that no inference can be taken from the data at present as the team has only been in existence for just over a year. If anything can be inferred it is that the figures seem consistent, and it is not possible to say that there is an effect on the speeders. However, from observation at the side of the road, the presence of the volunteers does influence many drivers, of course the hard- core speeders seem to be oblivious.

One factor may be that the volunteers have become more adept and are able to measure speeds at a greater distance, therefore they are catching the drivers before they even see the volunteer. The future plan is to increase the group slightly, maintain the effort and training, and to obtain permission and funding for a speed-indicating device.

Message From Mrs Cristobel Francis on behalf of the Poulshot Farming Club

Long running group of retirees that over the years have formed a social Group known as the Farmers Club. This group meets in the winter months once a month from 2:30-4:30. The group is about 40 members in total that include many members from outside Poulshot. Special events coming up will be a talk on the different Poultry breeds (Oct), The Air Ambulance (Nov), a trip to Guernsey (Dec), a presentation on Kenya and African Animals (Jan), Tortoise (Feb), Tim Jalland and the talk about the Salisbury Plain (March) and Journey to the Weakest Link in (April). It has been a wonderful year and the group is looking forward to the next events.

Message From Mrs Verity Jeffery on behalf of the Wiltshire Numismatic Society

This is a group of folks that meet up at the Raven that share a common interest in coins. They are proud to be celebrating their 50th anniversary this year. The group enjoy speakers on topics regarding many areas of coin collecting and production to include the most recent talk about Wiltshire Trade Tokens. In the last month the group also enjoyed a day out to the Royal Mint in Cardiff. If anyone has any coins that they would like to know more about or wish to sell, auction or trade in this fascinating topic please come along to the Raven. Meetings published in the Poulshot Magazine.

Public Participation

Latest broadband information was presented by Mike Wilson. The public were made aware that Mike Wilson and Ian Gillies will be meeting with Open Reach/BT on the 22nd of June to review the options that may be available outside of using telegraph poles on the Green, but that would also ensure this project continues to progress. A brief discussion was held regarding the road safety of the current plan that BT/Open Reach has started. It is thought that the poles proposed on the Green are considered a road hazard and therefore a safety issue. They are too close to the main road and considering the size of farm equipment becoming larger in proportion a safety hazard if placed. The Council ensured the village that the main goal for the meeting on the 22nd is to ensure that this project continues to move forward in a concise and legal manner and to ensure that the momentum of this project is maintained to completion.

Ray Josey asked the Council for the reasoning behind the increase in the precept. The Parish Clerk addressed this query. Last year the PPC looked to build a 5-year plan for the continued maintenance of the trees on the Green and Parish owned land. During the collaboration and planning stage of this plan the main chestnut trees on the green suffered a major breakage. Based on Health and Safety of the public a tree surgeon was asked to undertake the remaining maintenance of the three chestnut trees. As this work was not budgeted for in total the contingency fund for the Council was used bringing this to a nil balance. As the Council should be maintaining its accounts with a minimum of 30% in contingency part of the precept increase is to replenish this money over the next two years. As well, the long-standing contractor for cutting of the Green has retired from this role and our costs for the continued upkeep of the Green has also increased. The third reason for the increase was to begin to align the budget appropriately for the next 5 years. Poulshot's precept is not in line with running costs and must start to plan appropriately for the next few years. Nationally there has been discussion to bring in legislation that would enforce a referendum for ANY increase in precept. Poulshot has many initiatives that need to be budgeted for, coupled with many more responsibilities being handed down to the local level of government. Continued referendums would be costly and could potentially cause polarisation of needed work in the village. Aligning the budget now should help to set Poulshot on solid footing for the next few years.

Giles Morgan asked the Council if it has considered putting out a formal Village Statement or Village Plan for review and to help communicate across the Village? Chairman Collett did discuss that this piece of work is being looked at and had been attempted a few years before but was met with some difficulty at the time and was discontinued. Poulshot would like to begin the process of this and will be looking at how some other Villages have taken the process forward. Potters is one village that has just completed this process and according to J Seed, Seend is about a year away from completing this process. J Seed has suggested that Poulshot look carefully and speak to those who have been through this process as he did say it does highlight areas that can polarise a community when agreement is different. Ray Josey suggested that perhaps we could ask a neighbouring village to come and speak to Poulshot on the process and how they worked through the various subjects. Cllr Mike Wilson also highlighted that Community First offer a dedicated area of support for this work that Poulshot may wish to consider.

Closing Remarks

Chairman Geoff Collett announced that the HGF contracts had been exchanged and that the 10 year project is now hopefully making some positive progress. This exchange of contracts will be ratified at the full meeting to follow.

Meeting closed 7:55pm