

BASILDON PARISH ASSEMBLY

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY ON 17th May 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Ian Parsons (Chairman), Sarah Barnes, Elaine Cox, Geoffrey Couchman, Tim Martin, Ian Parsons and Nathalie Weekes.

Attended by the Clerk and 11 parishioners. The District Councillor, Alan Law, was present as was Sergeant A Murray.

1. MINUTES OF THE ASSEMBLY OF 16th May 2017.

The minutes had previously been circulated and confirmed as correct and were signed by the Chairman.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN

The Chairman welcomed the members of the public and speakers to the meeting and outlined the format that would be followed. The Chairman confirmed that all Councillors would cover off certain sections of Parish Council business with a short question and answer session from the local police and an update from District Councillor Alan Law. He then introduced Sergeant Murray who addressed the meeting.

4. Local Police Update

Sergeant Murray confirmed the following:

Victim based crime – up 9% in Thames Valley.

There 2 burglaries, 8 car related offences and 3 car thefts in the Basildon area in the last year.

Thames Valley alerts are available and are a useful resource for keeping up to date with developments in the area.

The public should use telephone number 101 for non-emergency issues and 999 for in the event of an emergency.

Questions from the public covered the possibility of the police being armed, anti social motoring behaviour and the use of quad bikes on the public road.

5. Parish Council Summary

The Chairman then provided a summary of Parish Council activity and confirmed the following:

As of the end of March 2018 there was just over £60,000 in two bank accounts controlled by the Parish Council.

The budget for 2017/18 was £27,000 and this has been spent over the course of the year although invoices trail spending leading to an under spend of around 3k in the year end figures. This has caught up with May invoices.

Subsidies have been given to the library service, bus service, gritting and grit bins and other local clubs and societies.

The Chairman confirmed that the internal audit was complete with the external audit set to kick off shortly.

Planning – 56 applications were received and of these the Parish Council objected to 20, had no view on 4 and objected to 32. Of these, West Berkshire Council approved 28, with 10 being refused and 5 withdrawn. The remainder are currently pending.

The Parish Council continued to object to anything outside of the settlement boundary.

4 new applications for more than one house on a plot were received. 2 were approved, 2 were rejected.

30 objections were received to a proposal for a large telecoms mast in the village. It was noteworthy that such a significant response was raised but similar support was not forthcoming for other proposed developments.

The Grotto application continues to be pending and has been followed up by the Parish Council due to concern over the buildings condition.

Staffing changes – There has been one new councillor.

The Chairman outlined a number of key Parish Council achievements:

Pot holes flagged to WBC and fixes now underway.

The outdoor gym which is set to be installed shortly.

Bus subsidies continue, as do those for the Post Office.

Winter gritting funded by the Parish Council

Contribution to local football club

Support for the Village hall

Two new litter bins

Ongoing conversations with the school over support.

Regular attendance at other council related meetings.

A meeting is held once a year in Lower Basildon.

The Chairman introduced the rest of the Council in turn and each covered off a specific topic:

Councillor Jones talked about support for the local library and confirmed that the Parish Council had paid £1740 to help keep the services running (£1 per member of the Parish). 154 residents are confirmed as active and use either Pangbourne or the mobile library service.

Councillor Couchman confirmed that support for both the 142 and 143 bus service continues. There is still a need for residents to use it or lose it.

Councillor Weakes outlined the discussions that had taken place with Beale Park who had offered half price membership of the park and use of meeting rooms for the Parish Council. This will be administered by the Parish Council. Additionally, allotments are now under discussion.

Councillor Barnes confirmed a speeding survey took place in August last year. 'SIDs' were placed in both Upper and Lower Basildon and the results were as follows over 1 week

4500 cars were recorded of which over 1500 were over the speed limit. The average speed was 29mph. Electronic speeding signs are being considered and will be invested in during the next year.

Councillor Cox updated the meeting on rights of way and informed the meeting that the Parish has 17 kilometres of paths, bridleways and rights of way across 26 locations. The main issues were associated with these spaces were Fly tipping at numerous locations (not all footpaths), a water leak on footpath 3 which was fixed by Thames Water and general issues with vegetation which was cut back. The path by St Bartholomews is now accessible after a space next to the gate was cleared.

Councillor Martin updated the meeting on the Village Hall. He informed those present that there is a new chairman and trustees plus a dedicated person to look after finance and bookings. The internal audit has also been completed. The Village Hall lost 10K during the year but this covered maintenance including essential work in the car park.

6. District Council Update

The Chairman introduced Councillor Law who updated the meeting:

Councillor Law informed the meeting that this was his 11th year as a District Councillor.

There has been a leadership change with Graham Jones taking over and Carol Jackson Doerge elected chairman.

Boundaries – there are proposed boundary changes with the Basildon Ward set to take on Ashampstead.

Finance – Council tax has gone up by 5.99% with 3% of it being a special precept for adult social care. Berkshire is participating in a pilot for a new business rate scheme.

Planning – work on the local plan to 2036 is under development. Economic development sites will be reviewed and there is discussion around greater AONB protection.

Roads – there are twice as many potholes as last year and these are being repaired as quickly as possible. Berkshire (with the exception of Cumbria) has the largest network of rural roads per head of population. Since 2015, 145 miles of roads have been resurfaced.

Waste / Recycling - WBC has one of the best recycling rates in England and a planning application will be submitted to upgrade Padworth to take general waste. There is going to be a £50 per annum charge for green waste.

Gigaclear Broadband is now rolled out across the ward and West Berkshire now has the fastest average speed of any non metropolitan district.

7. Any other Business

The Chairman opened up the meeting to questions and the following were asked:

There were questions around waste recycling and options for further recycling. Additionally, the Grotto and the lack of progress made with the planning applications was discussed. There was also a question around mobile phone masts and potential sites along with footpath condition and the bus service.

With the questions complete, the Chairman concluded the meeting at 9:15pm and

confirmed that there would be another assembly in 2019.