

Weston on the Green Annual Parish Meeting, 27th March 2019

Minutes

19.1 Welcome and introduction from Chair of Parish Council – Diane Bohm (DB)

Diane Bohm (Chairman of Parish Council) welcomed all for attending the Annual Parish meeting. This is a new trial format so any feedback to either DB or the Parish Clerk (clerk@westononthegreen-pc.gov.uk) would be much appreciated.

The idea for this meeting is to share all the good work in the community.

Parish Council (PC) meetings are great opportunities to find out what the PC does, all are welcome to attend, dates and agendas are detailed on the PC noticeboard outside the village hall.

19.2 Resolution To Approve: Minutes of 2018 Annual Parish Meeting held on 30th May 2018

Time for reading and discussion of the minutes of the 30th May 2018 meeting was given. There were no questions.

The minutes were then moved by DB and seconded by Robin Stafford Allen (RSA). It was supported unanimously by attendees at the meeting.

19.3 Report from: Village Hall Committee - read by Jane Mullane (Parish Clerk)

From Andrew Wilson (Chairman, Weston-on-the-Green Memorial Village Hall Committee):

The Village Hall continues to be host to several Village clubs and societies as well as putting on a range of events /activities including hosting a quiz night, film nights, Welsh Male Voice Choir and coffee mornings. Their biggest project last year was the renovation of the kitchen when a new safety floor was installed along with new worktops, splash-backs, oven and hob.

They have been delighted to be chosen by several new external groups for holding meetings and activities in the hall, providing new income streams.

As well as the hall itself, the Village Hall Committee also maintains the phone box library and the defibrillator. They continue to be involved in the organisation and running of the fireworks display and host the Village Christmas tree and the ceremonial switch-on of the lights. These events are growing year-on-year and prove hugely popular and important dates in the village calendar.

Question from villager – has there been any discussion about developing a youth group or mothers' group in the village hall?

RSA commented that the Village Hall Committee would be very welcoming if an organisation wished to run a group at the hall. Unfortunately, the committee is too small to run a group themselves and it is also a complicated process. Initiative would be required from someone to run such a group.

19.4 Report from: The Weston Garden Club – Robin Stafford Allen

RSA highlighted that the traditional spring and autumn garden shows are still held each year.

The Garden Club also host several Open Garden Evenings where residents in Weston open up their gardens for visitors to come and enjoy. Free for Garden Club members, £5 if not a member, refreshments provided.

The first one will be held on 10th April (Dairy Cottage, North Lane) with the next one on 14th May (Cherrycroft, Mill Lane).

Please look out for future dates in the Village News and advertised around the village.

19.5 Report from: Weston Society – Paula Hessian

The Weston Society was formed in 2000 when it was felt that the character of the village was under threat. They are a self-funding group where the subscriptions pay for the village hall, refreshments and speaker's costs.

Their current programme is as varied as possible, whilst still maintaining a close link to the surroundings:

- 13th May - medieval Jewish quarter of Oxford, followed by an evening guided tour
- July – Master Thatcher
- September - bellringing and specifically Weston's bells
- November - 17th century Christmas
- January 2020 - Otmoor Riots

If anyone is interested come along on the night – posters and the Village News give information or contact Graham Barnett (gblmb@btinternet.com) with your email address and he will give you advance warning of meetings.

Membership is £10 per person per year, visitors are charged £3 unless they join that night.

The village archive (stored in the cupboards in the entrance to the hall) was amassed while Weston Matters was being written in 1998-2000 and is currently undergoing a make-over. They are having the picture archived in a digital form and rationalising some of the documents – much information is now available on the internet.

After 20 years, there is to be a reprint of Weston Matters, which, it is hoped will soon be available through the Post Office. Many thanks to Yasemin for this. As with the original edition all profits will go to the Community Fund.

Weston Society also contribute short articles to the Bicester Advertiser more or less every month and have covered topics as far ranging as a wartime childhood and schooling, School Field, Oak Tree, Chapel and most recently Shopping in the Village.

19.6 Report from Neighbourhood Watch – Patsy Parsons

20-25% of the village are part of the Neighbourhood Watch.

Weston on the Green is in the Kidlington Police District, Patsy has been attending meetings and as a result we are getting better communications from the Police e.g. crime reports in the Village News.

Ideas encouraged by the Police:

- Lights on timers – shown to reduce burglary rate
- Door stickers - research shows that a high proportion of door stickers do put burglars off
- UV pen - put postcode on valuable property
- Medication prescription pot – put info on pot and put it in fridge and then people know what help is required in an emergency

Street co-ordinators are required for:

- Northampton Road, South of The Manor
- Church Road/Blacksmiths Close

Please contact Patsy Parsons if interested in becoming a street co-ordinator or wish to join The Neighbourhood Watch.

A resident mentioned about the crime in the Post Office where £350 was stolen. The Police were rung twice, staff were very distressed, the response was indifference and nothing was done.

The Parish Council (PC) made a formal complaint to the Police who were going to investigate further and look at CCTV etc. It was inexcusable that the police didn't show up to shop crime. PC complained about the inaccessibility of the Police and mentioned it felt like we are an uncared for village.

PC were told that the Community Policeman comes to Weston on the Green on the first Saturday of the month if wish to discuss anything.

Parish Council now receiving police alerts. A police alert comes through on Facebook so you can also link to alerts.

19.7 Report from Expressway Group – Roger Evans

Roger Evans highlighted the following regarding the work of the Expressway Group:

Thank you to all in village who sent letters to politicians. 23 parishes were invited to a meeting with John Howells, but Weston on the Green were not. The feedback was they didn't think anyone minded in Weston – now they know that we do.

The group has circulated flyers around the village and erected signs. They have also met with local politicians: Ian Hudspeth (Oxfordshire County Council leader) and Barry Wood (Cherwell District Council leader).

The Local Plan 2011-2031 highlights a total growth of 100,000 houses (1/4 million people) and most authorities are meeting this target.

For the Plan period 2031-2051 – there is a request to accommodate an additional 200,000 houses (1/2 million people). This has been handed down from Central Government with no consultation. There are proposals in Oxfordshire to double the population.

The idea of the Expressway is to join up all the housing growth.

There will be two phases of consultation: preferred routes in autumn 2019 and the preferred route in autumn 2020 with an enquiry to follow.

Neighbourhood Plan demonstrated that Weston on the Green is not against planned growth however capacity has not been checked on the ground by Cherwell District Council.

There are 2 major arguments against the Expressway:

- More pollution
- Channelling more traffic down A34

In summary, next steps include:

1. Thank you for all support – please keep letters going out to key people
2. Local politician meetings continuing
3. Expressway – No Expressway meeting to be held Saturday 30th March at the John Paul Centre in Bicester

A resident asked if there was any meaning to protecting the village when its said by Councillors. The Neighbourhood Plan provides a development guideline for the village. What Cherwell District Council had not done yet is work out where the new housing could be developed. There is a possibility of a housing belt from Bicester all the way down to Kidlington. We need to hold politicians to agreement about the development in our area. The focus on development in other countries is based around public transport not car transport.

Break: refreshments served

19.8 Report from Parish Council – Diane Bohm (DB)

One of the Parish Council's aims is to improve lines of communication in the village. The Clerk is first port of call who will then forward on requests to the appropriate Councillor in order to obtain a reply.

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact the Parish Clerk on clerk@westononthegreen-pc.gov.uk

Following is a summary of the formal report submitted to Weston on the Green Annual Parish Meeting 2019:

- Formation of Advisory Groups: Works, Finance, Staffing, Traffic, Transport, Neighbourhood Plan, Governance.
- Spring Clean supported by Daclour Maclaren.
- Trial run of Internal and External audit system led by Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils.
- Overhaul of finance system, hiring of new bookkeeper.

- Councillor Ruth Whitfield volunteered to be Interim Parish Clerk.
- Appointment of permanent Parish Clerk, Jane Mullane.
- Decision to replace Internal Auditor.
- Neighbourhood Plan submission in October 2018, final Rebuttal to Representation commenting on the plan submitted following support from CDC.
- Working alongside Expressway Action Group both in the village, along the A34 and the No Way Expressway Alliance.
- Range of training for most councillors: Planning, Financial Year, Role of Responsible Financial Officer, Role of the Parish Clerk, Managing Meetings.

Looking ahead:

- Due to the resignation of Graeme Forbes, the Parish Council will be advertising a vacancy. We are looking for a villager ideally with financial expertise who will lead the Finance Advisory Group however anyone willing to take up a role on the Council will be very welcomed.

Neighbourhood Plan

With regards to the Neighbourhood Plan Councillor Susan Daenke commented that incorporating the school field into the Neighbourhood Plan was not straightforward. Passive recreational use with respect to preserving biodiversity in a corridor north to south is unconventional and not what appears in most plans. Cherwell District Council have been very supportive and guided us through the process.

She went on to recognise the effort Diane Bohm has shown throughout the process. She has been a key person, demonstrating patience with an ability to communicate with all parties and was never phased by anything. Requests have been difficult to deliver and responses hard to phrase but Diane was not phased and without her we would have struggled to get the Neighbourhood Plan submitted, she deserves our thanks.

A resident asked if there was a timescale for the Examiner to report back on the Neighbourhood Plan?

Diane Bohm responded that there was no timescale, but they do tend to turn it round fairly quickly. The Examiner may call for an enquiry where any challengers can have their say. Money has been set aside in this year's Parish Council budget for legal council in case this happens. Money has also been set aside to support the Expressway Alliance Group with legal fees.

The Examiner may ask for changes to be made as a result of the rebuttal document, these have already been done in advance. The Neighbourhood Plan will then go a referendum or it will get rejected.

Playing Field Purchase- Robin Stafford Allen (RSA) presented a summary on the playing field purchase. He confirmed that Cherwell District Council would not be granting us any money as our scheme did not introduce a new facility for the village as we already have it as an existing field we are renting. We are therefore reliant on the Viridor grant who require letters of support from the village for the playground purchase.

DB suggested that a template letter would help to garner support which RSA agreed to distribute to local groups.

Chicken Farm: A resident queried how things were progressing with the chicken farm smell issues. The process of reporting incidents to the Environment Agency was explained by the Clerk and that each house in Weston on the Green should have received a leaflet detailing how to report it and to record incidents on the form and return it to the Clerk.

The chair of the Parish Council has also spoken to the owner of the chicken farm, Mr Wilcox and he is helping to move things forward.

19.9 Report from: Women's Institute - Ann Holt

Ann Holt, the current president of Weston's WI informed the meeting that the group meets in the village hall on the third Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm and the meeting is open for any female over 14 years old.

Meetings in the past year included talks on 'Orient Adventures', Sulgrave Manor, 'A window into Bicester's architectural history' and 'I Went to a Wedding in Delhi'.

Last year in August they visited the Manor at Upper Slaughter with their other halves and hope to go to the Red Lion pub in Islip to play skittles this year. They are also hoping to organise talks on Dogs for the Blind, a children's book author and The Falklands.

The WI collated a 'Welcome to Weston' document providing information for new arrivals in the village. Robin Stafford Allen organises distribution on behalf of the WI, please contact him on 01869 350464 if you wish to obtain an electronic/paper copy.

19.10 Report from: School Field Group – Nigel Birks

An outline timeline for the School Field Group was presented to provide an overview of information so far:

June 2017 Weston Front 2 formed in response to news that Lagan homes had acquired School Field together with Eristoun (which has been rented since then).

Objective – to act as catalyst for organised collection of data and arguments in preparation for fighting expected imminent planning proposal. To organise raising of funds expected to be needed for professional (mainly legal) advice.

To mid-2018 WF2 regularly met and have collated together the various arguments which might be deployed against a planning application whenever it arrives.

H2 2018 Waiting game, some further writing up work, helping NP group where possible.

Very grateful to Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Group for a significant amount of work to ensure the NP reflected the village's wishes for the School Field and importantly in a way that was compliant with Planning Regulations.

Jan-2019 NP went to public consultation and Lagan Homes employed a professional firm to write an extensive submission on their behalf.
This appeared to have been written in response to a request by Lagan to reserve as large and unfettered a development potential for the School Field as possible. Consequently, it treats the will and ambition of WotG residents for their village as little more than an annoyance by Pegasus.

Feb-2019 WF2 felt that the money invested by Lagan Homes in this response should be treated as a potential warning of imminent application. They therefore decided to call in pledges so it would all be available if e.g. they started to take advice from a barrister. They have so far collected just over £5,000 out of total pledges of about £8,500. If you have made a pledge but not yet paid or would like to make a contribution then please contact Nigel Birks on info@westonfront2.uk

Mar-2019 They are ready if a planning application is submitted.

(Group consists of: Nigel Birks, Julian Russell, Tony Henman, Roger Evans, Yasemin Olcay, Diane Bohm, Susan Daenke, Tuula Itkonen, Vicki Russell, Norman Machin)

A rumour had been heard about a bungalow being purchased on Westlands Avenue to provide access to the school field. Information can be deduced about access through a house from the submission report on the Neighbourhood Plan, however there is no firm information available at present.

There would also be no information if there had been pre consultation discussion with CDC on the field as any discussions would be private.

CDC have been incredibly helpful and helped to tighten up the NP document over this area of Weston.

DB commented that the Parish Council and groups in the village appreciate support from the village regarding different pots of money being put together for areas of concern.

Expenses in the parish have increased to reflect the number of key project currently ongoing in the village including money being put aside for forward planning, traffic issues, training, clerk hour increase and lawyers for various projects.

19.11 Report from: PCC – Eric Bohm

The Church building can accommodate 100 people and for Remembrance Service there were 112 attendees. The Christmas day service was also well attended with 92.

Other highlights this year include the reconvening of the bell ringers, average attendance of 50 people at the Lent Lecture series and the Harvest lunch.

Looking forward some highlights are:

- Easter services (31st March and 19th, 21st, 28th April)
- Increased engagement in the village – electoral role forms distributed to households

- Eggstravaganza at the Manor Hotel, Weston – Sunday 21st April, 11am-4pm
- Festival of Church mice – Saturday 11th May, 10am-4pm
- Feeding the Faithful - 1st June, an awayday
- Race night – Saturday June 15th, 7pm
- Ceilidh – TBC September / October 2019

Lawnmower and strimmer volunteers are always needed, please contact Eric Bohm on 01869 352006 / ericbohm12@gmail.com

The meeting Closed at 9.30pm

If you wish to find out any further information, please either visit the following websites:

Parish Council: <http://www.westononthegreen-pc.gov.uk>

Weston on the Green Village Hall: <http://www.wotg.org.uk/>

Weston on the Green Neighbourhood Plan: <https://www.wotgneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/>

Expressway Group: <http://no-way-expressway.uk/index.html>

School Field Group: <https://westonfront2.uk/index.html>

or email the Parish Clerk on: clerk@westononthegreen-pc.gov.uk