



Winnersh Parish Council

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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 12 MAY 2009 IN THE JOHN GROBLER ROOM

PRESENT: Cllrs J Southgate (Chairman), M Armstrong, P Bray, E Cooke, D Hunt, D Jupp, J Peffers, J Plant, J Wakefield and J Wilkins

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr P Helliard-Symons – Mayor, WBC; PCSO Nellie Williams; 8 members of the public; Mr C Hudson (WPC Clerk).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs W Clark, J Grimson, E Siggery; Pat Rowell.
Representatives of Wokingham & District CAB, Winnersh Rangers FC, Relate Berkshire.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2008 were agreed and the meeting **RESOLVED** to sign them as a true record.

3 ADDRESS BY CLLR PAULINE HELLIAR-SYMONS, MAYOR, WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL (WBC)

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Helliard-Symons and thanked her for agreeing to address the meeting.

Cllr Helliard-Symons gave a speech during which she gave an overview of her year as Mayor. She summarised the role of the Mayor, including the formal functions as the '1st Citizen' of Wokingham and Chair of the WBC Council meetings. Her other roles included being able to represent the Borough to the people, to say thank you to the many volunteers within the Borough, and to strengthen WBC's relationship with the voluntary and business sectors.

Cllr Helliar-Symons then gave examples of the visits and meetings throughout the year. These examples included the swearing in of the High Sheriff and supper with the Bishop of Reading and visits to schools and children's groups. Cllr Helliar-Symons spoke of the occasions when she had encouraged children and new British Citizens to value their freedom and to vote when they had the opportunity. She spoke of the Mayor's Commendation Awards and the two Mayor's Charities – the LINK Scheme and the Life Education Scheme.

Cllr Helliar-Symons summarised the amount of time spent representing the Borough during her year in office and concluded by commending the articulate and caring youth of the Borough and thanking the volunteers, parish councillors included, for their work. "The Community is better for you".

Cllr Southgate thanked Cllr Helliar-Symons and invited questions from the floor.

4 ANNUAL REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr Southgate gave a report as per Appendix 1.

5 REPORT OF THE BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

WBC Cllrs Armstrong and Bray gave reports as per Appendix 2.

6 REPORT ON THE WINNERSH FUEL ALLOTMENT TRUST

6.1 Cllr Bray, as a trustee of WFAT, presented the following report:

The Fuel Allotment Trust continues to rent out land off Old Forest Road, and to use the proceeds to provide some financial help at Christmas for some of the least well-off residents of Winnersh

During the year, the trust welcomed Roberta Tweedy as a new trustee.

Bill Clark stood down as chairman of the trust during the year, though he remains a trustee. The trustees would like to thank Bill for all his hard work as chair.

The trust would welcome approaches from individuals wishing to become trustees or to put forward the names of people who might benefit from the work of the trust.

6.2 Cllr Southgate reiterated Cllr Bray's message about the difficulty in finding people who need help and encouraged councillors to let the trustees or the Council know of any people in need.

7 CIVIC AWARD PRESENTATION

7.1 The Chairman informed the meeting that Mrs Bridget Graham was to be the recipient of the Civic Award 2009 for her work in Guiding, particularly amongst the Rainbow group of 5/7 year old girls in Winnersh.

The Chairman presented a certificate and flowers and photographs were taken.

Mrs Graham thanked the Council for her award. She commented that she has lived in Winnersh for 30 years and it does have a sense of identity. She meets people and knows many of the children and parents.

8 PUBLIC SESSION

- 8.1** PCSO Nellie Williams of Thames Valley Police introduced herself as the new PCSO. She explained a zero tolerance towards parking offences and indicated that anti-social behaviour has been going down. PCSO Williams handed out her business cards and invited councillors and the public to contact her. She thanked the people of Winnersh for their warm welcome

The meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.

APPENDIX 1

Winnersh Parish Council Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12 May 2009

This year Winnersh Parish Council has built on the previous year's work to provide a greater degree of community leadership in several ways:

- by organising community events
- by improving communications within the community
- by defining some longer term objectives
- and by working more closely with local groups to encourage community involvement

A highlight of the year was the Winnersh Village Fete, the first for over 35 years. The glorious weather certainly helped – but the success was due primarily to the work of the 40+ local groups and businesses who ran stalls and performed in the arena, and to the 1200+ people, mostly from the local community, who attended the fete. Thanks go especially to Judith Wilkins and Bill Clark who led the organisation of the fete and to all the others who made it happen on the day.

At Christmas we held the second “Lighting Up” event, which the Mayor kindly attended, presented awards and pulled the “virtual switch”. Malcolm Armstrong launched the fireworks afterwards and thanks go to him, his team, and the choirs from Bearwood and Winnersh Primary Schools for an excellent event; also to the Rainbow Centre and Sainsbury's for the refreshments.

We also ran two “litter picks”, the first in October with the Winnersh NAG as a direct result of local concerns about litter, and the second last month in conjunction with the Big Tidy-Up Campaign organised throughout the Borough.

The parish magazine, *Winnersh Matters*, was only published once during the year, but had an extra insert giving a colour montage of the fete day.

A new Winnersh Parish Website was launched in March, giving information about the parish, the Council and local organisations and events, and has been well received. So far there have been over 500 visits and I would encourage you all to have a look, promote it to your neighbours and maybe even contribute!

In March we also agreed a Strategic Aims document to guide our longer term work and this will be regularly reviewed to keep us focused on practical and pragmatic measures to improve life in the parish.

We have been pleased to support other organisations that are taking the initiative to organise local activities, in particular the Winnersh NAG, the Rainbow Centre and the fledgling Winnersh Community Partnership.

The R&A Committee has continued to work of the refurbishment of the Community Hall which is now complete, the last phase covering the toilet and corridor areas.

With a grant of nearly £50k from the Big Lottery Fund, the Committee has been able to extend the equipment on the Bearwood Recreation Ground to provide activities accessible to children of all abilities, provide more 'challenging experiences' for them and make it one of the best such facilities in the borough, with children and parents coming from a wide area to make use of it.

Thanks to Jill Plant and the other members of the Committee for these projects as well as for the ongoing management of the other Council facilities, including the allotments which have again seen marked improvement in both their cultivation and tidiness. The third year of the allotment competition was again very successful with an even higher standard reported by our judge, Les Moody.

The Community Hall continues to be used for a wide variety of activities and is heavily booked through the week. Winnersh Rangers Football Club also continues its success with relays of teams using the pitches here very fully at the weekends as well as for training on weekdays throughout the football season.

The Planning Committee has had a relatively quiet year with a very marked reduction in planning applications of all kinds, but especially the larger, more contentious ones and there has been a successful handover of the chairmanship of the Committee from David Jupp to John Grimson. We have again seen flooding severely disrupting road travel to the surrounding area and this will continue to be a primary concern for the Committee. The largest development in the area is that of the Winnersh Triangle business park which is progressing to schedule.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee has played its very essential role of preparing the annual budgets and monitoring income and expenditure through the year. The Committee also administers the Council's donations to organisations with clear local involvement including Readibus, Keep Mobile, Wokingham Citizen's Advice Bureau, Wokingham Job Support Centre, the local churches, Bearwood Primary School and several others.

We lost one Councillor during the year. Neil Sefton resigned because he has moved to Pembrokeshire and I would like to especially thank him for all his work for the Council, especially as chairman of the Planning Committee. We still have one vacancy for a Councillor.

Our relatively new Clerk, Clive Hudson, and Finance & Administration Officer, Sylvie de Groote, have both made great progress in mastering the intricacies of the day-to-day management of the Council. My thanks to both of them for all their hard work in keeping the Council running smoothly and to all the Parish Councillors for their work and support throughout the year.

John Southgate
Chairman, Winnersh Parish Council

APPENDIX 2

Report of Borough Councillors to the Winnersh Annual Parish Meeting

Wokingham Borough Councillor's Report – Prue Bray

A number of significant events have occurred at the borough council this year. The council had £5 million invested in Icelandic Banks – it now appears that the majority of this money will eventually be recovered, but around £1 million may be lost. The council was also one of 9 authorities found to be 'inadequate' in safeguarding children – a great deal of effort is being put in to rectify this situation. The Audit Commission Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the Council reduced it from a 3-star – which it had always been before - to a 2-star authority, putting it in the bottom quarter of councils.

To look more closely at matters affecting the parish, there has been a considerable slow-down in the number of planning applications for new houses in Winnersh and Sindlesham. Revised plans have not yet been submitted for the Hatch Farm Dairies site, although I understand that discussions are underway with the Environment Agency on the developer's revised proposed flood mitigation scheme. The Council's Core Strategy, setting the pattern of housing development until 2026, has recently been through its Examination in Public, and we await the Inspector's report later in the year. Although the Core Strategy itself does not envisage large numbers of houses being built in Winnersh, 1500 homes are planned for the Emmbrook area, and there will be considerable traffic impact locally. The Core Strategy assumes that the Winnersh relief road will be built.

Despite considerable effort, little progress has been made on flooding issues. The borough council has refused to repair the drain in Wedderburn Close that floods the parking area and the front gardens of several properties, and, despite agreeing in November to funding some measures to help Sylvester Close, no scheme has yet been devised.

Again, despite considerable effort on the part of a large number of people, of which I am just one, there is still no news as to whether the borough council will release the money for the construction of the reception area for the Children's Centre at Rainbow Park. This is a project which had reached the point of going out to tender in October before being halted.

During the year I have also been a member of the Winnersh Neighbourhood Action Group, the Tenant Participation Panel (which looks at issues affecting council tenants, including those in Winnersh) and the Winnersh Project Management Board (centred on Rainbow Park), and have participated in hedge-planting in Winnersh Meadows, and the borough-wide litter pick, and have dealt with a large number of problems and queries on behalf of individual residents, covering everything from Council Tax to speeding.

I contacted Cllr Alistair Auty about the Children's Centre money, as he is the Deputy Executive member who has been looking at Children's Centres, and have received an encouraging reply from him this morning, that says he is now working on sorting out the issue.

Prue Bray

Wokingham Borough Councillor's Report – Malcolm Armstrong

Cllr Armstrong reiterated the financial problems faced by the Borough in 2008/9 and the greater need for prudence in finance. The management of services must be tighter. The year has seen the restructuring of the Council and the launch of the Wokingham Direct call centre.

In Winnersh the flooding near the crossroads and the extra weight of traffic have been concerns. There has been lots of positive news about Winnersh youngsters and their involvement in community activities.

Cllr Armstrong has served on the Health Select Committee and has seen an increase in mental health concerns within the Borough. Generally, Wokingham is extremely fit and is well served by health professionals despite the financial strictures.