

MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of RIPLEY held on

THURSDAY 30th APRIL 2015 at ST MARY MAGDALEN CHURCH ROOM at 1930hrs

Present:

Cllr Jennie Cliff Chairperson
Cllr Richard Ayears
Cllr Colin Cross
Cllr Caspar Hancock
Cllr Lisanne Mealing
Cllr Suzie Powell-Cullingford
Jim Morris Clerk of the Council

34 Members of Public

Refreshments were served as people arrived.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Vernon Wood.

2. WELCOME

Councillor Cliff welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was gratifying to see so many members of the public in attendance. The evening's speakers, Mrs Millis, Mr Best, Mr Hill, Mr Sheikh, and Mr Hogg, were welcomed, as were The Horsleys County Councillor Bill Barker and Helen Jeffries, who was Guildford Greenbelt Group's candidate for Lovelace Ward in the forthcoming Borough Council elections.

3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 29th MAY 2014

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Ripley held on 29th May 2014, were received, confirmed and signed as a true and correct record by the Chairperson, Councillor Jennie Cliff.

4. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Councillor Cliff presented the annual report of the Parish Council to the meeting, having been Chairman of the Parish Council from 2014-15.

"This has been an exceptionally busy year for your parish council team. We sadly said goodbye as Alison Jones retired from the role of Clerk, and perhaps the incomer, Jim Morris, has sometimes wondered just what will hit him next. Welcome, Jim, and thanks for coping with so many different aspects of the job, and learning very quickly where to turn if we need help.

"We have become involved with even more village organisations as the year has passed, and offer congratulations to those celebrating milestones. The Over 60s club is 60 years old this year, and is run by a caring committee. Edna Millis, their Chairman, will be telling us more later this evening. The school first put on a pantomime 40 years ago and this is now an important part of Ripley's calendar. We trust that the planned new village hall will have good 'am dram' facilities, since the panto people are thinking of instigating an amateur dramatics group in the village. The monthly Farmers' Market is celebrating 10 years of trading this year. Their June market will mark this achievement. The Bonfire Committee is clocking up 60 years of managing their event, which is looked forward to county-wide. They are generously sharing their celebrations, by holding a bring-your-own picnic, with a beacon and live music to be held on The Green on 20th June. Watch out for details so that you don't miss it.

"We are working more closely with local sports clubs, both established and new, and sadly have to report that they received no grants from the RideLondon bike race, despite being encouraged to submit application forms. Just what has to be written to be successful remains a mystery. We are pleased to see the bowls club working so hard on establishing premises, obtaining grants, oh yes and enjoying the game, and offer them assurance that we'll continue to support them, particularly with links with Guildford Borough Council if we are able.

"We recognise the efforts of all who manage the Village Hall, and the committee responsible for the new hall project. The parish council is now more closely involved with this project, and will be contacting every household with information about raising funds for the building.

"I'll move on now to outlining some of the major projects which your parish council has been leading. We have recently revamped the children's playground, which enabled us to forge closer links with our primary school, as I visited some assemblies to tell the children about the plans. We are now getting some quotes for a small skate ramp in the same area. We thank the Rotarians for their kind donation which allowed us to refurbish the old bus shelter. We all found the constant delays quite frustrating, but are pleased with the new look.

"The most exciting ongoing project for us is the development of the Nature Reserve at the rear of West End Cottages. The land has been cleared, and we have a group of councillors and other who are busily working on plans to make this a quiet, dog-free area, and introduce a pond, walkway, bird watching facilities, access to (hopefully) the new 'green' Burial Ground and through to the existing churchyard. 'Enthusiasm' is a keyword for this group, and if you'd like to become involved please contact Jim at the parish office.

"The village is fortunate in that its Parish Council is a hard-working group with a real diversity of talents. As Chairman, I'd like to applaud the hard work of each member through the past year, and thank everyone for the time spent at all the various committee and working group meetings. From now on we are to have a Planning & Environment Committee, a Finance Committee, a Communication & Liaison Committee, and a Leisure & Facilities Committee. We hope that all aspects of village life will fit into this reorganisation. We also work on the Christmas Event Committee, and are involved in the development of the Lovelace Neighbourhood Plan. The Chair's role of these committees is taken by other parishioners. All these meetings provide a good base for discussions at our formal monthly Parish Council meetings, and help us to be a well-informed, well-prepared council. Thanks are due to our hard-working county and borough councillors, especially as our community is under the threat of a disproportional development planned for the former Wisley Airfield.

"I don't want to end on a negative note; we are a parish with a huge amount to be thankful for, and continuing hard work and enthusiasm will carry us forward and from strength to strength."

5. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM PARISHIONERS

Parishioners were invited to ask questions of the Parish Council.

a) Cllr Barker asked Mr David Ruddy to say a few words to the meeting. Mr Ruddy was running in the forthcoming Parish Council elections.

Mr Ruddy introduced himself to the meeting and gave some information on his background. He was proud to live in the village and raise children here. If he were elected, he hoped to bring a fresh outlook to the Parish Council.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Ruddy for speaking.

b) A local resident raised a question over whether parking would be available at a redeveloped Village Hall.

Cllr Hancock suggested that Mr Phil Paul, as chairperson of the Village Hall Trustees, may like to respond.

Mr Paul agreed that there were concerns over the amount of parking available. The Borough had insisted that the Village Hall was aiming to provide more parking than necessary.

c) Jackie Bruder mentioned the island crossing which had been installed in the road outside the Village Hall. It was an improvement, but users still felt vulnerable when using the island.

Cllr Powell-Cullingford acknowledged the speed of motorists through the village. It was not uncommon to find speeds of over 60mph at the Jovial Sailor on Portsmouth Road. She had had some success in lowering the speed limit through their village. The Horsleys Cllr Barker mentioned the possibility of reinstating the Community Speedwatch initiative. The issue of road safety would be placed on a future Parish Council Agenda.

The Chairperson thanked all the participants and introduced the next item.

6. SPEECHES: "CELEBRATING LOCAL INSTITUTIONS"

The Chairperson invited Mrs Edna Millis to speak on the Ripley Over 60s Club.

In an attempt to clarify the exact age of the Over 60s Club, a search of Mrs Millis's loft had turned up a newspaper clipping from the Surrey Advertiser dated 1953. Describing the "newly formed" Over 60s Club, the piece noted 140 members from Ripley, Ockham, Wisley, and Send Marsh, and that the new club fell under the jurisdiction of the Red Cross. The club then was a lifeline to its many members.

The club currently had 50 members paying an annual subscription of £5, who met on the 1st Saturday of the month at the Village Hall. Entertainment was provided by local talent, with tea, a raffle, and transport home provided if necessary. The annual event of Easter Egg painting attracted 55 high quality entries in 2015 and a trophy had been presented. Before the Bowls Club took over duties in 2014, the Over 60s had run the pig & lamb stall at the Bonfire for 30 years. Benson's Funfair had often donated raffle prizes and gifts for the club's annual Christmas dinner, and the Bonfire Committee's support was acknowledged. The Over 60s Club could not thank the Bonfire Committee enough, for it was felt that they would not exist without their support.

Edna Millis received a vigorous round of applause for her speech. The Chairperson thanked Mrs Millis for her most informative and interesting talk and introduced Mr Steve Hill who, as the designated Safety Officer, was representing the Bonfire Committee.

Steve began by congratulating the Over 60s Club on its longevity and affirmed that it earned every penny of the annual donation it received from the Bonfire. A brief history of the Bonfire was given. Steve's father, the late Mr Ron Hill, had remembered the Bonfire being held at least as far back as 1926. The Bonfire then had consisted of a ring of gorse and bracken scrub around a pile of household rubbish. At some point in the late 1920s the bonfire had burnt down before the event. Another stack was created at the top of the pond dip and this became the location of Bonfires in future years. The Bonfire procession in 1932 included a glider from World War 1. Benson's Funfair had first attended in the 1940s or 50s. Village elders had requested a road closure for the event, but had been rebuffed due to clashing with several other local events. This had led to the Bonfire being held on the last Saturday of October, and the date had stuck. Ripley Bonfire Association was formed in 1955.

The event had been threatened in the mid-1990s by a change to national policing policy. A meeting was held with local police and the highways authority and thankfully common sense prevailed. Building the Bonfire now took place over 4 weeks every year and each time used 2,000 pallets in a 20 x 20 x 20 stack. In recent years the Air Ambulance, Woking Hospice, Blood runners, and Ripley Christmas lights have all benefitted from Bonfire Association donations along with many local organisations. The Bonfire Association thrived on gaining new volunteers and was always open to new members.

Steve Hill received an enthusiastic round of applause for his speech. The Chairperson thanked Mr Hill for his entertaining talk and wished the Bonfire Committee all the best for this year's event. Mr Abbas Sheikh was introduced, who was representing Ripley Cricket Club.

Abbas began by thanking the treasurer, and all the members and volunteers, who all worked hard to ensure that the Cricket Club remained a popular local institution. The Cricket Club had many young members and also sent mentors out to local primary schools. Annual trips to The Oval were organised in order to instil a love of cricket in local young people. The Cricket Club thrived on attracting new, young members. With funding from the English Cricket Board and Surrey Cricket, Ripley was enabled to provide cricket lessons and competitive events.

Ripley Cricket Club was established in 1749, although Google gives the date as being 1742, and it has always been very much a village club. For context, Captain Cook had been born in 1728, and had landed in Botany Bay in 1770. Around 160,000 convicts had been sent to the Australian colony, and these days they came and told us how to play cricket.

Up to fifty young people attended colts night at the Cricket Club on Friday evenings throughout summertime. The high standard of coaching ensured that the club had some robust youth coming through. Last season saw all three adult teams win promotion to a higher league, and there could be no doubt that Ripley Cricket Club could look forward to a further 263 years.

Abbas Sheikh received an exuberant round of applause for his speech. The Chairperson thanked Mr Sheikh for his captivating talk and wished the Cricket Club all the very best for the year's forthcoming season. Mr Keith Best was introduced, who was representing Ripley Bowling Club.

Keith began by detailing the Bowling Club's inception in 1989. The club were without a green or any facilities and so began 'short mat' bowling, which dated back to 1967. In 1990, Ripley became a founder member of the Surrey/ Hampshire/ Berkshire league and also the Surrey Short Mat Association. Twenty four games were scheduled for the coming season.

In recent times, Lady Griffiths had donated a piece of land in Rose Lane to the Bowling Club. The land was choked with scrub, barbed wire, and brambles, but had been cleared by dedicated members to the extent that the new green had been laid in December 2014. Contractors had now vacated the site and handed over to the Bowling Club, but it was still two years until the surface would be bowlable.

The club had received grants from Guildford Borough Council, Surrey Playing Fields, and the Bonfire Association, along with private donations of equipment and funds. When Hersham Bowling Club had unfortunately folded, they had offered Ripley all their equipment, which had been gratefully received. The club also raised funds and awareness through running stalls at village events. The short mat game had blossomed in recent years, and many local clubs had commented on Ripley's 'relaxed and friendly' approach. The club were partaking in 6 different leagues, including the top division of the Surrey/ Hampshire/ Berkshire league, and so could welcome players of all abilities. The club had one player who was registered blind, yet had taken to the game with a good deal of competence. Open evenings were often held, and prospective players of all ages and abilities were most welcome.

Keith Best received an earnest round of applause for his speech. The Chairperson thanked Mr Best for his compelling talk and wished Ripley Bowling Club good luck for the future. Ripley Parish Council would try and help the club wherever possible. Mr Jamie Hogg was introduced, who was representing the Ripley Pantomime.

Promising to keep his speech brief, Jamie described how he had enthusiastically directed the Ripley Pantomime for the previous 10 years. The shortened word 'panto' was derived from the Greek 'pantomimos', which were plays depicting stories of haves and have nots, with elements of evil, romance, comedy, and slapstick thrown in to add to the entertainment. Productions at Ripley were strictly amateur affairs, designed to entertain an audience as well as the cast themselves. The long and close association with the primary school ensured a flow of funds in one direction and a flow of new cast members in the other.

Ending with an impassioned plea to any attendees in the room representing the Village Hall, Jamie asked that a redeveloped Village Hall must include a fore stage in order for the panto to continue. Over 40 years approximately 200 performances had taken place, and there could be no doubt that the ongoing success of the panto helped act as a social glue in the local community.

Jamie Hogg received a sustained round of applause for his speech. The Chairperson thanked Mr Hogg for his impassioned talk and wished the Ripley Pantomime a long and continuing era of success in the village and a continued home in a redeveloped Village Hall.

The Chairperson thanked all the evening's speakers and all attendees. It had been a wonderful and informative evening and gratifying to see so many people taking an interest in village affairs.

The meeting closed at 2110hrs.

Signed:

Date: