

## **Westfield Annual Parish Meeting**

### **Minutes of the Westfield Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2012 at 7pm at the Westfield Methodist Church Hall**

Present:: Cllr Rob Appleyard, Chair of the Parish Council and Councillor for Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) Council, in the Chair.

Cllr Robin Moss, Westfield Parish Councillor and Bath and North East Somerset Councillor.

Parish Councillors: Cllrs Anne Clarke, Geoff Fuller, Ted Pack, Sheena Russell, Bryan Wallbridge and Phil Wilkinson.

22 Members of the public

Attending: Lesley Welch, Parish Clerk

#### **1. Welcome and Overview of the Year**

Cllr Rob Appleyard, Chair of Westfield Parish Council, welcomed everyone to the first Annual Parish Meeting for the people of Westfield and was delighted at the turn out. This had been a difficult start for Westfield Parish Council, formed as a result of a government reorganisation which was initiated two years ago.

In this its first year the Council has looked to establish stability and focus. It has concentrated on making this a good community in which to live. It had not been easy on many fronts, many of them financial. Only three of the eleven Councillors elected last May had Council experience. The Chairman paid tribute to Chris Cray a founding Member of the Council, who will be missed by many people. His influence was recognised and appreciated by the Council.

Earlier this year the Council co-opted Cllr Bryan Wallbridge.

The Council operates the Finance and Personnel Committee and Environment and Development Committee. In terms of vision the Council is working for the community with a living Christmas Tree and Jubilee Green being established to create a central focus which it is hoped will develop over the years.

A Parish Plan has been initiated and it is hoped that more people will become involved in this project which should take about 2 years to come to fruition. The resulting Plan will state the objectives of the Parish and how they will be delivered. The Plan is a living document which will be re-visited due to the accelerated rate of change in this Parish brought about by new housing and a possible new superstore. There was a plea for more people to be involved in the Working Group and they were asked to make contact through the Parish Council office.

It is the vision of the Council to be in a self-sustaining position in terms of its accommodation. At the start of the year the Council was located at Victoria Hall, Radstock. It is now at the Oval Office in Cobblers Way, which is a cost effective option. However it has the opportunity to respond to the possibility of s.106 funding earmarked for employment purposes. To this end the Parish Council is investigating the creation of an employment hub. This would include a purpose built Parish Council office and a civic presence in terms of a community hall, offering office accommodation to local businesses. It is expected this would have a positive impact on future precepts.

## **2. Finance**

The Chairman introduced Cllr Robin Moss, Chair of the Parish Council's Finance and Personnel Committee. Cllr Moss outlined an interesting year where the main challenge had been to bring the year in on budget. The budget, inherited for its first year of operation, had not included office accommodation, a Parish Clerk or cash flow reserves. The Council inherited four grounds staff to deliver services across Westfield, Radstock and Midsomer Norton, together with two Trust Grounds. In its first few months it secured office accommodation at the Oval Office in Westfield and recruited a Parish Clerk.

An Outside Services Task Group from Westfield, Radstock and Midsomer Norton looked at the future arrangements for delivering outside services and as a result Westfield now contracts out its outside services to Bath and North East Somerset Council, providing a quality service at a much cheaper rate.

For the current financial year the Finance and Personnel Committee has built up a budget which it feels is reasonable and sensible. It has made financial provision to invest in the local community for projects and schemes in Westfield. It has started to build up a cash flow reserve to equate to 3 months net revenue expenditure.

The Committee is now looking at how it can provide office accommodation in Westfield on a self-sustaining basis. Cllr Moss thanked his fellow Councillors, particularly his Vice Chair Cllr Phil Wilkinson, for all their work in putting together the framework for a budget which should last until 2015 and beyond.

### **3. Environment and Development in Westfield**

Cllr Appleyard outlined the aspirations of the Parish Council's Environment and Development Committee to make Westfield a better place in terms of flowers, planting, planning issues etc.

Earlier this year Westfield Parish Council took on a lease from Bath and North East Somerset for the allotments at Waterford Park. Westfield Allotment and Garden Society (WAGS) has been set up to manage the site and, of the 16 general plots, all but two have been worked already. At the front of the site are raised beds for individuals and organisations for people with disabilities.

The allotments have been shortlisted for a Prince of Wales Award, with judges visiting the site on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. WAGS is not expecting an Award but a pat on the back for the work so far on efforts relating to sustainability would be welcome.

Local people will have seen new brackets going up outside the local shops and Methodist Church. An automatic watering system is to be installed shortly and hanging baskets will go up for a quality flower display in Westfield.

An appeal was made to local residents to become involved in the In Bloom competition, This is about the community improving its own area and if anyone can adopt a piece of land to plant up with flowers please contact either Cllr Robin Moss or Rob Appleyard as the BANES Councillors.

In terms of planning, the Parish Council does not decide planning applications, but is a statutory consultee. The public can therefore make its comments directly to BANES and is also welcome to feed comments through to the Parish Council for consideration in its formal response to BANES.

### **4. Questions from the Public**

**How was this meeting advertised, and was a representative from Sainsburys invited?**

The meeting was advertised via the Journal and also the Westfield Warbler which has recently been delivered to all households in Westfield. A representative from Sainsburys was not invited. Sainsburys is holding

its own consultation meetings, the dates of which will be publicised and residents will be able to comment in writing or on line.

**Can the A367 cope with traffic if a new Sainsburys is built?**

Traffic concerns are one of the items raised by Cllrs Appleyard and Moss at their meeting with Sainsburys and also by the Environment and Development Committee at its last meeting. When the Planning Application is submitted everyone will have the opportunity to comment on line or by letter. 13 weeks is the normal consultation period. There will be specific consultation with Highways, Green Spaces, Education and a key concern is about the traffic. Cllrs Moss and Appleyard have also spoken to local traders for their first thoughts. If, once the initial consultation by Sainsburys is over and a planning application is submitted, there appears to be a need for a public meeting, then the Parish Council will facilitate such a meeting.

There were comments that for those without transport a supermarket in the area would be lovely. There were concerns about the noise of traffic and deliveries on local houses.

**There is a lovely green area at Upper Court off Cobblers Way, can they have a gate to allow access to the back of Norton Hill Recreation Ground?**

This will be passed to Environment and Development Committee to investigate and progress.

**Could there be a bin put in at the green area in Upper Court?**

This request would be put to BANES via the BANES Councillors.

**There has been a commendable start to the new Jubilee Green, however will the Council commit to litter picking?**

Cllr Hamilton is looking to arrange a community litter pick and many Councillors will give their time freely to this initiative and hope the community will take part.

**Is there going to be a community noticeboard?**

BANES Councillors are allocated a sum of money each year for funding in the Parish. From this funding there is going to be a triple windowed noticeboard built at Jubilee Green (opposite the local shops) with one third for the community, one third for Parish Council notices and a third for BANES.

**There are no litter or dog bins on the new cycle path. Can this be addressed?**

This will be referred to the Parish Council's Environment and Development Committee.

**The bins on the Pit Path are not being emptied and the area is becoming disgusting.**

The lower Pith Path is in the remit of BANES and the upper Pit Path is not allocated to any organisation. However BANES is looking at taking responsibility for the Upper Pit Path as a designated cycle path and bins would then come under its jurisdiction.

**Work has stopped on the building of homes in the road off Bryants Avenue, residents have put up with the mud and inconvenience of the works for so long, when will it finish?**

Somer Housing is in discussion with the local builder - the work is almost finished but a challenge to the builder is causing a delay. It is indeed a frustrating situation. The resulting development will be 27 homes for local people.

**Has building started behind the blue boardings on Fosseyway?**

Work has indeed started. This is to be a small convenience store – originally with flats on top but these have now been taken out as all car parking spaces are needed for shoppers.

**Is the Radco in Westfield?**

Yes, the Chairman outlined the Parish boundary.

**Council vehicles are parked in the car park at Norton Hill Pavilion. How long will they be there?**

These are Westfield Parish Council assets and the Finance and Personnel Committee is making a decision relating to the vehicles at its meeting on Monday.

**Who updates the Westfield Parish Council website?**

This is undertaken by administrative staff in the office. It was set up by the Locum Clerk in order to have an immediate presence on the web. Westfield Parish Council is looking for a site with more scope and will be launching a new website shortly. Please let the Parish Council know if there is anything in particular you would like to see on the website. The Chair thanked the Parish Council staff for all their support.

### **Why was the Westfield Warbler delivered so late?**

This is in fact the second re-print of the Westfield Warbler. The first was delivered in error by the distributors to the wrong part of Bath. Once the Parish Council was aware it arranged a re-print and re-delivery, hence the delay.

The next Westfield Warbler will be the June edition and the lead article will be the Fun Day which takes place at Westhill Recreation Ground on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

### **Why is there so little news about Westfield in the Journal and the Somerset Guardian?**

The Parish Council writes press releases but does not want to get embroiled in the rows on the letter pages. The Parish Council has a policy whereby all news releases go out through the office. The focus is on concentrating on the work in hand and doing the best for the community.

### **Is there a chance of getting a 20mph limit on the A367 through Westfield?**

The 2014/15 BANES budget has allocated funds towards making side roads off main roads 20mph. It is unlikely that they can do this on the main roads but they try to maintain awareness at key areas such as Westfield Primary School.

### **Can anything be done about the potholes, particularly on the road by the Centurion Hotel?**

Up to a couple of months ago this road was owned half by Mendip Council and half by BANES. It is now owned fully by BANES and later this year will be resurfaced, with road markings outside St Benedict's School.

### **Is it possible for the Councillors to identify themselves and, next time, sit at the front?**

All Councillors, wearing identifying badges, stepped to the front for introduction by the Chair. Cllr Appleyard mentioned that he is stepping down from the Chair in May in order to take on another role.

### **Since the Wednesday afternoon club folded, are there clubs for the elderly in Westfield?**

A member of the public mentioned a Thursday afternoon club. A show of hands showed that there was an appetite for a return of the OAP's Christmas parties.

The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking residents for the good turnout and hoped to see them next year.

There was a round of applause. The meeting closed at 8.15pm.