

BISHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Barry Malki
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Minutes of Bisham Annual Parish Meeting 18th April 2019

Public Forum

One member of the Public asked why we took out the large tree in the centre of the Orchard. AK explained about the Arboriculturist's report.

One member of the Public suggested carving the stump into a totem.

One member of the Public suggested that Bisham enter a Best Kept Village award. MRB suggested that there may be a local/borough level competition to enter.

One member of the Public asked about the Parish Council's involvement in the bridleway works along the A404. AK explained that the idea had originally been posited by BPC several years ago, but the project was being entirely driven by Highways England and their contractor, Kier. MRB reported that the Maidenhead Advertiser had suggested that the bridleway in question was to form part of a larger looped path.

One member of the Public drew the Council's attention to the existence of a Slate Fence along the footpath and asked if it was being protected. AK reported that the fence isn't affected by the works.

One member of the Public asked about the future of Bisham Roundabout. AK said there had been no developments.

One member of the Public reported that there were cameras monitoring traffic along the A404.

One member of the Public said they were pleased at the parking control measures put in place by Bisham Abbey but felt that there weren't enough spaces for the level of visitors.

1) Welcome

Cllr Alan Keene (Chair) formally opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

2) Apologies

None

3) Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 2018

Cllr Keene presented the minutes from the previous annual meeting.

4) Chair's Report

["Your Parish Council has continued to work for the benefit of the community on many fronts, including our own initiatives and liaison with a number of external bodies. There](#)

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continue to be some unrealistic expectations about what it is possible for a small parish council to achieve, and we share frustrations about disappointing progress in some areas.

We have reviewed seventy-eight planning applications during the year. We examine each one in detail, and welcome input from residents, so that we are properly equipped to comment on issues that we believe the Local Authority should address. We pay particular attention to matters that affect the two Conservation Areas in the Parish. We opposed the demolition of a well-known and much-loved building in the Bisham Conservation Area, and our objection was upheld by the Borough. Unfortunately a subsequent application to change an important aspect of the same building was approved, and we are concerned that this could pave the way for eventual complete loss of this heritage asset. Following news from the Borough that they have no resources to update the Bisham Conservation Area Statement in the foreseeable future, we secured their approval, at senior officer and member level, to undertake our own update and to use specially ringfenced funds to do this. We engaged a local consultant, Sheila Featherstone-Clark, to undertake the work, only to then be told that the planning officers had changed their minds and after all we would not be allowed to produce a document that would carry any weight in planning terms. However we decided to proceed regardless, with the intention of creating a reference document for our own use when considering planning issues in the Village. A worryingly large number of unresolved planning issues remain outstanding and we continue to press the Authority for answers to these on an ongoing basis.

There are similar problems with the general state of the highways around the Parish, in terms of surface repairs, litter and dumped rubbish, overgrown footpaths and missing signage. A positive development was the decision to go ahead with the creation of a multi-user link between Hurley Lane and Bradenham Lane alongside the A404. The Parish Council had been pressing for the creation of this missing link in the local access network for many years. What was originally envisaged as an informal path making its way through the existing tree belt has turned into a surprisingly elaborate project, but we are hopeful that the outcome will be satisfactory and will afford pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists a safe and enjoyable off-road route.

We were saddened by the death in November of Councillor Margaret Cubley who had served the Council for many years. This left the Council with only five members to share the ever-increasing workload. We could have tried to co-opt a new member at the time but instead we decided that as the local elections were imminent we would wait for the full democratic process to take place. More about the local elections later. We are grateful to Zia Cooke for volunteering to be the Bisham representative on the governing body of the Brinkhurst charity which administers the Oxford road Almshouses. There has not been a meeting of the governors since Zia was appointed to this position, so I understand that she is not in a position to make a report tonight.

The Council is now in possession of two defibrillators which are scheduled to be installed in the redundant phone boxes in Bisham and in Temple on May 1st. These will be accessible by

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anybody in the event of an emergency, but if you are interested in training in their use, please contact us. The phone box in Bisham currently contains a collection of books which appear to be part of an informal book-swap initiative. These will have to be moved in order to install the defibrillator. There is no reason why the book-swap club can not continue alongside it, so it is important that we contact the person who organises the club to make plans for how to arrange the box so that it can accommodate both uses. If anybody can help to identify this person we would be grateful if they could contact us before the end of the month.

The Council has been involved with the other parishes and the Borough in the creation of a Parish Charter which is intended to improve liaison between the different bodies. We continue to develop our Corporate Governance standards with the introduction of a formal procurement policy to ensure complete transparency when we place contracts for supply of goods and services. Our thanks are due to our Clerk, Barry Malki, for his guidance and hard work in these matters. Barry has also created a plan for ongoing inspection and maintenance of the trees in the various areas under our control, and we have undertaken extensive works to trees, with the required planning permissions of course, to keep them healthy and safe. Unfortunately large amounts of rubbish have been dumped on the Parish land, and in The Orchard in particular, and disposal of this has resulted in considerable expense for the Council.

Our new flagpole has been used to mark some of the important state occasions when the Union Flag is flown. We have now purchased a Berkshire flag which will fly over the Orchard for most of the time, and a national flag which will appear on St George's day. We hope that these flags help to brighten the entrance to Bisham Village for residents and visitors alike. At Christmas we decorated the trees in The Orchard with lights, which together with lights at other points through the village provided by residents, made an attractive festive scene. We have also provided some new benches in Bisham and in Burchetts Green.

Our thanks are due to Bisham Abbey for providing this venue and refreshments free of charge."

MRB thanked Cllr Keene for his year of Chairmanship.

5) Financial Report

BM gave an update on Bisham Parish Council's 18-19 financial year. BPC started the year with £17,437 and ended the year with £12,962. The goal is to maintain a surplus of £20,000, and the reason for the shortfall, was due to the significant amount of money spent of remedial tree maintenance and expert advice.

6) Election Update

"Your councillors have long been concerned that the shortage of candidates coming forward in previous years has resulted in uncontested elections and a lack of democracy. So we took the unusual step of writing to every address in the Parish to inform residents about the

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forthcoming elections in the hope of attracting enough candidates to trigger a proper election. This generated some enquiries but unfortunately only one new person actually decided to stand for election. He is Ged Wylie and we are most grateful to him for coming forward to serve the Parish. We are losing Iain Steadman who is having to cope with ever-increasing work demands and who has contributed substantially to our work and especially to the Neighbourhood Plan and Conservation Area initiatives. The remaining four of us have served for very many years and felt that it may be time to take a break. If we had done this, and not stood for election, it is unlikely that the Parish Council would have continued to exist, with only one member. We all decided to carry on, but unfortunately we are still in a position where we are below strength. We have three representatives from Burchetts Green, but no residents of Bisham Village or Temple, which is very disappointing. We will have to co-opt a new member again, and I urge you all to consider coming forward to join the Council. It has been suggested that the Parish Council is a closed group but nothing could be further from the truth. We disagree on many issues but once a democratic decision has been made we support it regardless. We need your support. Please let us know if you think you may be able to give up some of your time for the benefit of your community.”

7) Neighbourhood Plan/Conservation Statement

AK gave an update on the Conservation Statement, covering the issues experienced with RBWM. The Conservation statement is going ahead with a local consultant in place, although this will not be formally adopted by RBWM.

8) Parish Council Branding

BM presented a series of options for a Bisham Parish Council Logo, which local residents discussed. The consensus was that a logo should feature an element of Bisham Abbey and the River. The Parish Council will take this forward.

9) Guest Speaker

Richard Poad of Maidenhead Heritage Centre gave a speech looking at the history of marital scandals that had happened in the area.