

# **BRAISHFIELD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 1998**

**at Braishfield Village Hall**

1. 25 parishioners attended.

Parish Councillors - Mrs M Balchin, T Howkins, A Lalonde, M Prince, Ms P Saunders,

Borough Councillor - Councillor M Hatley

County Councillor - Councillor A Dowden

2. The Chairman of the Parish Council, Andrew Lalonde welcomed those present to the meeting and introduced the members of the Parish Council and the representatives of the Borough and County Councils.
3. It was moved and agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on the 17th April 1997 be signed by the Chairman of the Parish Council as a correct record.
4. The Chairman introduced PC Dick Swain, the local Beat Officer for the Parish. He reported on the Braishfield Neighbourhood Watch scheme which he considered to be operating at a base level and sought additional co-ordinators in the Crook Hill and Pucknall areas. PC Swain outlined the operation of the scheme which encouraged villagers to report incidents to their local Beat Officers and to circulate crime information between co-ordinators throughout the area. Only one crime had been reported for the Braishfield area in the previous year. Reference was also made to new traffic signs and to a reduction in the number of road traffic accidents since their introduction at the Jermyns Lane/Braishfield Road crossroads. A spate of vandalism in the village had occurred in recent months. This was being monitored and was not increasing. Allegations of drug abuse had also been investigated although there was no evidence to support this. PC Swain answered questions from the floor and concluded by referring to new legislation which would allow the Police to issue fixed penalty tickets to cyclists who rode without lights.
5. Mr and Mrs Gardiner, proprietors of the village shop, attended the meeting. Mr Gardiner confirmed that the Post Office would close on the 31st May although the shop would continue. Decreasing turnover however and simple economics would eventually force the shop's closure. Test Valley Borough Council had introduced a scheme which resulted in the payment of lower Council Tax but Mr Gardiner commented that this would be insufficient to maintain its operation. Reference was made to a current planning application which would see conversion of the shop to residential accommodation and this had been objected to by the Parish Council on the grounds that the shop was an essential service to the village. Mr Gardiner, however, felt that from the current level of use the shop could not be considered to provide an essential service. The parishioners present indicated that they would encourage efforts to

increase patronage of the local village shop.

6. Andrew Lalonde, outlined the work of the Council during the year. This included discussions with Michelmersh Parish Council and Hampshire County Council about the use of land at Casbrook Common for a recycling plant. Representations and a meeting with the County Surveyor had resulted in improved signing and surfacing at the Braishfield Road/Sandy Lane/Jermyns Lane junction. Other highway concerns had been notified to the Area Surveyor during the year including damaged road surfaces, pavements, broken signs and blocked drainage ditches. The Parish Council's representative on the Twinning Committee had helped organise successful twinning events to resurrect the links with Crouay and the Council had made a grant of £365 towards a total of £3,500 for improvements to the village hall kitchen. Discussions had been held with the Football Club about their ongoing use of the Recreation Ground and contributions towards upkeep and a contribution of £420 had been made to the Braishfield church for churchyard maintenance.
7. County Council representative Alan Dowden spoke about the County Structure Plan which had originally provided for an additional 44,000 homes in Hampshire. Subsequent recommendations from a panel appointed by the previous Secretary of State had recommended that the County should provide 56,000 although more recent comments from the current Deputy Prime Minister could lead to this number being reduced to the original 44,000. Councillor Dowden also referred to his work on the Southampton Area Transportation Panel of which he was Chairman and to his service on the County Social Services Committee. This year's County budget had been set at £737 million which included a 5.7% increase for education.
8. Martin Hatley, Test Valley Borough Council's representative reported that despite a 5% increase the Borough's Council Tax was still the lowest in Hampshire. The Council had needed to make cuts in staffing but was maintaining services. He also referred to Braishfield's precept which was one of the lowest in the Borough at only £9.25 per head. Councillor Hatley also referred to the successful operation of the wheeled bin collection scheme and the increase in recycling which meant that less refuse was disposed of at landfill sites and lower tax bills. The Borough Council were currently looking at transferring their Council houses to a Housing Association and he referred to Test Valley's grant to the Braishfield Village Hall.
9. Andrew Lalonde invited questions from the floor and several matters were raised including the success of cycleways introduced in the Romsey area and the provision of additional land for a burial ground which had been made possible by a grant from the Church Commissioners.
10. Andrew Lalonde concluded the evening by thanking the Guest Speaker for his attendance and to the help afforded to the Parish Council during the year by Councillors Hatley and Dowden and the local residents and organisations who had assisted with local tasks.