

BRAISHFIELD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting held at the Village Hall, Braishfield
on Tuesday 2nd April 2002 at 8.00pm

1. PRESENT

Parish Councillors - Ms P Saunders, M Edwards, M Prince, A Lalonde
Mrs M Payne, A Light
County Councillor - Councillor A Dowden
Borough Councillor - Councillor M Hatley

9 Parishioners

Apologies were received from Mrs Sue Ransom

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 3rd April 2001 were agreed.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

After welcoming everyone, the Chairman of the Parish Council, Andrew Lalonde, presented his report on the year's activities covering the following matters:

Andrew Lalonde and Mike Prince were elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively for the year and that Meryl Balchin resigned as Parish Councillor with Alan Light being co-opted on to the Council in her place. All villagers were welcome to attend Council meetings on the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm.

On planning matters, the garage site had been given permission for houses and a small business unit. The Village Design Statement had been completed and was due to be adopted by TVBC very shortly. The Council recorded its appreciation of the work done by all those involved in the preparation of the VDS. The Council monitored all planning applications and was concerned about the effects of planning decisions on traffic particularly along Dores Lane where the verges were being badly damaged by lorries.

The Council also monitored the state of the roads and reported problems to the Area Surveyor. It was hoped that some form of limited safety measures would be introduced to slow traffic along Braishfield Road.

The Council maintained the Recreation Ground and had recently been offered a £12000 grant towards refurbishment of the pond.

The Council arranged for the refurbishment of the old style fingerposts and grants have been given to the School for its extension and to the PCC for churchyard maintenance.

The precept for the coming year has been set at £9000 which is £28.21 for a Band D property in Braishfield.

The Clerk presented a draft Receipts and Payments account for the year 2001/2 and invited comments. The Clerk also reported on the forthcoming audit changes in which the Audit Commission was intending to introduce a 'lighter' touch system.

4. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

In his report, Alan Dowden congratulated the Parish for the production of the Braishfield Village Design Statement. He said that Hampshire County Council was responsible for the provision of important services to 1.2m people and it was the responsibility of County Councillors to see that these services were delivered in an open and cost effective way. This was not easy owing to there being three different political points of view. There was a new constitution of Executive Portfolio Holders making most of the decisions and Policy Review Committees carrying out a scrutinising role and making recommendations to the Executive members.

All members, except for the Executive members were totally dissatisfied with the new system as they felt they were disenfranchised.

The Council tax for Hampshire was due to rise by 7.9%. After Government grants, £27.9m had to be found resulting in a Band D tax of £734. The Council tax amounted to 34% of overall HCC expenditure. Additionally the Police Authority precept which was added to the final Council tax bill would rise by a massive 27.3%.

At the local level, Alan Dowden was happy to support the School extension and hoped the warning lights are still working satisfactorily.

A planning green paper had been issued by HMG with the claimed intention of having a faster and fairer system with community interests at its heart! HCC supported the streamlining of the system but was concerned about development plans being abolished.

5. BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Martin Hatley said that he had enjoyed attending PC meetings for the past seven years and was now involved in the new structure at TVBC. This was a cabinet-style arrangement which was working satisfactorily but he preferred the old system.

He described the membership of the planning committees which were generally too large but all Councillors wanted to be on them, so nobody appeared to be happy. He reported on the Abbotswood proposal which was for 500+ houses but now the whole of Test Valley South was to have 500 houses so fewer would be at Abbotswood.

Martin supported the changes to the garage site in Braishfield and thanked all those involved in the Braishfield VDS. He said that it was encouraging that the inspector at the Chapel Works appeal had asked about the VDS even though it had not yet been adopted.

Test Valley Borough Council had the lowest Council Tax in Hampshire.

6. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

a) Care for the elderly

Concern was expressed at the massive closure rate of old people's homes owing to the raising of standards and the lack of money to implement them. One possible solution was to have a different form of ownership which would permit larger grants to be obtained.

b) Highway maintenance

The view was expressed that as companies located at, for example, Pucknall Farm were paying business rates then some of this should be used to repair the damage caused to Dores Lane by the ensuing traffic. There was a general concern at the state of the roads in Hampshire. It was, however, pointed out that business rates went directly to central government and not the local authorities.

c) Village Design Statement

After adoption of the VDS as Supplementary planning guidance by TVBC, it was asked what assurance would there be that it would be used and that applications would be judged against it. Both Alan Dowden and Martin Hatley said that it would be taken into account by TVBC but that it was *supplementary* to the Borough Local Plan.

d) Recycling bins

The recycling bins adjacent to the village hall caused damage to the car park during the emptying process and were being moved from that location. The collection of bottles was also very noisy and suggestions were made about the use of more sound-proof bins or doorstep collection. Recycling targets are being increased and are to exceed 40%.

e) Noticeboards

Concern was expressed at the amount of fly-pasting on telegraph poles around the village and it was suggested that 'proper' noticeboards should be installed around the village. These would cost in the region of £150-£300 each. Martin Hatley said there were a number in Ampfield and it required someone to look after them to remove old notices.

f) Village shop

There was a general discussion on the village shop and the possible location for it.