

BRAISHFIELD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting held at the Village Hall, Braishfield
on Tuesday 1st April 2008 at 8.00pm

1. PRESENT

Parish Councillors - Mike Prince (Chairman)
Andrew Lalonde
Kate Marshall
Dorothy Ross
Carole Renvoize
Mike Edwards

County Councillor - Alan Dowden

Borough Councillor - Martin Hatley

About 16 Parishioners

Apologies for absence were received from Simon Palmer

2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 3rd April 2007 were agreed.

3. PRESENTATION BY LYNNE DADLEY - AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

The guest speaker was Lynne Dadley of the Hampshire & IOW Air Ambulance Service. She explained that this was a registered charity formed in 2004 which started flying in 2007. The Government declined to fund it via the NHS, maintaining that the land service is adequate. However, in Scotland the NHS does provide the funds. Hampshire is the 23rd County to have a service.

The helicopter is leased from Bond and the NHS provides six paramedics. Access to the service is via 999 with the call centre deciding whether or not to call out the helicopter. So far there have been 551 flights which have taken casualties to the nearest A& E. It takes a maximum of 17 minutes to reach a mainland Hampshire site and 23 for the Isle of Wight. It is 10 minutes back to a hospital. The service is based at Thruxton away from the Southampton airspace but it does not operate at night. The £65000 a month costs are covered from an extensive fundraising activity.

Lynne Dadley was thanked very much for her talk and was invited to pass the collection box round all those present.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The following is the written report given to the Meeting by Mike Prince, Chairman of the Parish Council:

2007 was an election year which produced a number of changes on the Parish Council owing to the retirement of Sue Ransom, Jean Lowe and Alan Light. I would like to thank the retiring Councillors for their valuable contributions to the work of the Parish Council. In fact there was no election as such on 3rd May because there were just seven nominations for the seven vacant Councillor positions. So we welcomed Carole Renvoize, Simon Palmer and Dorothy Ross as 'new' Councillors who joined Andrew Lalonde, Mike Prince, Mike Edwards and Kate Marshall as 're-elected' Councillors, all unopposed.

At the Annual General Meeting on 10th May 2007 Andrew Lalonde and Mike Prince were elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively. However, Andrew Lalonde resigned as Chairman in

November, but remains on the Council, being replaced by Mike Prince. Mike Edwards moved up to Vice Chairman. We would all like to thank Andrew Lalonde for his contribution to the Parish Council for many years. In fact he was Clerk to the Council in the 1970s and was co-opted on to the Council in 1993 before becoming Chairman in 1995.

The Parish Council has met regularly throughout the year and meets at 7pm on the first Tuesday of each month except August. Residents of the village are very welcome and encouraged to attend. There is an open discussion period at the end of each meeting when any relevant matter may be aired.

PLANNING

The Parish Council monitors all planning applications in the village, as well as in nearby industrial areas such as Bunny Lane and Yokesford Hill, and comments on them where it thinks fit. There have been 29 planning applications in the past year, together with several notifications to do tree works in the Conservation Area. The number of planning applications was a slight drop on the 35 of the previous year. The Parish Council takes into account the effects that the proposals may have on the adjoining properties and on the village as a whole both in the short and long terms. It also takes into account the Borough Local Plan, the Braishfield Village Design Statement and the Conservation Area status.

Applications this year worthy of particular note affecting the whole of the village were those at Fairbournes Farm and at Upper Slackstead Farm. There was an open meeting on 17th April 2007 to discuss the Fairbournes application for 7 dwellings and other buildings. The meeting was attended by a representative of the architects. A show of hands indicated a majority in support of the application but the Parish Council and Test Valley Borough Council had a number of significant concerns. These led to the withdrawal of the application but further developments can be expected.

The application at Upper Slackstead Farm, which actually in the Parish of Hursley, was for a 300kw generator burning fuel imported by lorry past the school and along the winding lanes through Pucknall and Slackstead. The Parish Council made a strong objection, but was not permitted to speak at the meeting, and the application has recently been given approval with conditions about the timing of lorry movements.

An application for the development at Abbotswood has now been received. The Parish Council's copy was too large to be sent by post and had to be collected by car! The Council has not yet considered this application.

Hampshire County Council has carried out a housing survey on the need for affordable housing. This recommends the construction of a group of affordable homes in Braishfield but leaves the problem of finding a site to the Parish Council. The Council has not yet considered the report.

HIGHWAYS AND ROAD SAFETY

This year has seen Braishfield included in the Village 30 plan with a proposal to reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph along Braishfield Road from the top of Crook Hill along to the School. The proposal has been advertised and the closing date for comments has passed. A decision by Hampshire County Council is expected shortly. The point about traffic along this stretch of road to the School was used to no avail in the Council's objection to the generating plant at Upper Slackstead Farm.

The Council has agreed to purchase one of those battery-powered signs which alerts speeding motorists to the error of their ways. This will be purchased in conjunction with Ampfield PC and the unit will be moved around different locations on a regular basis.

The Parish Council has continued to report numerous defects in the highway to the Assistant Chief Engineer.

RECREATION GROUND and WAR MEMORIAL

As usual, the Recreation Ground has required maintenance, some of which is done by willing villagers and the Football Club. The Council has been in contact with the Charity Commission concerning the construction of a new pavilion. As things stand, the Recreation Ground Trust Deed forbids the Football Club from doing this, but the Charity Commission will consider a change to the Deed providing the Football Club agrees some difficult conditions. The Council has made no decision on this but one possibility is for the Council to take a lead role and act as Landlord to the Club.

The Playground is looking a little tired and consideration has been given to replacing it. Designs are being looked at, and a meeting was held with the children on the school council last week to get input from a child view, and sources of funding are being identified.

The Council is responsible for the War Memorial and has placed an order for cleaning. It is also increasing the insurance value to £32,000.

PARISH COUNCIL

As Chairman for the past five months I would like to thank the Councillors and Clerk, John Rhodes, for the work they put into the successful running of the Council and to Councillors Dowden and Hatley for their contributions and help. The Parish Council has continued to be supported by the Braishfield Village Association and this is much appreciated.

PRECEPT

The Parish Council precept for the coming year is £10,000, the first rise (from £9000) for seven years. The make-up of the 2008/9 Council Tax for a Band D property in Braishfield is as follows, with 2007/8 figures in brackets:

	2008/9	(2007/8)	change
Hampshire County Council	999.00	(955.62)	4.54%
Hampshire Police Authority	135.54	(125.37)	8.11%
Hampshire Fire & Rescue	58.23	(56.07)	3.85%
Test Valley Borough Council	113.31	(108.45)	4.48%
Braishfield Parish Council	29.59	(26.71)	10.78%
TOTAL	1335.67	(1272.22)	4.98%

For comparison purposes, the Band D Council Tax in 1999/2000 was £753.29.

5. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

The following is the written report submitted to the Meeting by Alan Dowden, County Councillor:

Hampshire County Council Tax will rise by 4.5% from April this year. The Leader told the Council that the rise was necessary to meet inflation costs, the increasing demand for services and the requirements of changing legislation.

My group put forward a Council Tax rise of just 3.5%, this was sufficient to provide a balanced budget and still provide enough finance to prevent further cuts to services.

I am the opposition Spokesperson for Adult Social Care and therefore a prominent member of the Safe & Healthy People Select Committee. Last year I placed the following motion at the County Council 'While Hampshire County Council fully supports Lord Ashley's Disabled Persons (Independent Living) Bill, it

writes to the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, to ask that government takes on the sponsorship of the Bill and extends its scope to cover vulnerable groups in society including frail, elderly people whose numbers are growing, allocates sufficient Parliamentary time to it and funds to implement its provisions.' The motion was supported unanimously.

I am pleased to have been appointed as a panel member of the Hampshire Commission. We will listen to evidence from various sources and produce a report to government in order to influence and inform the Government's Green Paper on personalised care due to be published this Autumn.

Previous consultations have shown that people want access to support when they need it and they expect it to be available to them quickly, easily and fit into their lives. They also want adult social care services to make provision for a range of needs, with a greater focus on using preventative approaches to promote people's independence & wellbeing. The emphasis should be on enablement and early intervention to promote independence rather than involvement at the point of crisis, within the framework of Fair Access to Care Services.

It will not be an easy task, with growing numbers requiring care and limited resources, but personalised care with individual budgets could be a better and more cost effective way of achieving improved outcomes.

The County Council have agreed to provide 400 Extra Care sheltered housing places. This will be part of a new generation of housing support and care that will offer older people the safety of care and support available on site where they live, 24 hours a day, according to people's assessed needs. This allows independence, something that most people value. I have strongly supported the County Council to pursue these aims.

Thirteen billion plastic bags are used across the UK each year and most of them end up in landfill. In an attempt to partly address this I have placed the following motion before Hampshire Full Council and it will be debated at the full council meeting on 3rd April. 'That Hampshire County Council contact all major supermarket chains in Hampshire with a view of persuading them to switch over to the use of bio degradable/compostable shopping bags as soon as is practicable.'

The Government have given the green light for the £200million street lighting private finance initiative (PFI). The contract will be awarded in the autumn of 2009. All street lighting in Hampshire, installed prior to 1990, will be replaced within five years.

From April a new highways contract has been awarded to Amey to provide maintenance of 5,280 miles of Hampshire's roads & footways. It will run until 2015 with an option to extend it until 2018.

Extensions to the 30mph speed limits have been proposed within the Parish of Braishfield. It appears from correspondence that there are differing views. Some parishioners object to further extensions of speed limitations and others support. This will create a problem for me on whether I support the proposals. It is a different situation in Ampfeld where local residents feel the restrictions do not extend far enough.

My objection to the planning application for 3 Biomass Generators at Upper Slackstead Farm, Braishfield was on various grounds: Some are listed below:

(1) The application was not in accordance with planning policy. It should have only have been permitted if it falls within one of the exceptions to the prohibition against development in the countryside. It does not. The unattractive grain drier building does not fall within the policies permitting the re-use of buildings.

(2) The application would present significant highway safety issues.

(3) The application does not adduce effective evidence that any noise pollution will be eradicated to an acceptable level. It was a disappointment that Hampshire County Council's Regulatory Committee gave permission for this proposal.

I have been the County Councillor for the Baddesley Division, which includes Braishfield, since January 1992. I have seen many changes during this time and the work is both varied and enjoyable. I look forward to continuing to work for all the residents within my division.

6. BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

The following is the written report submitted to the Meeting by Martin Hatley:

This May I will have completed my 13th. year as your Borough Councillor. During the last year I continued as Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport. It is in these two roles I represent Test Valley Borough Council at meetings of PUSH (Partnership for Urban Southern Hampshire).

As reported last year, I was successful in robustly defending Southern Test Valley's corner against suggestions from other Councils that there should be a major development of between 6,000 and 10,000 houses on a Greenfield site in the Romsey area. These were to be in addition to the extra 3,910 dwellings now imposed upon us by Central Government and to be built over the next 20 years, in Southern Test Valley. Although Braishfield, as far as PUSH is concerned is Northern Test Valley (!), up to 800 of these houses are due to be built just down the road at Abbotswood (the Local Plan Inspectors increased the figure from the 500 proposed by TVBC to 800). The Abbotswood site was first highlighted for development by the Local Plan Inspector in 1996.

I have lobbied for effective traffic improvements, at various junctions, to be funded by this development, especially either end of Jermyns Lane. An enhanced junction and repositioning of the bus stop is now proposed for the A3090 junction, and a new 'lozenge' shaped roundabout is planned for the Sandy Lane crossroads.

The original suggestion from the Highways Authority was for traffic lights, however the feed back I received from Braishfield residents clearly, and understandably, was strongly against this urban intrusion into the countryside. I contacted the developers who agreed to investigate alternative solutions. Their consultants came up with a more in keeping roundabout. The lozenge shape has been designed especially for the particular circumstances of these crossroads and will not need illuminating, which was another concern of residents.

Another frequent request is for a footpath from these crossroads to join up with the existing path by Crook Hill. It is a nasty route at the best of times and obviously even more dangerous for children to use during the dark evenings. As there is no requirement for a school to be built at Abbotswood, it is likely that some of the parents will want to send their children to the excellent Braishfield School. Again I spoke with the developers who agreed with me there was a need for such a path to provide a safe route to the school. I am pleased to report that they have agreed to fund a footpath/cycleway from Sandy Lane, down Crook Hill to link up with the existing path.

Speeding within the Parish is still an issue. Although speed limits are not a Borough Council responsibility, several residents, both for and against the suggested extension of the 30 mph, have contacted me. It is quite clear that whatever view they have, they all genuinely share similar road safety

aims, i.e. that the speed of the traffic approaching the school should be effectively reduced. It is just they have different theories as to how this can be achieved. I am also closely monitoring the proposed junction improvements at either end of Jermyns Lane and will be keeping your Parish Council fully informed during my regular visits.

Although Braishfield itself looks to be 'safe' from large scale housing development until at least 2026, occasionally the odd windfall building plot comes forward. There has been quite a strong local feeling expressed to me that Braishfield, and indeed many other villages, has a shortage of smaller properties suitable for the young, and those not so young who wish to downsize. Subject to planning policy guidelines and the individual merits of each site, I believe it would be healthy, if any new properties are to be built in the village, to consider first the possibility and suitability of smaller dwellings. In the absence of a Braishfield Village Plan, I would be interested to hear what villagers think about this suggestion. My contact details are given below.

Finally, the Borough's Council Tax at £113.31 for a Band D property remains one of the lowest in the Country. The 4.48% increase (or just 9p per week) has been achieved by a combination of efficiency savings of £466,000, reduction in the number of employment posts and prudent management. Yet again Central Government has required the Borough to provide more services and functions without the associated funding being granted e.g. the new national bus farepass scheme for all over 60's is being significantly under funded by them. To cover the extra costs we have increased our total budget for concessionary travel by £390,000 to £1.2 million.

Without these extra pressures, the same services we intend to provide over the next year could have been achieved with more than a 5% cut in the Council Tax. This year's tough and woefully inadequate government grant settlement was especially hard for Test Valley as it has suffered for the last eleven years from grant settlements which have failed to keep pace with inflation.

7. OPEN FORUM

In the open forum there was considerable discussion on the Slackstead generator decision and the fact that Parish Councils are not allowed to make representations to the HCC Committee. Apparently there were only seven HCC Councillors in attendance during the decision to approve the application. Alan Dowden criticised the HCC development plan which allowed such a development. There was concern about lorries passing the School when accessing the Slackstead site.

Mention was made of the proposed speed limit and the possibility of a footpath being created using Section 106 funds from the Abbotswood site.

The need for some affordable housing was discussed in connection with the first-time and last-time buyer syndrome.

At the close of the meeting, Mike Prince thanked everyone for attending.