

# **BRAISHFIELD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

Minutes of the Meeting held at the Village Hall, Braishfield  
on Tuesday 5th May 2009 at 8.00pm

## **1. PRESENT**

Parish Councillors - Mike Prince (Chairman)  
Dorothy Ross  
Carole Renvoize  
Mike Edwards  
Simon Palmer

County Councillor - Alan Dowden  
Borough Councillor - Martin Hatley  
7 Parishioners

Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Lalonde and Kate Marshall

## **2 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 1st April 2008 were agreed.

## **3. PRESENTATION BY INSPECTOR JAQUELINE WILLSON - ROMSEY POLICE**

The guest speaker was Inspector Jaqueline Willson, the new head of Romsey Police. She explained that previously her job had been based in Lyndhurst looking at Police performance in respect of crime, particularly in the Southampton area. It was a change to come back to core policing from dealing with facts and figures.

The main problem with crime in the Romsey area is with shed break-ins where garden tools are stolen but the Police does have a list of known offenders. Such tools are insecure and are rarely labelled. There is also theft from motor vehicles with three recent incidents in Mottisfont. People are watched when leaving their cars when, for example, they put a handbag in the boot.

It is intended to make changes with neighbourhood policing as the beat Officer has a large area to manage. The change will include providing a PCSO for Parishes such as Braishfield. Beat reports will be issued monthly and can be received by email.

More emphasis will be placed on traffic offences and extra money has been provided for speed enforcement vehicles. However, this activity is not her responsibility.

Beat managers will work with Schools where there are problems but dedicated School's Officers are only provided at problem Schools.

After questions from the audience, Mike Prince thanked Inspector Willson for her talk.

## **4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

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

At the Annual General Meeting on 6 May 2008 Mike Prince and Mike Edwards were re-elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively.

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 15 planning applications in the past year, together with several notifications to do tree works in the Conservation Area. This number of planning applications was a very significant drop on the 29 of the previous year and the 35 for the year before that. Indeed, there have been very few applications so far in 2009.

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 Abbotswood.

After a number of attempts, planning permission was given to the construction of a number of dwellings and agricultural buildings on the Fairbournes Farm site. The work includes the renovation of the listed buildings. Test Valley Borough Council also gave outline planning permission for the 800+ houses on the former gravel extraction site at Abbotswood. This includes a large number of 'affordable' houses. There will be a roundabout at the Sandy lane crossroads and it is hoped that a footpath from Abbotswood into Braishfield will be included in the surrounding works.

Advance notification of an application to install electricity generators at the Ace Liftaway site in Yokesford Hill has been received. These will be powered by the mountain of wood collecting on the site. From a planning point of view, the major issue appears to be the size and height of the stockpiles of material on the site resulting from the decrease in space caused by the installation of the plant.

The Council has noted that BKP in Bunny Lane has gone into administration but appears to be operating normally at the moment.

Hampshire County Council carried out a housing survey on the need for affordable housing in 2007. This recommends the construction of a group of affordable homes in Braishfield and Community Action Hampshire is considering where some might be located.

## **HIGHWAYS AND ROAD SAFETY**

The 30mph limit has now been implemented in Braishfield as part of a Countywide plan to reduce speed in villages. They have also been introduced in nearby Ampfield, Belbins and Timsbury.

The Council has purchased one of those battery-powered signs which alerts speeding motorists to the error of their ways. It has been purchased in conjunction with Ampfield PC and is being moved around different locations on a regular basis. Its first placement in Braishfield was opposite the Megana Way entrance.

The Parish Council has continued to report numerous defects in the highway to the Assistant Chief Engineer with increasing despair. While the County blames the recent weather for the state of the highways, it is quite evident that resources are not keeping up with the weight and amount of traffic on the

roads. Furthermore, repairs are being carried out on a temporary basis. Temporary repairs are often being carried out to temporary repairs.

The Council made a very strong complaint to Hampshire County Council about the state of Bunny Lane and works to improve the verges are being carried out.

### **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.

Designs for a new playground have been considered and grant applications have been made. Test Valley Borough Council has agreed to give the Parish a grant, but more is required from other sources.

The Braishfield Village Association is working on a plan in conjunction with the Parish Council and interested parties to install a fitness trail on the Recreation Ground, similar to but smaller than the one on the Kings Somborne Recreation Ground.

The Council is responsible for the War Memorial and has organised the replacement of one of the stones which had cracked and also for the repointing of all the joints. The Memorial now looks very smart and fittingly so to mark the 90th anniversary of the end of the First World War.

### **PARISH COUNCIL**

As Chairman 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 remains at £10,000. The make-up of the 2009/10 Council Tax for a Band D property in Braishfield is as follows, with 2008/9 figures in brackets:

	2009/10	(2008/9)	change
Hampshire County Council	1018.17	(999.00)	1.9%
Hampshire Police Authority	142.11	(135.54)	4.8%
Hampshire Fire & Rescue	60.30	(58.23)	3.6%
Test Valley Borough Council	118.44	(113.31)	4.5%
Braishfield Parish Council	29.67	(29.59)	0.27%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1368.69</b>	<b>(1335.67)</b>	<b>2.47%</b>

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's Council Tax will rise by 1.9% the lowest for many years. This will raise the Band "D" Hampshire County Council tax to £1018.17p.

The opposition members put forward a budget that involved no increase in Council Tax at all, by proposing to reduce the huge Public Relations spend at the County and taking some money from the £83 million of reserves the County hold.

We are all facing a challenging economic situation and it is times like this we must cut back on unnecessary expenditure and reduce Council Tax.

As the opposition spokesperson I was pleased to support the increased budget allocation for Adult Social Care of 4.8%, which will be well above inflation for the next financial year.

In November 2008 the Hampshire Commission launched 'Getting Personal' a fair deal for all. The Commission was set up by the Hampshire County Council and it has resulted in recommendations into how the care system, both nationally and locally, could provide a much better and fairer provision of care, offering social justice for all. This document will allow government an opportunity to include some of the recommendations within the government's own Green Paper, intended to manage and improve care for Older Peoples' Services. As one of the Commissioners I have felt it a privilege to have been involved. We listened to and read a huge amount of information provided by national and local organisations and useful evidence was obtained. Many users and carers had the opportunity to express their concerns and inform us, from their own experiences, on how they felt the care system could and should change.

The Commission have recommended that there should be a provision of choice, which offers a 'universal offer' of help and advice for every person with care and support needs, regardless of their financial position. Free social care for up to eight weeks for all those at risk of hospital admission or facing discharge from hospital and in need of support. An increase in the threshold for means-testing from the present £22,500 to £50,000. In addition, the commission recommends replacing the current charging rules with a national resource allocation system. This would compute a net contribution from public funds for each individual after taking account of the means-tested contribution they should make, whilst still leaving scope for some local discretion.

It has been a testing winter for the Hampshire Highways Department. They have dealt with extreme winter conditions. It is always easy to criticise but officers worked round the clock in an attempt to keep things moving.

The introduction of a 30mph throughout the Braishfield village was difficult because there were differing opinions on the matter. I did support its introduction purely on the grounds of safety, therefore I would hope that most people would support its implementation.

The County elections will take place on June 4th and I hope to retain my position as your County Councillor.

## **6. BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

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

It does not seem possible that it was 14 years ago I first was elected as your Borough Councillor. The main topic at my first Braishfield Parish Council meetings was speed limits within the village - some things do not change!

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 to you before, 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. However, I am now very concerned that Eastleigh Borough Council are apparently attempting to renege on their agreement to accommodate about 6,000 dwellings at Hedge End. If they were to be deleted from Hedge End, then Central Government will require them to be built somewhere else within the PUSH area. I am sure they will not go eastwards along the M27, because Fareham has already agreed to take up to 10,000 houses and the infrastructure just could not cope with such a large number of extra homes. I am also sure there would be attempts made to locate them within Southern Test Valley, but as I said publicly at a recent PUSH meeting, I am determined that this would not happen 'on my watch'!

One piece of good news is that the PUSH area was the only area in the SE Plan where the Secretary of State did not increase the housing numbers required over the next 20 years. Accordingly, the number of houses required in Southern Test Valley remains at 3920, although Andover (not in PUSH) has had an extra 1100 houses imposed on it and which we are objecting to and therefore did not include within our Core Strategy Document.

In Central Government planning terms, Braishfield is not in Southern Test Valley or the PUSH area. Although technically in Northern Test Valley, I fully appreciate that it is the Southern Test Valley allocation that will have most impact on the residents of Braishfield.

Earlier this year, outline permission was granted for up to 800 houses, just down the road at Abbotswood (the Local Plan Inspectors increased the figure by 300). I have lobbied for effective traffic improvements, at various junctions, to be funded by this development, especially either end of Jermyns Lane. As I reported last year, an enhanced junction and repositioning of the bus stop is now proposed for the A3090 junction, and a new 'lozenge' shaped round about has now been accepted for the Sandy Lane crossroads. You may remember that the original suggestion was for traffic lights here. Your Parish Council's objection (and mine!) was seen to be very well founded in that it would have been very undesirable to introduce this proposed urban intrusion into the countryside with its associated street lighting. The new proposals, which I succeeded in getting the developers to design, will not require street lights.

I do remain, however, very concerned with both the number and frequency of accidents along the A3090 at the Jermyns Lane junction and at the Sandy Lane/ Jermyns Lane crossroads. I am lobbying for a 40mph limit to start west of Jermyns Lane on The Straight Mile up to the start of the new 30mph speed limit on Ampfield Hill. Braishfield residents often express their concerns to me about turning right into Jermyns Lane on their way home from Chandlers Ford, Winchester or the M3. I am also closely monitoring the proposed junction improvements at either end of Jermyns Lane with my highways officers.

The Audit Commission has just published an independent review of how district councils use their resources. It shows that Test Valley's results are not only amongst the best in Hampshire but also meet the highest national standards. Overall the council is rated joint 29<sup>th</sup> out of the 238 councils assessed this year. This latest report shows that TVBC is performing well and provides value for money to local taxpayers.

Plans for the shape of future development in Test Valley are in doubt this week after the Government's Inspector examining the Core Strategy for Test Valley to 2026, raised concerns about its form and content. The Borough Council is now considering how to respond to her concerns and minimise the time it will take to address her comments on how to accommodate the development required in the emerging South East Plan. The Council produced full and detailed responses to each of the Inspector's concerns, which focused on the process the Council has used, rather than the outcome. I believe that we have taken all

reasonable steps to follow the Government's extensive advice to planning authorities on how to deliver new development.

I really appreciate all the hard work of the members of the cross-party Planning Advisory Panel and the Council's officers. We have received wide ranging feedback from the community and extensive independent advice, so I am both disappointed and a little puzzled that the Inspector was not satisfied with the case we put forward. Despite this set back, I am confident that we will all be professional enough to work together effectively to resolve the queries that have been raised. Over the next few weeks the Council will review its options for getting the Core Strategy back on track so that the Public Inquiry can take place as soon as possible.

I do not need to tell you that 2008/2009 has been an extraordinary year for the economy. The single largest effect of the recession for the Council has been falling levels of investment income, amounting to a reduction of £1.3m, due to the Bank of England's interest rate cuts over the last five months. The toughest budget round anyone can remember required quick and decisive action to identify unprecedented levels of savings to close a total budget gap that had risen from a manageable £225,300 in the summer to nearly £1.9m. It became clear very early on that in order to meet these targets the size of the organisation would have to be reduced. Some 25 vacant posts will be deleted and some redundancies will regrettably take place over the next few months. However, the impact on frontline services should be minimal.

Finally, a balanced budget has now been produced and the Borough's Council Tax at £118.44 for a Band D property remains one of the lowest in the Country. This has been achieved in spite of the recession and another woefully inadequate government grant settlement which 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.

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