

# **BRAISHFIELD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

Minutes of the Meeting held at the Village Hall, Braishfield  
on Tuesday 7th May 2013 at 8.00pm

## **1. PRESENT**

Parish Councillors - Mike Prince (Chairman)  
Dorothy Ross  
Mike Edwards  
Peter White  
Clive John  
Carole Renvoize

County Councillor - Alan Dowden  
Borough Councillor - Martin Hatley

13 Parishioners

## **2. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 1st May 2012 were agreed.

## **3. PRESENTATION BY INSPECTOR WILLSON - Hampshire Police**

Inspector Willson was accompanied by Sgt Alison West and PCSO Jo Cole.

She said that she has now been in post for four years. The Constabulary has a new Chief who is required to make a 25% cut in budget which would affect staff levels as this accounts for 86% of expenditure. The Romsey front office has been closed but only four or five people a day without appointments used it. Appointments may still be made using 101. There will be no front line staff losses.

Most resources are deployed in Southampton which accounts for 25% of the crime in Hampshire. Fortunately Romsey is in a relatively low crime area. The level dropped by 20% last year and the aim is for another 5%. Romsey has close contact with Southampton Police and special investigations using ANPR reveal most offenders live in Southampton.

Protecting vulnerable people of the community is a large part of the job. The Police is working with Andover and Wiltshire on heating oil thefts which appears to be by people out of County.

The Police are trying to create a hostile environment for criminals in the Romsey area.

PCSO Jo Cole said that she tries to publish a weekly update of local crime which is sent out by email. Vehicles used in thefts are often sold on quickly. There have been 21 or 22 heating oil thefts but the criminals seem to have moved on.

There has been some theft from cars, for example at Ampfield Wood, where criminals appear to wait and observe before making their move.

One Parishioner questioned whether 'stolen' oil had in fact been delivered in the first place.

There was some discussion on the use of speed cameras by the public, but generally this did not find favour.

Mike Prince thanked the Police for their presentation and attending the Meeting.

#### **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 Meeting of the Parish Council on 1st May 2012 Mike Prince and Mike Edwards were re-elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council respectively. Camilla Horton had resigned as a Councillor a few weeks earlier, as mentioned at last year's Meeting, and the Council agreed to appoint Peter White on to the Council. As it happened, Nick Virgo then resigned and the Council appointed Beverley Murtagh to join the Council in his place. I would like to thank Nick Virgo for his contribution to the Council's work.

While on the subject of personnel, the Clerk John Rhodes suffered a very bad car accident in Bunny Lane on the day of the Council Meeting on 4th September. The Council was very fortunate to have Katie Hardy, Clerk to Michelmersh & Timsbury Parish Council, take over the Clerk's job in October and she continues to help out today. I would like to thank her very much for her assistance.

The Parish Council has met regularly throughout the year and meets at 7pm on the first Tuesday of each month except August. However this rule is occasionally modified, particularly as we often have the July Meeting later in the month owing to the lack of a Meeting in August. Residents of the village are very welcome and encouraged to attend Parish Council Meetings. There is an open discussion period at the end of each meeting when any relevant matter may be aired. Villagers may also make presentations about matters such as planning applications at the start of the meeting.

#### **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. 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. The Borough Local Plan is due to be replaced by what is now called the 'revised' Borough Local Plan and the Council has commented on the draft document.

There have been just 12 planning applications considered in the past year, together with a number to do with tree works in the Conservation Area. This number of planning applications is a drop of 12 on the 24 of last year. The figure for the previous was 34, so it appears the recession is biting quite hard. The Council has no objection to most applications, but this year there were very few of significance in the village with which the Council disagreed. Indeed, the only one I would mention is the change of use to residential of Blackthorn House. There was some quite strong objection to the proposal, not least from the Village Hall Management Committee as, amongst other things, the building was intended to be a noise buffer between the Hall and the remainder of Blackthorn Close. However, the application was firmly refused by Test Valley Borough Council, but we have heard in the last few days that the applicant is appealing against the decision.

Outside the village, the refused RFSF Recycling application went to appeal and this was upheld by the Planning Inspector. RFSF have just submitted landscaping plans etc as a discharge of planning conditions.

Raymond Brown has taken over the skip business of BKP in Bunny Lane but we have now heard that they are running down the activity and are concentrating on their Andover site.

As reported last year, the affordable housing project on the land opposite the Wheatsheaf PH has not proceeded as hoped and the Council has now suggested a site adjacent to the Wheatsheaf land, but a design for this is awaited.

### **HIGHWAYS AND POND**

The Parish Council has continued to report numerous defects in the highway to Hampshire Highways. Hampshire County Council has had a particular problem with the weather over last summer and the winter.

There have been numerous water leaks from the old water mains in the village and the Council has complained to Southern Water. We are now in the midst of a major water main replacement programme covering 8.5km of pipe around Braishfield and lasting for much of 2013. Many properties in the area are also being put on to water meters. Strangely, Crook Hill does not appear to be in the programme, yet there have been several water leaks in the area.

The Council has planted a tree at the pond to mark HM Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Also to mark the occasion, a time capsule organised by the Braishfield Village Association has been buried. David Robinson is to be thanked for this and collecting the various items to be loaded into the capsule.

### **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.

Significant progress has been made on the replacement Football Pavilion as the Charity Commission has not only approved an alteration to the Trust Deed which permits the Club to build a pavilion on the Recreation Ground, but also waived the need to have a Surveyor's report describing how a new lease for the pavilion would be in the best interests of the Recreation Ground Charity. Having agreed the Heads of Agreement (ie the main points) of a lease with the Football Club, we are now working on the full lease document. Meanwhile the Football Club has been working hard on the new pavilion which looks much better than the previous one. I note there is a series of photographs on the Club's website showing the transition from old to new. The Club is to be congratulated for the work it has done.

I would also like to congratulate the Jubilee Committee and all those who helped and took part in the very successful Jubilee Celebrations.

Consideration has been given to the replacement of the rather unsatisfactory bark chipping surface in the playground with some form of rubber surface. Katie Hardy has been obtaining quotations and is putting together a grant application for the work.

The Council is Trustee of the War Memorial and carries out maintenance work when necessary. This year we have had the 1939-45 tablet cleaned.

### **PARISH COUNCIL**

As Chairman I would like to thank the Councillors and Clerk, John Rhodes, and acting Clerk, Katie Hardy, 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 has been increased by £500 for the coming year to £10,500. It has been at £10,000 for the past five years and at £9000 for the seven years before that. The make-up of the 2013/14 Council Tax for a Band D property in Braishfield is as follows, with 2012/13 figures in brackets:

	2013/14	2012/13	change
Hampshire County Council	1037.88	(1037.88)	0.0%
Hampshire Police Authority	151.25	(146.25)	3.4%
Hampshire Fire & Rescue	61.38	(61.38)	0.0%
Test Valley Borough Council	126.41	(121.41)	4.1%
Braishfield Parish Council	31.34	(29.33)	6.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1408.26</b>	<b>(1396.25)</b>	<b>0.8%</b>

For comparison purposes, the Band D Council Tax has risen 33.3% in the ten years since 2003/2004, when it was £1056.22. The apparent rise in Parish Precept for a Band D property next year is due partly to the £500 increase and partly to the change in the way the Government manages Council Tax Support.

## **5. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

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

I was first elected to represent the Baddesley division as the County Councillor in January 1992. My long experience at the three levels of local government has enabled me to get things done and helped me work successfully for all my constituents in Ampfield, Braishfield, North Baddesley and Valley Park .

Further reductions in grant settlements were announced by the coalition government in the Autumn 2012 statement and the overall financial position of the County Council for the foreseeable future will be even more difficult. The County Council have put in place an ambitious programme of cost reduction and efficiency measures to bring about savings of £97 million of the targeted £100 million. The County Council will utilise their Grant Equalisation Reserve to help balance the budget over the next two years.

It is good news though that I can report, that the County Council's Council Tax will once again be frozen and will remain at £1037.88p for a Band "D" property. All political groups supported this position that there should be no increase.

As the Adult Social Care Spokesperson I scrutinise and monitor the budget carefully and work closely with the administrations Executive Member in order to secure a balanced budget for the department. I was deeply concerned by the situation of those vulnerable individuals who required two carers to assist them to remain in their own home. They were being charged double amounts of money for their care. I felt that this clearly was an extra tax on disability and I highlighted it and spoke to the Executive Members in regards of this anomaly. I was grateful when the administration listened and then acted to change the situation at the following Full Council.

In the 2013/14 Adult Social Care budget there is an additional £11 million allocated to tackle the rising demand for services from an increasing elderly and frail population.

At the Full Council in November 2012 I placed a motion on "The Future of Social Care" pressing the government to bring forward legislation for urgent reform of the social care system. It gained unanimous support. At a time when finances are so tight finding the right solution is a huge challenge, but early this year the coalition government have announced some changes that they intend to introduce later in 2016.

The key reforms will be:

- A cap of £75K on the amount anyone will have to pay for their care.
- A massive increase in the means tested threshold from £23,250 to £123,000.

This means that more people with modest wealth will get help from the state with the costs of their care. Whilst the measures proposed are not perfect, when these changes are introduced they will be fairer, simpler and more sustainable than the current system.

The grant available for voluntary organisations in 2013/14 was oversubscribed by £600K and many voluntary groups will have had their funding cut by 40% with some being denied funding. I did argue for extra grant funding for the voluntary organisations on the basis that voluntary groups provide excellent value for money to the Hampshire Council Tax payer and should be fully supported and valued, if we are to encourage more volunteering. This time the administration did not support the request and some organisations may fold as a result of these cuts..

As a retired Investment Analyst I have enjoyed being an active member of the Hampshire Pension Fund panel. Over the last few years the fund has grown significantly and the value of the funds invested now amount to £4.1 billion.

The challenge is for the panel to choose the correct fund managers and the areas in which they would like the funds invested. The Panel constantly scrutinise and monitor their investment decisions, in order to gain the maximum returns for the pension scheme. With the economic uncertainty it has not been an easy task in recent times. However, most of the fund managers we have selected have made excellent choices in their investment decisions.

My County Council Community Allowance of £13K has supported grant donations to local voluntary organisations and sports clubs within my Baddesley division.

Highway improvements are an ongoing requirement. With an ever decreasing pot of funding it is a battle against other councillor's demands, to secure improvements. I am pleased I have been able to secure large amounts of funding for major improvements within my division.

I am delighted that out of the six schools within my division, three have been rated by Ofsted as 'Outstanding' with two that are Good and Improving. I serve as a school governor at two local primary schools within my division.

This year there are County elections in May and I hope that I will have the opportunity to continue to serve the best interests of all constituents of the Baddesley division.

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

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

In the 18 years I have been your Borough Councillor, the past year has seen some of the greatest changes, none more so than in planning and local government funding.

### **Planning matters and Draft Revised Local Plan**

I remain Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation. As I reported last year, in January 2012 the Borough published a Draft Core Strategy for Test Valley for consultation. The progress to the next stage, which would have been public consultation on the final draft, has been affected by a number of changes in the planning system – ALL outside the Council's control. Given the importance of these changes I considered it right that we took time to assess the impact of those

changes. The Government produced the final version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012. This established new planning guidance our policies now have to comply with.

The guidance in all the Government's Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes, amounting to several hundred pages and on which the Core Strategy was drafted, have all been deleted and replaced. The emphasis is on a pro growth agenda to help the economy and overcome the shortage of an acceptable home for a large proportion of our population. With the abolition, at long last, of the S.E. Plan in March, the NPPF and the Localism Bill now require us to calculate our own local housing figure but this must be robust and evidence based. Zero is not therefore an option! An important factor is that there are approximately 3,500 local households in Test Valley on our list for social/affordable housing, many of these are young professional people who traditionally would have been home owners by now. Worryingly, the average age of a first time buyer in the Borough is 37.

The changes we have made to the Core Strategy mean that we need to undertake further consultation to afford the public opportunities to comment on the revised document, now called The Local Plan – a better understood name which we are now able to use again. Whilst it may be frustrating to many, I think it is only right that we make sure that those who want to comment on the changes can and that we do not fall foul of any procedural matters. As I said, when we voluntarily asked to withdraw the draft core strategy, I would do all I could to ensure that we produce an evidence based and 'Government Inspector friendly' revised plan. I believe we have achieved this but it is now up to the public to comment.

The first draft consultation ended at 4.30pm on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2013. For details go to Test Valley website or see the plans at our new offices at the Former Romsey Magistrates Court or local library. It is hoped that the final draft Local Plan, which will incorporate any appropriate changes as a result of this recent consultation, will be published for the second round of public consultation in September/October '13. A Deposit Local Plan should be lodged with the Secretary of State in February 2014, with an Enquiry in Public hopefully in April and, subject to the receipt of the Government appointed Inspector's report, the Council is aiming to formally adopt the Local Plan in October 2014.

The Core Strategy covered a 20 year period up to 2031, the new Plan covers a shorter 18 year period up to 2029. This has helped to enable us to reduce the housing requirement for the whole Borough by 2,524 (from 12,550 to 10,026 homes). Specifically, the housing requirement for Northern Test Valley for the plan period has been reduced by 1,734 (from 8,250 to 6,516) and for Southern Test Valley it has been reduced by 790 (from 4,300 to 3,510 homes).

This means that the annual requirement for Southern Test Valley is 195 homes (this is less than the S.E. Plan) and for Northern Test Valley it is 362 (57 more than the S.E. Plan). Although the total number of dwellings has generally been agreed as being the lowest justifiable figure by both political groups on the Borough, the final locations are still subject to much debate.

If the Inspector is not convinced that the housing numbers are evidence based, he can then increase them eg. Winchester's Inspector has recently added 1,500 to their originally submitted number.

There are currently no major allocations for Ampfield or Braishfield. The main major sites proposed are 800 houses currently being built at Abbotswood; 1300 (reduced from 1500) at Whitenap, Romsey Extra; 300 (reduced from 500) at Hoe Lane, North Baddesley; 350 at Nursling and Rownhams and a new housing site of about 75 dwellings is proposed at Stoneham.

It is worth remembering that Southern Test Valley, as far as the Local Plan is concerned, is strictly defined as the 7 parishes of Ampfield, Chilworth, North Baddesley, Nursling and Rownhams, Valley Park, Romsey Town and Romsey Extra. None of the 3,510 homes can be allocated anywhere other than these

parishes. Furthermore, due to space constraints, Romsey Town and Valley Park have virtually no scope to accommodate any more large scale development other than that already accounted for on the Old Brewery site – a sobering thought!

The new Local Plan still includes the local gap that my predecessor Jimmy Wyss and I fought hard to achieve between Ampfield and Braishfield and Valley Park, Chandlers Ford.

One thing that I know your Parish Council is remaining vigilant about is the fact that if the 1300 houses are not located at Whitenap, as the protest group Romsave are advocating, then they will have to be located in another ‘sustainable’ location within southern Test Valley . All previously suggested sites would then have to be re-evaluated, including land at Ganger Farm, opposite the current development of Abbotswood. Obviously, just the highway issues alone could potentially adversely affect the residents of Braishfield. I will carefully monitor this one too!

### **Duttons Road**

The closure of the Duttons Rd. offices was a sad day for many of us as it marked the end of an era. The good news is that the transfer of the Customer Services team from here to the Former Magistrates Court, near the Abbey, has gone even smoother than expected. The hours of the duty planning officer have also been increased from those at Duttons Rd. All Council meetings that used to meet in the old Council Offices will continue to do so in the Crosfield Hall which has recently been refurbished.

### **Doing it online makes contacting the Council as easy as 1, 2, 3**

In today’s busy world people find it harder and harder to fit everything into their daily lives. To try and make it a little easier, Test Valley Borough Council continues to develop ways for residents to get in touch or carry out their business with us online at a time that is convenient for them.

This spring there are three top ways you can do it online with Test Valley...

A Direct Debit Self Serve is now available, enabling home owners to set up a new direct debit mandate to pay their council tax online. Nearly 500 people have taken advantage of this new service and signed up in the past five weeks. <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/counciltaxdd/>

The Council’s Garden Waste Collection Service is available for online subscription. Almost 40% of all people who subscribed during the early bird period took advantage of electronic registration, and residents can continue to subscribe at the click of a mouse throughout the year.

<https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/resident/wasteandrecycling/gardenwaste/>

Want to know what planning applications are being considered in your area? Planning applications are available online with just one click from the homepage. Once there you can view an application or choose to register your details. As a registered user you will be able to track specific applications and save searches and receive e-mail updates on them automatically.

<https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/resident/planningandbuildingcontrol/viewplanningapplicationonline/view-planning-applications-online/>

Complementing the do-it-online facilities, users can now also find out about the Council using an innovative app, which provides quick and easy access to a range of information on smartphones and tablets, (but not Blackberry devices yet).

Big Local App Test Valley is completely free to download and provides information about council services in addition to schools and colleges, sport and leisure, tourist information, cinema and theatre listings, a

comprehensive business directory and BBC news feed. Users can also access discount vouchers for local businesses.

Under the council section, residents can check which day their bin is collected, search for planning applications, apply for a parking permit, check what they can and can't recycle and much more.

Visit: [www.testvalley.gov.uk](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk)

### **Council Tax**

Central Government recognised that Test Valley BC, charging just £2.33 per week for Council Tax per Band D dwelling, is one of the lowest in England. In order to help maintain services, TVBC and these few other Councils were given special permission to raise the Council Tax by 10p per week for a band D property, without a referendum. Even after this increase, Test Valley remains one of the lowest in England and Hampshire – and still cheaper than neighbouring Eastleigh.

We are always on the lookout to reduce costs in order to maintain the quality of services. One simple example is that from 15 April the Council will collect all the black bins across the borough one week and all brown recycling bins the following week. Until now, for operational reasons at the receiving centres, the Borough could only collect half the borough's black and brown bins each week. Successful negotiations have enabled us to maximise efficiency and avoid the creation of a new round to accommodate the new houses being built throughout the Borough, saving approximately £140,000. Residents affected by the first phase of changes are those who were due to put out their brown bin for collection in the week commencing 15 April. Full details were delivered to affected properties or visit [www.testvalley.gov.uk/bincollectionchanges](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/bincollectionchanges)

As always, I remain readily contactable by phone or email. Tel. 07970 501050 or email [cllrmhatley@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:cllrmhatley@testvalley.gov.uk)

### **7. OPEN PERIOD**

During questions and answers there was a long discussion on planning and the proposed housing at Whitenap and the use of brownfield sites. Concern was raised at the availability of utilities such as water and mention was made of the new pipe construction between Otterbourne and the lower Test.

Alan Dowden said it was important to have a local plan adopted in view of the five year land supply situation .

David Robinson questioned the amount of attendance at Parish Council Meetings by Alan Dowden and Martin Hatley. Martin Hatley said that unfortunately PC Meetings on a Tuesday coincided with Southern Area Planning Committee and PSH - the Portsmouth and Southampton urban planning meeting.

In answer to a question about the Crookhill footpath, Martin Hatley said that a certain number of houses needed to be built at Abbotswood before the money is made available.

At the close of the meeting at 9.45pm, Mike Prince thanked everyone for attending.