

Harwell Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on Friday 18th May 2007 at 8:00 pm in the Village Hall

Present: Dr. K Beswick Mr. J Fisher Mr. M. Ricketts
 Mr. G Taylor Mr D Hayter

Apologies: Mr. S Lilly Mrs. D. Boughton-Waite

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of last year's Annual Parish Meeting held on 18th May were signed as a true record.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

3. Chairman's report

The Chairman reported on changes to the Council following the recent elections, thanking the outgoing Councillors as well as those who had decided to stand again. He welcomed new Councillors, and mentioned that there are still 5 vacancies. He also expressed thanks for the work of the County and District Councillors, the webmaster, the Harwell News Editors and distributors, and the staff, and praised the work of local organisations which provide so many services and interests in and around the village. In a brief report of the Council's activities during the past year, the Chairman mentioned that the village had won the annual Best Kept Village award and that the adventure play area had been upgraded. Support had been forthcoming for several local projects, including the Harwell Playscheme.

Ongoing projects which it is hoped can be completed during the coming year include the expansion of Harwell Cemetery, refurbishment of the showers in the sports pavilion, and the affordable housing scheme. Mr Lilly will be monitoring the review of bus services. A Footpaths Walk is planned for later in the year, though no date has been set at present.

The expansion of Didcot continues to be a concern.

The new changing rooms project is at the stage of drawing up provisional plans.

4. Report from Thames Water re: new pipeline

Mr Matthew Thompson, a project communications consultant for Thames Water, reported on the pipeline which passes through Harwell. Maps and aerial photos were on display.

The GATOX (Gatehampton-Oxford) pipeline is a 900mm water main which will ensure supply to the Swindon/Oxford area, via Goring, Harwell, etc, along a distance of 34km, with links to Hagbourne Hill reservoir. Farmoor storage reservoir will be used to hold the water until it is treated before final distribution. A booster station will be installed near Steventon, but this will affect residents as little as possible, being soundproofed and fenced off. The booster station is needed because of rising ground in that area. A 2 year project, the total cost is estimated at £50 million. All disturbed land will be restored to its former condition once the pipes are in place, and extensive testing and cleaning will be done before it is fully in use.

Dr Beswick thanked Mr Thompson for attending; Mr Thompson then left the meeting.

5. Advice on new smoking legislation

VOWHDC had sent information on the new laws, which come into force on 1st July 2007. This information was left out on display.

6. Update re: Great Western Park

Dr Antony Highes provided an update on this project.

Great Western Park development is almost agreed on, but there are still many local concerns, as well as disagreements to be resolved between planners and developers, with a major stumbling block being the insistence that developers pay for improvements to Milton Interchange before any other building takes place. Work is unlikely to begin for another year.

It is important to remember that further expansion of Didcot is planned beyond the development at Great Western Park, between 2016 and 2026. An Examination in Public was recently attended by Western Villages Alliance, which includes Harwell; the Inspectors' Report is due out in July, in which recommendations will be made regarding further development at Didcot.

Great Western Park construction traffic is not to be routed through Harwell.

7. Any Other Business

Mr Fisher gave an update re: the new changing rooms project.

2 groups have been set up to decide the design and to find funding. Local sports clubs and the Royal British Legion Club are involved. The sports clubs are keen to encourage youth, which should help to secure funding.

One resident mentioned that the sports clubs do not at present encourage village youth. Mr Fisher agreed, but said that encouraging a youth team to play at Harwell (eg East Hendred Boys Football team) would be a start. Residents were agreed that all teams should encourage youth in the village, perhaps starting new teams if necessary.

Mr Levey announced he would be giving up the Editorship of Harwell News shortly, as Mrs Levey is having an operation.

Mr Ricketts mentioned that information days for local children are being organised by Oxfordshire, Berks & Bucks Wildlife Trust, based in Sutton Courtenay.

Mr Fishburne from Harwell Tennis Club asked that Agreements be drawn up shortly between the Club and the Council. This matter to be discussed at the next Council meeting.

The Chairman thanked all those who had attended the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.