

HARWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 8.00pm in Freeman Hall on Thursday 21st May 2009

Councillors: Mr D Marsh (Chair) Mrs K Beswick OBE (Vice-Chair) Mr S Lilly
 Mr G Taylor Mr M Ricketts Mr J Fisher
 Mr F Treml Mrs D Boughton-Waite Mr D Hayter

Apologies: Mr R Thomas

Approximately 15 members of the public.

1. Approve Minutes of the previous meeting (APM 08)
 Minutes of the previous meeting had been available in draft form all year, and were also available in the hall. They were signed as a true record by Mr Marsh.

2. Presentation from Thames Valley Police
 PCSO Clarke was welcomed by Mr Marsh; thanks were expressed to police and PCSOs who had regularly attended parish council meetings during the last year, helping to foster closer relations between police and residents.
 PCSO Clarke said that ongoing patrols around the village would continue; no major crime had been reported for some time. Crime figures are available on the Thames Valley Police website. PCSO Clarke intends to hold further monthly police surgeries in the recreation ground pavilion; the meetings will be advertised. The success of the SID machine in the village has led to traffic police visiting the area so that speeding drivers can be prosecuted if necessary; traffic police can also take action on other driving offences, eg dealing with disqualified drivers.
 There is evidence that in areas where there is poor street lighting, there is a higher incidence of crimes such as thefts from vehicles; this does not affect Harwell at present.
 With thanks for attending, PCSO Clarke left at 8.10pm.

3. Chairman's report
 Mr Marsh began with a resume of parish council duties, and thanks to grounds staff for their hard work during the year. Dog mess is still a problem in some areas; this can be reported to Environmental Wardens at VWHDC.
 The recreation ground is well-used by sports clubs, and the west field is undergoing treatment so that it can be used more next season; Mr Taylor was thanked for his work liaising with sports teams. The new pavilion project committee, Harwell 2008, is awaiting notice from VWHDC planning department that re-drawn plans are acceptable.
 The cemetery extension is being prepared for use as a burial area, and improvements are planned for the rest of the cemetery.
 The Council has asked OCC to consider road improvements on Didcot Road, and the Annual Footpath Walk led to a document being submitted to OCC, detailing action required to local footpaths. Both these documents were drawn up by Mr Ricketts. One resident asked whether speed cameras could be erected in the village; the council is in favour of cameras, and has asked for them to be erected at problem sites, but OCC needs to monitor traffic and road statistics before it will erect a camera.
 The X32 bus service appears to be a success; continued use will help to safeguard it.
 The council has taken a neutral stance on the proposed incinerator at Sutton Courtenay, until further evidence is available. Comments from residents are welcome.

The council still supports the idea of affordable housing for the village, but all considered sites have so far proved unsuitable. Parish Council approval would be required before any such project could begin.

Responses have been sent in to planning consultations by VWHDC and SODC regarding further homes planned around Didcot by 2026, and to a traffic study (SCOTS report); responses were sent in by Mr Marsh after being made available for comment. The Council will follow up on all these consultations as necessary.

Visits to the council website are increasing – the village history pages are popular with overseas visitors. Thanks was expressed to Mr Marsh as webmaster.

Mr Marsh expressed thanks to Harwell News co-ordinators and distributors as well as the editor, to the Garden Club for the maintenance of the war memorial garden, to all those who helped to clean the war memorial last autumn, and to all who took part in the Footpaths Walk.

4. Street lighting

Mr Ricketts had displayed maps detailing street lights within the village. OCC is asking residents to consider whether any street lights could be turned off between midnight and 5.30am. This is part of a campaign by OCC to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions. Any suggestions should be sent in to the Clerk.

5. Emergency Plan

Mrs Beswick has been preparing an Emergency Plan, along the lines suggested by VWHDC's Emergency Planning Officer. It is intended to put a version of the Plan on the council website, and councillors will all have an "emergency pack" containing an up-to-date contacts list. It is time-consuming collating all the information for the Plan, but a draft version should be available shortly; any suggestions or details for inclusion in the Plan should be sent to Mrs Beswick.. Residents should always call 999 in an emergency.

6. Any Other Business

2 overgrown hedges were reported to the Clerk.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.