

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting in Harwell Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2010 at 8.00pm in the village hall**

Chaired by: Mr D Marsh (Chair, Harwell Parish Council)

Present: Mr R Waite, Mrs M Turner (Vale of White Horse District Councillors), Mrs K Beswick OBE, Mr M Ricketts, Mrs D Boughton-Waite, Mr G Taylor, Mr J Fisher (Parish Councillors), 10 members of the public

1. Chairman's report

Mr Marsh thanked all those present for attending. He explained that this year's meeting was earlier than in past years as it was felt more suitable for a current Parish Council Chairman to provide a report than to ask a new one to do so. This will be especially relevant next year when there will be parish elections. Mr Marsh urged all residents to consider standing for election.

Mr Marsh praised the village hall committee for the success it has made of running the hall, and thanked all those in the parish who had contributed to community life in the past year, with particular mentions for Miss J Markey who recently won an award from the District Council Chairman for her services to village life, parish council grounds staff who work hard to keep the parish looking neat, youth project members for cleaning the war memorial, the garden club for its work on the upkeep of the war memorial garden, Mr & Mrs Staples for coordinating delivery of Harwell News, all the volunteers who deliver Harwell News, Keep Harwell Rural for its continuing battle against major development in the parish, Police Community Support Officers who provide a visible presence in the village, and parish councillors – Mr Taylor for liaising with football clubs, Mr Lilly for helping to obtain funding for the building project at Little Pippins Pre-School, Mrs Boughton-Waite for arranging the Annual Footpaths Walk, Mr Ricketts for organising remedial work on footpaths and for putting together Harwell News, and Mr Fisher for his involvement with the Youth Project.

Mr Marsh mentioned a few of the Parish Council's activities during the past year; the Harwell 2008 Committee obtained Outline Planning Permission for a new sports building, and a new Sports Development Committee has been formed to continue with the project; funding of around £40,000 will be required as start-up costs. Particular thanks were expressed to Mr Lilly who along with Dr Delfosse and Mr Fisher has worked hard to bring the project past the initial planning stage.

Mr Fisher mentioned the Youth Project "Our Street Corner", thanking all the adult volunteers for their contributions to the running of the Project and everyone who had donated funds, such as Harwell Feast Committee, RSRL, St Matthews Church and Didcot First; the group has successfully applied for grants to enable the continuation of the project and engage a youth worker, who has been most helpful. A "drop-in" has been set up in Freeman Hall, and workshops on various themes have been held. Members of the public expressed the hope that the project can continue.

The Council is trying to be more communicative as to its activities, via Harwell News and the website, which was recently upgraded. Residents are encouraged to use the website; usage is increasing – the local plans and village history pages are popular. (Mrs Beswick pointed out that Mr Marsh is the volunteer webmaster).

2. Waste collection

Mr Waite introduced himself and Mrs Turner as District Councillors; their main interests on the Council are the Development Control Committee (planning), Youth Forum, Scrutiny Committee and waste – Mr Waite is Shadow Portfolio for Commercial Services (including waste) and a member of the Joint Waste Board covering VWHDC & South Oxfordshire DC areas.

Mr Waite reported on the new waste collection service which is due to start on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2010, with Verdant as the contractor. 2 large wheelie bins will replace existing black bins and recycling boxes, and there will also be a collection caddy for food waste. Food waste will be collected weekly, the recycling and other waste will be collected fortnightly. Sacks will be provided for some households where there is no outside storage space, and there will be assistance for residents who are unable to manoeuvre wheelie bins. The brown bin scheme will continue alongside other collections. Recycled waste will be taken to a processing centre in the Midlands for sorting and baling; food waste will be processed at Ardley and turned into compost.

It is hoped that the new system will save up to £100,000 in 12 months, with recycling credits adding a further £300,000.

Further information will be sent to householders shortly.

Other recent waste issues in Harwell have included large amounts of rubbish left in Orchard Way and Westfield/Gaveston Road; this is being dealt with by VWHDC and Vale Housing Association. Residents are asked to report fly-tipping to VWHDC.

3. Youth Project – covered at Item 1.

4. Local development plans

Mr Marsh explained that the parish council had responded to VWHDC's Local Development Framework, setting out objections to further planned development in the parish, in the area on the far side of the A34, which it is proposed will adjoin the development known as Great Western Park, and will include a further 2,300 homes.

Work on the first phase of Great Western Park is now nearing a start date. A large part of this development will lie in Harwell parish to the west of Didcot. The first phase includes construction of a spine road, drainage ponds and landscaped areas, but ultimately the development will contain around 3,200 homes, some of which will be 3-storey buildings. Developers will also have to make upgrades to Rowstock roundabout and install traffic calming measures in Harwell, although it is not clear what form

these will take. Not all concerns from neighbouring councils and residents have been answered, eg lack of burial space.

5. Cemetery project

Mr Ricketts explained that a new area is required for burials; the parish council already owns land adjoining the cemetery which will need preparation before the land is consecrated later this year. The council also plans to upgrade existing fences, gates and paths as part of the project, which will cost around £7-10,000. The council has already begun budgeting for the work, and re-seeding and tidying of some areas has already taken place. In future, it is hoped that waste disposal options can be looked at, as there is currently no provision for recycling. The council must consider whether to leave any part of the new area unconsecrated; as there is already an area of unconsecrated ground in the existing cemetery in which there is only 1 grave at present, it may be that there is no need for any further unconsecrated area, but residents are invited to submit comments.

6. Footpaths Walk

Mrs Boughton-Waite informed residents that this year's walk will take place on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May, beginning at 2.00pm at the village hall; all residents are invited to take part – there are 17 paths in total. It is a way of ensuring that all footpaths in the parish are kept in use, and is useful for identifying any problems, such as barriers across the paths.

With no further comments or questions, the meeting closed at 9.45pm.