

PITSTONE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 17 May 2016
in the main hall at the Memorial Hall, starting at 7.45pm and concluding at 9.40pm

- PRESENT:** Cllr Saintey (Chairman), Cllr Nicholls (Vice Chairman), Cllr Mrs Stack, Cllr Starling, Cllr Mrs Crutchfield, Cllr Weber, Cllr Matthey and Cllr Mrs Groom.
Clerk: Laurie Eagling. County Cllr Mrs A Davies. District Cllr Mr D Town. PCSO J Dodson.
Chris Trew of BBOWT. Plus 36 members of the public.
- APOLOGIES:** Cllr Blunt, Cllr Mrs Arney, Mrs K Groom (Ivinghoe Parish Council) and District Cllr Mrs S Jenkins.

Local Community Groups and Charities

Between 7.15pm and 7.45pm residents were able to browse stands from Pitstone Memorial Hall Charity, Town Lands Charity, The Williamson Trust, St Mary's Church Pitstone, Pitstone Community Car Scheme, Pitstone Community Cinema, Pitstone & Ivinghoe Entertainments, BBOWT and Bucks County Council Prevention Matters. The Parish Council hosted information stands on Pitstone Recreation Ground Charity (including annual report and accounts), Pitstone Parish Charity (including annual report and accounts), the Parish Council annual report and accounts, the current Ben Hamilton-Baillie highways proposal consultation, the youth café, proposed sports and leisure developments in the parish, access to Tring station, the proposed path to Marsworth and the key principles in the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

- 1/16AA **ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES** - See above.
The Chairman opened the meeting, introduced the council members and thanked everyone for attending. He encouraged all attendees to visit the stands and support the community groups during the refreshment break if they hadn't already had chance to do so.
- 2/16AA **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY** held on 21 April 2015
The draft minutes were available on the web site all year. Copies were also available from the clerk and further copies were available at the annual assembly. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes were a true and accurate record and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as such.
- 3/16AA **PRESENTATION BY BERKS, BUCKS AND OXFORDSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST (BBOWT) ON THE WONDERFUL LOCAL WILD ORCHIDS**

Chris Trew of BBOWT who manage College Lake and Pitstone Fen, as well as a number of other local nature reserves, delivered a fascinating talk to those present. There are 58 species of wild orchid nationally and the majority of these can be found within the BBOWT area.

We learned about the wonders of the nature reserves on our doorstep including Pitstone Fen, College Lake, Aston Clinton Rag Pits, Dancers End, Weston Turville Reservoirs, Bacombe Hill and Burnwood Meadows amongst others.

Through the fully illustrated talk, residents heard about the amazing mimicry of the butterfly and bee orchids, hybridisation, pollination and the unique conditions liked by these delicate flowers. Beautiful photography of some of the local orchids were shown along with fascinating facts for each plant including the Common Twayblade, White Helleborine, Red Helleborine, Green Flowered Helleborine, Common Spotted Orchid, Fragrant Orchid, Pyramidal Orchids, Marsh Orchids, Green Winged Orchids, Military Orchid and Birds Nest Orchids.

BBOWT have just launched an exciting new 5 year strategy, working outside of their nature reserves and closer with communities and parish councils to promote vitally important green corridors, flower friendly mowing regimes for verges etc. These provide vital habitats for flora and fauna which encourage insects, butterflies, birds and other wildlife as well as providing access corridors between larger nature reserves and wildlife sites. Pitstone Parish Council has been protecting three areas of grass verge along Westfield Road where bee orchids have been growing in abundance this year.

Residents were encouraged to visit the BBOWT sites to see not only the orchids but the wonderful butterflies too, join in with BBOWT events and guided walks (especially around Pitstone Fen if local residents haven't already been), join one of their conservation work parties and help protect these wonderful assets and/or become a member of BBOWT.

The Chairman thanks Mr Trew for his splendid talk and echoed his encouragement, based on personal experience, for residents to join a BBOWT guided walk of Pitstone Fen orchids in June.

4/16AA **PRESENTATION OF PITSTONE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2016**

The Chairman presented Klaus Ginda with the Volunteer of the Year Award for all his numerous years of volunteering in the parish including the co-ordinator and main driver for the Pitstone Community Car Scheme, being a member of the committee & acting as box office manager at all the Pitstone Community Cinema events, attending the Pitstone youth café on a weekly basis, acting as Advertising Manager and Distribution Co-ordinator (as well as delivering numerous copies himself) for Pitstone Parish Post, heading up the Heritage Sub-Group for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, continuing to carry out Street Light patrols on behalf of the parish council, for a number of years Klaus was a trustee for both the Town Lands Charity and The Williamson Trust, and he also acted as a member of the parish council for numerous year.

Klaus's generosity and good will towards his fellow residents has stretched far and wide. The Chairman presented Klaus with a framed certificate and cheque for £50.00. He will also go forward as the Pitstone nomination into the AVDC Volunteer of the Year Scheme.

The Parish Council runs the Volunteer of the Year scheme to celebrate the unsung heroes within our community. If you know someone who goes that extra mile and provides an outstanding voluntary service to the residents of Pitstone, please submit your nominations to the parish clerk so that they can be taken into consideration for the 2017 award.

5/16AA **THANKS TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP MEMBERS**

By now, residents will all be aware that at the NDP Referendum 97% of those voting, voted in favour of AVDC adopting the Pitstone Neighbourhood Plan. AVDC has now officially 'made' the plan and it is already being utilised to help determine planning applications for our parish.

The parish council wished to publically thank all 33 members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for all the hard work and dedication they contributed in researching, consulting and getting the Pitstone Neighbourhood Plan delivered in record time.

The Chairman invited all members of the group to come forward and receive an individual personalised thank you card signed by each member of the council.

6/16AA **CRIME REPORT FROM THAMES VALLEY POLICE – PCSO J DODSON**

PCSO J Dodson of the Thames Valley Police Wing Neighbourhood Policing Team who gave a report on the crime levels over the previous 12 months. Unfortunately, crime figures are up on the previous 12 months but remain low overall.

The most prevalent crime (16 incidents in 12 months) had been thefts from motor vehicles which included thefts of tools from vans and the theft of electronic gadgets from vehicles left at the beauty spots such as Pitstone Hill. Other statistics included 8 burglaries, 1 theft of a vehicle, 3 cases of drug possession, 6 incidents of criminal damage and 6 assaults.

Sadly, Thames Valley Police had also attended 20 domestic disputes in the last year which often resulted in protection referrals; they were called upon to investigate 12 incidents of nuisance/harassment often reflecting the growing trend towards cyber-bullying on social media such as Facebook; and searched for 5 missing people.

The Chairman thanked PCSO Dodson for her presentation and she invited residents to talk to her about individual matters during the refreshment break.

REFRESHMENT BREAK AND FURTHER CHANCE TO VISIT THE STANDS, VIEW THE ACCOUNTS AND SPEAK TO THE GROUPS. RESIDENTS WERE ALSO ABLE TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS FOR THE COUNCIL TO ANSWER DURING THE QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION LATER IN THE EVENING, IF THEY DIDN'T WISH TO SPEAK IN PUBLIC.

7/16AA BUCKS COUNTY COUNCIL PREVENTION MATTERS – NATALIE JUDSON

Natalie Judson gave a brief presentation on the benefits that Prevention Matters can have for residents. Prevention Matters supports people in regaining confidence, independence and getting out and about if, they are:

- Struggling to remain independent in their own house
- Having difficulty getting out and about
- Feeling lonely and isolated
- Feeling anxious or lacking confidence
- Recovering from an illness

The service helps these residents find social activities, volunteers and community services in their area. She introduced two new sessions that would be coming to the Pitstone area soon, including Simply Walk and Movers & Shakers sessions to stimulate both mind and body.

The Chairman thanked BCC for giving the presentation and invited residents to collect leaflets on Prevention Matters at the end of the event if they had not already visited the stand.

8/16AA PITSTONE PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – COUNCILLOR BOB SAINTEY

As Chair of the Parish Council, Cllr Saintey provided residents with information about the recent 10% increase in council tax given that it is the first significant rise in 8 years. Some of the main reasons were discussed including the reduction in the Localised Council Tax Support Grant, the provision of Devolved Services to Bucks County Council will grass verge and rights of way maintenance and the ongoing running costs for the pavilion sports site now that the S106 maintenance funds have finally expired. To put this into context, the rise equates to just £6 per year increase for a Band D property, from £63 per annum to £69 per annum, which is 15p per week.

Cllr Saintey encouraged everyone to read the Parish Council Annual Report and Accounts which includes details of all the key activity and expenditure over the last 12 months and highlights areas that will be the focus on the coming year. Copies were available for all attendees and will also be published in the next edition of Pitstone Parish Post.

9/16AA UPDATE FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR AVRIL DAVIES

Cllr Davies talked of the difficult year experienced by Bucks County Council as they struggled to balance the books necessitating in a freeze on all non-essential funding over concerns with a possible £6m shortfall in budget. At Christmas BCC were awarded a grant of £23m, being £10m lower than anticipated, and there will be no grant provided by central government at all by 2020 with expectations that funds will be generated through council tax or business rates (but within Bucks, rather than generating revenue for the county council, £11m of business rates have to be passed back up to central government). On top of all the financial concerns, the county was rated as 'inadequate' within their delivery of child social services. Therefore both the past and the coming year were likely to be dominated by priorities and efficiencies, with massive cuts planned to Connections and Residential Care.

As well as the core county council business, Cllr Davies provided a summary of all the other activities she is involved with on behalf of the community including the new Children's Centre contract (Action for Children having replaced Barnados), the potential down-grading of the A4146 to a B road to alleviate issues at Water End, the introduction of a new Freight Strategy for HGVs being planned to help address residents' concerns about HGV traffic through the villages, the new franchise for the West Midlands train line (which includes Tring station), the NDP, BVCL, several select committees and Leader of the Opposition to name but a few.

A resident raised concerns about the further cuts experienced to the number 61 bus route. Cllr Davies explained that this route was not subsidised by BCC and was controlled by Arriva. Unfortunately, in times of austerity, funding wouldn't become available for services that received

little public support or use, and there was always more pressing matters for the funds to be utilised against. No further questions were raised by the public. The Chairman thanked Cllr Davies for her update.

10/16AA **UPDATE FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR DEREK TOWN**

Derek talked about the first year in office for himself and Sandra Jenkins. Derek explained that the Vale of Aylesbury Plan was currently being asked to deliver 31,000 new homes by 2023 with only 21,000 of these needed by the Vale and the extra 10,000 being requested of AVDC by the surrounding authorities such as Chiltern, South Bucks and High Wycombe who claim they can't meet all their own needs due to green belt etc. AVDC was pushing back to these authorities. It is planned that a draft will be available in June, with a consultation running between 7/7/16 and 5/9/16 resulting in the final plan being adopted in the late spring or early summer of 2017.

AVDC aspire that their section of the council tax will reduce to zero. All services are being reviewed to make them more commercial in a bid to replace the central government grant which, as Avril said previously, would be completely withdrawn by 2020. They are now operating retail sites and commercial sites such as Waitrose and Waterside Theatre plus developing their own superfast (or ultrafast) broadband service, although these were unfortunately not coming to Pitstone just yet.

Cllr Town provided a breakdown of all the activity undertaken by himself and Cllr Mrs Jenkins on behalf of the community including the various committees they sit on, BPFA, the New Homes Bonus panel and planning. He also described the changes to the Ward areas.

Cllr Weber asked Cllr Town to clarify AVDC's 5 year housing supply provision at present, and Derek confirmed that it is currently operating at 4.5 years but that this figure is expected to improve as the 10,000 unmet demand from other regions will hopefully fall.

A resident enquired if the Pitstone NDP was watertight or if AVDC would seek to push some more of the 10,000 homes into the parish. Cllr Town felt that Pitstone was in a strong position having included a higher number of homes than originally being requested by AVDC and therefore it was unlikely that it would have to be reviewed to include a higher number, but that this could not be completely guaranteed.

No further questions were raised by the public. The Chairman thanked Cllr Town for his update.

11/16AA **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

- A resident asked if there was any chance that HS2 would be cancelled completely. It was felt that this was unlikely.
- The lack of site works by Taylor Wimpey (TW) to bring the Castlemead estate up to adoptable standard before Bucks County Council can officially adopt the highways was raised. This has been an ongoing frustration for a long time. It is known that the contractors have submitted several work lists over the years but that TW have not granted approval to carry out the works. BCC are speaking with TW about similar issues on a number of sites in the county. The parish council also continues to press for a resolution. In the meantime, all Castlemead residents should report matters direct to Taylor Wimpey Customer Care and perhaps this additional volume from individuals, rather than issues just being funnelled through the parish council, will have some impact.
- An enquiry was raised about the deliverability and funding for the aspirations outlined within the Ben Hamilton-Baillie consultation. It was confirmed that BCC and the Parish Council are in the early stages of investigations and no details or proposals have been confirmed at present. Cllr Davies advised that both BCC and Transport for Bucks were in favour of the initiatives, and that it was important that it was kept at the top of the agenda at all times to maintain focus and drive.
- Cllr Saintey advised residents that the bin collection day may be changing in June and to look out for information from AVDC shortly.

12/16AA **CLOSURE OF MEETING**

There being no further questions, the chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their contributions. There being no further business to be transacted, the chairman closed the meeting at 9.40pm.

NOTE CHARITY AND COUNCIL ACCOUNTS

Copies of the various accounts listed below were available to all attendees at the meeting and representatives of each group were available to answer any questions at any of the sessions before and after the meeting and during the refreshment break.

- 1) Pitstone Town Lands Charity & Williamson Trust
- 2) Pitstone Recreation Ground Charity and Pitstone Parish Charity
- 3) Pitstone Parish Council

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairman