

OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

on
TUESDAY 2 MAY 2017, IN OTTERHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL

Present:

John Berry (Chairman), Dick Best (Vice-Chairman), Bob Birkenhead, David Cather, Julie Evans, Barry Leathwood, Dist Cllrs Mike Caswell and Julie Pay, Aly Prowse (Clerk) and 3 members of the public.

Apologies:

Apologies were received from R.Perrett.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

The Chairman presented his review of the year (which will be available in full on notice boards and the Combwich website). Some of the key areas he addressed included:

- Hinkley Point C - the long awaited decision and how this might impact on us; particularly the traffic on the C182 and in and around Bridgwater. We continue to campaign with our neighbours in Stockland Bristol for speed reduction and safety measures (including at Biffen's Corner) along the C182. On the plus side is the £500k mitigation fund which as a parish, we need to ensure is spent as effectively as possible.
- Enhancements – It is gratifying to see so many children and young people enjoying the play and recreation area. Other areas of enhancement include the small common by the pill; tree planting by the play area; repairs to Combwich Track; new mesh safety railings across the brook at the entrance to Estuary Park; a new dog bin at Brookside Rd garages and two dog bag dispensers; vegetation removal along Wharf Rd and the grant funded sea buckthorn project at Steart.
- Parking has become increasingly difficult in the village and the verge bordering the road near the play area became seriously eroded during the winter. Measures to prevent cars encroaching here are underway but parking is likely to remain a problem that we can only resolve collectively. We persist with our efforts to regain public access to Combwich Ponds, and with Highways for lighting improvements at the crossroads. The timely provision of the restricted, albeit welcome bus service courtesy of EDF has helped (as of course has Otter Wheels) but can only be a short term answer. We will also continue to address this issue.
- The Chairman paid tribute to our County Cllr John Edney, retiring after 16 years as a ward councillor. He also thanked our District Cllrs Mike Caswell and Julie Pay. Finally he expressed his thanks and appreciation to his fellow councillors who put in a lot of voluntary time and effort trying to represent the best interests of the community; the Clerk and the village gardener.

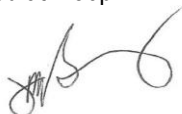
ANNUAL ACCOUNTS:

The Clerk presented the Annual Accounts which showed a net bank balance of £18.8k; £13.2k of this is held in reserve for ongoing obligations. The total income for the year was £90.4k, an increase over the previous year of £69.5k, almost wholly attributed to the Play and Recreation Area. Similarly, expenditure for the year at £92.5k, an increase over the previous year of £78k, was largely due to the Play Area and the associated VAT of £18k (reclaimable). The full Accounts, together with the Audit return will be placed on the Website (mid to late May).

PUBLIC SESSION:

Whilst very welcome, it was disappointing to see only 3 members of the community present. The main theme was that of appearance and enhancement in the village, sometimes looking a little 'unloved and unkempt'. The parish council does try to keep the areas it is responsible for maintained, but some areas such as the grass opposite Nursery CI and the Post Office are the responsibility of Somerset County Council and of course whilst we appreciate all those residents who do cut the grassed areas outside of their properties and make an effort with flowers and vegetation etc. it is in the main up to each individual householder with respect to their efforts and resources. We were also asked if we felt we had value for money employing a village gardener; the Chairman responded that we believe we do obtain value for money.

The meeting ended at 7.30pm



Signed:
(Chairman)

Date: 1 June 2017