

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY, 22 APRIL 2010 AT THE CHURCH HALL
PILGRIMS WAY, CHEW STOKE
AT 7.30PM**

- PRESENT:** Mrs G Slater (GS) - Chairman
Mr D Thompson (DT) - Vice-Chairman
- COUNCILLORS:** Mrs A Cunningham (AC), Mr A Hawkins (AH), Mrs L Attree (LA),
Mrs H Padfield (HP), Mrs J Brown (JB), Mr P Jameson (PJ), Cllr M
Hanney (MH), Ms C Wood (CW) Clerk
- PARISHIONERS:** 34 Parishioners
- APOLOGIES:** None

Before the meeting commenced, Parishioners were invited along at 7pm for "Drinks and Nibbles" for a chance to speak to the Parish Councillors.

Meeting commenced at 7.30pm.

1. READ AND CONFIRM THE MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2009 were agreed and signed as a true record.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Nothing to report.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2010 APM for the parish of Chew Stoke. It is lovely to see so many of you here – hopefully not enticed in just by the glass of wine!

The order of events this evening is first to deal with the minutes from last year's APM and then there are five separate reports including my report as Chairman (as set out in the Agenda).

For those of you who do not know me, I am Gillie Slater and am Chair of the PC. The other councillors are my Vice-Chair, Dennis Thompson and then, in no particular order, Joanna Brown, Hilary Padfield, Andrew Hawkins, Ali Cunningham, Louise Attree and Peter Jameson and our clerk is Carol Wood.

My first task this evening is to thank all the councillors for their hard work and support over the last 12 months; also, I would like to express publicly the PC's thanks to Andrew Troup who is retiring as a councillor at the end of this month after many (10, I believe) years of service to the parish.

Thank you, also, to our clerk, Carol Wood – who does all our admin and keeps us on the straight and narrow.

Finally, many thanks to Malcolm Hanney, our District Councillor, whose advice and guidance are invaluable.

CONFIRM AND SIGN MINUTES FROM 2009 APM

REPORT

This has been my second year as Chair and, like the first year, it has been interesting and busy. The Parish Council deals with a wide range of tasks and services, from queries relating to pot-holes and dog mess in Rectory Field to commenting on the draft Core Strategy options document produced by B&NES – more about all of this later but the Core Strategy is going to replace the Local Development Plan for B&NES for the next 20-25 years and so affects all of us.

The summary of the main events, the highlights if you like are:

1. **Village of the Year** - In 2009, for the first time in some years, we entered the Village of the Year competition, run by the Council for the Protection of Rural England and sponsored by Calor. Whilst the competition was about much more than the prettiness and tidiness of the village, there was an enthusiastic response from parishioners and also from our garden contractor, Hugo King, and we were delighted to be the joint winners with Chew Magna in the B&NES Small Village category. Our certificate is displayed here this evening (and there is a small plaque recording the win on the millennium sign). We have taken the decision (just a few weeks ago) that we will enter the competition this year – we hope to show the judges that we have made improvements in various areas in the last 12 months – more on this later in the spring.
2. **Website** – last year in my report I highlighted more and better communication as one of my aims for the year. Shortly after last year's APM we launched the new parish website – www.chewstoke.org.uk. I am very pleased to say that the website has gone from strength to strength over the year. On the display board as you entered the hall I have shown the number of “hits” for the site per week over the last 12 months and, as you can see, it is an ever-upwards graph. It is still fairly early days with the website but the aim is to make it where everyone in the parish goes to first in order to find information about the village, local events, hall bookings, important phone numbers etc. All suggestions for improvements to the website will be very welcome – please contact me or any councillor. We do appreciate that some parishioners do not access information via the internet and so we will keep on putting information in the Gazette and the church magazine and also on the village noticeboard at the village stores – where we have recently added leaflets holders – help yourself to anything we place in those holders.
3. **Recreational areas** – There has been quite a lot of activity in our recreational areas and generally in the open spaces in the village.

First, we have carried out necessary repairs to the **slide** in the play area – the steps and platform have been replaced. This work has just been done and we managed to secure a grant for most of the cost of the work from B&NES.

Quite a bit of work has been carried out on the **trees in Rectory Field** – work was needed here and there to make sure the area stays safe and also to ensure good husbandry. Some more maintenance work will be done this year. We have also carried out some small repairs to the bridge from Quarry Hay to Rectory Field and we are arranging for the bridge to be pressure washed (and further maintenance work may follow on after this cleaning).

We have had some **shrubs planted in Quarry Hay** and have put up a low level fence – this is to protect the shrubs and the bank from those who would otherwise use that as a sort of bike adventure course. We were also given a

grant from B&NES (a special grant from our District Councillor) which we used to plant **shrubs** in various locations in the village. In the recent spring sunshine the village has been looking glorious.

Dog mess – this time last year I said that this was a growing problem, especially in Rectory Field and I can honestly say that it is one of things that has been discussed the most at our monthly meetings. We have used the B&NES dog wardens – they have inspected on and off over the year; we now have a special dog mess bin at both entrances to the field along with spare bags. In the hope of improving things further, we asked the primary school to run a poster competition on the subject, the idea being that a plea from the children might have more impact. The school was enthusiastic and, at the end of last year, Ali and I judged the entries. We came up with one winner (Emily Manville) and two second prizes and all the results were shown on the website. Since then we have had 4 signs made – two showing Emily's picture and two more that are a combination of the pictures produced by the 2 winners of the second prize. Those signs have now been put up at the entrances to Rectory Field and then a third sign has gone up on North Hill. We are hoping to put the final sign on Woodford Lane in due course.

4. **Planning** – there were about 34 applications made over the last year (together with 10 applications relating to tree work) compared with about 26 applications for planning and 2 applications relating to tree work in the previous year. The majority of applications are supported by the PC and are granted by B&NES – but when assessing any application our planning sub-committee follow (as they must) the rules and principles set out in the Local Plan including those relating to Green Belt, AONB and Conservations Areas, as appropriate.

One important aspect is that, due to changes in procedures at B&NES, more applications are decided by planning officers rather than by the B&NES planning committee and, because of this, it is more important than ever that we have good and open lines of communication with the planning officers. This has not been the case over the last 12 months and, as a result of this, we met with the senior planning officer and agreed a scheme to ensure more communication between our planning sub-committee and the planning officers. It is early days so far with this – and we are keeping a close eye on what the planners do and how they communicate with us – the jury is out on this issue, as they say. The aim of all of this is to ensure that our views are heard and taken into account.

Core Strategy – this has been the most important and, in many ways, most time consuming item that we have dealt with over the last 12 months. B&NES is in the middle of a process that will lead to the adoption of the “Local Development Framework” – this will replace the current local plan and will form the basis of planning generally for the whole of B&NES for the next 20-25 years. The Local Development Framework comprises Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. The focus of attention so far for us has been on the Core Strategy which is one of the Development Plan Documents. I have posted on the display board a copy of the comments made by the Parish Council on the Core Strategy document. I have also put a copy of the document itself and the seven summary leaflets on the table – I need to keep these documents but I can lend them to anyone who is interested and you can read about all of this on the B&NES website. This is an important issue as we are debating issues such as how to create sustainable communities in rural areas, what to do about transport, what to do about

housing and the central government requirements to build more houses, how to encourage local businesses, how to protect our countryside and the Green Belt, and so on. Please do take a look at this and feed your comments back to the PC. If anyone would like a copy of the comments that the PC have made on the Core Strategy document to date, please just let me know.

5. **Planning Enforcement** – we have had another somewhat frustrating year with the enforcement officers at B&NES. They have, again, been disappointing in terms of keeping in touch with us and moving matters forward. The main item has been the smoking shelter outside the Yew Tree Inn, which was erected without planning consent. After endless delays and various applications and appeals, an enforcement notice was finally served earlier this year. What we have been told, quite recently, by the enforcement officer is that they have agreed with the landlord that, provided the structure of the shelter is removed, B&NES will not insist on the concrete base being removed. We are not happy with this and have expressed this to B&NES – but it seems that there is little that we can now do about it. The shelter will evidently be removed by 12 May.
6. **Radfords** – as you will all know, development of the houses on the site has progressed over the last year. The first residents of **Dairy Way** have now moved in. We have been told by Charles Church that the 12 “**affordable**” units are being dealt with by Sovereign HA – most units will be rented but at least 2 will be sold on a shared equity basis. Anyone interested must apply via B&NES Homesearch – you must be on the housing waiting list. We will be giving out more information about the process for applying for one of these units shortly – information will be on the website and also on the noticeboard by the shop.

Turning to the **commercial part of the site**, there is no progress on the 3 “employment” units. As for the “community building” that has always been thought of as the new doctors’ surgery, we are still holding our breath and waiting to hear that the doctors have signed a deal with Charles Church.

As a Parish Council, we are now discussing how to deal with the various “extra” items – the **mini roundabout** will be put in place some time this year (the money for this is due to be paid now by the developers and the work will be carried out by B&NES and I understand that the necessary plans are being drawn up); we are sorting out repairs to our existing **bus shelters and bus-stop posts and signs** and will also have some additional work carried out to the bus stops on Bristol Road (details still to be confirmed) – all of this is being paid for by the developers. After that there are two sums of money – and these are the sums referred to in the questionnaire that you will have received, I hope, a few weeks ago – a sum of money for **additional bus services** and a sum of money for **community facilities**. The PC will be looking at your suggestions for these two sums and will be reporting back to you on this in due course. If you haven’t already filled out and returned your questionnaire, please take one this evening and do so – you have until 5 May and there are spare copies at the back of the hall.

7. **Highways** –
As in previous years, **speeding** has been the main issue along with the volume of traffic (oh, that is apart from **pot-holes** this spring, of course!). We have talked about trying to slow down the traffic on Stoke Hill and Walley Court Road for some years and in parish council meetings we debate this problem constantly; what we do know is that there are really no easy answers and quite likely no funding even if there is an answer. We work with the highway

officers from B&NES as they are the ones with the expertise and also with the funds, such as they are.

Since last year's APM we have had the works on Stoke Hill, a special road surface laid in Pilgrim's Way to aid pedestrians, works on Walley Court Road and, very recently, the arrival of two 30mph flashing signs.

Looking first at **Stoke Hill**, the works were proposed by highways at B&NES – the options in that area are limited due to the layout of the road and surrounding houses etc. Not all parishioners are happy with the scheme – but we have to rely on advice given to us by the highways engineers at the end of the day. We will keep this under review.

We have recently had a “gateway” scheme carried out on **Walley Court Road** in an attempt to slow down the traffic on that road. This seems to be successful so far and we are working on making this a real “gateway” to the village by adding gates and some planting. As ever, the additional signage is regrettable – but we cannot have the one without the other. We have been lucky to have this work done – this has been down to some funds being left over in the highways budget for 09-10 and our B&NES highways officer being very pro-active on our behalf.

We have also been able to “acquire” two **30mph flashing signs**. There will be 5 sockets for these signs – 2 on Walley Court Road, 2 on Stoke Hill and 1 on Chew Lane and the two signs will be moved between these 5 sockets as appropriate.

White line painting – we were promised that the line painters were due to “do” our area in March/April this year. I have heard recently from B&NES that there have been some delays to the programme but that they will be coming to our area shortly.

As you may know, North Somerset introduced a **weight restriction on A368** (at Churchill/Burrington) which led to heavy vehicles being funnelled through the Chew Valley B roads instead. We have objected strongly to the scheme as we have other villages and also B&NES. Coupled with the possible further expansion of the airport, the growing volume of traffic passing through our village is a concern. I have no news about what B&NES might do to counter the effect of this weight restriction on the A368.

Bristol Road footpath – there is funding for this footpath in the year 2010-2011 – partly from B&NES and partly from the Radfords development. However, this project does depend on highways reaching agreement with the villagers whose properties are affected by the scheme. We will be doing what we can to move this forward.

8. **Questionnaire** – hopefully you have all completed your questionnaires and returned them by now – if not, please do this as it will help us greatly to hear the views of parishioners. The questionnaire was initially intended to help with deciding how to use the monies we will receive from Radfords but we decided to expand the scope of the questionnaire to give us more information about our parishioners and what you think is important to Chew Stoke. We will have the results assessed by a statistician so that the information is analysed properly. A report on the results will be made public later in the year and then we will decide on how to proceed further.

GOING FORWARD

So, as you can see, it has been a busy year. What are the plans for this coming year? One thing that becomes more and more evident in current times is that, in some respects, Chew Stoke's destiny is, potentially, more in our own hands than it has been in the recent past. More and more we are finding that central government is trying to devolve power down to the regions and the regional authorities are pushing decisions (or at least consultation) on down to the local level. We are being consulted constantly by B&NES on all sorts of policies, plans and programmes. Now, of course, our views on all these issues may be ignored or there may well be no money to go ahead with anything we want to do (especially in the current climate) – but the fact remains that we are being asked.

Another aspect of this overall picture is that funds for projects are sometimes available in the form of grants and awards, but you have to search for the grants and apply for them, making a case for why you deserve the monies. What you discover, if you do some research, is that quite substantial projects in villages such as ours can be achieved and have been achieved in other parishes – it has simply been a case of a lot of research and hard work by a team of volunteers.

So that brings me on to community spirit and community involvement. There are lots and lots of good things going on in CS all the time – it is a lovely village; however, perhaps it lacks a centre – something that pulls all the groups together from time to time? What I would like to debate in the coming year is whether this is lacking and whether we should work to find that central theme – whether it is to do with the village stores, Harvest Home, a village hall or even a swimming pool at the leisure centre or something entirely different. Or perhaps you don't feel that this is important? To that end, we will be talking about strategy for the parish in the coming year and maybe work towards setting this out in a Parish Plan. The questionnaire is a good first step along this road.

Much of this thinking has been prompted by the work we have done over the last year on the draft Core Strategy options presented to us by B&NES – having to review those documents does force you to think about what villages like CS need to survive and thrive in the 21st century. Themes we will be coming back to again and again are transport and traffic management in rural areas and also facilities for the young. One idea that CS has come up with along with Chew Magna is to take one of these “big” issues and to get together with all the other parishes in the Chew Valley in order to agree upon a joint strategy for the whole area – that way we will have a much bigger voice. This is an interesting initiative that we will be taking further.

The Parish Council has also been promoting our village stores on the basis of “use it or lose it”. This is something we will be debating further and working on with Malcolm. On top of this, we hope to bring further improvements to our open spaces, our bus stops and shelters and also the village website.

The Parish Council is here to serve the parish and it is important that, in making decisions that affect the parish, we are reflecting the views of the majority of our parishioners – and so we need your feedback and participation to assist with this.

Please do come along to our meetings to listen and to give your views – or contact any councillor at any time. You can also contact me or our clerk via our website.

We will have an opportunity for questions from the floor at the end of all of the reports and so please hold on for a little bit if you do have a question – you will be glad to hear that my report is the longest this evening.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT – Dennis Thompson

The Parish Accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis. All income received and expenses paid in an accounting year are recorded in that year, even if they relate to prior or future years. The accounts are audited both internally and then externally by Mazars and are available for viewing by appointment with the Parish Clerk. The audited accounts to 31 March 2009 are posted on the village website. The level of VAT claimed is naturally dependent on the number of paid invoices which are subject to VAT. The requirement that the Annual Parish Meeting has to be held between 1 March and 1 June each year means that the accounts reported to March 2009 are inevitably historic, since a 31 March year end does not allow sufficient time for the current year to March 2010 to be audited.

Parish income is almost wholly dependent on the Precept and the village cleaning contribution from BANES. Other grants are sporadic, usually unpredictable and not possible to forecast. The Precept which was raised to £15,000 in the year ended March 2010 has been left unchanged for the year ended March 2011. ALCA guidelines suggest that a reserve of 50% of the Precept is maintained. The budget for year ended March 2011 forecasts a reserve at the year end of £8547 which is 56% of the Precept. The present Precept equates to a figure of £36.00 for a Band D household and for comparative purposes this figure is less than that of Chew Magna and Compton Martin.

The years ended March 2010 and March 2011 have seen increased expenditure in 3 main areas. Extensive tree works have been necessary in Rectory Field and the Play Area. The Play Area has involved increased expenditure due to both safety requirements and vandalism damage.

The Parish Office is a very small unit at Fairseat which incurs new annual rental and utility costs of approximately £1100. The Parish facility for storage and archival filing had become unmanageable prior to this arrangement.

In clarification of other expenditure items –

VAT reclaimed income is shown as nil in 2009 as the claim was delayed and income fell in the 2010 year.

Rectory field grass cutting is shown as nil for 09 as the bill was not presented until the 2010 year and shown there.

The repairs and maintenance items in 2010 are -

Repairs to the safe surface play area following vandalism, extensive tree surgery in Rectory Field and the Play area, Stream clearance, repairs to the footbridge at Quarry Hay footpath, installation of a new post at Bristol Road/Bilbie road footpath and installation of new and further dog and litter bins.

“Other” items are the Parish Office rental and utility costs, Church Hall hire for meetings, provision of new benches, printing and stationery costs and subscriptions and donations. The expense of the recent village shrub planting was fully covered by a BANES grant specifically for this purpose and was not funded by the Precept.

A healthy balance is carried forward to next year.

5. POLICE REPORT – PC Simon Glanfield

Unfortunately, for us Simon Glanfield has been called to Police the Election Hustings at Ubley – he therefore, sent the Clerk the following report and also sent a brief report to Jenny Ireson which she will read out on his behalf before her report.

Police Report - Chew Stoke

During the last 12 months the crime figures have remained constant over the Chew Stoke Area within the Chew Valley North Beat.

Figures over last 12 months –

Burglary – Which includes Sheds and Commercial Premise = 12
Theft = 5
Criminal Damage = 13
Assault ABH = 2

Figures for Dec to Feb 2010 compared to same period in 2009

Burglary has reduced
Vehicle Crime reduced
Anti-social Behaviour reduced
Violence rose

The Criminal Damage was primarily down to the fact that we had one individual who was putting up signs around the toilets in the Tea Rooms. However this person has since been dealt with and the problem seems to have been resolved.

Assaults in the area are rare and so any reported incidents of this nature will tend to affect the figures. We had a couple of incidents of assault that are still under investigation.

Calls of Anti- Social Behaviour have dropped which we hope are down to the fact that we are increasing our visible patrol. We have dealt with an incident involving a couple of youths with an air pistol. The items were seized and appropriate action was taken.

Burglary has shown a reduction, however, 12 a year represents 1 a month on average for the Chew Stoke Area which is too many. Compared to other areas this is very low and the area remains a safe place to live.

The Beat Team have Spent time with the local Primary School where we have done assembly and classroom based activity which we aim to continue along with Beat Surgeries at the end of Term.

In order to assist the Police we urge every home to take note of our contact details and report any suspicious activity to us.

We have had some great calls over the last 2 months which has enabled us to identify who is in the area, when and where they are from.

We don't want to alarm anyone but a simple call to the Police to report any activity will be followed up and if it is innocent then that is fine but we need to know!!

What Do We Want –

1. Suspicious Vehicles – This might be a vehicle you don't recognise from the area, it might have a number of persons inside, it might be driving slowly past houses paying attention.
2. Suspicious Persons – They may be cold callers, charities, Gas or waterboard officials without I.D. It could be youths in a group or with hoods up covering their faces.

3. Phone or Internet – You may receive a call about a Home Security Visit. Please do not accept this, don't give any details which are personal even if they already have some. Remember if you haven't initiated the call then you don't need it!! If you require Home Security Advice then the Beat Team will arrange for the Police to do it. Free!!!

Action

If you receive or see any of the above then you must call either 999 or 0845 4567000 to report the incident where we will look into it as a priority.

The information we require

Registration of Vehicle (colour / model / make / features)
Persons description (Height / Build / Age / Clothing / Features)

Crime Prevention Reminder –

With Summer approaching and following our recent sunny spells we remind the people of Chew Stoke to remain vigilant and think crime prevention.

You will all be tempted to leave windows and doors open during warmer weather which creates an excellent easy opportunity for thieves to enter and steal items on display! Please exercise caution!! If you are enjoying your leisure time in your garden then make sure the front of your house is locked and secure.

The Beat Team now consists of myself, 2 PCSO's and a very regular Special Constable which has enabled us to be even more visible.

PC 4299 Simon Glanfield
Chew Valley Beat Manager

Unfortunately, PC Simon Glanfield is not able to attend as he has a "Political Hustings" meeting at Ubley this evening, therefore the Police Report PC Glanfield has submitted will be read out by Mrs Ireson with her Neighbourhood Watch Report.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH – MRS JENNY IRESON

As the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for the village I would like to record a warm welcome to Simon Glanfield who is our new Beat Manager, replacing Glen Lord.

Police Report

Tonight's TV news told us British Crime Survey says crime, with the exception of card crime is at an overall low for 30 years – down 7% but the Police would like to work with the community to get the levels lower still.

I would like to tell you a story related by Simon.

Not long ago someone in The Valley reported a suspicious van in the area. Simon stopped it. At that time there was no sign of wrong doing but he recorded the details. When the next day The Lakeside Café reported a break-in he was able to trace the suspect vehicle which contained evidence which enable the apprehension of the crooks. That piece of information made all the difference.

Simon encourages us to report any suspicious people, vehicles etc., and not to be afraid that our information is too small to be of consequence.

He is also offering a service to people leaving their property unoccupied.

You can register your holiday dates and key holder details so that if anything untoward should be reported a prompt police response is ensured, the correct people contacted. Discrete drive past surveillance of the area would also be included in the normal beat patrols. For the relevant period, the data would be held on designated, secure police files.

Simon has also asked that his mobile phone number and that of the PCSO's should be made available and urges us to use it whenever we are worried or suspicious. Obviously we should still phone 999 for a crime in progress or emergency.

I will be putting these numbers in the Parish magazine and on the Parish website.

I am also putting all relevant police warnings on the Parish website which is available for all to read on www.chewstoke.org.uk

Simon Glanville 07748 766997

PCSO Martyn Bragg 07825 103289

We are also urged to take advantage of our Statutory Right to have the police and local authority listen and deal with the issues which are of highest concern in our area at the quarterly PACT meetings. One was held last night and the issues dealt with last quarter were thought to have been successfully actioned. The new priorities given to the agencies for the next 3 months were:

- A review and rejuvenation of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme
- Police monitoring of Youth antisocial behaviour in the play areas in Chew Magna, Pensford Memorial Hall and Whitchurch.
- Speeding problems on Sutton Hill Road , Bishop Sutton. and
- Fire Service Interaction with local schools.

The next meeting will be at 7pm on 14 July at Pensford Memorial Hall

Last but not least, Doris Smart wanted a spy-hole for her front door. I contacted the Police who sent the Bobby Van. They checked her security and free of charge fitted the spy-hole and a new safer front door lock free of charge. This service is more cost effective than investigating and sorting out crime after the event. A free crime prevention survey is on offer to all.

7. REPORT ON UNITED CHARITIES- Hilary Padfield

Annual meeting took place on Monday 9 of November 2009 at 3 Quarry Hay

Those present were:-

Mrs Hilary Padfield

Mrs May Witt

Mrs Gillian Wring

Mrs Mel Jameson

The current account at the date of the meeting stood at £184.17 (this was the interest earned)

This year there were 6 beneficiaries who were given £30 each which left (at that time) a balance of £4.17 to be carried forward for next year

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Parishioner – a lot of dust is being created at the Radfords site – perhaps over the next few months the site could be dampened down with water spray. GS will speak to Charles Church.

Q. Bristol Road Footpath – if agreement is not made with all the landowners could the money available be used to make some of the area safer at least for the school children – GS the majority of the money available we have for 5 years.

Q. If the community building is not the doctors surgery – what else would it be – GS no plan B. It is hoped that the contracts will be signed and the Doctors Surgery will be built. MH – discussions have to set the rent from the Primary Care Trust – final negotiations with Charles Church are still taking place.

Before the meeting closed the Rev. Victor thanked Parish Council for their hard Work.

The meeting Ended at 8.30pm