

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FOR OAKLEY, 2ND MAY 2018

Present: Mrs. Blackman (Chairman), Mr. Crafer, Mr. Ellison, Mr. Hewitt, Mr. Leslie and Mr. Startin.

Borough Councillors Mrs. Taylor and Mr. Golding and County Councillor Mrs. McNair-Scott attended, as well as approximately 60 members of the public.

- 1. Welcome:** Mrs. Blackman welcomed residents and speakers to the meeting and announced that the speakers from Manydown had informed the clerk on Monday morning that they were not able to attend due to the Borough elections.
- 2. Apologies for absence** were received from Mr. Bealing, Mr. Bullions, Dr. Johnstone, Mr. Law, Mr. Parry and Ms. Tofts.
- 3. Andy Jones, PCSO:** The beat priorities for the area are burglary, theft, anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and road traffic incidents. Andy informed the meeting that although there was no overall rise in thefts in Oakley as a whole, there was a significant increase in bicycle thefts, and also in criminal damage. On the positive side there was a large reduction in reports of anti-social behaviour.
Andy commented that Beach Park was receiving extra attention, due to the gatherings of youths at the park smoking cannabis and drinking. The school swimming pool cover was damaged last summer as a result of vandalism. A resident asked if there was any link in the rise of bike thefts to the rising popularity of electric cycles, but Andy did not think this was the case. He did advise to check the unique serial no on each bike and take a photo of it so if a bike is stolen the police can identify it and get it back to the owner. Another resident asked if there was likely to be a rise in antisocial behaviour if the footpaths on the Ashe Park Estate are opened up again, but Andy felt that unlikely as Oakley has so many paths already.
Andy confirmed he had spoken to Mr. Sweeney at Bulls Bushes about rights of way and if residents had concerns that legitimate rights of way were blocked they should report them to Hampshire County Council.
- 4. Ashley White, CSPO:** Ashley explained that Community Safety Patrol officers are employed by Basingstoke and Deane, and concentrate on tackling anti-social behaviour and environmental crime – these may be regarded as low level but they are very important to residents nonetheless. Ashley stated that Oakley was a safe and pleasant village, but that dog fouling continued to be one of the major issues reported to the team from the Parish clerk and members of the public. Ashley advised that identification of dog and owner is vital, and that two owners have been visited and warned about letting their dogs foul, but it does rely on witnesses coming forward to the team.

Beach Park was also mentioned by Ashley as there has been quite a lot of antisocial behaviour -drinking, drugtaking, playing loud music late at night etc, and the team are doing extra patrols.

Ashley bought along some leaflets for residents, about fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles and how to report these incidents to the team. There

will be an even greater emphasis on dog fouling later in the year with the team all concentrating on this problem.

A member of the public asked if the increase in fly-tipping was related to the charges imposed by HCC at the waste disposal tips, but Ashley thought not as most of the fly-tip is things that can be disposed of without charge at the site.

5. Chairman's report: Mrs. Blackman gave a full report of the Council's work during the past year and their plans for 2018 (see report under separate heading)

6. Borough Councillor's report: Mrs. Taylor first spoke about finances and informed the residents that despite another large reduction in central government funding, the Borough's finances are still healthy and that BDBC continues to be one of the lowest district council tax areas, even though they have also one of the highest spends per head.

Mrs. Taylor then mentioned housing, and briefly spoke about Manydown and confirmed the development partner for the project as being Urban and Civic (partnered with the Wellcome Trust). She explained that the Borough and Parish Council were both urging Network Rail to establish a footbridge over the line by Beach Park, as with the new development at Park Farm it is vital that there is a safe route from the village to the park and to the Andover Road village hall.

The Co-op in Oakley Lane is still in the pipe line and the Borough is working with the architects in a pre-submission discussion.

The next topic was waste collection, and Mrs. Taylor confirmed the Borough's decision to continue with weekly collections for the grey bin, which is against a national background where almost 75% of councils now have fortnightly collections.

Leisure and shopping opportunities in the area continue to grow in popularity, with Festival Place shown amongst the 20 most attractive shopping centres in the country. The Leisure park deal has been signed and the new aquadrome and the designer outlet are both being funded by private sources.

Mrs. Taylor mentioned the issue of homelessness and rough sleeping, and informed the residents that the Night Light Winters Shelter project continues to operate to give up to 15 rough sleepers a bed and a hot meal during the winter month.

Finally Mrs. Taylor praised the work being done by a group of residents who are spearheading a project to get Kennet Way Park regenerated, using a mixture of public money and individual donations.

7. Speedwatch: Mr. Harding, a co-opted member of the Highways and Transport Working party, and the current co-ordinator on the Speedwatch initiative, summarized the 20 Speedwatch sessions done in the village in the past year. These indicate that approximately 5% of vehicles were exceeding the speed limit. The amount of Speedwatch sessions is limited due to the lack of volunteers. A new Speed Indicator Device was planned to be purchased by the Parish Council but it is important that confirmation from both the Police and the County Council is obtained to detail exactly

what information, in what type of format, is acceptable to both parties. The new device will be useable in open or 'covert' modes and will be able to gather information over a much longer period which will give a better indication than the hour long sessions currently being performed.

- 8. County Councillor's Report:** Mrs. McNair-Scott first explained that planned savings covering school crossings and community transport subsidies would not take place. The County Council has lost £219m of central government grant funding since 2010/11 and with a rise in the number of people over 85, and also with more younger people living with social and medical care needs, the budget is under extreme pressure. However, the County has a band D council tax rate of £1,200.00 against West Sussex's £1317.00 and Dorset and Surrey's of over £1400.00. The County Council has been implementing high-performing shared service arrangements over the last 5 years and this is being extended in the current year to include running Buckinghamshire's Children's Services, as well as IT services with Oxford. There are economies of scale to be gained from such measures, as well as extra income to the County.
- The state of the roads – in particular the potholes – was the next topic. The County has over 5,300 miles of roads to look after. Members of the public asked why it took so long to get the really large potholes fixed, as some had been reported in December and were still not filled. Councillor McNair-Scott agreed to follow this up with the Highways team. There have also been several incidents of flooding and both Pack Lane and Oakley Lane bridges are included in the provisional Operation Resilience programme for the year 18/19.
- Mrs. McNair-Scott confirmed there were no further library closures to be implemented in the coming year. She also confirmed her support for the proposed multi-user path from Newfound to Scrapps Hill, which will be part of the infrastructure for Manydown.
- 9. General Questions:** one resident asked if a notice board could be put outside One Stop for public as well as PC notices, and the Parish Council will discuss this. Another resident asked if the PC had detailed statistics about forecast traffic flows with the new developments at Beech Tree Close, Park Farm, and of course Manydown. Mr. Harding answered to say that the proposed new equipment that the Highways team are intending to purchase will give them better actual data but the Parish does not have the resources to run the modelling and forecasting programmes necessary to provide such a detailed estimate at present.
- 10.** As the meeting drew to a close, one of the residents proposed a vote of thanks to the Parish Councillors for all the work they do to benefit the village, which was echoed around the room.