

WINSFORD PARISH COUNCIL - ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 25th March 2015

7:30pm, Winsford Village Hall

1. Apologies for absence

D. Mileham, J. Williams, K. Lindop (to whom lots of love and good wishes was expressed), Rector D. Weir, J. Lawson, P. Gascoyne, J. Bray and K. Connell.

The Chairman welcomed everyone and introduced the new Clerk and RFO, Verity Vigar.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the last Annual Assembly (as posted on the notice board)

These were **APPROVED** and signed.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes - None.

4. Broadband

Steve Hunt introduced Nathaniel Lucas from the Economic Development Team at Connecting Devon and Somerset, who have responsibility for improving rural broadband that is not necessarily commercially viable. There is a need to have good broadband in the village and he will tell us the progress that is being made and answer questions.

Nathaniel Lucas then gave a detailed presentation, by firstly setting the scene of the broadband programme across the whole country. CDS covers the areas where the market failed to invest (i.e. BT, Virgin etc.) and collectively aims to reach 90% of premises by the end of 2016. Those within 1.2km of the FTTC (green box) will get superfast (up to 24mbps). Those properties further away will be covered by phase 2 which is using alternative solutions such as satellite and wifi. He suggested to look around the area for your nearest green box at the side of the road. When a green box is live it will have a poster on it notifying people and then you can ring up and request superfast, this is expected by October 2015 in Winsford. There is also a website map showing areas as they go live - www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk.

The Chairman thanked Nathaniel for his presentation.

5. The new "Winsford Website" - Beverley Flanagan

Many months ago when I was looking for some information, I thought I'd be sure to find it on the village website but to my horror all I found on inspection was information and photos that literally hadn't been updated for years.

When I asked other people in the village about it the general response was, what website or I never use it because its never kept up to date, it's not easy to use and difficult to find the information you want ,even if it's there and it's dull.

So at that moment the seed of an idea was sown to create a new website.

On my way home one afternoon I bumped into my new neighbour Helen and we were chatting about the village and where she might find information on events and clubs. I told her about the website and my ideas and my lack of technical ability and she said no problem, that's my husbands business, he'll do it.

So for those of you who don't know him I would like to introduce Jon Richardson who without his brilliant technical skills and unending

patience with me, we wouldn't be here making this presentation this evening.

So this is IT at its best Information (me) and technology Jon which have come together to make a great team.

So what are the aims of the website?

Firstly to have a village site that showcases all the things that are great about where we live and all the things that happen here. It has to be easily found by visitors and be informative, encouraging them to come to Winsford, thereby helping our local businesses to thrive.

For residents it has also to be informative, interesting and fun, keeping them up to date with events and giving them as much information as possible about all local services. It has also to be a website where everyone has a chance to be involved.

So thank you to everyone who has helped John and Maureen Maunder for assisting us with trying to get internet for this presentation tonight, for all of you who have contributed so far and to all of you who will hopefully be inspired to contribute in the future.

The new website was then displayed for all to see by Jon. Parishioners are encouraged to have a look regularly as things change every week and tell other people about it. It is not for profit, run by us for us.

The Chairman thanked Beverley and Jon for all their hard work.

6. The Village Archive

Jan Faulkner

I am the keeper of the archive, which includes people, places, events and facts of history. We even have the first Parish Council meeting minutes dating back to 1894. Winsford Remembers taught us a lot and lots was added then but there are still lots of gaps and more information is needed. People are asked to share anything that might be of interest and to date anything they hand over, which is then scanned and copied and the originals given back. Jan can be emailed at: winsfordarchive@gmail.com.

The Chairman thanked Jan and reminded people that things can be included as they happen, they don't have to be old.

Mel Mileham

I'd like to explain the 2 main aims for the archive and how they will work together. Jan has explained the need for records – or at least copies to fill in the many gaps that are currently in the physical archive. The way the village has developed into such a great place to live has been influenced by the people, industry, and agriculture over centuries. It would be such a shame to lose this knowledge, the skills and information known by previous generations and much of it now sadly disappearing.

In order to make some of this information more accessible I'd like to explain the concept of Online Parish Clerk to you in case you have never heard of it.

It is nothing to do with the Parish Clerk, who is an employee of the Parish Council. The OPC scheme started in Cornwall in 2000 when a group of amateur genealogists decided to make information about a County / Parish more easily available to anyone who was interested either in tracing their ancestors or researching the history of a particular Parish, its local, economic, social history, all of which serves to paint a picture of that Parish for indigenous residents or new comers moving to an area. Where the information is available it explains 'how we got to where we are now, traces developments, some major like Wars, famines, industrialisation, population movements, agricultural slumps, foot and mouth, which determine the course that the Parish takes right through to today.

The idea spread fairly quickly – bearing in mind that it is a purely voluntary operation. Many new Counties joined the project and now much of the British Isles is covered. In Somerset, for instance there are 170 of the 620 Parishes covered. Because – as it says in the title – this is an online resource that anyone who can use a computer can access.

So if your ancestors came from Winsford in the 1850's and you now live in Australia, an OPC can point you to the website or offer to do 'looking up' for you which is where the church records of baptism, marriage and burial come in. The censuses from 1841 every 10 years up to (currently) 1911, which are not readily available unless you subscribe to a Genealogy website or are willing to go to a records office. All these records can be uploaded on to the Somerset OPC site, they are linked under the Parish name and are accessible wherever you are in the world.

Now that the Winsford website is up and running it is proposed to put a 'village history' tab on the Webpage with links to the wsom-opc.org.uk. This will link to many of these records that have been uploaded plus any other information such as, copies of Kelly's directories (like yellow pages) for a selection of years between about 1880's – 1930's – showing most of the farms, trade + censuses.

As Online Parish Clerk for Winsford I have the email opcwinsford@btinternet.com

And I'm happy to answer any queries which may come in and use the information that Jan may have in the physical archive which we hope will soon find a permanent, dry, secure home!

There is a huge amount of work required to make the online and physical archive, useful, accessible and fit for purpose and I hope there are a number of you that may decide you would like to help. In the first instance it will be necessary to visit the Somerset Heritage Centre in Taunton to research important items that we can at least take a copy of. There are several Data Protection issues that fall under the 100 year rule and some items that have been handed in that may not be accessible or retrievable for Winsford.

So please, if you know of anything that needs saving let us know!

The Chairman thanked Mel. It was suggested to spread out a whole range of existing stuff one day for parishioners to see and to stimulate additions. Mini themed exhibitions could then be held from time to time.

7. Report on the George Joyce Trust - Richmond Harding

Despite no longer living in the Parish, Richmond has continued to be Winsford's representative. The other two parishes are Cutcombe and Wootton Courteney. He informed parishioners about the Trust, which was set up in 1952 to share the annual profits from the rent on the house and land at East Nurcott Farm (126 acres) between the 3 parishes. Despite a significant spend on maintenance this year, it has been decided to still give £1400 to each parish to be divided for those in financial need personally. Rector David Weir is a trustee and he should be contacted with details of anyone in need. It is all confidential. There is a vacancy for Winsford's representative, for which the Parish Council need to organise a replacement.

The Chairman thanked Richmond.

8. Village Clean up

Taking place this Sunday, 29th March at 11am to make the village look better. Note that the clocks change! Support is appreciated and regulars are asked to encourage others. Bags and pickers are provided.

9. The Chairman's Report - David Godsall

Last year I was able to report that the Winsford element of the Council Tax remained unchanged. This year we decided that the precept, that is the money we get from the District Council, should remain unchanged, but because of the way it is constructed you will have seen that what you pay to Winsford has reduced by 1.9%. As the owner of a band G property therefore my weekly contribution has reduced from 60 to 59p.

Last year I also informed you that the balance at the end of the financial year was expected to be about £3,500, this year it will stand at £3,700. You will remember that The Parish Council, as the Trustee, sold the old Village Hall, and with guidance from the Charity Commissioners, rather than attracting interest of only some £60, we invested the proceeds in compliance with the rules of the Trust.

The interest gained in the past 12 months has amounted to some £800. We will now therefore be able to reimburse the Parish Council with the cost of maintaining the village green and the play equipment as well as a share of the insurance premium costs – for this financial year which is about to end, that totals £700. We should also, in the future, be able to improve and where necessary replace the equipment on the Village Green from the Trust income rather than the precept and Sue Hayes and Bryony Neal will advise when anything is required.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank Mike Hillier, whom we employ to keep the grass cut in the public areas and generally to keep things neat and tidy, for all that he has done. Thanks also to Mike and to Robin Lockwood for the very good job they have done in re-roofing the bus shelter.

This past year saw the very moving and successful Winsford Remembers, which marked the centenary of the start of what we now know as the First World War. Can I thank, on your behalf, Mel Mileham whose idea it was and all those who contributed in very many ways. Winsford very much led the way in Somerset and I know that there is an appetite for future events that open up the past of Winsford to those of us who live here now. I am sure that you would want your Parish Council to continue to support this sort of event.

It is very pleasing to know that there is a growing number of younger people in the village. Nothing gets easier with the price of accommodation and the lack of employment opportunities. A great concern for those with young children in a village with no pavements has been the increased prevalence of speeding traffic. I congratulate Sarah Little and Emma Howe in taking the initiative and getting up a petition for a speed limit. Building on their start we have been able to gather just short of 100 signatures, covering in effect every household within the village. Previous attempts to do anything have got nowhere on this occasion speed checks have been carried out and we are being listened to. With considerable help from Frances Nicholson, our County Councillor, things are progressing, albeit slowly. She and I have a meeting in the village tomorrow with Gary Warren from Somerset Highways.

As a community we have every reason to be grateful to Mark and Sally from the Royal Oak for stepping into the breach and opening the Oak Shop when the long anticipated closure of the Village shop happened in September. Remember the old adage of use it or lose it is as valid as ever.

Can I thank all my fellow councillors for their invaluable contribution. I know there are people who think we do nothing but I can assure you that is not the case all you have to do is ask our wives/husbands/partners just how much time and effort is involved. I am very sorry that we have lost Edward Harding who has now moved to Withypool.

Particular thanks go to Steve Hunt who volunteered to be co-opted to replace the irreplaceable Sue Hayes (and is also secretary of the Village Hall Committee) and has lead our case for broadband; Beverley Flanagan who has been the driving force behind the Website as you have seen; Kevin Connell who has represented us at a wide range of National Park Meetings; Katherine Lindop an excellent and very supportive vice-chairman who was an enormous help when we were between clerks; and of course Johnny Bray who's experience can always tell us that whatever challenges we are suddenly faced with have been coped with before – and how!.

You are no doubt also unaware of how much help Winsford gets from Frances Nicholson and Bruce Heywood, our County and District Councillors who have attended every one of our Meetings and taken up causes on your behalf.

10. Election of Parish Councillors

Parish Councillors serve a term of 4 years and at the end stand for re-election, which is tied in with the national election on 7th May. The Parish has a maximum of 7 Councillors, of which there are 6 currently. If anyone is interested in standing, please contact Chairman, David or Clerk, Verity. Details will be displayed on the noticeboard as per the statutory timings.

11. Questions from the floor

Dave Williams - concerned that erecting speed limit will cost more in order to police it as people already take notice or not. The Chairman replied that he couldn't answer but we are doing our bit, there are young families and no pavements and a speed limit is essential as currently doing 60mph is within the law. He reminded parishioners that we all have a responsibility to drive carefully through the village.

Further concern was expressed that it would make no difference and that more was needed such as street lights, lines in the road, signs etc. Tim Debney stated that there are mechanisms for community speed checks once there is a limit. Local members of the community can use the technology backed up by the PCSO.

Colin Phippen - reported that quad bikes charge around that Caratacus stone doing damage with the tracks. It was replied that this was a matter for the National Park. He also reported that 3 years ago 25/30 bales of rushes were baled and then left. Whilst they are biodegradable the cord is not and is a hazard to wildlife and ponies. It was replied that it was likely done for biomass boilers or bog regeneration but that he should also raise it with the Park.

Another parishioner mentioned that he had reported that there was a lot of wire around the allotment and that 3 months later it disappeared. The Chairman replied that he had spoken to the Thomas Everard family.

Colin Phippen - concerned that when grandchildren play on the village green, there is dog poo. Can we put up signs and a bin? The Chairman reported that there is already a bin at Howtown and that it costs significantly more for WSDC to come and empty a second one. There is already a problem with emptying the bins anyway so will ensure it is investigated after the election.

Jan Faulkner - can we tidy up the bus shelter and telephone box? It was replied that the box was last done 2 years ago and replacing the damaged timetable case is in hand. We can give the bus shelter a new coat of creosote.

The pile of scalping in the car park was also mentioned, which has been there a very long time. The chairman replied that they were to be used to fill in the holes in the car park and that there was to be a site meeting there in a couple of weeks.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and apologised that it is taken so long, but it was great to have had the new website displayed and the other presentations and reports.

The meeting closed at 9.24pm.

Signed: Date: