

**MINUTES OF THE SPEEN PARISH ASSEMBLY 16<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2007 IN THE  
PARISH HALL AT 7.30 P.M.**

**Present:** G Foulkes ( Chairman ) D MacAlister L Warner A Snook A Martin  
A Lees AJ Ives ( Clerk )

**Members of the Public:** 2 plus Newbury Weekly News Representative.

- 1) **WELCOME** by the Chairman.
- 2) **APOLOGIES** P Calder E Vandyk H Ashburner R Tolcher K Phillips  
P Bryant ( District Councillor.)

3) **MINUTES** of the Parish Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> April 2006, which had been circulated.  
These were agreed and duly signed. Proposed and seconded. All in favour.

4) **MATTERS ARISING: nil**

5) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

At the Annual General Meeting of May 2006 there arose the matter of the parents of children attending Stockcross Primary School & the early morning use of the Parish Council Car Park - as a safe dropping off point. The B4000 is both busy & dangerous - Chapel Lane the location of the School is also unsuitable as a safe dropping off point. The Parish Council agreed to temporary of the Council Car Park.

After a constructive meeting with the Headteacher, a Governor & two SP Councillors - it was agreed that temporary use of the Car Park would continue subject to agreement from the Parish Council. However it was also agreed that a more permanent solution was necessary. To date the matter has not been resolved.

You may recall that after high winds last year the Speen War Memorial was damaged. It was repaired by a Basingstoke masonry company who used laser technology to cut a replacement cross in Portland Stone.

The Memorial is now fully restored.

We were up to full numbers of Parish Councillors by September, and were pleased to welcome the new faces.

Donations for the Churches were given as normal £250 each for the upkeep of the Churchyards. A donation was given to Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust £100.

A visit from the West Berks Chief Executive Nick Carter gave greater insight in starting a Parish Plan. His interesting talk gave food for thought, but no decisions have been made as yet.

An active policy for the use of dog bins has been started, and thanks for this to one councillor – Cllr Denise McAllister.

For the coming year the 2007-08 Precept £18,365 ( last year was £13,620) - to allow for plans to go ahead for Speen Recreation ground, pavilion and car park, and Stockcross Car Park.

## 6) WORKING GROUPS REPORTS:

### 6a) PLANNING GROUP: Planning Report. Year 2006 – 7

It was unfortunate that I was indisposed for a considerable part of the year and I would like to thank others on the committee and the council for doing all they could to cover for me.

On looking back over the year, there appears to be little change from previous years in the mix and number of applications.

This year there were 52 applications notified to SPC of which 7 were later withdrawn leaving 45.

From the information to hand, we objected to 5 of the 45, three of which were later approved by WBDC. In contrast, we had no objection to two others but WBDC refused them later.

From the records I have available, our opinion overall was roughly in parallel with WBDC.

Most applications were non-controversial but those that did cause some concern came to a satisfactory conclusion.

Three items of interest

First is that Speen Garage has lost its permission to do vehicle repairs other than those for presenting their own vehicles for sale and

Second is that, Benham Grange Farm now owned by Wessex Recovery, being used for heavy and light vehicle recovery and a waste transfer station, has been given permission to extend its buildings by some 30 odd percent.

I claimed a pecuniary interest on this one so passed the applications to other members with an offer to help with any technical item that they might incur.

I give you my report. Cllr Allan R Snook.

### 6b) RECREATIONAL GROUP REPORT/SPEEN Prepared by Lou Warner

#### External Condition of the Pavilion

The roof is in a sorry state, there are nine broken roof tiles which need to be replaced urgently. I spoke to Tony Butcher about making these repairs and he declined as he said this is a two-man job and he is too busy. Do we have the name of a contractor who we could contact to do this?

All the external wood fascias, shutters and doors have deteriorated badly and are in need of treatment with a wood preservative, this needs to be done soon or they will need to be replaced. Denise McAlister has some quotations for this work and is awaiting further quotations.

There are no working lights on the outside of the pavilion and at night it is totally black and the pavilion lighting needs to be dealt with without delay.

There is unsightly graffiti on the brickwork that needs to be removed.

### Internal

I have no keys and am unable to inspect the inside of the pavilion. I believe SPC had a hefty electricity bill, not helped by an unknown person leaving the heating in the pavilion on for several weeks.

When speaking to Tony Butcher recently, he informed me that he had been requested to read the electricity metre for SEC, as the electricity had been estimated for the past 5 years due to the meter being inside the garage and inaccessible to the SEC.

If I can have a set of keys for the pavilion, I am prepared to inspect the inside of the pavilion on a regular basis to avoid this happening again.

### Car Park

The contract to extend the tarmac over the rest of the car park was agreed at the last SPC meeting, this will eliminate the problem with the scalpings finding their way onto the grass and being thrown at the pavilion.

The wrought iron gates to the car park are in need of urgent replacement. The right hand gatepost has tipped in and this heavy gate needs to be lifted to be opened and closed. Keith Butcher, the Brazilian Soccer coach complained to me last Saturday that the top part of the gate on the right hand side has partially come away and this hit him on the head while he was opening the gate. This is a health and safety risk, which may cause injury and could result in a claim being made against the SPC.

The wooden gate next to the car park gates needs to be treated with wood preservative to prevent further deterioration. The bolt and catch, which are missing, need to be replaced to stop this gate from swinging and banging in the wind.

Next to the car park, a street light was recently blown down and has not yet been replaced although the Clerk has given an order for this work to the SEC.

### Rubbish

Tony Butcher continues to remove the rubbish from the Speen recreation grounds every Monday morning. Most of the rubbish is empty beer cans and plastic bottles left around the pavilion area.

### Noise

There has been an increase in the youth activity late at night over the past few weeks, probably due to the warmer weather.

### Soccer Club Contracts

New draft contracts have been sent by the Clerk to the secretary of the Brazilian Soccer Club, as of last Saturday, the coach Keith Butcher had not seen this so I have put a copy through his door.

The proposed contracts AFC Newbury for Speen are OK to send but the proposed contract for Stockcross needs some changes which I would like to discuss with Keith Phillips prior to completing.

## **6c) RECREATIONAL GROUND STOCKCROSS** Prepared by K Phillips

### **School Parking**

Parents delivering and collecting children from Stockcross School have been causing problems by restricting access (notably emergency vehicles), damaging verges and obstructing driveways in the lanes around the school. The matter was discussed at a meeting in September between the Head Teacher Nathan Hunt and the Chairman Grahame Foulkes and Cllr Keith Phillips. It was agreed that the “kiss and drop” scheme introduced by the school for the mornings was working well and during fine weather use of the Stockcross Recreation Ground car park also worked relatively well with parents and children able to walk safely across the grass to the gate opposite the school. However during wet weather parents were not inclined to walk across the wet grass nor walk along the narrow pavement on the B4000. Parents are also clambering through the fence onto the Rec. in spite of reminders from the Mr Hunt not to do so. The fence is now in need of repair as a consequence (see below).

Mr Hunt maintains that the parking problem is not the school’s responsibility. The possibility of a footpath from the Rec. car park to the gate opposite the school was discussed but source of funding was not identified. It was agreed that the PC would look into the possibility of external funding since neither the PC nor the school could afford to pay from their normal budgets, especially since the car park itself is in serious need of resurfacing, which is another disincentive to its use during wet weather (see below).

It is worth noting that the school has a current application for an extension to the library area. Presumably this will facilitate further growth in pupil numbers.

### **Stockcross Recreation Ground**

The Rec is continuing to be used regularly by junior footballers (AFC Junior Newbury Boys and Girls Soccer teams). However the pavilion is in a poor state and unless improved (provision of WC in particular) the teams will be unable to play there. The footballers have offered to refurbish the pavilion but naturally would expect something in return, specifically to be able to sub-let. The PC has agreed to take the initiative on the refurbishment and costs are currently being identified.

Quotations for resurfacing the car park with gravel and replacing the fencing to match that around the children’s play area have been obtained and the work is scheduled to be completed by the end of May.

While trying to identify possible external sources of finance for the footpath and improvements to the pavilion it was realised that qualification for grants and charity money is often heavily dependant on the extent to which the facilities are used by the local community. The Sutton Hall Committee was asked if there was a possibility of finding more ways of using the Rec. e.g. for the Street Fair which in turn prompted publication of an article in the the Grapevine Newsletter hinting that unless we made greater use of the Rec we might lose it. The article invited people to let the PC know

of any ideas for extending its use. Whilst untrue that we could otherwise lose it (because it is owned by the Parish) this did generate several suggestions, especially from the younger members of the community, for new facilities such as a concrete surface for radio controlled cars, skateboarding, rollerblading and the like. Regrettably execution of these ideas also requires funding.

6d).. The Pound and Lady Well: A Butcher reported that snowdrops and daffodils abound and that the area is in good order.

6e).. The War Memorial: Posts need checking – some are cracked. Cars park on the corner forcing passing cars into the triangle and breaking the chairs and bollards.

7)..**CRIME IN SPEEN** – No Councillor present.

## **8) ..DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT – Marcus Franks**

I will start on some district wide issues. It has been another successful year producing the second below inflation council tax increase. While investing to allow 45 miles of roads to be resurfaced and the new waste contract being negotiated to shortly allow kerbside collections of plastic and cardboard.

Paul and I have worked with the parish council and residents on a number of issues including footpaths – some of which are still outstanding others have reached a successful conclusion like the golf course. We have also worked on several planning issues.

We have continued work on anti- social behaviour and crime in the Speen area especially Speen Lodge Ct. I have put in a bid for a footpath to Stockcross School from the car park to be delivered within the pathway improvement programme.

We look forwards to working with the parish council in the forthcoming year (subject to results on May 3<sup>rd</sup>) especially on getting more planning gain money spent within Speen ward. Also to help raise funds for Speen and Stockcross recreation Grounds. We appreciate the help and support given by the parish council over the past year.

## **9) ..FINANCE REPORT**

### **SPEEN PARISH COUNCIL - FINANCE REPORT**

<b>RECEIPTS</b>		<b>PAYMENTS</b>	
Precept	13,620.00	Hall Hire	156.00
Interest Received	1,106.32	Stamps/postage	407.59
Vat Refunded	1,545.96	Insurance	1,245.43
Football	1,205.00	Website	780.00
Sds/Stationery	40.00	Stny/Use of home	864.23
Insurance	3,117.00	Audit	270.00

		Clerk	5,096.40
		Lights	2,246.77
		Memorial repair	2,943.00
		Recreational Gmd	4,418.20
		Subscriptions	412.95
		VAT	1,598.06
		S137	840.00
	20,634.28	-	-
Loss:	644.35		21,278.63
	21,278.63		
B/Forward	25,532.22		
add receipts =	46,166.50		
less payments	24,887.87	Accumulated figs	24,929.85
as per accounts		less: O/s cheque	41.98
			24,887.87
carried forward	24,887.87		
Funds in Banks	24,887.87		

Our Bank of Ireland branch at Kingston Upon Thames has merged with Berkeley Square London W1.

We are still trying to obtain an Internal Auditor for the coming year.

Our thanks to Anthony Kirke who has been in this position since 2003 UHY Hacker Young are in their last year as External Auditors.

The rate we get on our Bank of Ireland Account is 4.75%

J Ives

Thank you  
Responsible  
Financial Officer

- 10) ANY OTHER BUSINESS** a) We are still hoping for a road to be named after Monica Harries – no new housing developments have come up this year. West Berks Council are ‘on the case’.
- b) A Snook mentioned the proposed facility at Stockcross ie a new pavilion and toilet. This sparked a discussion and A Snook agreed to form costs and report back, after having met with AFC Juniors.

**The Meeting ended at 8.30 p.m. and the next meeting is the AGM on May 14<sup>th</sup> at Speen at 7.30 p.m. All Electors Welcome.**