

**MINUTES OF THE SPEEN PARISH ASSEMBLY HELD
ON 21ST APRIL 2008, IN SPEEN VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 p.m.**

Present: G Foulkes (Chairman) E Vandyk (Vice Chairman) K Phillips
K Sullivan A Martin R Tolcher A Lees A Snook J Ives (Clerk)

Members of the Public: Thames Valley Police (3) Newbury Weekly News (1)

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN.

- 1) **APOLOGIES:** L Warner P Bryant (DC) M Franks (DC)
- 2) **MINUTES** Minutes from 16th April 2007 Parish Assembly were agreed and signed. All in Favour.
- 3) **MATTERS ARISING** nil.

4) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

There has been some progress in the work of the Speen Parish Council this year.

For example we have re-surfaced the Car Park at Stockcross and replaced some fencing there, and tarmaced the Car Park at Speen. The Football Contracts with AFC and Braziliant Fun Soccer have been re written and agreed, signed and payment is coming in. We have plans to administer our busy website ourselves. The garage at the Pavilion has been cleaned out and emptied of all rubbish. My thanks to Lou Warner.

The Precept has been considered and agreed and is going up to £20k 2008/2009 to allow for work at Speen recreational ground and pavilion.

I am glad to say that our efforts with WBC Highways has resulted in a hump in Brummel Road and VAS in Stockcross. Further plans for Grove Road are in the pipeline.

Regretfully we are short of 3 Councillors – please spread the word and any questions to myself or the Clerk.

The New Code of Conduct was scrutinised, discussed and agreed in July 2007.

Donations have been made to the Church of St Mary Speen, and St Johns of Stockcross, and payments will also be made to the Speen Fete and St Georges Day at Stockcross.

Plans for new security barriers at both recreational grounds are in hand and quotes being obtained, including replacement gates for Speen Recreational Ground.

My thanks to all my fellow Councillors and Julia Ives our Parish Clerk.

- 5) **TALK BY THE POLICE:** Three Police Officers were present led by PC K Edmond and she explained the current policy which has 'gone live' in this area. PCSO's and NAG's are all set up and they are ready to hear from the public, and act. Numerous small meetings between Police and Public have now increased in size and

the NAG organisation is coming along well, particularly in the Donnington area on Speen borders. Scrap cars are being moved, photos are being taken of suspect areas, and young people are being invited to come to the NAG meetings. Perception of speeding is assessed and planned and has to be approved, which takes time. There is now a Newsletter for all to read, on the Thames Valley Police Website.

The Chairman thanked K Edmond, P Sutherland and R Breach for coming to this Meeting.

6) WORKING GROUPS REPORTS:

a) Planning. A Snook report a satisfactory year with all Applications being returned on time, and all except one had been approved/refused as we had noted. The one we had refused was eventually passed by WBC. 42 had been scrutinised during the year and A Snook thanked his Committee of L Warner, K Phillips and K Sullivan

b) Speen Recreation Ground Report: prepared by Lou Warner

External Condition of the Pavilion

Roof tiles damaged during the past year have been replaced when required and at this moment the condition of roof is satisfactory. The external wood fascias, shutters and doors have deteriorated badly and are in need of treatment with a wood preservative, quotations for this work need to be obtained. The lights on the outside of the pavilion have been repaired and are working on a time switch at night.

There has over the years been a considerable amount of vandalism to the pavilion, this has mainly been caused by youths who congregate there at night. These youths often use the venue to consume alcohol, they sometimes become rowdy and on occasions they vandalise the pavilion. For this reason, the SPC committee recently voted to have a youth deterrent device called a Mosquito installed at the pavilion to discourage youngsters from meeting there at night. The Mosquito was installed by Secure Systems and it was immediately vandalised. Secure Systems have now improved the protection around the unit and the PIR detector and the unit is still working at this time. The Mosquito device is on a time switch to only work in the evenings from 5pm until 3am and will only be activated by someone entering the patio area of the pavilion. There is unsightly graffiti on the brickwork that needs to be removed.

Internal: The Garage The Brazilian football club store their goalposts in the garage, the rubbish at the back of the garage has been removed. The SSE have replaced the electricity meter in the pavilion due to its age. **The Changing Rooms** This area needs a good clean and ideally it should be repainted. **The Main Room and Kitchen** This area is very untidy and also needs a good clean. The toilet which was damp due to a leak from the toilet is now dry but this area needs painting.

Car Park The tarmac to the rest of the car park has been completed and is satisfactory. There is an area between the car park and the pavilion which for some reason has not been tarmaced, this area is surfaced with scalpings and it needs to be surfaced with tarmac or concrete to avoid the scalpings finding their way onto the football pitches.

The wrought iron gates to the car park and the adjacent pedestrian gate are in need of urgent replacement or restoration. I believe that the gates will be dealt with along with the new barriers to keep travellers from occupying our recreation field. Several of the short wooden posts have been removed from around the car park, these are now

in the pavilion garage. We should consider concreting these into the ground as they are too easy to lift out.

Noise There has been a decrease in the youth activity and noise late at night over the past few weeks, probably due to the Mosquito device.

Rubbish The brick rubbish bin next to the pavilion has been badly vandalised, most of the bricks have been broken off the bin. There are two deactivated steel goal posts laying on the ground behind pavilion, these need to be sawn up and removed from the area.

c) Recreational/ Traffic etc in Stockcross K Phillips reports:

The main issues to report in Stockcross mainly relate to traffic:

- through traffic: too fast through the village – speed indicators being erected
- school traffic: inadequate parking – initiatives needed
- wrong sort of traffic, risk of, in the Rec. car park – height restriction gates being installed
- underground traffic in the form of moles – humane deterrents being sought
- football traffic, or lack of, on the Rec. – inadequate facilities; high cost of upgrading.

Local residents led by recently arrived Gill Creswell and Tony Hersh have taken the initiative to campaign for measures to enforce the 30mph speed limit through the village. 30 mph indicators (vehicle activated signs – VAS) are scheduled to be in operation before the end of April, but the initiative does not end there; the effect will be monitored and it is hoped that other changes will be introduced to take effect once the “novelty” of the signs begins to wear off. Very few options are available; another “pinch point” and extending the speed limit beyond the village boundaries are the most likely.

Another traffic problem is that created by school parents restricting access and some blocking driveways at school opening and closing times. Possible solutions include using the Rec and the Sutton Hall car parks but introduce the challenges of either walking children safely across the B4000, along the narrow pavement past the Rising Sun or across the wet and inhospitable Rec. during inclement weather (including snow in April!). The local traffic action group is including the school in its action plan and is supported by at least two of the resident parish councillors.

Recent problems caused by travellers in other parts of the district have alerted the parish to the possibility of unwelcome parking in the Rec car parks. Frequent, regular and welcome users of the Rec. car park include walkers (many with dogs), tennis players, children (with parents) using the playground and occasional footballers. It is highly inconvenient to lock the car park gates; instead height-limiting gates are being installed to prevent the inflow of “undesirable” vehicles.

Mole hills have recently appeared on the corner of Church Road and the B4000, preventing grass cutting which David Halls has generously undertaken for some years prior to the moles’ emergence. Efforts are being made to eradicate the subterranean rascals.

Football clubs no longer use the Rec. on a regular basis as the pavilion does not meet required standards; this is something of an understatement. The Rec offers probably the best level playing surface in the district, not only for football but cricket too, as evidenced by an excellent afternoon’s entertainment last summer. It will be a major tragedy if its use is limited by lack of a pavilion; but the cost of refurbishment and

upkeep to meet H&S requirements is significant, certainly more than can be financed from the Parish Council precept.

7) CRIME IN SPEEN: Reported by R Tolcher.

1. The "Speen, Shaw & Donnington Neighbourhood Action Group" (NAG) is up and running and has been holding regular meetings at Trinity School at approx. two monthly intervals. SPC has been represented at all meetings.

The organisation of the Group is in the process of being made more formal with the adoption of a "Constitution" incorporating membership rules and procedures. A draft newsletter has been produced and the final version is due to be issued after approval at the next meeting, to be held on Tuesday 3rd June 2008. Members of the Group will be required to sign "Acceptance of Office" forms as part of the Constitution at that meeting. The Chairperson of this NAG is Jo Tuttle who lives in Speen.

2. A major issue over the last twelve months has been the Gating Order for the footway between Speen Lodge Court and the A4 Bath Road. The Order was authorised on the 26th February 2008 by WBC Cllr Keith Chopping following the preparation of a detailed report by Alex O'Connor, Assistant Community Safety Manager of the Safer Communities Partnership Team.

The gate is currently being manufactured and should be ready for installation very soon now. The work is being financed by developer contribution.

Thanks are due to Alex O'Connor, to both Ward Members and the local residents who have all put a lot of effort into resolving this problem regarding local crime and anti-social behaviour. It has been a slow process, taking approx. 2 years to achieve a positive result.

8) BAGNOR: Report by E Vandyk

I attended a meeting of the Bagnor village ad hoc committee held at the pub in Bagnor on Friday 14 March following the PC meeting and the request made at that meeting for a grant to assist in bringing land adjacent to the river Lambourn back into a meadow.

A number of items relating to Bagnor were discussed and I indicated that in some instances, such as speed limits for example, involving the PC or Marcus Franks, as the District Councillor, may well get a more satisfactory response if not result.

I shared with them WBC's preliminary findings about the flooding in 2007, its cause and remedial measures.

As regards the meadow I said I believed the PC would welcome an application but such application needed to be comprehensive and specific about what was proposed, cost, legal and other regulatory issues as regards ownership, proposals re ongoing maintenance etc.

These were obviously issues the village had taken on board as they had been in touch with the owners (the golf club) and had a representative from the SSI zone adjacent to the (proposed) meadow the other side of the river.

Two things emerged from the meeting.

Firstly they would get on with the meadow and approach the PC as and when they had the information to make an application. I offered to help format the application.

Secondly I urged them to nominate someone to be put forward for membership of the PC as and when there was a vacancy. I believe they will accept this challenge !

9) DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT: Marcus Franks reported:

I set out last year, targets for Paul and myself to support your work.

These were sort out Speen Lodge Ct gating order and get access to more S106 money for the parish. The gate isn't up yet but it is due shortly. I would like to thank the dedication of the residents and the work of the Parish Councillors in getting us this far. I am hopeful when the gate is up crime in that vicinity will reduce to the benefit of the residents.

As for more S106 money. Some has gone towards the gate. I believe some open spaces money has been transferred to the Parish Council as well. We need to do more in this area to support your projects.

Other improvements in the parish have been the safe routes to school scheme by Robert Sandilands school.

The VAS signs in Stockcross village. We have a momentum for further action on speeding traffic in the village. Shortly the gateways into Stockcross should be painted by the Highways department (I will find out the proposed date from for the minutes.)

On a wider basis the district council has delivered another council tax rise within inflation rates. This was achieved within a framework of a very low settlement (2%) from the government and large costs increases from Older Peoples services and the financial support required for the PFI waste contract.

The road and footway improvement programme has continued bringing West berks roads up to an acceptable standard. The new waste contract has now been signed which will provide more doorstep recycling services and better street cleansing which was a concern in the Speen area in the last couple of months of the old contract.

I would like to thank the Parish Council on behalf of Paul and myself for all your support over the past year.

10) FINANCE REPORT by Responsible Finance Officer J Ives (Clerk)

The Accounts have been prepared for the Internal Auditor, and onwards to the new External Auditors Mazars LLP in Southampton. They will be presented to the Parish Council at the May Meeting, following the AGM.

There will be an opportunity for anyone to see the accounts – a notice will be displayed on the boards, and if you are interested please do ring me and come and

collect a photocopy at the cost of £4, to my office in Chaddleworth. I will be pleased to explain anything on which you have queries.

We brought forward a figure of £24,888 and finished the accounting year with £28,263 in our Bank Accounts. Some of the activity in between is as follows:

Precept: £18,635 Other Receipts: £9,917
Clerks Salary: £5,110 Other Payments: £19,797.

The other payments cover: Insurance premium: £1,284.92 (there is a cheaper alternative to be discussed by the Council in May) Recreational Ground costs: £11,469.24 Lights in Speen: £2,351.43 subscriptions, elections and sundries: £671.26 the rest is normal administration such as hall hire, stationery, GPO and auditors charges.

We have had receipts from the football, and tennis club at Stockcross and Speen Fete kindly made a donation of £300.

We have received interest at the Bank of Ireland – averaging £338.00 per quarter. This is at a rate of 4.95%.

VAT has been reclaimed regularly and been banked.

We received Section 106 monies in the sum of £4647.09 re Sextons Cottage, Speen.

We also received £50 from the young tearaway who damaged the roof of the Pavilion causing repair to the roof tiles. We thank him.

The Mosquito has not been paid for in the financial year under review. Work has been completed at Stockcross Car Park and Speen tarmac car park. We are planning to have Security Barriers erected at both Car Parks, and this will happen soon. There is more Sec 106 monies in the pipeline, details later.

10) ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- a) It was agreed to hold an Extra Meeting on April 28th at 7,30 at Stockcross House, to discuss the Security Barriers and place an Order.
- b) The Clerk asked that a Bank Mandate be signed for Bank of Ireland.
- c) A cheque should now be sent to pay for the Mosquito.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.30 P.M. AND THE NEXT MEETING IS AS MENTIONED ON APRIL 28TH AT THE OFFICES, STOCKCROSS HOUSE.