

BUCKLAND NEWTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report Annual Parish Meeting

Tuesday, 13th May 2014

Welcome by Chair:

Vice Chairman Nicki Barker welcomed parishioners to the meeting and presented the Chairman's Report highlighting items that the Parish Council have been involved with over the last year. Parishioners are always most welcome at all our monthly meetings and can bring their views and concerns to the Council's attention prior to the Council discussing Agenda items. The year has again seen a change in Parish Clerk with Sarah Wood stepping down in August and we are delighted to have been able to fill her place with a local resident, Sarah Mitchell.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Council has continued to comment on a variety of Planning Applications the more important being final approval of the Whole Farm plan for Court Farm to improve its visual attractiveness and control the precise use or industrial occupation of each of the farm buildings, alongside a few domestic applications and several farm applications relating to new slurry and waste water regulations.

NEIGHBOURHOOD/PARISH PLANS

This has continued to be by far the biggest undertaking of the Parish during the year. It is the work of a diligent team of parishioners concentrating as working groups to cover core aspects, led with extraordinary dedication by Cllr John Baker assisted by Cllr Townsend and District Councillor Jacqui Cuff. The Parish Plan, which deals with a wide variety of non-development issues within the Parish, was completed and adopted in October 2013 and a number of its recommendations are already completed or actively in hand, such as the coloured footway alongside part of the B3143, the future of the old red BT phoneboxes and a project to restore the fingerposts within the parish.

The team is now concentrating on the Neighbourhood Plan which, when finally completed, examined by the Government and adopted by a Parish Referendum, will form the basis of how current residents would like to see the built environment of the Parish develop over future years, whilst ensuring every protection to its unique rural environment. In order to advance this, a questionnaire was circulated to every household in the Parish in March 2014 to understand their anticipated future housing or business needs and to understand the potential for development land that could become available from within the stock of current landowners in the Parish.

PARISH FIELD

Mowing of the field continues to be done very economically and efficiently by the County Council Grounds Maintenance Team.

An oak memorial bench in memory of Sir William Aykroyd has been acquired for installation at the northern end of the field. A second hardwood bench has been donated by a local parishioner. Both benches will be installed on a hard surface this summer.

FINANCES

The Parish Accounts remain in positive territory.

There has been no increase in Parish Precept.

The Council continues to manage Sir William Aykroyd's legacy prudently and to use it to cross subsidise or benefit projects within the Parish.

RURAL ROADS SCHEME

The creation of a coloured, but not raised footway between the shop and the school with a raised pavement section around at the crossroads itself was completed in September. It has taken a while for the philosophy of it to bed in and for residents and vehicle traffic to use it correctly, but it is already beginning to achieve its primary purpose of slowing the B3143 traffic down through the village and

providing a safer route to the shop. This is being further enhanced by the efforts of a local group of under a Community Speed Check scheme.

HOUNTWELL PUMP

In September 2013, the Parish Council appointed Land Agent Andrew Robinson, Senior Partner of Symmonds and Sampson to act on their behalf to assist in resolving the land issues on which the ancient Hountwell Pump and its access track sit. The intention is to restore the well and re-erect the boundary fence as soon as these issues have been resolved to ensure the original supply of potable water in Henley remains available in perpetuity against a future public need.

WINTER FLOODING AND RIVER WORKS AT WOOLFORD WATER

The unprecedented intensity and continuity of rainfall throughout the winter caused the B3143 to behave as a river from Landscombe Lane downhill towards Woolford Water. This caused flooding issues to houses along its way and particularly at The Cross where flooding has been exacerbated by the installation of the new raised pavement. These issues were discussed on site with DCC Highway engineers in February 2013. This excessive runoff has also caused additional problems where the entire volume of roadwater discharges from the Highway drain into the ditch to join the River. The high volume has interfered with the normal flow line of the stream forcing it towards the Lydden Meadow side leading to serious undercutting and potential damage to the foundations of the footbridge and attenuation exit. To resolve this and return the river to its pre winter course position, the Parish Council, as a riparian owner of the short section of the River Lydden immediately upstream of the Woolford Water road bridge, is working with their opposite riparian owners BNCPT of Lydden Meadow to remove the buildup of load deposit gravel and repair the undercut section of the bank with gabions. No Environment Agency Consent is required for this work because the Lydden is classed as a stream, but an application for Ordinary Watercourse Land Drainage Consent has been required from the DCC.

Signed Date.....