

Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Semington Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 20 April 2011 at 8 pm in the Village Hall

PRESENT:

Robert Oglesby, Chairman, Semington Parish Council and Chairman for the meeting.

Roger Coleman, Clerk.

The following Parish Councillors were present: K Lockwood, B Smyth, P Vooght and C Wade.

Wiltshire Councillor J Seed attended the meeting.

There were four members of the public present.

1. Introduction and Apologies.

The Chairman, Robert Oglesby, opened the meeting by explaining the purpose of, and procedure for, a Parish Meeting.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 12 May 2010.

The Minutes were signed as a true and accurate record.

3. Annual Report of the Parish Council.

The Chairman presented his Annual Report of the Parish Council in which he described the activities of the Parish Council during the year.

A summary of his report and the topics addressed is attached at Annex A to these minutes.

4. Statement on the Parish Council accounts for Year ending 31 March 2011.

The Clerk stated that he had balanced the accounts and had completed the Annual Return and all associated paperwork. He stated that the balance brought forward from FY2009/10 had been £32369.24 and, allowing for the payments and receipts during the year, the balance carried forward at the end of FY2010/11, was £14341.45. He added that the total receipts for the year were £9182.26, payments for the year totalled £27210.05 and the value of the fixed assets owned by the Council was £19988.48

Of the balance £14341.45 carried forward some £10218.32 represented the legacy donation of the St George's Development Fund, that is:

St George's Developer Grant - £4922.06
Tennis Court Fund - £5296.26

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leaving £4123.13 in the General Reserve Bank accounts.

Main Receipts in the year were:

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|-------------------------|----------|
| Precept: | £7500 |
| HMRC VAT Refund: | £35.61 |
| WC Grant (Bus Shelter): | £1634.41 |
| Bank Interest: | £12.24 |

Main Payments in the year were:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Staff Costs: | £31 |
| Office Expenses: | £483.73 |
| Donations: | £9000 (Semington Sports Club - Playing Field), £9000 (Village Hall), £500 (St George's PCC – Newsletter/Grass Cutting). |
| Bus Shelter: | £3922.58. |
| Litter Bin: | £319.67. |
| Insurance/Subscriptions/Audit Fees: | £ 900.38 |
| Hall Hire: | £400 |

The Clerk reported that the Annual Return had been completed and that the Internal Auditor will be invited to undertake the Internal Audit and thereafter the Annual Return will be presented to the Parish Council for approval. He added that the Annual Return will be submitted to the Parish Council at the next meeting for approval and thereafter it will be sent to Mazars, the External Auditor.

5. Observations from Wiltshire Council Councillor Cllr. J Seed.

Cllr. Seed reported that he was pleased to be associated with two major initiatives for the benefit of the parishioners of Semington, namely the award of the Performance Reward Grant of more than £10,000 towards the Sports Field and the 'unlocking' of the s106 Agreement in respect of the Orders of the St John Care Trust development that will contribute towards the improvements at the Village Hall. He added that he had also championed the case for the Area Board Grant for Semington that helped pay for the Litter Bin for Littlemarsh.

Cllr. Seed commented that as Chairman of the Melksham Community Area Board, he was promoting the 'Melksham Campus' development because he was convinced that it was the best way to safeguard the future of a wide range of facilities at Melksham.

He concluded his report by stating that he had provided support to local residents on a number of issues during the year, including representing the views of parishioners in respect of planning applications and that he will continue to support the Parish Council as he has done in the past.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Seed for his report.

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6. Planning Application W/11/01206/FUL (Gypsy & Travellers' Site).

The Chairman stated that a planning application had been received that sought to make the temporary Gypsy and Travellers' Site, adjacent to the crematorium, permanent and he invited parishioners to express their views.

One parishioner stated that the occupants of that site had been given temporary permission in 2008 that lasted for three years and that many of the conditions attached to that permission had not been met. He queried why Wiltshire Council Enforcement officers had not taken effective action to insist that those conditions were met and that a 'new' application should not even be considered until those original conditions had been met in full. He commented that, in common with any new residential development, the applicants for the establishment of this site as a permanent residential site should be required to enter into a s106 Agreement and that it was grossly unfair if they were being treated differently. The parishioner added that there are to be new rules governing the creation of such sites but these rules are unlikely to be on the statute book until the autumn. He commented that he had been told by Wiltshire Council that there had only been two letters of objection to the original planning application that was subsequently permitted and that to his certain knowledge there had been at least seventeen letters and that it was clear, and generally admitted, that the planning file at Wiltshire Council had been 'weeded' or 'sanitised'.

Cllr. Seed stated that there are new rules proposed that would ensure that the public and the 'gypsy and traveller' community are treated equally in respect of planning applications and a consultation document to that effect has recently been issued. He stated that Wiltshire Council is becoming more robust when dealing with planning applications of this nature and that when permission is granted there is a condition requiring that outstanding work is completed before occupancy – as is commonly the case with new buildings for the 'settled' community. He added that the question regarding a s106 Agreement is a vexed one, with Wiltshire Council, Head of Development Services, investigated whether such an agreement is possible. In respect of the veracity of the planning file, Cllr. Seed commented that the file at Wiltshire Council is incomplete and there is clear evidence that it had been 'weeded'. He confirmed that this matter is being investigated to establish why such improper action had been taken.

There ensued a general discussion on the nature of Planning Application W/11/01206/FUL during which a parishioner proposed that in order for parishioners' views to be properly represented a professional planning consultant should be engaged by the Parish Council such that objections to this planning application will be based on sound planning reasons, devoid of emotion. It was suggested that the cost of engaging such a consultant could cost around £2000. Another parishioner seconded the motion and the Chairman called for a vote. The parishioners present voted unanimously for the Parish Council to engage a professional planning consultant.

8. To consider resolutions of which written notice has been given.

The Chairman stated that Jamie Lewis of 'hunterpage planning', representing Hannick Homes, had written to the Parish Council inviting comments from parishioners on the possible development of land at St George's Road. He added that Mr Lewis had stressed that any

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development would respect the wishes of the community and that mixed residential/community development was possible, including the provision of leisure facilities.

A copy of the letter from Mr Lewis is shown in italics below:

'Hannick Homes was established in 1979 and specialises in building both small and large housing developments, commercial and industrial projects. Residential projects include developments at Devizes, Ashton Keynes and Purton. Hannick Homes combine the best of traditional building methods, materials and craftsmanship with a personal and caring approach, which has led to the receipt of several prestigious awards. The same high degree of care and attention to detail is applied to all projects.'

The 7 acre site south of St George's Road is available for development to meet the needs of Semington over the next 15 years. Hannick Homes is keen to learn how much development the community considers will be necessary over this period and the types of development and other uses that would be appropriate. As Hannick Homes would expect development to be led by housing, it is expected that affordable housing for local people would be an element of a housing proposal. Hannick Homes also provide mixed use schemes which include employment units, perhaps for start up businesses. In addition Hannick Homes will consider other community needs such as recreation/play space, community building, financial contribution to support existing facilities etc.

For a scheme to be successful there will need to be a viable mix of uses and if the community identifies a need for development and wishes to explore this further, we would be happy to work with you to prepare a plan for this land that will be acceptable to the village.'

The Chairman invited parishioners to offer their comments.

There ensued a general discussions on the merits, or otherwise, of such a development in the village and the view expressed by parishioners was that currently there are already significant proposed developments in the village and that it was not appropriate at this time to support any further ones. The proposed developments of the Orders of St John Care Trust, the Canal Marina development, further developments of the Wilts & Berks Canal were cited as examples.

A parishioner proposed that no further developments should be encouraged in Semington for at least a five year period. The motion was seconded and a vote was taken. The parishioners voted by a majority to support the proposal.

9. To consider other matters raised by those present.

A parishioner stated that the promised bunding at Littlemarsh had not yet been installed, despite promises from Wiltshire Council that it would be provided. A discussion ensued and the parishioner proposed that the Parish Council writes to Wiltshire Council requesting that the bunding is installed forthwith. This proposal was seconded and a vote taken. The parishioners voted unanimously to support the proposal.

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10. Any Other Business.

There was no other business.

11. Close.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Chairman

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Annex A

Semington – Annual Parish Meeting, 20 April 2011

Annual Report from the Parish Council - Year 2010 – 2011

Full Council (9 members) for whole year.

The following is a summary of some of the activities of the Parish Council on behalf of the parishioners of Semington:

10 Ordinary PC Meetings

1 Annual PC Meeting

1 Annual Parish Meeting

Consideration of Planning Applications – Around 19 (only 10 last year).

Village Sports Field – Development underway (Planning permission granted), Donation £9000 by PC (St Georges).

Village Hall – Donation £9000 (St Georges) – Improvements.

Neighbourhood Policing Team Activities (Tasking Meeting etc)

- PC Emily Thomas and PCSO Rose Baldock.

Village Environment/Expenditure:

- Bus Shelter (now three in village provided by PC/WC).
- Flower Tubs Planting..
- St George's PCC – Churchyard & Grass Cutting.
- St George's PCC – Village Newsletter.
- Allotments – No land identified
- Wessex Close – New Play Equipment.
- Littlemarsh Litter Bin.
- Grit Bins.

Website – Development/Maintenance.

Donations/Subscriptions:

- Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Website Development.

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Parish Steward - Footpath Clearance/Brambles/Grass Cutting/Overgrown Hedges.

Highways issues:

- Speed of traffic through village.
- 'No Through Road' ignored.

Other Matters:

- Maintaining a 'watching brief' on the Travellers Site.
- Melksham Community Area Board involvement.
- Melksham Campus (Support).
- Wilts & Berks Canal trust involvement.
- The Turnpike – Affordable Homes.

Consideration/Consultation on numerous WC Document