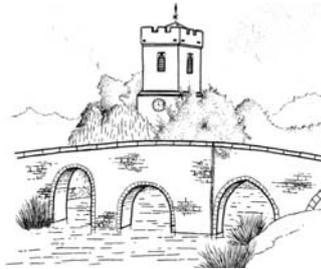


BIDFORD ON AVON PARISH COUNCIL

In the County of Warwickshire



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 4th April 2011 at 7.30 p.m. at The Parish Meeting Room, Bramley Way, Bidford-on-Avon

ATTENDANCE

Cllrs. Hiscocks (Chairman), Fleming, Gerrard, Hill, Mrs. Keeley, Langston, Sandle, Spiers and Williams

District Cllrs. Pemberton and Slaughter (Cllr. James sent his apologies)

Mrs. E. Uggerløse Clerk to the Parish Council

Also present: 7 members of the public.

Invited speakers:

Ian Tonner and Phil Stewart from Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service

Paul Lankester, Chief Executive, Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Cllr. Hiscocks, , Chairman of the Parish Council, chaired the meeting

He welcomed all present to the Annual Parish Meeting

1. The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 2010 were approved and signed by the Chairman
2. Chairman's Report 2010-11: this was read out by the chairman and is attached hereto.
3. The Chairman introduced the first guest speakers: Ian tonner and Phil Stewart from Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) who gave an excellent presentation on "Enhanced Flood Response) which is attached hereto.
They then answered questions from the council and public

- Where will boats be positioned south of the county?
This has not been determined but it is thought it will be either Stratford or Alcester, but this is for the future as it will require 7 full time staff to crew. For the time being the proposal of precautionary mobilizing is the best solution in the current economic climate.
 - Rugby has 2 boats each with a crew of 7
 - Looking at across border partnerships: for example Evesham would be asked to assist Bidford.
 - Being proactive in flood preventions as with the successful smoke alarm campaign. Leaflets will be produced and distributed to all households
- What about partnerships with subaqua clubs?
Although this looked an attractive solution, the issue of Health and Safety have to be considered. Members of the club would, in effect, be contracted by WFRS, and would have to be trained to its high standards to be able to be deployed. The cost of training them is too high for the number of incidents when they would be deployed.
- When would the combined fire and flood home visits begin?
This is still to be agreed as the wording of the leaflets has to be approved by the Environment Agency. Target dates are 2011/12

The Chairman thanked Messrs. Tonner and Stewart.

4. The Chairman introduced Paul Lankester, Chief Executive to Stratford-on-Avon DC.

Mr. Lankester then gave a presentation on the key issues and context in which Stratford on Avon DC is operating. The Council had received a cut in Government grant of 28% in the current and next financial year. This level of savings had led to a number of staff redundancies but the Council had tried to minimise the impact on frontline services. Senior management costs had been reduced by 40% (£400,000) as part of a package of £1.9 million savings. The Council had reduced its net budget to £12.9 million as a result. The Council had reviewed its corporate strategy and reduced its priorities to four aims:

- Addressing local housing needs
- A District where business and enterprise can flourish
- Improving access to services
- Minimising the impact of climate change.

He then outlined aspects of the Core Strategy which will form the main part of the new Development Plan for the District. For the next 15-20 years.. He explained that the Government is proposing the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy, the body responsible for setting development targets for the boroughs and districts, and wants each borough and district council to set its own targets: and this does not mean they can simply put a figure or say no further development: targets will have to be justified by evidence and there must be proper public consultation. With this in mind, SDC has organized

some workshops to which members of Parish and Town Councils have been invited, and Mr. Lankester added he was aware the Bidford Parish Council had attended these and participated in full!

The main issue at the moment is establishing the number of new dwellings needed in the district, and where to put them, bearing in mind the Government is adamant that a positive approach to business growth and new housing is essential as an important part in the economic recovery. Mr. Lankester said that he was aware of the comments already sent in my Bidford Parish Council but added that new houses were needed in the district (the number still to be agreed on) and that not having any was not really an option.

He then touched on the new Localism Agenda, especially Neighbourhood Development Plans: this document may be similar to the Parish Plans, but have more emphasis on the planning aspect and, if adopted, would have a legal status (unlike the current Parish Plans). However, he emphasized that any plan would have to comply with the Stratford on Avon DC adopted Local Development Framework and be supported by the local community. Quite a number of Parish/Town Councils had shown interest in this process. However, until such time as the Localism Bill had passed through Parliament, officers at District Council would be limited in the assistance they would be able to offer.

He ended the presentation by encouraging residents to participate in the LDF consultations.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Lankester and invited the public to raise questions.

- The questions raised were all concerned with enforcement, or lack thereof.
There was particular references to the way the enforcement officers behaved towards residents, which in a couple of occasions appeared to have been overbearing and rude, and not at all helpful.
Mr Lankester confirmed that this was unacceptable behaviour and that he would look into it to ensure it did not occur again.
He added that the planning department had been made aware of the deficiencies in the enforcement area, and that the officer in charge, Clair Eynon, had been putting new processes in hand which had significantly cut the waiting time and vastly improved the service SDC officered.
- Old Geodis building – it continues to look a mess – could something be done about it. Mr. Lankester replied that SDC would look at the situation once again to see if something could be done under health and safety regulations.

- Members of the public were very complimentary about the improvements carried out to the Big Meadow
 - Play equipment
 - Trees
 - Tree guards

The meeting ended at approx. 9.30 pm