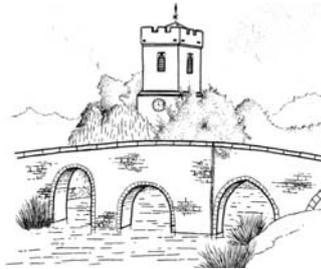


BIDFORD ON AVON PARISH COUNCIL

In the County of Warwickshire



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 1st June 2015 at 7.30 p.m. at The Parish Meeting Room, Bramley Way, Bidford-on-Avon

The Parish Council had resolved to dedicate this meeting to say **Farewell to Cllr. Frank Spiers MBE**, after 45 years service to the Parish Council and the Local Community. Cheese and Wine were made available to celebrate this occasion. Invitations had been sent to councillors who had served with Cllr. Spiers and the High Sheriff of Warwickshire, Mrs Belle-Smith was invited to make the presentation.

The meeting was also an opportunity to comment on the Neighbourhood Development Plan Draft Policy Consultation, which had started its statutory 6 week consultation period. Banners were erected and booklets made available.

The Chairman opened the meeting by thanking all those attending. He proceeded to read the Chairman's Annual Report, highlighting the Parish Council's achievements during the year 2014/15 – this is posted on the website.

He specifically mentioned the NDP, the hard work been carried out by the Steering Group, led by Cllr Joe Harvey, and the importance of this project and how essential it was that the local community became fully engaged as the end result would be a statutory planning document that would reflect the wishes of the local people. He invited those present to look at the banners, take a booklet and make sure they made their comments which could be done in the booklets or online.

Before proceeding to the main event of the evening, he asked members of the public if there were any issues they wished to raise. There being none, he then asked Cllr Mrs Keeley, the longest serving Councillor on the Parish Council, to make a testimonial to Cllr Spiers;

"Tonight we are saying a Big Thank You for the 45 years Frank has been on the Parish Council. He was elected in May 1970, after being persuaded by Mr Billy Cox of Tower Hill, who collected 40 names asking Frank to stand.

Frank is a very proud Bidfordian who was born at the Bull's Head in January 1925, where his parents were the third generation licensees. His Great Grandfather, William Churchley, took the tenancy in 1851: it remained with the family until 1992. In 1991 they had a great celebration to mark 140 years and even printed their own newspaper "The Bull's Head Bulletin" which cost 25p.

Frank has only ever lived in two houses in the village: 21 Ickniel Street and 2 Bryan Mews, virtually next door to each other.

During his time in the Parish Council, Frank he served twice as Chairman: 1974-76 and again 1980-82 and during this time has seen many, major, changes:

- *The Relief Road being built taking a lot of the traffic from the High street*
- *A new Fire Station replacing the one on Ickniel Street which was very close to his home*
- *The closure of Bidford High School in 1984/85*
- *A new Primary School built together with this Parish Council Meeting Room and the library (which is now a community library run by volunteers)*
- *The growth of the parish by 100% since 1971 – and still growing*

Outside the Parish Council, Frank did a lot for the community, helping run the carnivals, which were great events held on the August Bank Holiday Monday every year. Frank was the Parade Master and dressed immaculately in his red jacket, black trousers, top hat and highly polished shoes, he would lead the procession from Dugdale Playing Fields down Victoria Road, along the relief round, down the High Street to the Big Meadow. There was only one year that Frank couldn't do this, when his knee problems prevented it. Then he enlisted a young man called Russell (whom we all know from the butchers!) to do this in 1991.

Bell ringing has played a great part in his life and for many years he was Tower Captain. He has, over the years, taught a great number of people, young and not so young, to ring. On several occasions, St. Laurence Bell Ringers have rung in London on the occasion of the Lord Mayor's Parade, by invitation!

Cystic Fibrosis was a charity Frank and Gian took great interest in after two of their grandchildren were found to suffer with it. They organised people to collect each year in the village, with Frank himself doing the whole of Broom on his own.

He was also a Trustee of the Bidford Parochial Churches as well being the representative of the Parish Council on the Perkins Educational Trust for many years.

In June 1995, Frank was awarded the M.B.E. by the Queen for services to the community. This was when he got the special name "Mr Bidford". It was a great day when the Queen, herself, presented him with his medal.

The only time he lived away from the village was when he was called up and joined the Grenadier Guards in 1943. He has remained a member of the Guards Association ever since joining. Earlier this year he was presented with a medal by the British Legion for collecting/selling poppies for 55 years

Frank will tell you he could not have achieved half of his work without the help of his loyal wife Gian, who sadly passed away in February 2002".

The Chairman thanked Cllr Mrs Keeley for this touching tribute and invited the High Sheriff to make a presentation of a plaque commemorating 45 years dedicated to Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council and the Local Community

The Chairman then invited all the guests to Cheese, Cake and Wine and to celebrate Cllr Frank Spiers