

Brampford Speke Parish Council

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting, Wednesday 4th May 2022

Present: 4 members of the parish including Cllr S Luxton, Cllr E Hollingsworth, Cllr A Birmingham, Cllr W Honan, Cllr N Vickers, Cllr R Tillett and Cllr B Hillson

In attendance: Ms Tracy Watkins (Clerk)

Welcome by the Chair of the Parish Council Cllr A Birmingham who gave an explanation about the purpose of the Annual Parish Meeting. It was not a meeting of the Parish Council. Its formal purpose was a meeting of the registered electors of the parish, convened and chaired by the Parish Council, at which electors discussed parish affairs and, if they wish, pass resolutions.

Apologies: Mrs Molly Luxton and Mrs Karen Sanders

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 5th May 2021 – Were agreed as a true record

Annual report from the Parish Council

Cllr Birmingham (Chairman)

Another year passes. We have continued to work through the impact of Covid and all that this has brought. In addition, our thoughts remain with people in Ukraine and the suffering and hardship many are experiencing. We know that many in the village have been busy fundraising and organising donations for the Ukraine appeal. A big thank you.

The Council has continued to meet on a regular basis, using Zoom calls to supplement our bi-monthly meeting schedule. We welcomed Brad Hillson as a new Councillor following the decision of William Gallois to step down, and a thank you to William for his time on the PC. I would also like to offer my thanks for the continued support to all Councillors and the Footpath Warden for the time and commitment they give to me and to their roles, working for the benefit of the community, honestly and to the best of abilities. Some villagers do not always recognise this and it is worthy of acknowledgment in this forum.

Highlights

- Village Hall Roof- with huge thanks to a village benefactor and Wifi now fitted
- Church Path resurfacing- improving access facilities
- Footpaths- new kissing gates; Stoke Cannon path access
- New initiatives for Jubilee Celebrations and Xmas lights

We say goodbye to Carole -for a second time- and welcome Tracy Watkins as our new Clerk. During her time with us, Carole has navigated the PC's path for us, using her specialist skills and experiences to great effect and we will miss her involvement.

Tracy has a tough act to follow, but I am sure she is ready for the challenge, after all, she can always call on some 'sisterly' support as she settles into her role.

Now invite Councillors to say a few words about the areas they lead on.

Cllr A Birmingham - Finance Report

Annual Audit has been completed for this year and all governance requirements complied with. Year-end accounts are available to view.

Earmarked reserves reduced this year following decision to fund Church Path upgrading and other footpath improvements, plus one-off unexpected IT equipment replacement and historic wi-fi costs.

Annual operating costs for 21-21 were in broadly line with budget when P3 money netted out and Sec 106 funding taken into account.

Income boosted by £1800 P3 monies. Precept increased for 22-23 as reported.

Moving forward for future years, a more balanced budget approach will be adopted.

Cllr Richard Tillet:

Highways: BSPC Road and Snow Warden: involves liaison with DCC highways officer about roads and traffic. Issues include: potholes, drains/flooding, verge trimming, gritting etc. A quiet year this year, with no major problems. The PC is indebted to Mark Short for acting as our volunteer gritter over the winter; he carries out supplementary gritting runs in severe weather when Burr ridge Hill doesn't have sufficient priority for DCC action, it's a "secondary" route, and only gritted by DCC in extreme conditions. Hoping to hand these responsibilities over during the next year.

Village Hall (jointly with Will Honan): the re-roofing is eagerly awaited. The hall has reopened for business after prolonged closure during the pandemic, and bookings are looking healthy. The trustees have arranged for various repair/maintenance work to be carried out (e.g. on the front porch, front and rear doors etc), and the electrical system has been upgraded to comply with current legislation.

Village communications (jointly with Nicola Vickers): community email list reaching over a hundred addresses, to facilitate communications between the PC and our residents. Monthly PC update for Speke UP.

Community Land Trust: seconded to act as BSPC representative at request of CLT. Attend their committee meetings. Involved with circulation of Housing Needs survey to assess current need for affordable housing in the two parishes (BS, UP).

Finance (jointly with Alan Birmingham and Stuart Luxton): joint signatory for PC bank account. Jointly approve payments made between PC meetings.

Cllr B Hillson:

Cllr Hillson met with Footpath Warden, Wynn Stait, to provide an update on footpaths. The Bramford Speke footpaths are currently in a good condition following dry weather and in advance of the 2022 cutting programme.

At the last APM, the Footpath Warden reported that the Parish Council had received quotes for resurfacing the Church path. We are pleased to report that the work was completed during

February/March 2022 and the muddy surface has now been mechanically removed and replaced with a hard-core topping along the full length of the path. Many thanks to our contractor Ed Rogers for such a good job.

Ed has also been given the go-ahead to complete a schedule of improvements to Station Hill path and we look forward to seeing the completed job. This should make the path easier to maintain in the future.

During June last year Footpath 4 (Sowdens Farm to Red Rock Road) was highlighted by a parishioner as becoming difficult to negotiate. This was reported to Ros Davies and Richard Spurway at DCC. Within 10 days their contractor James Ayres attended and significantly cut back many years of tree growth creating a much more accessible path. Many thanks to the ongoing support of DCC in the maintenance of our paths and their quick response times during a difficult year.

Members of the Brampford Speke PC recently met with counterparts from Stoke Canon PC to discuss the possibility of making FP1 (Station Hill Footpath to Stoke Canon) wheelchair accessible. All parties agreed that the idea was worth exploring and DCC have agreed to engage an "Access Expert" to survey the path and report back on what is possible. The Footpath Warden will monitor progress on this and report to the Parish Council when he has further news.

It was noted that the Footpath Warden has done, and continues to do, a fantastic job in both the management and maintenance of the Brampford Speke footpaths and the Parish Council are very grateful to him for his efforts.

Cllr S Luxton:

We had one cut last year done by the parish council.

This year we are going to use the services of Richard Hill as he operates from the village.

Cuts will be as necessary and only enough to cut back dangerous visibility splays etc and not to disturb too much wildlife and wild flowers etc.

Cllr E Hollingsworth:

The WW1 trees (by the river) are thriving. The willows have flowered and are setting seed. The hawthorn and rowan are flowering now and are buzzing with bees and busy with other pollinators. Hopefully, birds will soon start to nest in the trees (if they haven't already). The area beneath the trees has been allowed to grow wild, providing shelter and food for many creatures - harvest mice nest in the long grasses plus there are voles, shrews, moles and other small creatures - which are eaten by owls and other predators (such as the polecat which stalks the area together with stoats and weasels (not to mention the mink and the domestic cats that visit too). The many wild plants add to the biodiversity attracting insects which provide food for the many species of bat that live in the area, the seeds feeding small birds such as finches and tits - which, in turn, provide food for the sparrowhawk and kestrel (with hobbies also seen occasionally). The area provides riverside cover for otters (sometimes seen from the bridge), swans, ducks, geese, goosanders, moorhens and other water birds. Great crested newts have been seen by the river here plus grass snakes have been spotted. A lot of the riverside fields throughout the Exe Valley

are a mono-culture of single-species grass, so this tiny area provides a much-needed refuge for wildlife.

The Queen's Jubilee Oak Tree has been planted alongside the footpath amongst the WW1 trees - by kind permission of the landowners, Ross and Ruth Matthews. The tree was provided by EDDC and a plaque will also be added in due course.

Sadly, 'ash dieback' is now active in our village and we are losing these magnificent trees as the disease sweeps down the Exe Valley.

Please plant trees (preferably native trees) whenever and wherever you can! 'Plant A Tree for The Queens Jubilee'

Cllr W Honan:

East Devon planning department has recorded 12 property applications during the period from April 2021 to March 2022.

Ten property applications were related to residential property, one application for a business (the Pub), one for the school and none in this period for agriculture.

The residential property applications were relatively smaller in scale compared to the previous year. Two applications, both related to the same project in a single property, were refused by East Devon planning dept. An appeal is underway. The Parish Council (PC) had not objected to either application.

The Parish Council did object to one application and recommended refusal. East Devon planning subsequently approved the application.

Three of 12 applications are awaiting a decision from East Devon planning dept.

In February 2022 the Parish council decided to circulate notice of such applications that the council wished to arrange a site visit. The helpfulness of this will be monitored.

Cllr N Vickers:

In the last year the PC village email list has proven to be a useful form of communication to residents for any PC/County matters. The list now has 118 contacts. There has been positive feedback that the flow of information is useful and appreciated.

The Village WhatsApp group also plays a useful role for communicating information and we will continue to encourage people to visit the [Parish Council website www.middevonparish.co.uk/brampfordspeke/](http://www.middevonparish.co.uk/brampfordspeke/) and also the [Bramford Speke website \(https://bscn.chessck.co.uk/\)](https://bscn.chessck.co.uk/).

The Village Welcome Pack is being updated and will be available to new residents joining the Parish. Many thanks to both Jan Birmingham and Sue Satchell for their involvement in drawing this together. A copy will also be available on both websites.

Over the year I have also been involved in helping to create other opportunities to support and enable the flow of communication between residents and the PC, I was part of the interview team to appoint the new Parish Clerk and am investigating a more competitive broadband provider for the Village Hall. My efforts continue to be focused on the importance of good communication – vital to a successful and useful Parish Council for all.

Any other ‘parish affairs’ matters

A Member of the public raised a point of discussion in writing. Can the Council look at purchasing a plot of land for the construction of a playground for the ever-increasing number of pre-school children in the village? This was discussed and agreed that Chairman will speak to the proposer.

Signed.....

Date.....