

# **BLACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Blackwell Community Centre, Woburn Close, Blackwell on Monday 7 April 2014 at 7.00 p.m.

## **PRESENT**

Councillor N J B Willens (Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs C Munks: I J A Newham: R A Poulter: R J Sainsbury: B Stocks: A F Tomlinson: L Walker and Mrs P R Wilkinson.

## **ALSO PRESENT**

Four Parishioners.

## **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D G B Bullock: I G Cox and C R Moesby

## **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 8 April 2013 were approved and signed as a correct record.

## **CHAIRMANS REPORT 2013/2014**

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor Nick Willens gave his report on the activities of the Council during the year 2013/2014. He also reviewed the activities of some of the other organisations active in the Parish looking at each Village Centres in turn and concluded with some more general remarks he apologised if he omitted any organisation whose Members would like to have been included in his review.

## **BLACKWELL**

Blackwell Community Centre is one of the Councils major assets and provides an important centre for community activities

The Post Office continues to operate every Tuesday and Thursday morning from 9 00a.m. to 1 p.m, its popularity is enhanced by the offer of hot drinks

and tasty snacks by the volunteers from the Blackwell Residents Action Group.

Blackwell Youth Club meets every Monday in the Community Centre under the leadership of Karen Mitchell it holds two sessions one for five/11 year olds with an average of attendance of 50 the second for 9/16 years old with an average of attendance of 20. There had been a number of Fund Raising Events including a "sleep over" in the Community Centre, a Fashion Show, Psychic Evenings, and a sponsored car wash. One particular event was an "onesie" evening to raise funds in connection with the World Autism Day on 31 March. At the end of May 2014, a group of youngsters and volunteers would be attending the Kingswood Education and Activity Centre in Staffordshire.

Blackwell Residents Action Group had been very active over the last 12 months, it had run 3 Litter Picks tidying up the village, it had also further enhanced the appearance of the village with bulb planting in the grass verges, filling and maintaining planters, and the garden in front of the Miners Memorial. Its other activities included Pie and Pea Suppers with Bingo, Band Concerts with the Chapeltown Brass Band. A Senior Citizens Outing, a Christmas Fair with parties for children and others.

BRAG Members run the Snack Bar to coincide with the Post Office opening on Tuesday and Thursday mornings it had also run football coaching sessions for 5/15 year olds during the school holidays.

Blackwell Children's Centre continues to operate successfully at Blackwell Primary School. It had 2 full time children's centre workers and three part time child care workers. The Centre caters for a Variety of activities including a Baby Clinic on the second Monday of every month, a weekly Path Way Dinner for children up to 2 and years old each Wednesday, a Toy Library every Thursday and a Jelly Tots Group on Thursday mornings for 0 to 5 year olds together with their parents in addition to these additional outdoor activities have been organised.

The Blackwell Mother and Toddler Group meets every Wednesday morning in the Community Centre under the leadership of Kelly Gordon. There are approximately 15 children up to 3 years old who attend this Play Group additionally in late Spring/early summer outings to a variety of different venues are organised.

Since Blackwell Methodist Church closed last year the Wesley Guild now meet at the Community Centre with attendances of 25/30, the last Meeting this winter was at the end of March. A new session starts on 1 October to end of March 2015 with a short break over Christmas.

There are Martial Arts Classes run by Jason and Lisa Tungate on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5.40p.m /7.15 p.m. and 6 p.m./9.0 p.m. respectively. There are 25 students with ages ranging from 5 to 67 and courses ranging from White Belt to adult Black Belt. Last year Jason was inducted in to the American Hall of Fame for Martial Arts.

### **HILCOTE**

A major development occurred this year which involved the Parish Council taking on the role of Sole Corporate Trustee of the Charity which owns and runs Hilcote Miners Welfare and Community Centre. The Centre had been losing money for some years which the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation could no longer support. The only other solution was to allow the Centre to close all together. In future it would be run on similar lines to the other two Community Centres within the Parish.

There are a number of organisations which come and use the excellent facilities offered by the Centre. These include the Methodist Youth Club. Gun Club (small bore) a Monthly Line Dancing Session, Dog Training Course, Skittles, Art Class, Elderly Persons Club and the Hilcote Environmental and Leisure Project Group.

Under the leadership of Malcolm Greenwood the Hilcote and Environmental and Leisure Project (Help) Group had yet another busy and successful year.

There were three Litter Picks during the year. There was also a "Duck Day" in September with plastic ducks being raced along the Normanton Brook raising funds for the Group. These funds have been used for very extensive planting of daffodil bulbs throughout the village, which anyone passing through cannot fail to admire.

### **NEWTON**

Newton Community Centre continues to be well used by local groups on a regular basis including St Werburghs Parochial Church Council, Newton Women's Institute, Newton and District Old Peoples Club, Yoga Club and the Newton Mother and Toddler Group. There is a Kick Boxing Class on Thursday evenings and a Dance Class is held on Friday evenings. Sadly the the Mothers Union which used to meet on the second Wednesday of each month has folded.

The Centre has also provided a venue for other events such as those put on by the Newton Carnival Team and Newton Community Association and the occasional Charity Concert. At all three of the Councils Community Centres there is plenty of space in the calendar to make the facilities available for

private functions such as birthday parties, wedding receptions and anniversary celebrations.

The Newton Carnival Team had a further successful year in 2013 with all the events which have now become traditional including Spring Plant Fair in May with all sorts of plants and home produce for sale, craft stores, entertainment and refreshments. Despite the traditional downpour the event was well attended.

Newton's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Carnival itself preceded by the procession of bands, floats, and street entertainers coming up from Blackwell and a full programme of events on the Charnwood Crescent Playing Fields (The climax of the teams activities are major event within the District of Bolsover)

The Annual Firework display and bonfire, also on the Charnwood Crescent Playing Fields with funfair, stalls, live entertainment, hot food and drink attracted a good sized crowd.

The Annual Victorian Street Fair at the end of November with the switching on of the lights on the Carnival Teams Christmas trees at the Community Centre and on lamp posts within the Village, Santa's Grotto, stalls, live music, Fun Fair and seasonal refreshments ending with a grand firework display.

Santa's visit which is become a tradition with Santa and his helpers travel round the four villages in the Parish in his illuminated sleigh meeting children and their families.

The Newton Community Association film nights run every month during the winter using the specialised Cinema Equipment bought with a National Lottery Grant continued to be well attended. The refreshments before the screening of the film were as every served by the ladies of the Women's Institute.

Over the course of the year the Association ran two Litter Picks with individual Members carrying out ad hoc picks from time to time. They also filled and maintained the planters on Main Street and Littlemoor Lane which are in addition to the displays provided by the Parish Council. The Association arranged to have the four flower beds in front of the Community Centre cleared and replanted.

The Newton and Blackwell Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Association runs the three allotment sites at Blackwell, Mount Pleasant (North/South Street) and Littlemoor Lane on behalf of the Parish Council.

At the special January Meeting of the Parish Council it was agreed that Allotment Rents for 2014/15 would be held at the last years level of £20 per plot. This is below the average level in the area which lies at around £25.

The Annual General Meeting was held at Newton Community Centre on 28 April the Committee and Officers of the Association stood down at the Annual General Meeting in accordance with the constitution and as usual offered themselves for re- election.

For those residents of the Parish who would be interested in spending some time in the fresh air with the added benefit of growing some of their food there are still some plots available on the Association Sites at Littlemoor Lane, Mount Pleasant and especially Blackwell.

The Newton Mother and Toddler Group continues to be led by Kath Mann it meets every Thursday afternoon at Newton Community Centre and provides Play Activities for children up to 5 years old. During the Summer Holidays the Group organises a number of outings.

The Newton Women's Institute continues to meet in the evening of the third Wednesday of the month with a full programme Meetings are well attended but I am assured there is room for more.

The Newton and District Old Peoples Club meet every Monday in the afternoon in the winter months and evenings when it is a bit lighter.

### **OLD BLACKWELL**

As had been mentioned in the Chairman's Report last year there are now 15 Parish and Town Councils within the district of Bolsover. Blackwell is proud to be one of the select numbers of these to have not one but two designated conservation areas as most residents are aware these are situated in Old Blackwell and Newton.

### **WESTHOUSES**

The Westhouses Residents Action Group led by its Chairman Dudley Fowkes assisted by a small group of dedicated volunteers had organised over the previous twelve months a successful Litter Pick and the Annual Carol Service at Westhouses Methodist Chapel. They had also maintained the planters situated on Alfreton Road and Tibshelf Road. An appeal was made in the Winter Edition of the Parish Council News Letter for more active members to help in keeping the village neat and tidy.

There had been problems with the solar lighting installed at Tibshelf Road Playing Field and along the footpaths from Sidings Way to Westhouses

Primary School and around the Multi Use Games area. These have now been identified as being in the programming of the software controlling the lights. Unfortunately this will mean using a cherry picker to get into each light to fit new software. As a result of all the wet weather during the Winter it had not been possible to get this heavy equipment on to the soft ground.

### **GENERAL MATTERS**

The Chairman said that when looking at what had been going on in each of the four villages it was to be seen that there was a thriving community within the Parish. Events had been well supported and attended, however, when the Chairman had been to a function it appeared it was always the same people doing the work irrespective of which Organisations Banner was flying over the event. The Chairman said he would make a general appeal to all residents in the Parish to take a more active role whether this was occasionally picking up a litter stick, erecting a Marque at the Carnival or spending an hour or so each month on one of the organising committees.

On financial matters the Parish Council had held a Special Meeting on 23 January 2014 to discuss its finances for the coming financial year. It was agreed the amount that they would ask Bolsover District Council to collect on their behalf known as the Parish Council Precept would remain unchanged at £118,000.00. This was in line with the decisions of the District Council to maintain the level of Council Tax in 2013/14 for the following year although Derbyshire County Council, Police, Fire and Rescue authorities would be increasing their charges by just under 2%. The apparent .1% increase in the Parish rate is due to a slight reduction in the Council Tax base.

Most of the expenditure is related to routine running of the Council including the maintenance of the Community Centres, Playing Fields and Play Areas across the Parish. It was agreed that the Council should continue to pay for hanging baskets on the lamp posts throughout the Parish and the Floral Planters outside the Community Centres. These are in addition to the floral displays which are filled and maintained by the various Residents Groups. After these costs and the inevitable costs of repairs there was little room for any major eye catching projects.

The Parish Council was still in discussions with Groundwork Creswell, Ashfield and Mansfield who had installed the Skate Park at Scanderlands with the aim of upgrading the Play Equipment on Charnwood Crescent Playing Fields, most of the costs of this project would be covered by external funding but the Parish Council would be expected to make a contribution estimated at around £6000.

Beyond this the Council had planned a number of smaller projects including installation of a new cooker at Blackwell Community Centre, installation of

hot water boilers at Newton and Blackwell Community Centres, new goal posts at Scanderlands Playing Fields and refurbishment of the War Memorial in Newton.

The Council had also agreed payments under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 to help with the maintenance of St Werburghs Parish Church Yard and a contribution to the upkeep of Doe Hill Community Park subject to similar financial contributions from Tibshelf Parish Council and other neighbouring Parish Councils and also to finance participation in the Bolsover District Council Sports Outreach Programme during the summer holidays.

Richard Walker, the Part Time Parish Caretaker has now given up his responsibility for Newton Community Centre but continues working for the Council and gives excellent service in the Parish. His high profile presence and friendly attitude towards local residents of all ages has been much appreciated.

The Chairman said that the Council had been very fortunate to have PC Lorna Evans as the regular Beat Officer and she had been ably supported by PCSO's Paul Brownlee and Stuart Swaby who regularly attend Council Meetings. These three Officers had always dealt promptly with any complaints made by Councillors or local residents, in particular the Chairman thanked them for their efforts to counteract the incidents of petty vandalism that break out from time to time.

The Chairman counted himself lucky to have Councillor Alan Tomlinson as a member of the Parish Council he had been a member since 1975 and a District Councillor since 1979. Councillor Tomlinson is currently Bolsover District Councils Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration. He is a strong believer in what is termed "grass roots democracy", he has ensured that Blackwell Parish Council maintains a good working relationship with the District Council and that the Blackwell Parish Councils voice is heard in the corridors of power at The ARC in Clowne, since 2011 Councillor Tomlinson has been supported by his fellow District Councillor Mrs Clare Munks.

The Council have similarly been lucky to have County Councillor Clive Moesby working for Blackwell Parish Council at County Hall, Matlock, and in particular a number of local residents and voluntary groups have benefitted from grants from the County Councils Members Community Leadership Scheme.

The Members of the Council are particularly grateful to County Councillor Clive Moesby for his persistent efforts to obtain the reinstatement of Tibshelf School in the building schools for the future programme which has now borne

fruit. He and the Vice Chairman, Councillor I J A Newham and myself had the pleasure of attending the official opening of the school on 7 April 2014.

The Chairman would like to express his appreciation for the attendance of his fellow Councillors and their active participation at Parish Council Meetings, they are all busy people with plenty of other demands on their time and one should not forget that they do this voluntarily and for no reward other than the satisfaction it brings. As is done by other local Parish Councils and District and County Councils the Chairman had drawn up a table with actual attendance figures for the last two years.

| Councillor       | Year 2012/13<br>(13 Meetings) | Year 2013/14<br>(13 Meetings) |
|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Dexter Bullock   | 6                             | 7                             |
| Ian Cox          | 10                            | 8                             |
| Clive Moesby     | 11                            | 9                             |
| Clare Munks      | 7                             | 9                             |
| Ian Newham       | 11                            | 11                            |
| Roger Poulter    | 13                            | 13                            |
| Robert Sainsbury | 12                            | 11                            |
| Brian Stocks     | 8                             | 7                             |
| Alan Tomlinson   | 12                            | 10                            |
| Leonard Walker   | 12                            | 10                            |
| Paula Wilkinson  | 7                             | 6                             |
| Nick Willens     | 13                            | 12                            |

In conclusion the Chairman said that the Council would continue to strive to make improvements within the Parish and particular he appreciated the comments from those parishioners who turn up regularly at monthly Parish

Council Meetings and draw the attention of Members to potentially improvements that might otherwise escape their notice.

The Chairman said he was most grateful for the support given to him by his fellow Councillors, The Community Centre Caretakers, Richard Walker, Rita Mann at Blackwell, Val Wilson at Hilcote and Sean Stevenson at Newton and most of all the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for the last 18 years Jeff Radford.

### **OPEN FORUM**

No items were raised under Open Forum