

BLACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Newton Community Centre, Newton on Monday 8 April 2013 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor N J B Willens (Chairman)

Councillors: D G Bullock: I G Cox: C R Moesby I J A Newham: R A Poulter:

R J Sainsbury: B Stocks: A F Tomlinson: L Walker and Mrs P R Wilkinson.

ALSO PRESENT

PCSO Paul Brownlee, Derbyshire Constabulary and four Parishioners.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs C Munks.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 2 April 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2012/2013

Members of the Council and Parishioners, I have pleasure in submitting my report to you regarding the activities carried out by the Blackwell Parish Council during the year 2012/2013 and also review of some of the many organisations which are active in our community. It is also my responsibility to give you an overview of the Council's plans for the year 2013/2014. With your approval I propose to review each village in turn and I shall start with Blackwell.

BLACKWELL

a. Blackwell Community Centre

This remains a major hub for community activities in the life of the Parish and, as such represents one of our major assets.

I am pleased to report that Blackwell Post Office has continued to operate at the Community Centre on Tuesday and Thursday mornings 9.00 a.m. to 1 p.m. and is very well patronised by local residents. No doubt this is helped by the Blackwell Residents Action Group providing tea, coffee other refreshments on these two mornings, not to mention an opportunity to catch up on what is happening in the village and the world at large.

b. Blackwell Youth Club.

The Council is pleased to note that the Youth Club continues to be successful. An average of 50 children attend the first session and up to 15/20 at the second session. The Organisers recently had to change the second session from 11/16 year olds to 9/16 year olds to ease pressure on the first session. Coupled with this three new adult volunteers have joined the Club which has greatly assisted matters. In the past twelve months the Club has been busy with various activities such as several sessions of OZ BOX aimed at older children and approximately eight sessions of Extreme Wheels aimed at all children. PC Lorna Evans had arranged some activities for them like a climbing wall, laser quest and sphere balls prior to her taking maternity leave. The Youth Club will be going on its annual residential trip to Kingswood in Staffordshire 26/29 May taking 41 children and six volunteers. The Club recently won an award from Real People Magazine in conjunction with Mecca Bingo for Unsung Heroes of our Community, recognising all the hard work put into the Youth Club. Karen Mitchell and Phil Dooley went on an all expenses paid trip to London to receive the Award of £1,000.00 which also included a slap-up meal. They were featured in the "Real People" Magazine". The Club was also granted £1,000.00 from Youth Action Grants towards the Kingswood trip. A further award of £500.00 from the Primary Care Trust and the Derbyshire Times has also gone towards the Kingswood Trip.

c. Blackwell Residents Action Group.

This group continues to be very active for the benefit of all members of the community. Ongoing activities include several litter picks around the village and continued maintenance of the planters and flower-beds with seasonal planting. As mentioned before, they provide the Community Coffee Shop on the days the Post Office is open in the Community Centre. They also arranged football coaching sessions for 5-16 year olds in all the school holidays apart from Christmas.

New projects included the erection of a Christmas Tree on the corner of Primrose Hill and Woburn Close and the building of a garage for storage in the Community Centre grounds.

Events included the Annual General meeting with support from Community Voluntary Partners in respect of running successful meetings and team working. They celebrated the first anniversary of the Mining Monument, ran two Pea and Pie Supper / Bingo nights and held a well attended Christmas Fair for fundraising. Together with Newton they ran an Open Gardens event which raised money for St Werburgh' Church and Blackwell and Newton Methodist Churches. They also provided a Christmas Party for children aged 5-11 years and a Christmas Lunch for over 60s at the Hilcote Country Club.

d. Blackwell Children's Centre

The Children's Centre continues to operate successfully at Blackwell Primary School. The Centre has two full time Children Centre workers and one part-time worker. The Centre caters for a variety of activities including the "Peep" Group" for 0 – 1 year olds and the "Stay and Play" Groups. In addition to these activities extra outdoor activities have been organised during school holidays.

e. Blackwell Mother and Toddler Group.

This Group continues to operate successfully under the leadership of Kelly Gordon. There are approximately 15 children 0 to 5 years old who attend the Play Group on Tuesday afternoons and Wednesday mornings at the Community Centre.

HILCOTE

a. Hilcote Environmental and Leisure Group

It has been another busy year, with the 'Woodland Project' now being on a care and maintenance basis. The Group ran a successful fund raising "Duck Day" in September on one of the few fine days of the year.

b. Hilcote Miners Welfare and Community Centre.

The excellent facilities offered by the Centre are used by a number of groups including the Methodist Youth Club, the small bore Gun Club, an Art Class and a dog training class. Despite strenuous efforts to attract more groups and other users, the Centre is still losing money. Towards the end of last year the Council was approached by the Trustees of the Centre with regard to the possibility of the Centre being passed over to the Parish Council.

Meetings have been held between the trustees, representatives of the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) and the Council. Subject to satisfactory clarification of many points of detail and a great deal of i-dotting and t-crossing, it has very provisionally been agreed that the Parish Council is prepared to take on the trusteeship of the Centre.

The Council will ensure that the residents of Hilcote are kept informed with regard to progress.

NEWTON

a. Newton Community Centre.

The Centre is actively used by local groups and represents the other major hub for community activities in the life of the Parish. Regular users include St Werburgh's Parochial Church Council, the Mothers Union, Newton Women's Institute, Newton and District Old Peoples Club, a Yoga Club, the Mother & Toddler Group, the Newton Carnival Team, Newton Community Association and a Zumba Class.

A Dance Class is held on a Friday evening.

b. Newton Community Association

The Association continues to help improve the appearance of the village by maintaining planters and holding litter picks. The weather over the last twelve months has not helped in either of these.

Film shows on the last Thursday of each of the winter months have continued with a wide variety of entertainment, from 'The Full Monty' to 'Easter Parade' (although White Christmas would have better suited the weather outside) As already mentioned, together with BRAG, NCA ran an Open Gardens event on one of the few bright days in August which raised money for local churches. Unfortunately, a 'Royal Day at the Races' to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee had to be cancelled due to lack of support. Two newsletters were distributed, one headed 'Yes, we can' which generated some new volunteers, including a new Chair, John Thorley and Treasurer, Colin Hart.

c. Newton and Blackwell Allotment and Leisure Gardeners' Association

It is encouraging to note that the majority of allotments at Littlemoor Lane, and North/South Streets, Newton are under cultivation and that there has been an increase in usage of the allotments located The Ridge, Blackwell. There are still some vacancies at all three sites. Anyone interested in some healthy activity in the open air and a source of fresh food should contact me or a member of the Association's committee.

At this point I would mention that a Secretary is still required for the Newton & Blackwell Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Association.

d. Newton Carnival Team.

I am pleased to note that, despite a difficult year with the weather, the Team had another successful year in organising their now traditional events: The Carnival Royalty Ball, at which the Carnival Queen and her attendants are chosen.

The Annual Plant and Garden Fayre

The 15th Annual Carnival, which attracted the usual high number of visitors. It is the highlight of the Team's year and is one of the largest such events in the area. The Annual Bonfire and Firework Display, now in its fifth year.

The Christmas Fayre and Lights, held at the Community Centre at which the village lights are switched on, culminating in a firework display Santa's visit to the four villages of the Parish on his illuminated sleigh giving sweets and gifts to the children and residents of local care homes.

The Light of Life Service was cancelled due to lack of response, but will be revamped for 2013. The Carnival website is being extensively transformed and will be relaunched in April 2013 (www.newtoncarnival.org). The Carnival Team is being formed into a Community Interest Company under the full name Newton Carnival and Community Resource Services CIC, and, as such, will provide event equipment and support to other third sector organisations in the area.

e. Newton Mother and Toddler Group.

The Group continues to be led by Kath Mann and meets every Thursday afternoon at Newton Community Centre and provide play activities for children up to 5 years old.

Old Blackwell

As in has been mentioned in previous reports there are now 15 Parish and Town Councils within the district of Bolsover and Blackwell Parish Council is proud to be one of the very limited number of these Councils to have conservation areas and most residents are aware of the ones situated at Old Blackwell and Newton.

Westhouses

- a. The restitution of the site following the opencast mining operation at the Engine Reclamation Site is now all but complete and it should be open to full public access in the near future.
- b. Westhouses Residents Action Group.
The principal activity of the year was monitoring the effect of solar lighting scheme at the Council's Tibshelf Road Playing Field. The Group has continued to monitor the litter and dog fouling situations.

General Matters

Parish Council Finances:

At the Special Meeting of the Parish Council held on 21 January 2013 to discuss our finances for the coming year, it was resolved that a Precept of £118000.00 be levied on Bolsover District Council for the financial year 2013/2014. This increase over the figure of previous years was to take account of our probable increase in costs due to the adoption of responsibility for Hilcote Miners' Welfare and Community Centre, which I have already reported. It is also to build our reserves back up again after we had to dip into them to pay our share of the skate park on Scanderlands Playing Fields.

When the Council reviewed its budget it was agreed to approved the following items of expenditure for the financial year 2013/2014, in addition to the routine costs of maintaining its services:

Replacement back door – Newton Community Centre.
Provision of additional fencing – Bamford Street Play Area, Newton.
CRB check on all Council Members.
Winter planting of the Community Planters.
Provision of two additional Grit Bins.
Maintenance of the Mining Memorials situated at Hilcote/Blackwell and the Railway Memorial at Westhouses.
Provision of a Memorial Seat to former Councillor Sam Haynes.

In a bid to reduce lighting costs the Council have given their approval for DAS Technology Limited, Mansfield to install LED lighting at both Community Centres. This project will pay for itself in 3-4 years. It is also actively considering a project to install photo-voltaic cells on the roof of Newton Community Centre to be financed by a leaseback scheme with the Carbon Trust.

Support Services

Richard Walker, the Council's Part Time Parish Caretaker continues to provide the Council with an excellent service and his high profile within the Parish has not gone unnoticed by the vast majority of residents. I should also like to express my thanks to Rita Mann, who looks after Blackwell Community Centre for us

The Council had been fortunate in having our regular Beat Officer, PC Lorna Evans, now returned to us after the birth of her son, Henry, and her maternity leave. She has been ably supported by PCSO Paul Brownlee and Stuart Swaby. These Officers in turn regularly attend Council Meetings and have always dealt promptly with any complaints or queries made either by members of the Council or local residents.

Pantomime

The Council continues to fund an Annual Pantomime at Blackwell and Newton Community Centres for the children from Blackwell, Newton, Westhouses Primary Schools and also local Mother and Toddler Groups. The feed back from all these organisations is excellent.

Floral Displays

The Council will again this year be funding the floral displays within the Parish area, and extend the display outside the Community Centres for the full twelve months of the year. There has been excellent feedback from local residents and visitors to the Parish with regard to the displays.

Council Newsletter

The Councils Newsletter has been published on a quarterly basis and is under the excellent editorship of Councillor Ian Newham and the Newsletter is delivered to all households within the Parish by volunteers from various community groups.

Other Matters

Local residents have noted with satisfaction the new village entrance signs and very favourable comments have been received with regard to these. It will also be noted that new Notice Boards have been installed at both Blackwell and Newton Community Centres.

Towards the back end of last year, the Council appealed for volunteers to help out in bad weather in a joint pilot project with Bolsover District Council. Unfortunately, the appeal did not generate the support we had hoped for. However, I was very pleased to see that our appeal for individuals to clear the snow from the footpaths in front of their homes met with considerable success. I am sure that regular users of the footpaths such as our postmen were very grateful for the chance to walk on normal ground.

Following representations from a number of residents, the Police have organised a Community Speed Watch scheme. The Council have been very fortunate to receive funding for the Speed Detector Gun from H W Martin Limited and this has been successfully used on a number of occasions. The speed watches are manned by trained volunteers under the supervision of a qualified Police Officer or Community

Support Officer. Anyone wishing to have a speed watch in their part of the Parish or to volunteer, should contact the Clerk to the Council

On a final note it was pleasing to see the Olympic Torch, whilst not passing through the Parish of Blackwell, did pass through the Bolsover District Council area, namely Glapwell and Bolsover on 29 June 2012. The Parish was represented at the parade in Bolsover with a banner produced by the Blackwell Residents' Action Group.

Councillors Alan Tomlinson

As I mentioned last year, Alan has been a Member of the Parish Council since 1975 and Bolsover District Council since 1979 and in that particular capacity he has ensured that there has been a good working relationship with all departments of the District Council.

Councillor Mrs Clare Munks

Clare became a Member of Bolsover District Council in 2011 and has been very successful in dealing with local residents complaints.

County Councillor Clive Moesby

Despite the difficult economic climate Clive has worked extremely hard at County level on behalf of this Council and the Parish as a whole. I am aware, that through Clive, a number of local residents' and voluntary groups have benefited from the Derbyshire County Council local grant scheme.

I am very grateful for the work that these three do on behalf of the Council and the residents of Blackwell Parish.

Attendance at Parish Council Meetings

I should like to express my appreciation for the attendance of my fellow councillors, and their active participation, at Parish Council meetings. They are all busy people with plenty of other demands on their time. 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 the District and County Councils, I intend to publish a table with the actual attendance figures for the last two years with the printed version of this report.

One person who attends every Council Meeting is our Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Jeff Radford. I should particularly like to thank him on behalf of all the Councillors and, indeed all the residents of the Parish, for all the efforts he puts in and his precision and attention to detail.

Conclusion

The Council will continue to move forward and as our slogan says "Caring for the Community" is what we do. This would not be possible without the comments and suggestions made by those parishioners who turn up regularly, in fair weather and

foul, at our meetings and draw our attention to matters that might otherwise escape our attention.

Councillors R A Poulter and A F Tomlinson congratulated the Chairman on a first class report.