

MARKYATE PARISH COUNCIL



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Clerk to the Council: Mrs J Bissmire

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH GATHERING OF MARKYATE HELD ON TUESDAY 12 APRIL 2016 AT 7:30pm IN THE VILLAGE HALL, CAVENDISH ROAD, MARKYATE

Cllr P Bunyan took the chair and declared the meeting open in the presence of 7 Parish Councillors, 1 Borough Councillor/Parish Councillor, County Councillor David Lloyd, Highways Officers, Mr Peter Wright and Mr Martin Neville, PC B Evans, Substantive Sergeant R Downs, PCSO R Sheppard 17 Parishioners, Mrs C Booth, Financial Officer/Halls Administrator and Mrs J Bissmire, (Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer).

The chairman welcomed all those present.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Crawford and Peterson and Borough Councillor Jane Timmis.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual Gathering held on 21 April 2015 were a correct record and were signed by the Chairman. This was proposed by Mrs E King and seconded by Mrs R Jones.

3 PC BRIAN EVANS

PC Brian Evans introduced PCSO Rowen Sheppard who said PCSO Mark Green has left his post to become a full Police Officer, Rowen said he had worked in this role for 4 months, previously he worked as a Security Officer and spent 3 years doing crime and justice at university. He said he looks forward to working to keep places safe.

Acting Special Sergeant Richard Downs said he works with Brian Evans and Rowen PCSO Rowen Sheppard in Markyate, Great Gaddesden and Flamstead and noted the low level of crime in these areas compared with other areas.

PC Brian Evans said the crime figures circulated show comparisons with Hemel Hempstead; incidences of oil being sold on eBay led us to oil in Great Gaddesden then to Watford, then to Leighton Buzzard where an arrest was made.

We discovered a massive crime syndicate passing through but linked to Markyate.

From January to April this year, 16 accidents took place on this section of the A5; it seems to be more Flamstead than Markyate.

We had investigations of theft of power tools throughout the county 8 males were taken in and 5 were arrested with 150 tools being recovered. Vans have been targeted, low level crimes, low level detection rate and anti-social behaviour is low.

Anything suspicious should be reported to crime stoppers or 101 but in an emergency always use 999.

A report made on crime stoppers led to a cannabis factory found in Markyate. If you feel something is not right please report it, it could lead to something big.

We are quite visible but you may not always see us around because we have to do work in the office.

The question was asked, as one person had been arrested for breaking in to St John's the Baptist Church, had any more been taken in.

Richard Downs said one person was arrested but a group of youths were involved who originated from Leighton Buzzard. It's an ongoing investigation with CCTV footage to view to see who is involved.

A member of public remarked 16 accidents on the A5 was 16 too many.

PC Evans said 9 out of 10 were driver error.

Q: If the majority are at the traffic lights, is this area being looked into?

A: We look at the conditions as well; our recommendations go through that department

Q: How do you see resource changes in the police force?

A: We are looking for Special Constables, there is no age limit, we encourage more people to get in touch with us, we don't work 7 days a week and it is difficult to leave a village like this with no cover but you do have police cars patrolling. We normally are here for the whole day.

Q: Is 101 manned all the time ?

A: It is a non-emergency number but during shift changes it may take longer to get a response. The standard to which we work is to answer 999 calls within 10 seconds and 30 seconds for 101 calls.

Q: Are you finding any time for speed traps

A: Without fail once per month, we try to spend a whole day on this if we can; sometimes just our presence deters speeding.

Q: Can you give support to drive safe volunteers, to set up, we will pass all information to police?

A: Email address of PCSO Sheppard will be sent to you.

Q: When calling 101 if you are in your car on hands free, you cannot press prompts as requested.

A: If you continue to the end of the call, you will speak with the operator

Q: What do we do if we see someone using a car illegally?

A: Call 101 or crime stoppers which is anonymous on 0800 555 111

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County Councillor David Lloyd said he cannot speak about police issues due to this being the purdah period, the time before the Police Commissioner elections.

PC Evans, Acting Special Sergeant Downs and PCSO Sheppard left the meeting at 8pm to the applause of the audience in appreciation of their hard work in the village.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2015/16

Welcome to the Gathering of Markyate Parish Council for 2015/16.

We are very pleased to see you all here this evening.

This has been another busy year for the Parish Council.

Last year we successfully closed the road for the Remembrance Day Service and we hope to do the same again this year.

It is possible the police cadets will join us for the parade this year as stewards - this is being looked in to by Gillian Lilley, the new British Legion co-coordinator, and we would like to thank her for all her hard work.

We are pleased to announce that through S106 we are having a new safety surface in the play area at Peggy's Field and also new mesh netting under the basketball goal.

A new path from Manor Farm leading to the school is being funded through S106 which is money received from new developments.

Last year Automatic Gates were installed; unfortunately damaged in September 2016, but are now working well and both the police and cricket club are very pleased with this installation because it has done the job it was meant to do, it has made the area a lot safer.

Only one person has been locked in but happily later 'released'.

Christmas lights, unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances and incorrect advice from Ringway, we could not put lights on last year but we are all ready to go this year, hopefully all the problems will be solved.

The Speed Indicator Device in Buckwood Road was part funded by your Parish Council and Dacorum Community Safety Partnership and reports back from the residents are that the traffic has been noticeably slower so it is working, always try and get a smiley face!

Your Parish Council has commissioned a new website, which we hope will be published shortly. Please have a look at it, all the information you need will be on this website which will be updated regularly.

We also have an eNewsletter which goes out monthly, if you wish to be included in this just leave your email address on the piece paper on the table or email the clerk.

Those that receive it say it is a good information tool which is updated monthly.

We also run a twitter account with regular updates.

Within the next month or so, the first part of the new cemetery will be released to us, the gates that are being used to the entrance are the original gates from the path leading to the Halls, and have been refurbished. These will be installed shortly together with a new path. So this means for the next 100 years at least we will all have somewhere to go.

Any of you planning to stay longer than 100 years will have to sort it out for themselves!

We thank all councillors who give their time freely to fight matters on behalf of this village, whether it's attending meetings, planning appeals, or just speaking with parishioners on matters of concern to them. Their time and knowledge is given freely. It is not just one person; it is a body of nine councillors who are fighting for what we feel and what you ask for the village.

Unfortunately three councillors have resigned during this period, Terry Hunt, Anna Marie Jacob and Simon Deacon.

We thank them for their time with us and all their help on behalf of the village.

This year we have hosted Councillor Surgeries on a trial basis, Rosalyn Langley came up with this idea so do come and visit us.

On Wednesday's between 2pm and 4pm we are at the Methodist Church and the Y2K on Saturdays from 10am to 12pm.

Also we are commissioning a Villager Survey, copies of which are available on the table please take one as you go and give us your ideas. There are examples on the form of what you could put but I am sure you will have far better ideas than us, however small or large it is all will be considered.

I would like to thank: Iain Crawford who is indispensable to me as vice chair.

Bert Chapman, our Borough Councillor and also Parish Councillor, for all his help in liaising with Dacorum Borough Council on village matters and ensuring everything is carried through, and County Councillor David Lloyd for his continued support on our behalf at county level. Both really fight our cause, for which we are grateful.

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David Coasby for all his work with the bus company, trying to sort out a one way system for the buses which will cause less congestion in the High Street, hopefully the trial will be going forward soon. David also keeps an eye on our automatic gates to ensure all is working okay.

Also thank you David for designing the posters for the May Fayre and the Queen's birthday.

Our thanks, as always, to Sheila Pilkinton as chairman to the Budget and Finance Committee and all other areas to which she gives so much time and energy this year for taking on the Queen's 90th birthday Street Party which she will update you on later at this meeting.

To Richard Peterson for all his hard work as chairman of the Village Hall Committee and all his hard effort in promoting the Halls.

We would like to welcome our three new councillors, Gemma Baldwin, Rosalyn Langley and Paul Sherriff, we look forward to their contribution and expertise which they can bring to the Council.

Thank you also to Dave Clark our warden for the really good job he does, he is well known and respected by all in the village.

Sadly we lost two members of staff during this period, Caroline Blanchflower in May and also Serena Eccleson our Caretaker, both were with us for many years and we thank them for their commitment during that time, but we welcome Collette Booth as our Halls Administrator/Financial Officer and Denise Bourne-Williams as Caretaker.

My thanks also to Jenny who keeps us all in order and is a great support to me.

PC Brian Evans will try to attend our council meetings if he can but we thank him and Richard Downs and Mark Green for all their hard work in our village which gives us the opportunity to discuss things with them.

Thank you to Mark who is leaving his post as PCSO to become a Police Officer and we welcome Rowan Sheppard.

5. COUNTY COUNCILLOR LLOYD'S REPORT ON TRAFFIC PROPOSAL AND OTHER COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

Secondary School Transfer

C/Cllr David Lloyd said children in Markyate have in the past 30 years been finding places at Harpenden schools, some at Townsend.

St Georges had a consultation to take the transfer approach to the same level as two other schools. It is a change he fought but lost. HCC are still considering a legal challenge, as he is very disappointed. This year at this point only one child did not have the school of their choice; on appeal that child will get a place in a Harpenden school. Although there is a new school being built in Harpenden this will not happen until 2018, so he considers the numbers involved in 2017 may have problems with placements.

Transport – A5

The Highways England Agency Department of Transport are putting in a link road north of Dunstable, this will link the A5 to a new junction on the M1. Highways England believes when this is done some of the traffic issues on the A5 may be addressed. HCC are unlikely to receive funding ('a dowry') from Highways England when the road is de-trunked. When the A5 junction from Chequers Hill, Flamstead, is set up the A5 will be de-trunked and the laybys will go. Work on the A5 is not his focus but he still hopes to get some funding from Highways England but looking at Hicks Road he is not too sure.

High Street

In the short to medium term the following could be introduced;

- Incorporate a combination of junction protection and waiting restrictions on the eastern side of the High Street to allow vehicles to pass and re-pass. The preferred layout is covered under option 3D, this should potentially remove the congestion and bottleneck along the High Street.
- In conjunction with this a formalised crossing point with localised footway widening could be introduced outside the convenience store by Buckwood Road which was covered in the initial report of July 2015. The northbound bus stop would be relocated south of Buckwood Road.
- A 20mph zone could be introduced as shown on drawing number HC GMS008.006.09.
- Introduction of a peak hour turning ban into Buckwood Road to reduce the conflict points with the High Street. Whatever is considered on balance someone will lose. David was accompanied by two Highway Officers, Peter Wright and Martin Nevill, who had some ideas. Parishioners were asked to complete the questionnaires available to them and return to the Parish Office.

The scheme consists of:

- One Way system between Buckwood Road and Cavendish Road northbound
- 20 mph scheme
- Pedestrian Crossing
- No left turn from Buckwood Road during peak times.
- He will spend £60/£70,000 but he is not prepared to back something if people do not support it.

The first stage is for parishioners to see what we are looking at. He needs from them to see if this is worth continuing with.

6. PROJECT FOR VILLAGE THROUGH PRECEPT

A proposal was put to the meeting to continue with the £5,000 from the Precept. A vote was taken by show of hands and it was agreed unanimously to continue.

This year will give a total of £10000.00. It was proposed by Mr Hodgson and seconded by Mrs E King.

When asked if any particular project was being considered, the chairman said we were looking for suggestions from the Villager Questionnaire, we ask what would you like in your village? We are applying for funding through the Tesco funding for n outside gym but welcome any suggestions.

7. ONE WAY BUS ROUTE

Some months ago a parishioner suggested all buses passing through the village should travel northbound and avoiding many of the traffic hold ups in the narrow High Street. Southbound buses coming from Dunstable and Luton would pass along the A5 and enter the village at Shaw's Corner, travel up to London Road and the High Street sharing the same bus stops as the north bound buses. After making their stops they would exit via the much safer junction with the traffic lights and turn right, continuing their journey south.

Cllr Coasby said this is only a proposal and Centrebus would not commit but agreed this was a good plan and they are very interested, Cllr Coasby is quietly confident it could happen. He said he will keep the pressure up and write to Centrebus to keep the mementoos going.

Q: For residents from Dammersey Close this is okay going north but how would they get back?

A: This would be one disadvantage

Q: This sounds interesting but can we make the size of traffic smaller, dustcarts and coaches are too big, can we have size prohibition?

A: This is not within our remit; DBC will have to answer that question.

Noted from one parishioner; 7.5 tons is normal going through anything bigger is not allowed.

Councillor Coasby was thanked for his hard work which seems a good idea and a lot of thought had been put in to this.

8. DOCTORS SURGERY

Cllr Sheila Pilkinton and B/Cllr Bert Chapman explained that the problems the Village has encountered with the new Doctor's Surgery are still on going. Planned space for the new surgery were originally submitted and no objections received at that time. Now, with the new surgery space having been built in Hick's Road, and despite it being a lot larger than the existing building the Doctor felt it was not fit for purpose, as it's did not comply with NHS standards?. There are thoughts of building another new surgery on Hicks Road car park land but this could seriously reduce the number of vehicle parking spaces. At the end of the day this is a matter between the Doctor, NHS and Dacorum Borough Council.

9. QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY STREET PARTY

The Order to close the High Street on Sunday 12 June has been applied for. There will be a charge of £2.00 per adult, children under 12 are free.

This includes light snack/drinks from 1.30pm. Each road should select Leaders who will then book a table. There will be a giant Cake to celebrate the Queen's Birthday, live musicians, games, still looking for ideas and suggestions. This will bring the community together and we hope a great day for all.

10 PUBLIC QUESTIONS.

Q: Are there any members from Markyate Matters here tonight? Is the Parish Council considering using them as a sounding board?

A: The Council discussed this but resolved they would not interact with a Facebook page. We are 9 elected individuals but cannot interact with a Facebook page.

Cllr Bunyan went on to say she had received some personal messages from this group which were very rude but could not respond as an individual. The Parish Council is a body and all decisions are binding as a body. It has to be said we are surprised there is no prescience this evening from Markyate Matters; they make a lot of noise but not here this evening.

Q: When the A5 is de trunked does this mean Lorries from the M1 are prohibited?

A: C/Cllr Lloyd said most roads do not have weight restrictions so Lorries will be able to use this road. We are putting weight restrictions on the A4146 and are hoping Central Bedfordshire are looking at weight restriction through Dunstable. De trunking means ownership of the road will revert to Hertfordshire County Council.

Q: Are there going to be any shops in Hicks Road? Can we suggest a pop up shop, i.e. History Society for six weeks?

Q: Although delighted to see the derelict building down, what is happening at the front of the site and the piece on the corner is this going to be grassed over?

A: That was going to be a MOT centre that is a separate thing to be dealt with. The problem is parking, HCC, prior to development, were going to install a road. There are two items to be dealt with, first a loading bay, yellow lines etc. there needs to be a sign to say this part is closed but a meeting has to be held with developers.

The empty shops, the criteria are they cannot let for anything else for a period of two years. At the moment we are in limbo but we all know there has to be some arrangement.

A member of public said that refers to surgery not empty shops.

A: This is a private part, nothing to do with DBC. The shops will be rented by a private company so they would deal with it.

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Q: Borough Councillor Jane Timmis said DBC planning is taking legal advice on the surgery, it is unacceptable DBC have got things so wrong, and there was no control whatsoever over the building work.

A: DBC officers tried to deal with the NHS but unfortunately those officers have gone. There were positives to the new surgery, larger area and a lift to meet health and safety standards.

If you have a will you can do anything and I believe it can be turned around said one member of public.

The whole impotence to get this started was a new doctor's surgery, we are all very disappointed.

A suggestion was made one shop could be utilised as a Book Club.

County Councillor David Lloyd said there is no possibility whatsoever of getting public library funded in Markyate.

If volunteers wanted to come together he would be interested in trying to put some of his Locality Budget to try to get it to work.

Redbourn and Harpenden have libraries which 60pc of people use because the cost per book is £12, it's cheaper through Amazon.

Reference was made to the lead stolen from St Leonards in Flamstead and the damage to St John's Baptist Church in Markyate and the disrespect of actions by others.

In closing the audience thanked the Parish Council for all their hard work.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm