

Duncton Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 7.00pm on 5th May 2015

Present: Parish Cllrs: M. Bracey, P. Darley, C. Davies, S. Danby, A. Beadsley

In attendance: A. Harte (Clerk to the Council), P Harrod (Playdale), Rev. Bob Mitchell (The Holy Trinity Church Duncton), H Martin (Head Teacher Duncton Cof E Junior School), N. Clifford (Chairman of the Village Hall Committee)
Approximately 20 members of Duncton Parish

Agenda item no. 1 Opening of meeting by Chairman

Thanks were given to all for coming to the meeting and especially to those that provided refreshments for the evening.

Agenda item no. 2 Apologies: M. Brown (WSSC) and J. Elliott (CDC)

Agenda item no. 3 Minutes – to sign the minutes of the APM held on 20th May 2014: Signed as a correct record

Agenda item no. 4 Proposed Playground Extension – Presentation by Peter Harrod from Playdale:

Marie Bracey introduced the background behind the proposed extension to the playground as it was felt that the current playground equipment does not cater well for the toddlers or the older children in the village. It was felt that there is scope for improvement whilst not causing disturbance to residents.

Peter Harrod presented plans for a multi activity toddler slide unit, a 30m Zip wire outside the current fencing and some play panels.

There then followed a discussion with several questions from Duncton residents about the age range that the equipment was suitable for and the potential noise and parking issues that the extension may cause. Some residents expressed concern and felt that the Zip wire would be better placed at the recreation ground at the Village Hall. It was agreed that Peter Harrod from Playdale will investigate the noise level of the zipwire. Marie Bracey pointed out that nothing is decided yet and thanked everyone for their contributions to the discussion.

Agenda item no. 5. The Holy Trinity Church Duncton Report:

“Messy Church” was introduced in May, with help from St Mary’s Petworth and Graffham. It provides a highly relaxed informal setting (in the Village Hall) for children to have fun, do some crafts, have a short talk, and enjoy tea together. It happens every 3 months through the year.

In my view the highlight of the year was the candlelit WW1 Centenary Commemoration on 4th August that followed a showing of War Horse in the Village Hall. It was timed to coincide with the special Service at Westminster Abbey, and proved to be a highly atmospheric occasion which somehow combined the solemnity of remembrance with a challenge to recreate the future on a different path. The December Carol Service then recalled the remarkable Christmas Truce in the Trenches in 1914, when Stille Nacht/Silent Night was sung by opposing troops during the ceasefire. Both occasions were well supported across the community.

After 5 years of discussion and deliberation the decision was taken in the late spring – following a visit and quotation from the Whitechapel Bell Foundry – to refurbish the ancient 14th Century Bell. This would enable it to be swung chimed. The Faculty for the work was duly obtained from the Diocese, and the Bell eventually removed in early 2015. It is currently close to completion, with an agreed return date of Wed 20th May to enable Duncton school children to view the refurbished Bell in church before it is re-hung in the belfry. (Any other villagers are welcome to join this “special viewing” – around 1.30-2.30pm).

A special Celebration Service to mark the Bell’s return is then planned for 31st May (Trinity Sunday) at 4pm, followed by refreshments in the church yard. Local fund raising initiatives will hopefully supplement the amounts already promised through grants and individual donations. The total sum required is £7500. (Duncton Parish Council generously donated a sum of £400).

Like many other rural parishes Holy Trinity Church has been struggling for some time now to maintain its pattern of regular Sunday Services, as much as keeping in the black financially. Diminishing congregations mean that a crisis point has been reached in the life of the parish and its future. This has only been exacerbated by the need to find individuals to fill the legally required offices of church warden and treasurer.

In response to these challenges, and to gauge support for Holy Trinity in the wider community a questionnaire has recently been put together for circulation to every household in this month’s 3 Parishes magazine. This questionnaire is accompanied by an article which provides some of the background to the dilemmas facing HT Church. From the results of this questionnaire it may be possible to glean some pointers to the way forward, or at least to have stirred up some interest in a unique part of any village life which most folk expect to be around when they need it (baptisms, weddings, funerals, Christmas, Easter etc) – without then making the connexion of responsibility to resource its continued existence. There is a degree of irony in all this – as we shall be celebrating our 150th Anniversary in July 2016.....

In the midst of all this angst over the future, I would want to pay tribute to the exceptional service given by both Helen and Daphne to Holy Trinity Church over these many years. There’s no doubt in my mind that Holy Trinity would have fallen into terminal decline many years ago were it not for the unstinting contribution of both ladies. We owe them an immense debt of gratitude for all they have given in loving service and faithful ministry - which has benefitted the wider community as much as the local congregation.

(Rev Bob Mitchell – May 2015)

Agenda item no. 7 Chairman’s Report 2014-2015:

Village Events

- WW1 Commemorations August. Showing of War Horse, Supper, Candlelit procession and service.. Thanks to Bob, John , Caroline , Louise, Jean
- Village Tea and Games
- 4th Fireworks. Great success, thanks to Martin Fleetwood, Paul, John & others

Highways

- Double white lines along Duncton straight – anecdotal evidence sees it as more successful.
- Speed and noise along the A285 and through the village, particularly at weekends still a major problem with less police activity to enforce speed limits.
- Very little progress has been made on getting a speed watch team up and running- we need someone to take this on.

Broadband

- There have been many delays in the work to provide Duncton with the fibre optic super highway. We now are waiting for BT to commission an engineers’ report on the new box needed.

Minerals & Waste

- The Heath End quarry remains the dominant issue. SDNP have been very active in trying to enforce a closure order, Dudmans have been refused planning permission to continue operating. It is a very confused picture.
- WSCC Minerals plan has included sites at Coopers Moor and Duncton Common as possible sites for sand extraction. We will continue to monitor and oppose. Thanks to Liz Williams for her work in this area.

Meetings

- Duncton has been represented at most meeting of the West Sussex County Local Committee, the North East Parishes Forum, Burton & Chingford Ponds Advisory Committee and the meetings of Parishes in CDC and the Police Liaison Committee in Petworth.
- The Parish Council has met 6 times and all meetings have been quorate. Once again I would like to thank all my fellow councillors for their support and contribution to the work of the council. Special mention of course to Daphne who has stood down after so many years. And to Ruth for her contribution. – special tea for Daphne following plant sale on 16th May.
- New notice board
- An additional Parish Councillor is required.

Marie Bracey, Chairman Duncton Parish Council
5 May 2015

Marie Bracey also spoke about Operation Watershed, the Sylvia Beaufoy Youth Centre and thanked the Councillors and the Clerk for all their efforts throughout the past year.

Caroline Fleetwood spoke about the Chestnut Tree Hospice charity that they are hoping to raise £6800 for (the cost per day for the centre to run). There will be a car wash on Tuesday 26th May and a party to raise funds for the charity on Friday 23rd October with dinner and entertainment from Willie Austin. The cost is £25 per head and offers of auction items will be gratefully accepted.

Agenda item no. 6. Duncton School Head Teacher's Report 2014/2015 :

Duncton CofE Junior School along with Graffham CofE Infants together form the thriving Lavington Park Federation. There are 54 children at Graffham (8 years ago there were 36) plus the nursery which has 29 children and 67 at Duncton. There are more children from within catchment now 50% as opposed to 30% previously.

There have been changes at Government level. Duncton School continues to offer a wide curriculum encompassing Forest School and venturing out into the community. Helen thanked The Gadd family for allowing the School to use areas such as Ash Copse and Coopers Moor. They are hosting training for teachers across the 17 Rother Valley Schools.

The School is outward looking and has a connection with a School in Bangalore from which a group of teachers recently came to share their skills with the teachers and pupils of Duncton and Graffham.

The School provides many opportunities for the Children, there is a planned visit from some Hawks (Falconry). They work with both Midhurst Rother College and Seaford College and have taken part in Netball and Football tournaments. The Year 6 group visit the houses of Parliament and pupils from Duncton will also visit the Royal Festival Hall. There are opportunities provided through the Gifted and Talented programme, for example at Chichester Cathedral. The School has also set up successful breakfast clubs at both schools which is appreciated greatly by both parents and pupils.

Agenda item no. 8. Financial Report 2014-2015:

Financial Report 2014-2015 Duncton Parish Council

Balance b/fwd at 1/4/14	£9,595.73
Receipts	£24,194.70
Expenditure	-£28,317.38
Balance c/fwd	£5,473.05

Income consisted of Precept £7191.86 and grant £58.14 which is paid together to meet the request of £7250
 Operation Watershed grant for Willett Close £11969
 VAT reclaimed £2479.90
 Grant for interactive Screen £1400

Expenditure

Operation Watershed £14362.80
 Interactive Screen £2470.80
 Notice Board £1612.80
 Office Furniture for Village Hall £1610.40
 Various grants and donations e.g. Duncton Summer Fair, The Church Bell, CAB, Petworth Youth Association and The Air Ambulance

Agenda item no. 9. Nigel Clifford Village Hall Report 2014/2015:

This time of year is always a very quiet period for the hall, however it is then a good time to get various jobs done ready for the main season. The hall is being redecorated, together with the outside seating, and the garden is starting to be prepared for it to bounce back to life.

I hope that you all saw the newspaper article about Messy Church, a new event in the hall run by the two Helens, Brown and Clifford, with help from Serena, producing dragon biscuits (it was Saint David day), and Bob and Annie Sneller from Tillington kindly providing games for the children. I think these were from the youth centre, which the hall supports with funding. So the hall is benefitting from the donation to the youth club by support from the club, which is good.

The one big drawback at present is trying to get the village involved in the hall. What I am sure that we all don't want is it to become just a white elephant, only for use of parish and village hall meetings and weddings. So if anyone knows any other groups, such as ballet, dance, photographic, etc. who would like to use the hall then please let me know.

The good thing is that any villagers can hire the hall now for 10% of the cost to general public, and the two churches and parish council have the use for free.

As general maintenance I have arranged for the ladies toilet window to be repaired and decorated, and also for the decking to be redone ready for the summer. We have also had the electrics checked as two points that were playing up and the wall lights repaired. The heating is being attended to (service, clean the fans), and also I have arranged for a quotation for improving the gents toilets that are getting a bit sad. This is to renew the wc bowls (one is cracked), to have infra-red sensors (environmentally friendly, lot less water use), and the basins to be changed to pedestal, doing away with the horrid brackets.

I have asked the gardener to purchase some wild flowers and put in on the slope of the bank.

I have two quotations for the renewal of the hall floor, both below the budget. However we still need a bit more money behind us, and a clear space (next winter?) to do these works.

Andy Beadsley and I have been sorting out the ramps, which we are hoping will be a lot cheaper than originally envisaged as we can reuse one that was existing (a few repairs needed), and hopefully Andy has one that we can purchase from the Wheely Boat Trust to take care of the other ramp required. Andy also organized the planting of around 100 trees donated from the Woodland Trust.

We have purchased a new Henry Hoover, some desperately needed cooking pans, and some water jugs from Austins, ready for village events next year.

I have approached Jenny Rawlings, architect from Brighton, who did the planning permission for the extension, about seeking planning for a further extension by the bin stores. The committee will decide later whether to proceed.

I gave a talk to the Mens breakfast group from Tillington in the Duncton Hall in January, which seemed to go down well. I hope that we can do a further talk by someone else from Duncton village later in the year and invite Tillington again.

Some of you may have seen that Duncton hall has formed a 'buddy' with Graffham hall. I met with the hall chairman in January and we chatted a lot about possible prospects for working closely together. To bounce off ideas from one another is the way forward. We had a further meeting in March for a catch up, and intend to make this a regular occurrence.

I have been approached by a magazine to do an article to represent Duncton, which will obviously be mostly about the village hall, and hopefully I can also bring into the article items regarding the charity fundraising for the Hospice that is being organised primarily by Caroline Fleetwood and Louise Excell, with help from Marie Bracey

I also hope that you saw the sad article about the girl who was having a wedding this year and was booked in, however had to cancel as she has had to have major liver surgery. We could not in our hearts stop her the deposit. Hopefully this shows that the committee are trying to look at things in a very objective yet compassionate way. And just to show how wonderful most people react with a bit of kindness, she has donated the money to the hall anyway.

The hall has been heaped with praise for its condition and reputation, from members of different parishes and clients. Let's see if we can make it even better this year. With a wonderful committee working together and a good manager that we have, I see no reason why not!!

Agenda item no. 10. Parishoner's Questions: None asked.

Meeting closed at 20.50pm

The next APM will be held in May of 2016 in Duncton Village Hall. Time and date will be agreed closer to the time.

Signed:

Date: