

**MINUTES OF THE BISLEY-WITH-LYPIATT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2009 AT BISLEY WI VILLAGE HALL**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr P Thorp		Chairman
	Ms L Greene	}	Bisley Ward
	Mr R K Brooks	}	
	Mr D Hunt	}	Eastcombe Ward
	Mrs L Petch	}	
	Mrs V Nairn	}	
	Mr A E Davis	}	
	Mr P Dawes	}	Oakridge Ward
	Mr R N Budgeon	}	
	Mr N Holliday	}	
	Mr N M MacLeod		Clerk

In Attendance: County Councillor Mrs J Nash  
District Councillor Mrs P Carrick

Two members of the public were present.

09.1 1. **Apologies for Absence**

All members of the Parish Council were present.

09.1 2. **Public Participation**

The Chairman welcomed Mr R Utley and Mr A Kaupe to the Meeting and both indicated that they had no specific points to discuss.

However, during the past month, Mr Utley had written to the Parish Council - under the Freedom of Information Act - concerning the Parish Council's estimate of costs for the refurbishment of Bisley Pavilion, which included an extension to house a Parish Office. The Parish Council had replied to his enquiry and stated that the specific information he sought was not yet available. In a second letter to the Parish Council, Mr Utley declared that he had seen correspondence which was addressed to the Trustees of the Village Hall Committee and had noted from this that the Parish had declared it had 'outline costs' for this development. He sought to know the nature of these costs. Mr Utley said that his concerns did not arise from the proposal of the Parish Council to obtain 'dedicated' office premises, but from the lack of transparency he considered the Council had shown in moving forward with this project and with the refurbishment of the Pavilion.

The Chairman assured Mr Utley that the Parish Council did not, in any, way, seek to 'hide' any accurate costs associated with the Pavilion redevelopment. On the contrary, the Chairman reaffirmed to Mr Utley that the Parish Council would place the full details of any proposal concerning this project before the electorate of the Parish before any decisions were taken. However, the Chairman added that until properly-estimated costs had been obtained from Contractors under competitive tender, any information given out at this point would be purely speculative and could well be misleading. For this reason, the Chairman declined to provide the information sought by Mr Utley. Mr Utley requested that the Minutes of this Meeting record the unwillingness of the Chairman to release the information he had sought under the Freedom of Information Act. The Chairman agreed to this request.

09.1 3. **Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared by individual Councillors but the Parish Council as a body declared an interest in the Planning Application submitted to District Council in respect of the Bisley Pavilion redevelopment – Item 09.1 (10) refers.

09.1 4. **Councillor Resignation**

The Chairman announced that on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2008 he had received written notice from Mrs Lyn Hemming of her resignation as a Councillor for Bisley Ward, with immediate effect. This had followed the resignation of Mrs Ceri Nash from the Bisley Ward earlier in December and the Chairman said he had written to both former Councillors to express his regret at their departure and to thank them on behalf of the Parish Council for their valued contributions to the work of the Parish. These sentiments were endorsed by all present at the Meeting.

09.1 5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 having been circulated to all councillors were approved unanimously and the Chairman signed the Minute Book.

09.1 6. **Matters Arising**

(a) **Future for Rural Dispensaries**

Councillors were advised by the Chairman of Eastcombe Ward that the Government had decided not to proceed with the changes proposed in its White Paper on Pharmacy Services. It was not known if this information had been received by the Frithwood Pharmacy in Bussage and a reply from David Drew MP to the concerns raised by the Parish in respect of this issue had yet to be

received. It was agreed that further investigative work was needed to determine if the 'threat' to rural dispensing services had indeed been removed.

b) Watercourse Wardens

It was agreed that the Parish Council would make a direct approach to individuals in the Parish who might wish to accept responsibility as Watercourse Wardens in some of the key water-course areas such as Bakers Mill, Cricketty Mill and Toadsmoor.

09.1 7. **District Council Matters**

District Councillor Mrs P Carrick reported the following matters:

Canal Funding – Funding had now been secured to renovate the stretch of the Cotswold Canal from Brimscombe Port to Saul.

Planning Appeal – A planning appeal in respect of internal alterations at Jaynes Court, Bisley will be held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2009 at Ebley Mill.

'Champions of Warmth' – A meeting of the 'Champions of Warmth' Scheme had announced the widespread delivery of wood briquettes to deserving households, together with the issue of 'easy to read' thermometers, to enable elderly residents to monitor the temperature levels in their homes. However, concern was expressed by the Parish Council about the withdrawal of the £1000.00 per household funding for insulation under the 'Wise Homes' Scheme. The retention of the £1000.00 per household of funding towards the costs of renewable energy sources was welcomed.

Waste/Recycling – Despite the recent publicity about the difficulties of storing and selling recycled waste, parishioners were encouraged to continue to recycle as much waste as possible.

In questions from Councillors, District Councillor Carrick was asked to investigate the possibility of obtaining bags and dispensers from SDC for use by owners to dispose of dog waste in the bins provided by the Parish Council.

09.1 8. **County Council Matters**

County Councillor Mrs J Nash reported the following points to the meeting:

County Council Tax – A proposed increase of 2.9% in the County portion of Council Tax is under consultation. This County Council element represents 82.% of total Council Tax bills. The Police Budget has yet to be announced and the District Council Budget will follow.

Schools – The proposed 'claw-back' of schools' excess balances has been delayed until 2010. Bisley Bluecoat School has

£6,000.00 of excess balance and this delay will enable it to spend the money as intended.

Dedicated Schools Grant funding from Government has been increased by 2.7% for the 2009/2010 FY. It is anticipated that pupil numbers in the County will decrease by approximately 800 in the year ahead.

#### Swindon/Kemble Railway Line

A meeting is being arranged between Gloucestershire County County Representatives, Great Western Trains and Network Rail to discuss the latest position concerning the improvements proposed to upgrade the railway link between Swindon and Kemble.

Supporting Local Businesses during the Recession – GCC has set up an ‘Economic Task Force’ working with the Regional Development Agency and Government Office South-West to address issues arising from the current economic downturn.

Footpath at Tunley – Correspondence had been received by the Parish Council and County Councillor Nash concerning an application submitted by the Parish Council in 2003 to the Public Rights of Way Department to add a length of footpath at Tunley. For various reasons this application had been long-delayed and further information had now been requested. County Councillor Nash asked to be copied-in on our response to the request.

School Bus Service – The Chairman of Oakridge Ward said he had witnessed continuing problems with over-crowding on the school bus servicing Oakridge School. County Councillor Nash undertook to pursue this issue once more with the service providers.

## 09.1 8 **Matters for Discussion**

### a) **Election of Parish Councillor – Bisley Ward**

The Electorate of Bisley Ward had exercised its right to seek an election to fill the ‘Casual Vacancy’ arising in Bisley Ward, following the resignation of Mrs C Nash. Councillors had been provided with a written brief by the Chairman concerning the election procedures that would initially follow.

The Chairman reminded councillors that at the December 2008 Meeting, Councillor Mrs L Hemming had notified her intention to resign at the end of January 2009. This timescale had been agreed in the expectation that a replacement for Mrs Nash would be in place by that date. However, should a further election be sought by the electorate to fill the ‘Casual Vacancy’ arising from Mrs Hemming’s intended date of resignation, the Parish would be faced with two elections within a few weeks of each other. If these elections were contested, the Parish Council would incur significant costs for each election, for which financial provision would need to be made from Parish funds.

Following from discussions with the Electoral Office, it was determined that if the date of resignation of Mrs Hemming was brought forward, only one election would be required to address both vacancies, thus saving 50% of the potential outlay to be met from Parish funds. Mrs Hemming readily agreed that this was the appropriate action for her to take and tendered her resignation, accordingly. Whilst this action has temporarily halved the number of councillors representing Bisley Ward, with a resulting increase in workload for the remaining two councillors, the Parish Council agreed that, in the circumstances, this was the correct decision to take.

The Parish Council must now wait to see if a second election is called for, in order to determine the procedures that will follow.

**b) Election Costs/Parish Precept**

The cost to Parishes of a contested election is circa £2,000.00 and £110.00 if it is uncontested. Thus, even though the Parish Council has been able to include both of the vacancies detailed above into one election, provision must be made to cover the cost. Parishes are advised to maintain sufficient uncommitted funds to cover three months of normal expenditure. If the Parish has to meet the £2,000.00 cost of a contested election, uncommitted funds would be close to the minimum requirement at the Financial Year end.

The Finance Management Committee met on 29 December 2008 to consider this position. Given the stated aim of the Council to keep any increase in precept for FY 2009/2010 to the minimum possible and given the uncertainty as to whether or not the election would be contested, the Committee agreed that the increase in precept should be limited to £1000.00. Should the election be contested the remaining £1,000.00 would need to be met from Parish Reserves and if not contested, the balance of £890.00 (£1000.00 - £110.00) would be 'ring-fenced' and set against the potential election costs of the quadrennial elections due in May 2010. The Finance Management Sub-Committee agreed to place this recommendation before the full Parish Council for approval.

During discussion, it was suggested that the Parish Council should in future make on-going provision to meet election costs. It was agreed that this suggestion would be considered at a later date by the Finance Management Sub-Committee.

The Chairman called for a vote on the proposal that the Parish Precept for 2009/2010 should be increased by £1,000.00 to address the potential cost to the Parish of a contested election. The proposal was

endorsed by Mr R N Budgeon, seconded by Mr D Hunt and carried unanimously.

**c) Appointment of Snow Warden – Bisley Ward**

The Parish Council approved the appointment of Mr Ashley Dickinson as Snow Warden for the Bisley Ward. The Parish Council expressed gratitude to Mr Dickinson for taking on this role at very short notice.

**d) 'Zero Waste Week'**

The Chairman of Bisley Ward briefed councillors on the Programme of Events for the forthcoming 'Zero Waste Week'. Bisley was the 'flagship' village for the scheme and wide-ranging activities and demonstrations would take place throughout the week. Everyone was encouraged to participate and it was emphasised that grants and other offers of assistance would ensure that there would be no cost to the Parish for 'championing' this event.

**e) Funds for Playground Improvements**

Ward Chairs and Play Area Wardens had been passed details of the funding that would become available for 'Play Area Initiatives' during the next two years. Gloucestershire's share of the funding would amount to £1.1M, for division between the six Districts in the County. Councillors were agreed that the play area equipment at Eastcombe Recreation Ground was most in need of modernisation and it was decided that the Parish Council would submit an 'Expression of Interest' as called for by SDC. Bisley Ward put forward a request for the hard-standing for their basketball post to be included. There was a further suggestion that the previous Waterlane play area be considered for the construction of a 'Natural Play Ground' which would incorporate tree stumps, tunnels and natural wood structures.

**Financial Statement****Receipts December 2008**

Bank Interest	£38.93
VAT Refund	£1,917.64
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b><u>£1,956.57</u></b>

**The following payments were approved by the Parish Council**

	<b>£</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>Total</b>
A Bailey – Tennis Court – Pd 09/12/08	6,000.00	900.00	6,900.00
A Bailey – Tennis Court – Pd 19/12/08	6,000.00	900.00	6,900.00
C R Pulley – Pathway at Eastcombe	420.00	73.50	493.50
Hailey Wood Sawmill – Grit Bin (O)	104.20	15.63	119.83
Toshiba UK – Copier Usage	17.77	2.67	20.44
Graduate Gardeners – Burial Ground (O)	352.16	52.83	404.99
Wicksteed Ltd – Play Area Repairs (E)	220.50	38.59	259.09
Clerk – Salary	731.70		731.70
HM Revenue & Customs – Tax/NI	324.67		324.67
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£14,171.00</b>	<b>£1,983.32</b>	<b>£16,154.22</b>

**Petty Cash Payments – December 2008** **£65.12**

**Cash Balance as at 31 December 2008** **£37,212.57**

**Bisley Lock-up Balance as at 31 December 2008** **£2,136.44**

**Westbury Gift Balance as at 31 December 2008** **£10,000.00**

**Parish Office Reserve as at 31 December 2008** **£17,500.00**

**Community Tennis Court Fund as at 31 December 2008** **£1,000.00**

**Bisley Pavilion Reserve as at 31 December 2008** **£3,300.00**

## 09.1 10 **Planning**

The following Planning Applications have been received during the past month and the Planning Sub-Committees' responses are recorded.

### **Bisley Ward**

**S.08/2039/ADV** – Stirrup Cup, Cheltenham Road, Bisley – Erection of illuminated and non-illuminated signs – **Comment Only** – Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Council and community opinion in the emerging Village Design Statement strongly opposes street-lighting. Accordingly, we wish to ensure that there is no pollution at all of the night sky or light intrusion on neighbouring properties/streetscape with the proposed lighting system. The Parish Council has a Sustainability Policy so expects that the lighting system proposed is low-energy.

**S.08/2272/FUL** – Bisley Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, Van der Breen Street, Bisley – Refurbishment and extension to existing Sports Pavilion – **Comment Only** – Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Council owns and manages the Pavilion thus declares an interest in this application.

## 09.1 11 **Correspondence**

The following correspondence received during the past month was available for inspection by councillors:

Stroud District Council

Invitation to Meeting of Parish and  
Town Councils – 17<sup>th</sup> February 2009

## 09.1 12 **Ward Matters**

### a) **Bisley Ward**

**Ward Workload** – The Ward Chairman highlighted the heavy workload that Ward sought to discharge before the end of the FY. This included the installation of the bus shelter on Cheltenham Road, the installation of the basket ball post at Bisley recreation Ground, the enhancement of the area adjacent to the play area at Windyridge and the provision of the pavement from Little Close to Bearsfield. Despite depleted resources, the Ward would aim to complete these tasks. Additionally, it had been agreed that until new councillors are appointed, The Chairman of the Parish Council would carry out the weekly inspection of the Pavilion Play Ground and the Clerk would inspect the Windyridge play area. Finally, the Ward Chairman thanked the other Wards for their offers of support in dealing with planning applications received whilst the Ward was 'undermanned'.

b) **Eastcombe Ward** – The Ward Chairman asked the Clerk to hasten the quotation requested for wall repairs at the Recreation Ground and for providing ‘scalpings’ for the track leading to the Scout Hall at Eastcombe.

c) **Oakridge Ward** – The Ward Chairman wished to record that a request had been submitted to County Highways to extend the primary road gritting route to include the road down to the School in Oakridge Lynch. He also wished to record appreciation for the excellent service provided by County Highways in replenishing grit bins during the recent, extended cold spell.

09.1 13 **Date and Place of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at Oakridge Village Hall on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009 at 7.30 pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.45 hours.