

BOSTON SPA ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting is a meeting of the Parish electorate. It is not a Parish Council meeting. The Parish Council Chairman calls and Chairs the meeting. The Annual Parish Meeting must be held between March 1st and June 1st (LGA 1972, sch 12, para 14). There is no prescribed format for this meeting and its recommendations are not binding on the Parish Council.

DRAFT Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Wednesday, 14th May 2014 at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Room, Boston Spa Village Hall.

PRESENT: Parish Councillors D.I. Thomson (Chairman), R. Wivell (Vice Chairman), T. Gausson, B. Charlton, T. Baker, S Williams, H Shaw and M Heum

IN ATTENDANCE: Ward Councillor Gerald Wilkinson, PCSO Stephen Wales – Wetherby Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT), approx. 40 members of the public

The Chairman welcomed everyone and declared the meeting open.

1. Apologies

Ward Councillors Proctor and Lamb. Parish Councillors Yeadon and Beeson

2. Police Matters

There were 54 crimes recorded in 2013/2014, compared to 53 crimes recorded in 2012/2013. PCSO Wales gave a brief verbal report to the meeting:- there were 11 arrests relating to: burglary of a dwelling, criminal damage, theft of a bicycle and theft from a shop. The village does not have a high level of crime and anti social behaviour continues to be low. The PCSO's continue to visit local schools and groups improving the relationship with the community and giving valuable advice. Speed checks continue to be undertaken in the village, mainly to raise awareness among drivers.

Cllr. Thomson asked for an update on the aggravated burglary in the High Street earlier in the year. Three people had been arrested but unfortunately due to the lack of forensic evidence they have not been prosecuted. The Police responded quickly to a recent attempted burglary and arrests were made.

Work is ongoing to set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the village.

There were no further questions and PCSO Wales was thanked for attending the meeting.

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th April 2013

The minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held last year were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

One of the important issues discussed at the meeting was the proposed closure of Primrose Hill Residential Care Home. Cllr. Thomson invited Mr. David Morton, who led the campaign to stop the closure to give an update on the current position. Leeds City Council made the decision in September 2013 that the home would remain open for existing residents but with no new admissions and will close when no longer required by the existing residents. 14 permanent residents are left plus 3 people on respite care. All of the residents have been moved to the ground floor. The Action Group will be making one last attempt to stop the closure.

4. Matters arising from that meeting

i. **Provision of a pelican crossing on the High Street near to Deepdale** - At the last meeting Ward Cllr. Lamb offered to take the issue forward. He has had a number of meetings to explore the possibility of a crossing but with limited funding available the priority is for locations that have suffered the most accidents. He will continue to pursue the issue. Cllr. Thomson reported that the Parish Council is also meeting with Leeds City Council to discuss the possibility of using funds from the Church Fields development allocated for Highways improvements to fund a number of crossings and a 20mph speed restriction.

ii **Concerns with speeding along the High Street** - The Police continue to regularly monitor speeding along the High Street. If funding is obtained for Highways improvements, that will help to reduce the speed of traffic.

iii **Tesco application for the Crown Hotel** - Since the last meeting the Tesco application for a change of use for the Crown Hotel was refused. Tesco have appealed against that decision and a Public Inquiry will be held in the Village Hall on 8th and 9th September. Residents are encouraged to attend.

5. **Neighbourhood Plan** - Geoff Shaw, Chairman of the Boston Spa Neighbourhood Plan Group presented an overview of the work to date.

The last year has been spent gathering information and engagement with the public. A series of events were held throughout the village to raise the awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan and to encourage people to contribute their ideas. A questionnaire was delivered to every house in the village and 40% of residents responded. In July 2013 there were the exhibitions where the results of the questionnaire were presented and further consultation took place. The Neighbourhood Plan Group has been on a learning curve, collecting detailed evidence to support the plan which will be examined by an Independent Inspector.

Topic Groups with 4-7 members were formed:

Housing and Development - research shows the village has around 4,100 people but 1,900 homes. Many of the homes are underutilised, the population is aging and not moving, this is putting pressure on housing needs for the future.

Environment and Energy – there are not enough green spaces, and new developments need to be energy efficient, and schemes that reduce energy should be encouraged.

Business and Employment – proposals that support the vibrancy of the village will need to be encouraged.

Community and Wellbeing – this is about the softer issues that support social interaction between people such as improved access to open spaces and improving sport and leisure facilities within the village.

Heritage – it is important to maintain and enhance the historic environment.

Traffic and Getting About – looking at improving access to cycle ways, footpaths, and delivering better public transport services.

Communications – a small team develops and co-ordinates the various communications and events to promote the Neighbourhood Plan.

This year – the focus is on refining the vision and objectives, the Neighbourhood Plan will take the village through the next 20 years with 5 yearly reviews. The group has been assessing options to achieve the objectives. From this come policies and actions. The Policies will have legal teeth, they are more planning related, but also involve roads, transport, and other aspects identified by the Topic Groups. The community actions are the aspirations identified to make the village better and are discussed with the Parish Council. The policies have to be precise and will need to pass the scrutiny of an Independent Inspector. The Plan will need to be supported by residents, the Parish Council, and Leeds City Council. Consultation is ongoing and public exhibitions of the objectives and policies for the Plan will be held in the Village Hall on 11th/12th July followed by a public meeting on the evening of 16th July. This will be an opportunity for everyone to have a say before the plan is written.

The programme will be for consultations to be completed by the end of July, the policies will be finalised and the plan will be produced followed by a 6 week pre-submission consultation before submission to the Local Planning Authority in spring 2015, followed by the Independent Examination and a village Referendum in mid to late summer 2015.

The Neighbourhood Plan Group will be writing the plan themselves, and it will be scrutinised by experts before submission.

The Plan has to be in accord with the Leeds Core Strategy which is likely to be ratified at the end of this year. The decision on the Leeds Site Allocations may not be finalised until 2015 and there remain concerns with the number of houses that may have to be built in Boston Spa to contribute to the target of 5,000 new homes in the North East quadrant of Leeds.

It is important to encourage people to come to the July events so that they can contribute to the proposed policies and objectives that will form the Neighbourhood Plan.

A question was asked that if the plan has no legal teeth until it has been approved by the Inspector, it will mean developers will push to develop sites that will not be in the spirit of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan. Developers are trying to get ahead of the Leeds Core Strategy being implemented and the outcome of an appeal in Farsley which challenges whether Leeds CC has a 5 year supply of new homes is awaited. Miller Homes and Barratts are waiting for the outcome as it will influence their intent to develop sites within the village. As evidenced by the development at Church Fields there is a conflict of profit motive and therefore a shortage of affordable homes, leading to a skewed housing stock.

There are about 12 approved Neighbourhood Plans in the country; nearly all are in the South East. Boston Spa is one of the most advanced in Leeds.

The recently introduced Welcome Pack for people new to the village was one idea to come out of the Neighbourhood Plan Group. The Parish Council has developed the pack and Councillors have delivered 40 up

to now, and they are well received by new residents.

- 6. Feasibility Study for a Hydro Power Scheme** - Councillor Susan Williams is leading a working group to consider the feasibility of a hydro power scheme on the river. 65% of people who responded to the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire supported the idea of a hydro scheme. The Parish Council was successful in applying for a government grant to enable the appointment of a consultant to conduct a feasibility study to establish if a hydro power scheme is viable. The results of the study will be available in July. The study issues are:

- Is it financially viable - can you generate money to cover costs and make a profit?
- Is it technically possible - the weir is not very high so it has limitations?
- Is it socially acceptable - the river walk is recognised as village asset so there is an environmental impact?

The discussions so far show the scheme is reasonably financially sound. The consultant has looked at the average flows over 50 years and a 100kw turbine could generate an average income of £100,000 a year with £1,000,000 investment. A minimum 12 year payback is likely, plus maintenance. The Feed in Tariff is guaranteed for 20 years, plus the electricity generated. It would be necessary to borrow funds and a robust financial model will be produced.

The Consultants are working on the technical assessment – the height of the weir limits the turbine choice to either an Archimedean screw which is visible or a Kaplan (pit type) which would be below ground. Both require a watertight building.

There are 3 potential sites – (1) the Thorp Arch side of the fish pass, however, the Archimedean would not be well received. (2) the Boston Spa side of the fish pass, just beyond Mill House. There is only room for a 30kw turbine unless a larger turbine is placed into the Mill House area which is seen as being of historical interest. (3) the riverbank itself, which may be costly and visually unacceptable.

A question was asked - which turbine is the most efficient? At this stage it is not known. Once the size and type of turbine is known residents on both sides of the river, anglers, Thorp Arch Parish Council and the Archaeology and Heritage Group will be consulted. Full consultation will take place at the Neighbourhood Plan exhibitions on the 11th and 12th July at the Village Hall when diagrams and drawings of the proposed scheme will be on display and the Consultants will be available to answer any questions. Following the public consultation the proposals will be presented to the Planning Department and the Environment Agency to identify whether there are any 'show stoppers' and whether any further environmental studies are required.

The Feasibility Study identifies and assesses risk. The next stage involves planning, obtaining licences and the detailed design. Funds would need to be raised, around £120,000 through a grant for the planning stage and construction costs of around £800,000 raised through ethical loans or a community share offer. A similar scheme in Oxford raised nearly £500,000 in 4 weeks.

A hydro power scheme is environmentally friendly and a 100kw turbine would provide electricity for around 100 homes.

It is important to encourage people to come to the July exhibitions to see the detail of the proposed scheme and to take the opportunity of raising questions with the consultants.

- 7. Identifying potential sites for benches in the village** - Councillors Wivell and Gausson are reviewing the number and location of benches in the village, and wish to give people the opportunity to propose potential new locations. Benches are used to rest, to meet and talk, and where there is a view to be admired. There is the opportunity to put more rustic benches at view points along the riverside. There is also scope for benches on the open space at the Church Fields development. Proposed locations would need to be agreed with land owners. People are encouraged to feed any suggestions through to the Parish Council.

- 8. Chairman's Report** - The Chairman's report was published in the Annual Parish Council Newsletter which was delivered to all households in the parish. Councillor Thomson advised that there are now 3 new Councillors. There were no questions or comments.

- 9. Financial Statement** - A provisional statement had been prepared and distributed to the meeting. The Parish Council has increased the precept to £35,500. There were no questions.

- 10. To invite Boston Spa residents to raise any matters of interest.**

- i. Reverend Peter Bristow from St Mary's Church said the new car park between St Mary's and the Church Fields development is working well. However, there are problems when there is a large event at the Church, with people blocking the extended entrance. The church is considering using marshals to control

parking. Signage to ask people not to block the entrance was suggested. Councillor Thomson advised the overflow car park was originally to be controlled by bollards, however Taylor Wimpey are not honouring the agreement. There has been at least two occasions when people have also turned into the pathway thinking it is the car park entrance.

- ii. Further issues were raised about people parking badly on the High Street, including lorries and vehicles associated with the Church Fields development. A question was asked about the progression of plans to introduce double yellow lines on the Church Fields side of the High Street and parking bays. Councillor Thomson advised the Parish Council continue to talk to LCC Highways, and Taylor Wimpey to progress the highways improvements.
- iii. A resident commented that to her knowledge it has taken 26 months for Clifford Road and the footpath to be swept by Leeds CC. Concerns were raised that the roads and paths become slippery once the leaves fall in the autumn and a suggestion was made that consideration could be given to services being provided by the community. Another resident made people aware that you can apply online to have your street cleaned. Another resident asked if a request could be made to Leeds CC to spray weed killer along the roadsides.
- iv. A resident asked for an update on the proposed development at Newton Kyme. There is planning consent for 140 homes and Redrow have applied to build 128.
- v. Concerns were raised with the deterioration of the Crown Hotel building pending the outcome of the Tesco appeal against the refusal for a change of use. The appeal will be dealt with by a Public Inquiry in September. The building has been inspected and no action is required under the derelict buildings legislation. Approaches to the current owners to consider enabling the building to continue as a hotel have not been successful; they are continuing to work with Tesco.
- vi. A resident asked if the Parish Council has a schedule of road repairs. Each year the Parish Council is consulted on proposed repairs and tries to influence the prioritisation of work. Anyone wanting details of the schedule should contact the clerk.
- vii. Concerns were raised with the closure of the NatWest Bank in August.
- viii. A resident asked if anyone else had experience of Leeds CC taking photos of listed houses in the village. The interest appeared to be only in the back of the houses.

- Councillor Thomson advised there was a defibrillator awareness event on 3rd June in the Village Hall at 2.00pm for those people who were interested to know how the defibrillator now available on the outside of the Village Hall worked. A second device is expected to be placed at the library.
- The Grove Road (planning application) Public Inquiry starts on 20th May for 4 days at the Village Hall, residents are encouraged to attend.

Next Meeting - The Parish Council holds its meetings on the third Monday evening of the month at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Boston Spa. All meetings are open to the public. Any specific matters for the attention of the Parish Council should be sent to: Mrs. V. Skinner, Clerk to the Parish Council, The Village Hall, 199, High Street, Boston Spa LS23 6AA, by email: clerk@bostonpapc.org.uk, or by telephone 01937 843956. The next Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Wednesday 13th May 2015.

Closure - There being no other matters for discussion the Chairman thanked the residents and the Ward Councillor for their attendance and the meeting was declared closed at 21.15 hours.

Signed
Chairman

Date