

Burton upon Stather Parish Council

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on
Monday 22 April 2002 in the Village Hall, Burton upon Stather**

PRESENT: Councillors M.Aykroyd, Mrs A.Bradley, Mrs D.G.Clark,
A.H.Harrison, A.Irons, Mrs A.Jennison, M.Peace, S.Sowerby
North Lincs Councillor Mrs T.Muir
Pc J.Sewell and Pc Smith
Approximately 38 members of the public

APOLOGIES: Councillors P.F.Bell, C.Curtis, B.P.Regan
Mr C.Hodgins

Councillor K.T.Gray, Chairman of the Parish Council, in the Chair.

The Chairman welcomed police constables J.Sewell and Smith who answered questions on rural policing.

P.C.Sewell commented on the large increase in funding for rural policing and said that new officers were currently being trained. The public should see a significant improvement in numbers of officers on the beat in about 18 months.

Residents voiced their concerns about particular trouble spots in the village where young people gathered such as the Darby Road bus shelter, St Andrew's Churchyard, the Sheffield Arms car park, empty property, Burton Hills and the surgery. Drinking, noise, vandalism, car crime and some drug taking were all cited.

Humberside Police was criticised for not patrolling more often, particularly in the evening, failing to respond to telephone calls and failing to target known trouble makers, despite an 11% increase in the allocation from the Council tax. Residents regretted that P.C.Albert Williams was no longer policing the area. They noted that they had yet to see the police on bicycles around the village.

In their defence, P.C.Sewell stated that they had to cover 20 villages and had to prioritise their response to crime. Members of the public were advised to ask for a log number when they reported any trouble so that they could trace the progress of the complaint.

P.C.Sewell stated that they could not victimise youth and the police themselves had to witness any alleged damage or disorder. He claimed that television crime programmes were a source of information for young people who knew their rights. Young people now had much greater mobility and could travel between villages.

P.C.Sewell did not blame local licensees for supplying underage youngsters with drink, but blamed their older friends and even parents for supplying it.

He stressed that the police would charge anyone caught in possession of drugs, but claimed that young people themselves thought tobacco was more dangerous than drugs.

P.C.Sewell agreed to provide information on crimes, disorder, arrests and outcomes in Burton compared to other similar areas

A resident was informed that repairs to damage to personal property could not be paid for out of public funds.

The Chairman thanked the two officers for attending and answering the questions.

1. Minutes as circulated of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 23 April 2001 were accepted as a true record.

2. Matters arising from those Minutes

Grass cutting

Following a complaint about the standard of grass cutting in 2001, a letter from Stuart Clifford of North Lincolnshire Council Neighbourhood Services stated that it had been an unduly wet spring, hence the lush growth of grass. Their budget did not stretch to collecting grass cuttings. He offered to attend a Parish Council meeting to explain their budget and procedure if there were any further complaints.

There were no further complaints that year.

Mr T.Rowbotham asked the Clerk to find out why the area beneath trees was not cut or trimmed.

Traffic Problems

The Council had continued to pursue North Lincolnshire Council and the police about traffic speed and inconsiderate parking around the school.

This had resulted in a much higher profile from the police who had also booked a number of motorists. An on site meeting with the traffic safety officer had resulted in the promise of new road junction markings and the pruning of trees to reveal the Wiltshire Avenue off The Avenue.

North Lincolnshire Council had recently provided a crossing patrol across Flixborough Road. Previous Boards of Governors and Friends of Burton School had sought the support of the Parish Council and North Lincolnshire Councillors for a crossing across Normanby Road, thought to be a more important danger spot at that time.

3. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

Cllr Kevin Gray had welcomed four new councillors onto Burton Parish Council since the last Annual Parish Meeting: Miles Aykroyd, Alan Irons, Stephen Sowerby and, most recently, Robert Harris.

He commented on the on-going problem of sewage in the village, particularly down Stather Road. He hoped that this problem had been solved since the discovery of a pipe blockage towards the top of the hill.

Vandalism was also an on-going problem for the Council but P.C.Albert Williams had made a significant impact on antisocial behaviour last year. Unfortunately he had since been deployed on other police duties. The Community Police contact was now his partner, P.C.Gareth Barker.

Cllr Gray commented on the Stather Road house being set alight and the problem with the Darby Road bus shelter, a current target of vandals.

3. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council contd.

Cllr Gray welcomed the improved bus stops, kerbs, signs and the promised bus shelter for The Avenue.

He commented on the Parish Council's efforts and failures to influence planning, particularly the Cliff Drive development and the Orange mobile phone mast.

Dog fouling remained a contentious issue and he maintained that it would take a prosecution before some dog owners complied with the law.

King's Ferry Wharf had caused very little trouble over the year and the bollards outside the Sheffield Arms had proved successful.

An attempt had been made to re-open the Villa Farm footpath file, but there had been no further news from North Lincolnshire Council Public Rights of Way Department.

He praised the Burton in Bloom event organised by Mrs Wendy Mitchell and her team. Money from the event was given to local charities and £800.00 set aside to provide flower planters to enhance the entrances to Burton.

He commented that Glebe Paddock had proved an excellent venue, which, he hoped, would be used for other events. Plans were already being made for an electric point, which could also supply power to a Christmas tree.

He reported that Normanby had come runner up in the Best Kept Village Competition and that the £30.00 prize money would probably be spent on bulbs for the village.

As previously reported in the newsletter, it was hoped that North Lincolnshire Council would soon begin work on replanting The Avenue with a mixture of beech and lime trees, supplied by Sir Reginald Sheffield to replace the unsuitable sycamore trees.

He urged everyone with internet access to look at the Parish Council's website (www.burton-upon-stather.co.uk) which had been constructed by Councillors Miles Aykroyd with support from Cllr Alan Irons.

Answering questions, he stated that the empty house on Stather Road, owned by Mr S. Wharton, was still the target of vandals. A planning application to build new housing on the site had been refused by North Lincolnshire Council as it was outside the village development boundary.

Cllr Gray acknowledged that mobile phone reception was poor, but thought that the proposed mast would only improve reception for Orange mobile users, although mobile phone companies were encouraged to mast share.

He noted a complaint about cars visiting the church and Sheffield Arms blocking the entrance to Church Farm Mews. The complainant felt that further events on Glebe Paddock would exacerbate this problem

The Clerk agreed to make enquiries at North Lincolnshire Council for advisory white lines, a No Parking sign or other deterrents. Cllr Tracy Muir also offered to follow up the complaint. Meanwhile the resident was advised to take the car registration number of any car blocking the entrance and to report it to the police.

Referring to an enquiry about the missing "Barrack's Yard" sign, the chairman stated that Mr D.Hearn had agreed to put the sign up again after he had finished work on the cottage stonework.

4. Report from the Treasurer of the Parish Council

Referring to an unaudited financial statement for the financial year ending March 2002, the Clerk and Treasurer, Mrs P.Denby, explained the Parish Council's income and expenditure. The cost of vandalism had been logged monthly but was disguised in repairs and maintenance. The precept had been held at £25,500 the previous and for the coming year.

She explained that the "Contingency" figure had been increased to allow some flexibility in spending, for example if the Village Hall needed financial help or the Council decided to support the Queen's Golden Jubilee

She explained that the precept was an additional sum raised from the Council Tax payers of Burton, Normanby and Thealby. The Parish Council could in theory demand huge increases, but councillors were mindful of the tax burden on Parish residents.

5. Report from the Village Hall Management Committee

Ray Buettner, new chairman of the Village Hall Committee, read a prepared statement as agreed by the whole Committee. He commented that he encouraged full participation by all committee members.

The Committee had been disappointed that the Parish Council had felt unable to allocate a specific amount to the Village Hall Committee this financial year. He explained that what appeared a very healthy bank balance, was in fact a building fund built up over many years by the retiring treasurer, Mrs Ruth Hodgins, to cover such problems as suspect roof covering and possible subsidence at the rear of the Hall, should the new Community Hall not materialise.

He was reassured by the Parish Council's statement that there was a Contingency Fund, should an emergency arise.

The Village Hall Committee was unable to provide a financial statement as the audited accounts had not been approved by the Village Hall Committee.

Answering questions, he confirmed that the building maintenance fund would be transferred to the new Community Hall, should it ever be built.

He agreed that parking was the main problem facing the Village Hall. One resident suggested that additional parking might be acquired via the closure of the metal detector shop.

6. Report from the Burton Playing Fields Association

Barry Jackson, chairman of the Burton PFA, explained that purpose of the Committee was to co-ordinate the function and running of the playing fields.

The Committee had worked tirelessly over the past year, trying to secure grants for various projects, one of which was for the children's play area fence.

They had sought to improve their service to the community and had submitted articles for the Parish newsletter, Parish magazine and created a website specifically for the PFA:

www.geocities.com/buspfa. They could be contacted by email at buspfa@hotmail.com.

He commented that a plan was being developed to restore the BMX track to its former condition after becoming overgrown.

Referring to the well used recycling banks he stated that a can bank and clothing bank had been added. The facility generates a small income for the PFA.

The Committee was actively researching the possibility of purchasing their own machine for grass cutting to avoid problems and frequency and quality of the service.

Members were still concerned about dog owners using the playing fields and allowing their pets to foul the land. Members of the public were reminded that dogs were not allowed onto the playing field by order of the Burton PFA and Parish Council, the owners of the land. If owners disregarded this and allowed their pets to foul the field, North Lincolnshire Council would now fine them under the new byelaw.

The Parish Council had allocated £2713.00 to the PFA this year to help with grass cutting, repairs and maintenance.

Mr Jackson invited residents to the AGM on Wednesday 1 May and stated new volunteers would be welcomed onto the committee.

In conclusion he thanked his hard working committee, in particular David Wenban, Pat McKay, Ann Bradley, Karen Walker and Rob Belton without whose time and effort the village would not have such a well run facility.

A financial statement was not presented.

Answering questions on the recycling banks he confirmed that no income was derived from paper collection, but it was an additional facility for those who missed the blue bag collection.

A questioner asked if a plastics bank could be added to make the facilities a one stop shop. The Clerk replied that this had been researched before and there had been a perceived danger of arson with a plastics bank, but it would be raised again with North Lincolnshire Council. A resident whose property overlooked the facilities stated that he personally would not want to see any more recycling banks.

Another resident asked whether the PFA had ever purchased more land, as was once mooted.

It was confirmed that the purchase of additional land was being considered when there were more football teams needing extra pitches, but the land had not been purchased as the number of teams decreased.

7. Report from the Thealby Play Area Committee

Cllr M.Peace, Chairman of the Thealby Play Area Committee, confirmed that the play area continued to be very well used by 30-40 children at weekends.

He was undertaking repairs and maintenance following a site inspection by North Lincolnshire Council for insurance purposes.

A financial statement was not presented.

8. Report from the New Community Hall Committee

Cllr Mrs Ann Bradley, Vice Chairman of the Community Hall Committee, commented on the difficulties faced by the Committee in trying to amalgamate the Village Hall and Playing Fields Charities in preparation for applying for Lottery funding.

During this process, they discovered that there were funds available from the Football Development Association which could be used to provide an extended pavilion, so it was decided to try that course of action, leaving plans for a new Hall for the time being.

Discussions were to be held with the Parish Council about the way forward to provide better facilities for the Parish. She stated that she was part of a committee of three desperately trying to attract funding, but it was very time consuming.

The chairman thanked all members of the voluntary committees for their work for the community.

9. DISCUSSION ON FUTURE BURIAL ARRANGEMENTS

A display showing the possible cemetery plan for Wiltshire Avenue, leaflets about woodland burials and the Minutes of the meetings about burials had been mounted. G.W.Robinson MBE gave the background to the current discussion about future burial arrangements. There were about 25 burial spaces left in the churchyard, which might last 5 years, if there were an average of 5 burials per year.

Members of the Parochial Church Council were merely discussing the possibility of reusing part of the former burial ground to the south of the seat towards Stather Road. There was no objection from the Church Authorities, as the last burial had taken place over 100 years ago. The setting of the church could be protected by restrictions on the size and shape of any headstones and a large area of lawn would still remain. Approximately 115 spaces could be created and would ensure that burials could continue at the church for 20-25 years.

The proposals had not been discussed in great detail by the Parochial Church Council who remained completely open minded.

Previous Parish Councils had decided to plan for a civic cemetery, but it was stressed that Parish Councils had a power, but not a duty to provide a cemetery. The present Council was not committed to providing a cemetery.. If the Parish Council went ahead with the cemetery, it had been estimated that it might cost Council Tax payers around £30,000 to £35,000. Councillors had discussed all possibilities, including providing a woodland cemetery, or a mixture of the traditional and woodland, but they too remained open minded and sought the views of parishioners.

The discussion was opened up for those present to express their views:

- The churchyard was thought the proper place for burials
- There was a fear of vandalism at a cemetery, especially next to the playing field
- Reburials at the churchyard would save the parish a considerable sum of money, even if it only lasted 20-25 years
- In that time, there might be a national re-think on use of land and trends in burials/cremations.
- Reburials at the churchyard would buy the Parish time to consider matters further
- Some residents did not want a cemetery next to a playing field
- Most residents preferred the churchyard for burials and felt it quite usual to see gravestones in that setting. They formed part of village history and enabled relatives to trace their ancestors
- The view would not be spoilt as gravestones could be flat. Only half the front lawn furthest away from the church would be used
- If the Parish Council voted not to provide a cemetery, residents would have to travel to Woodlands Crematorium or elsewhere

In opposition:

- Reburials would spoil the beautiful approach to the church
- It would be inappropriate to have freshly turned earth in front of the church when functions such as weddings were taking place
- It would be better to use the north, not south side of the church, where some headstones could be moved (Reverend Canon Dadd stressed that this idea was new and had not been discussed. Immediate reaction to it was that there were too many recent burials, within the last 50 years, at the north side)
- The idea of reburials at the church was a red herring which caused division among villagers
- It would only delay a decision being made to provide the cemetery, which had already been given planning permission and was written into the Local Plan
- Digging the front lawn would inevitably uncover human remains which would have to be reburied
- To reuse the front lawn would only be a temporary measure, but the effect would be permanent
- The Parish Council should continue making financial provision for a cemetery as it would only be more expensive in the future

The chairman said that research was being undertaken by Cllr Alan Irons into environmentally friendly woodland burials, which began in 1994 with 2 sites. There were now 130, so perceptions about burials were perhaps changing.

In conclusion he asked for a show of hands to gauge the opinion of those present:

Those in favour of reburials at the churchyard	17
Those in favour of a cemetery	5
Those undecided	9

(Not everyone voted)

It was stressed that further discussions would be taking place at both the Parochial Church Council and at the Parish Council before decisions were made.

10. Any other business

None

Thanks were expressed to the Parish Council and to the Clerk for their work over the past year.

Mr D.H.Newman also thanked those who had organised the very successful Photographic Exhibition, which had run from 16 – 20 April 2002.