

WINSFORD PARISH COUNCIL - ANNUAL ASSEMBLY
Wednesday 23rd March 2016
7:30pm, Winsford Village Hall

1. Apologies and Welcome

T. Faulkner, Major & Mrs Milner-Brown, G. Withers, C. Wilkins, C. Nicholls, B. Staples, T. Staples, J. Cox, E. Connell, I. Wybrow and S. Fallon.

The Chairman warmly welcomed all 65 people in attendance. He then explained that in order to allow Mr Geoff Mackett from CRISP to get home to the other side of Somerset at a reasonable time, he would be speaking first ahead of the other agenda items.

2. "Community & Emergency Planning" - Mr Geoff Mackett - CRISP (Community Resilience Somerset Project)

Geoff Mackett introduced CRISP, Community Resilience Somerset Project, which is helping communities to prepare for emergencies by providing support and guidance to those who wish to increase their resilience. CRISP started with 3 partners but has grown to include: the Environment Agency, Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Somerset Local Authorities Civil Contingencies Partnership, Somerset County Council (and the 5 district councils), Community Council for Somerset (CCS), British Red Cross, County Highways and Rotary International. It covers 312 parishes and is 9 officers strong and has 2 community representatives. There are a further 22 voluntary agencies who provide support such as Wessex 4x4, who transport care providers in bad weather, and the animal welfare support unit etc. CRISP also works with and gets funding from Somerset Rivers Authority. By the 2030s, up to 1.5 million properties will be at high risk of flooding and 59% have no community resilience plans. CRISP helps prepare community flood plans and parish emergency plans, funds flood wardens, provides training and support, provides grants for things such as sandbag sheds/stores, or invests capital to help clear rivers to mitigate from flooding. But it is not just flooding, other emergencies are planned for such as severe weather, transport disasters, fire, pollution etc. They have an easy application process and Geoff can be contacted on gmackett@somerset.gov.uk or 01823 356792. Kate Pearson from the Environment Agency in Exeter is here (and organised a previous event here because Winsford was identified as at risk of flooding) and can answer flooding related questions.

A question was raised about rivers not being cleared, and instead beaver dams are created. KP answered that it is to slow down the flow by having it trickling but understood the concerns about it backing up and bursting and pointed out that it can be assessed for risk.

Another point was raised that the Exe is very strong and there are a number of old bridges which get damaged by tree trunks and so if the barrier breaks there is potentially lots of damage.

Another question was raised concerning the fact that Highways used to clear the drains on a regular basis, but on a limited budget are only doing what they can. If drains are cleared and pumped, it prevents water cascading down the roads, and saves a lot of money. It is harder to be proactive but GM agreed to talk to colleagues in WSC/TDBC and get an answer to BF. It was highlighted that a community flood plan represents a collective voice and is therefore more likely to get things done i.e. drains could be mapped and shared for priority maintenance. It was noted that drains are blocked from the pub to the main road, causing the Winn Brook to flood the ford and run down. A parishioner mentioned that the Fire Brigade do not want to know until water is running through your house. GM agreed to take comments back to flood authority.

MM reported that she had sent photos of logs upstream on the river bank to the Environment Agency and was told someone would be in contact, but they had not been. KP noted that they usually write to the landowner as it is their responsibility so they would try that again.

In summary, there is money available, and they are keen to explore spending it differently, such as helicopter surveys, although being proactive is hard. Lots of resources are available as are templates for each community to 'fill in the gaps' for them individually.

The Chairman thanked Geoff and Kate and noted that we have a friend and someone to turn to. The Parish Council can take it on and make a plan - you have not seen the last of us!

3. Approval of the Minutes of the last Annual Assembly (as posted on the notice board)

These were **APPROVED** and signed.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Chairman reported that in 2015 we discussed Broadband, the Website, the Archive, the George Joyce Trust and the Village Clean Up, all of which we cover again this evening. The pile of scalping on the car park was used to fill the holes, thanks very much to Johnny Bray and his magic machine. In my Chairman's Report, amongst other things, I spoke about the proposed speed limit. You have good cause to wonder what has happened on that score. Since the last meeting speed measurements were taken (using mysterious grey boxes beside the road) and Gary Warren, the man from the SCC highways was amazed that a village such as ours, with no pavements should have no limit below 60mph. The process

then started, plans produced, the proposal was published in the Free Press and there were no objections, indeed the subject was discussed at every PC meeting. We had thought that the job would be completed by now, however the delay has concerned the placement of the small repeater signs which are required by law. The ENP were like most of us, understandably, not keen on extra poles, particularly if they were grey, so highways then looked at putting them on telegraph poles or were they electricity poles.... who owned them....etc not as simple to resolve as we mere mortals may think. We await final decisions on this and our key supporter, Frances Nicholson, who is both our county councillor and a member of the ENPA, has suggested that perhaps the poles could be green or brown! She also recommends that once the limit is in place we should join up with Community SpeedWatch. We are nearly there. Yes we all agree that there seems little point in having some of the repeater signs, for example up to Howetown, but there is a legal requirement. To say that people won't obey the speed limit doesn't really help. There is a proven, overwhelming desire by people who live in the centre of the village to have a speed limit, the Parish council have listened and heard and we are almost there. I don't think anyone can really claim that Exford, Wheddon Cross and Bridgetown for example that have speed limits are blighted by the existence of signs.

He then asked if there was anything else from last year's Assembly that anyone would like to raise at this point, and reminded people that the floor would be open after Item 10, The Chairman's Report?

Jan Faulkner asked about tidying up the telephone box and bus shelter, which she raised last year. This would be covered under Item 9, Village Clean Up/Clean for the Queen

5. Broadband - Stephen Hunt

SH reminded attendees about last year's presentation about the initiative to improve broadband speeds in rural areas - Connecting Devon and Somerset, which is Government sponsored. Under Phase 1 BT is responsible for installing fibre optic cables to the exchange (with no change to existing copper connections to houses). This went live in Winsford at the end of last year, and other providers can use these cables. He asked for a show of hands of how many people have been notified by their provider that the new service is available? - about 8 people. He told everyone that they need to contact their own provider as it is not one size fits all, the service and speed you get depends on the cable distance you are from the cabinet. He then asked for show of hands of how many have taken up the new service? - about 10 people. Regarding Phase 2, he asked for a show of hands for how many people attended the Connecting Dartmoor and Exmoor Roadshow last November? - about 4 people. This included a presentation given by Airband who are the provider for Phase 2. This is a different system where broadband is provided by radio signal from a pole to a dish on your house by line of sight. The rollout for this is between March and December 2016 and it is possible that Winsford may be covered. He asked for a show of hand of how many people have registered an interest for this service? - about 4 people. He reported that he had spoken with Airband today and they are still on target for March to December rollout and 40 planning applications are in the pipeline. He checked with ENP and 3 have gone in so far for South Molton, Luxborough and Brompton Regis. If you registered you will be notified if the service comes to Winsford, so he encouraged people to register.

The Chairman thanked Steve.

6. The Village Archive - Mel Mileham

The Chairman began by thanking Jan Faulkner for her terrific contribution, over many years, as the keeper of the Archive. She has now handed over to Sue Hayes, who together with Mel Mileham have taken things forward.

What a long way we've come since the Winsford Remembers Commemoration. Last year at the Annual Assembly we asked you to search your family papers and photos and then let us take copies for the Archive. Anything relating to Winsford is welcome. Not everything has to be 'ancient'! We are still missing lots of information on more recent events, clubs, people, the school, WW2 and especially from 1930's to now. We had 2 Archive open days last year when we explained what we wanted; and showed you much of what was in the archive. We asked Helen Blackman (Exmoor Society Archivist) to talk to us about 'where to go from here' and we contacted lots of people who used to live in the village to share their knowledge with us. Over 100 people visited and many provided us with information that was missing - about 75% of the photo subjects and people were named and of course we managed to get all-important contact details - a living link to Winsford's past. Andrew Needs (son of Harold who lived in Winsford in the 1930/40's) has been compiling the map of the graves in the churchyard and researching the history of Winsford cricket club. Sue and I have been adding to a Winsford family tree. In order to give the Archive a safe long term home we applied to the ENP Partnership Fund and were fortunate to receive a grant which has enabled us to buy proper lockable cupboards for the Archive to be stored in. The Winsford Village Hall Committee gave permission for the cupboards to be built in the Meeting Room - an ideal situation that is safe, secure, accessible and most importantly DRY! And once the old filing cabinets are removed, frees up a useful storage area for other Village Hall ventures. We have transferred the Archive content that was in old filing cabinets at the back of the Village Hall. We have asked the people who volunteered last year to help us sort it out. The online

archive has been very successful, we have had many enquiries - one person was looking for his ancestor - John Webber - who he thought was buried in Winsford churchyard. We found the gravestone and were amazed to discover that John Webber had fought with the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular Wars at the battles of Talavera, Badajoz and Salamanca - how amazing that he survived all that and was laid to rest in Winsford! When the physical archive is sorted out we plan to hold mini exhibitions of what we have found. We also want to link the information through the Winsford website. The Parish Council, Sue and I would like to thank Jan Faulkner for her efforts to care for and preserve the contents of the Archive that were handed to her over several years - especially the indexing which has kept track of the content. Also thank you to the ENP Partnership scheme for helping us with the matched funding and of course all the volunteers who have been patiently waiting to start helping.

The Chairman thanked Mel.

6. Winsford Website - Beverley Flanagan

The Chairman introduced Beverley as one of the unsung heroines of Winsford and thanked her (with assistance of course from others) for bringing us well into the 21st century, all we need is for more people to make use of it!

Beverley Flanagan

It's hard to believe that the new Winsford Village Website has been up and running for almost a year! I know that some of you were here last year and will remember that the launch at last year's Annual Assembly was well received with many positive comments and a huge sigh of relief that Winsford had been brought in to the 21st century! The aim of the website was to give residents, the outside world and visitors alike, a window into the life of this picturesque village. During the year we've tried to cover diverse topics and events through a variety of articles, photos and of course the sometimes humorous blog! Looking back over the year the village has been busy and we've covered, I hope most of the events, The Easter Play, The Annual Litter Collection, The Winn Club iPad Training Day (with the great tea) Two Book signings, The Three B's Fashion Show and Annual fete to name but a few. These are only some of the events which took place over the last year but really helps to showcase the positive nature of Winsford villagers who regularly and voluntarily give up their time to positively support the various projects. It seems that not only is the website viewed locally but we have interest as far afield as America and Japan, so Winsford is on the world map! It has also provoked interest from people looking for information on previous residents of the village and we have been able to help through our archive, which we are very fortunate to have. Only yesterday I received an email from a gentleman which I would like to share with you, apologies to those of you who may have already seen this.

Dear Sir, I write to you because of the connection with your village, of a lovely lady called Gwen Kirby, who lived there for the last period of her life.

Please allow me to relate how I know of her. I was a patient at Great Ormond Street Hospital in Feb/ March 1958. I was in the hospital, for a heart operation, a repair of the aorta.

It was not an emergency operation. it was something discovered at a school medical check. An operation was needed, it was state of the art technology, and my parents were advised it should be done by my 13th birthday. They asked for it to be done on the 11th February 1958, the 100th feast Day of Our Lady of Lourdes, an auspicious day in the Catholic calendar. I was twelve years old.

It was obviously a great success. I was in hospital for about a month, and I remember various things, one of them was the matron, Gwen Kirby. I didn't remember her name then, but I do remember her. She was an imposing figure, and visited the ward regularly, it was on the 6th floor.

What made her stand out, was not only her matronly demeanour, but her hat. She wore a nurses' uniform, but because she was trained at St Thomas' she was allowed to wear their hat, which was different to the Great Ormond street nurses' hat. It had a bow, which she wore under her chin.

A few years ago, I read her obituary in the Times. It was in the edition of the 16/04/07. Reading it, I realised that she had been the Matron when I was there. I tore it out, and put it away. A few days ago, I was having a little tidy up, and I came across it. I goggled her name, and saw her connection with your village. I read the entries relating to her, and also her mention of Princess Ann, who I remember being in the hospital the same time as me.

My ward was on the 6th floor, and the night before I was discharged, I was told that there was going to be an emergency admission, my bed was needed, and I was going to be moved up to the 7th floor, the private ward, where Princess Ann was. I know remarkable.

I am very grateful for what happened and for the part Gwen Kirby and so many other wonderful people played in my very successful operation. Whenever I am in the Great Ormond Street area, perhaps a few times a year, I often visit the lovely chapel that is within the hospital, to say a few prayers of gratitude, for all those involved.

I pray this all makes sense. Thanks for reading it. I have now retired I have time to do things like this, and I write to you as the name of your village is mentioned in the obituary, and God willing, there are people who knew her. Thanks again, God bless you all, Dennis Fitzgerald.

I thought it was such a nice letter to receive and something we could actively respond to, so if anyone has any information relating to this lady please could you pass it on to Me.

So a year on where are we with the website?

We continue to post as much information relating to events effecting us all and having sent out the first newsletter I can confirm that this will in the future be done on a quarterly basis. So if you haven't already signed up to receive this I would ask that you sign the form giving your details to be included for the future. I have been asked about security for emails and I can confirm that your information will not be shared with anyone and all correspondence is sent out as a blind cc ie. no-one else can see who its been sent to. As is normal in the UK we all have a fascination with the weather so we have added a weather widget to the site, so no need to go outside to find out if its raining you can just log onto the website for the information! There is also a link for visitors to Trip Advisor which gives reviews and information on local businesses, so hopefully this will be useful for the Tea Rooms, Pub and Camp Site. So finally this website is for you all So please continue to send information regarding your clubs and events, post your photos of anything relating to the village and log on to your website regularly to find out what's going on. Lastly a big thank you to everyone who has supported this website in it's first year and we look forward to hearing from you in the future.

7. Report on the George Joyce Trust - Richmond Harding

Richmond is Chairman of the 9 trustees of the George Joyce Trust, which was set up in 1952 to share the annual profits from the rent on the house and land at East Nurcott Farm (126 acres) between 3 parishes (Winsford, Cutcombe and Wootton Courteney). There are 2 tenants and the farm is in the black despite spend maintaining the property, installing electricity in the new shed, and maintenance of the road to fill in the potholes. This year's dividend agreed by the trustees is £1500 per parish for those in financial need.

The Chairman thanked Richmond.

8. Village Clean Up/Clean for the Queen - Beverley Flanagan

The Annual Litter Pick Up will take place on Sunday 3rd April at 10.30 in the car park. It has more significance this year as there is a Clean for the Queen initiative for the Queen's 90th Birthday. Please come and support, bags and pickers are supplied by please wear gloves, practical clothing and preferably a hi-viz jacket. There is a prize for the most interesting find and coffee afterwards at the Royal Oak courtesy of Mark and Sally.

Regarding the Clean Up, Colin Wilkins has offered to wash/clean up the village signpost as a temporary measure (ENPA are sourcing funding for maintaining all signposts). As mentioned, the bus shelter, noticeboard and phone box need some attention and so a separate day for maintenance would be organised - any volunteers please contact Beverley. It was also noted that the signpost needs to point in the right direction to Tarr Steps.

The Chairman thanked Beverley.

9. The Chairman's Report - David Godsall

For the past two years I have been proud to report that the Winsford element of the Council Tax had remained unchanged. Again this year we applied for the same figure as 2015/16 and, so far as the Precept is concerned, we will receive the same amount as last year. I don't know how they work it out! Last year as a band G property owner I paid a penny a week less than the previous year and for 2016/17 I will be charged half a penny more - the princely sum of £0.595 a week or £30.95 a year. We felt it important to keep our figures down as our household Council Tax bills for the year will rise by 4.60%.

I am glad to say that the income from the Trust which is used for mowing the Village Green, maintaining the play equipment and for insurance once again was sufficient so that none of this has been a cost to the parish precept.

Winsford is a renowned Exmoor village but it has to be said is a very different rural community to that about which we learned during Winsford Remembers two years ago. At that time more than 65 former pupils from the school went off to the Great War. Now apart from some of the farming families, and a few other notable exceptions, we are almost entirely what are described as incomers and a very high percentage of the population is retired. Just about everything that happens in the village is organised and run by volunteers. In retirement many wish to give their time and the benefit of their knowledge, experience and expertise to the community - for free. We should all be very grateful, not just to them but also to those others, many here present, who played their part in previous years. Thank you.

Thank you Bridget Ryle for becoming the Winsford correspondent for the Across Exmoor Benefice Magazine - a great contribution, so please everyone give her your news. Thank you, Evelyn Connell, for taking on the coordination of the distribution of the magazine. Thanks to Sarah Little and Emma Howe for organising the Speed limit petition. Thank you to those who alert us to the problems which need reporting up the chain to the CC, WSC and EA - drains, road problems etc. We cannot always get things solved instantly but my goodness we try! Thanks to those helping us cope with the perennial

dog problem! Those who have pledged their support and time for the Archive and coming up with new information, photos and documents, all of which enabled us to get ENP partnership funding. A very big thank you to those who provided both physical and moral support for the great tidy up of the village green (we could never have paid for the over 100 man (and woman) hours of work) Mike Hillier even declined any payment for use of his tractor and trailer. Thanks to the many who have offered continuing support and, when we are ready, have offered plants. Thank you also for the many who organise events in the village Hall to raise money and other events to keep us all entertained or busy of fit or whatever. Those who spend hours of their own time organising and running the many activities and clubs - the Fete, the Winn Club, bowls, Moor Movies, fitness, tennis, cricket, the choir and all the other things I should have mentioned. And a big thank you to those who support these events.

It is very satisfying to be part of a community that pulls together. When you go into the meeting room to look at the Archive cupboards look again at the great village picture of us all on the Green for HM the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. I just wish there was also one of the Golden Jubilee as well, with us all lining the brook for the Duck Racing - something we will now be able to do once more.

Soon after last year's meeting was election day, which included, if required, the Parish Council. We need 7 members. Edward Harding had moved and dear Katherine Lindop had decided to stand aside. Can I just say how very much we miss her, what a brave girl she was. She had stepped forward when Keith retired from the Council and was a real asset, her help, advice, sheer commonsense and support to me when she became vice-chairman was enormous. Keith you are and should be very proud of her - she always put others first and her contribution to the village over the years was immeasurable and I don't just say that because on more than one occasion in the Woodbees she was my wife!

Mel Mileham and Colin Wilkins had put their names forward and as there were 7 nominees we were spared the expense (some £1,000 plus) of an election.

I am not for one moment suggesting that previous Parish Councils have not done a lot but I can tell you that this lot have done a fantastic job and given up hours and hours of their own time without a penny in expenses! There seem now to be many more meetings at which we must be represented. I am proud to say that our way of doing things is much appreciated by the County and West Somerset Councils and also the National Park. In some areas we lead the way and Beverley and Mel have done just that with the drive to have the historic fingerposts repaired. Kevin, Johnny, Beverley, Steve, Mel and Colin thank you all very much. There have been some real challenges and I can assure you that we do need the support of the good folk of Winsford for whom we work. You have no idea how nice it is to hear something that is not a complaint!

We have heard lots about broadband and websites but you have no idea just how many emails requiring action (not to mention those that do not and don't have anything to do with us) reach the Parish Clerk every day of the week. Verity has done a fantastic job and frankly I don't know how we would cope without her hard work, diligence, expertise and commonsense thank you. Those former clerks in the audience should consider themselves fortunate that they have already done their bit! A very big thank you to Mike Hillier who continues to do a terrific job with mowing, drain clearing and generally keeping the village tidy, I dread to think what we would do without you - some of you will be aware that funding for the village lengthsmen, who carry out maintenance in some of our neighbouring parishes, is being withdrawn - we were right to remain independent of that scheme. Final thanks go to Frances Nicholson and our two West Somerset Councillors Bruce Heywood and Nick Thwaites who attend all our meetings and take up challenges on our behalf.

Now it is your chance to raise whatever subjects you wish. Bear in mind I have received no advance warning of anything so I may not necessarily have all the answers, but we will give it a go.

11. Questions from the floor

A parishioner asked whether the play equipment (slide and climbing frame) on the village green could be improved? It was replied that, yes, this is something we can consider doing but need to talk with Sue Hayes and Bryony Neal, who are also responsible for the Village Green.

Jan Faulkner - raised the problem of notices being stuck all over the bus shelter and mentioned that the old board for local notices has gone. Can we have a replacement one 1/3 larger than it used to be? It was answered that this was a good idea as it got them off the tree too.

Carol French - asked whether anything was planned to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday? It was replied that, yes, things of this nature are usually celebrated. Carol then offered to organise a meeting to brainstorm ideas - she was thinking a vintage tea party on the village green, which it was thought was a great idea. The Chairman thanked her.

Bill Stormont - what is the situation with the semi-derelict property in Ash Lane? It was answered that the Parish Council are already working with the National Park as it is essential to correctly follow procedures. Trying to persuade progress but difficult.

Mrs Cox - noted that as the houses on the roads are not numbered, delivery drivers etc. are struggling to know which house to go to. Can a directory be compiled for residents so they can send them to the right place? It was answered that there used to be one but it was no longer permitted. It was suggested that a map could be sourced and people fill in the names of their houses as it could be important for the community resilience/emergency plan discussed earlier.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 9.10pm.

Signed:
Date: