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The Annual Open Meeting of the Wistow Parish Council took place on Tuesday 27th April 2010 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, with Dr Farrar in the Chair.

1. Apologies for absence: Mr Carter, Mr Cook, Mr Lucas, Mr Williams
- 1.1. Present: Mr Bucknell, Mrs Coles, Dr Farrar, Mr Leigh, Ms Rice, Ms Robinson, Mr Ward, together with 5 members of the public.
2. To sign and approve the minutes of the Annual Open Meeting held on 28th April 2009
- 2.1. The minutes, had been circulated around the Councillors prior to this meeting, and were available at the meeting. Mr Bucknell proposed and Mr Leigh seconded approval of the minutes which was unanimously agreed.
3. Financial statement – Dr R Farrar
- 3.1. Dr Farrar welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.
- 3.2. A copy of Wistow Parish Council's Annual Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2010 were available for inspection, Dr Farrar invited comments on the Financial Statement. The cost of the cutting of the allotment hedge was brought up and Dr Farrar explained the extent of the work carried out and the reasons for undertaking it. It was felt that it would be an investment for the future. He confirmed that three quotes were requested. Dr Farrar reported that it had been quite an expensive year but that grants had been obtained wherever possible and much had been accomplished. It was the Parish Councils intention to reduce the cash holding to approximately 6 months running costs and to that end the precept had been kept to £6500 for 2010/11, a reduction on the previous two years.
4. Chairman's Report – Dr R Farrar

The Chairman's report for last year opened with the phrase "2008 has been fairly uneventful". This phrase probably won't suffice as a summary for the past twelve months however, as we have had an extremely busy year with much being achieved despite a few ups and downs along the way.

The most notable achievements during the last year have undoubtedly been the completion of the **bridge refurbishment** along with our **new playground**; two huge projects by any standards, particularly for such a small community.

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Following a consultation with the village, the final outcome of the completed bridge project seems to have been well received by the village. As a parish council we are still working closely with the County Council to remedy a few last issues and teething troubles with the bridge and its associated landscaping. As an adjunct to this project we were also able to secure some minor **traffic calming** measures at the opposite end of the village; with no cost to the village.

Our other major project this year has been the addition of **new play facilities** in Oaklands Avenue with the aid of a £30,000 government grant plus some additional funding from the Red Tile Windfarm Trust. The new play area has given local children a fantastic play area comparable to those usually found in much larger towns and villages. As part of this project we have also improved access to the park and secured the entrance to reduce the risk of young children running out into the road. The new play area will be officially opened on 22 May by our local MP.

As everyone will have noticed, 2009 was a rather cold and protracted Winter, but luckily we managed to get the Wistow Toll bus route added to the official gritting routes, which now provides villagers with at least one **gritted route** out of the village. Following this unusually hard Winter we have also ordered a few additional salt bins to place in strategic points in the village ready for next Winter.

Despite being an expensive year with the playground project (the majority of which was covered by grant funding) the village will be pleased to know that we have also managed to substantially **reduce the annual precept** for the forthcoming year.

The Parish Plan is coming up for its fifth birthday and the Parish Council are now looking to review this plan and consult with the village as to priorities for the next few years, but as a quick summary, some of the things that have been achieved in the village over the past five years by the Parish Council and community minded villagers alike in direct response to the Parish Plan include:

- Post Box in Oaklands Avenue [12]
- Village Sign [15]
- Youth Club [16]
- Traffic Calming at both ends of the village [1]
- Website [13]
- Village Shop [7]
- New Playground [2, 10]

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5. Playground Report – Dr Farrar

Covered in report above

- 5.1. The Parish Council was congratulated on the new playground which was being well used by the community. Dr Farrar said that Mr Bucknell should be thanked for his input. The question of safety with regard to children running out into the road was raised and Dr Farrar confirmed that the Parish Council were looking into road markings. In response to a question regarding maintenance issues on the existing equipment Dr Farrar confirmed that at the safety inspection on 6th April there was on one item that needed non-urgent attention and that was the stop on the aerial runway..

6. Allotment Report – Mr Cook

Mr Leigh read Mr Cook's report in his absence

As we can all see the hedge bordering the allotments to the road with the junction of the C140 has no been cut back to a sensible height giving good visibility to this dangerous junction. There currently is a parcel of land up for re-let either as an allotment or farmed as is the rest of the land in this area. We have at this moment in time three applicants, any other person wishing to be considered should in the first instant contact Patsy Coles.

Dr Farrar explained that the Parish Council are looking into registering the allotment land which is currently not registered.

7. Traffic and Road Issues – Ms Rice

Raveley road - This road was resurfaced last August. The road was clearly unsatisfactory and complaints were made to CCC. CCC and the Contractors agreed that the finish was not ideal, and if remedial work was considered necessary it would be carried out prior to the final dressing scheduled for this summer.

Speed limit - There is now a 30 mile speed limit in place throughout village.

Traffic calming - The parish council submitted a bid for a Jointly Funded Minor Improvements Grant. The application was for traffic calming measures on the Mill Road entrance to the village. The bid was unsuccessful but the work was still carried out and funded as part of the remedial bridge work.

- 7.1 It was explained that there would be a two layer top dressing applied to Raveley Road in an attempt to improve the surface.

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8. Countryside report – Mr Cook

Mr Leigh read Mr Cook's report in his absence.

We have further funding this year from the County Council to open up some of our lost paths, should any one wish to help to clear areas that are over-grown etc please contact Jeremy Carter or Patsy Coles. Most of the bridges have been replaced but help is still required to keep them in good order.

The Parish Council wishes to thank Richard Blackhurst in assisting to reinstate fallen and mis-guided 'Way Markers' to public footpaths on his own land and land managed by him.

We would also like to thank Mr Juggins for his commitment in keeping the footpaths on his land open and in good repair.

Dog fouling is still a great problem now that the dog population of the village is still growing. It is an offence for a dog to foul the public high way; this includes verges, so please clean it up. The main problem areas are Harris Lane at both ends, and the footpath just over the bridge. We have more than enough poo bins for a small village.

- 8.1 It was mentioned that no dog fouling/dogs on leads signs had been put up with the waymarkers. These had been obtained from HDC. It was reported that people drop poo bags and it was asked if bins could be put by the bridge and half way down Harris Lane.
- 8.2 The Parish Council were asked to look at a grass crossing which was beginning to erode as part of the footpaths work. The need for more footpaths was questioned but it was stated that it was part of the Parish Plan and the desire for circular walks was highlighted.
- 8.3 The ploughing of the footpath from the bridge to Bury was raised and the Parish Council were asked to write to the farmer. Dr Farrar explained that Mr Carter was taking over the Countryside role and was to undertake some training on legislation and rights. This would better enable the Parish Council to work with the farmer to ensure future access. It was also reported that the verge on Blackhurst Lane/Hill Road had been damaged but was to be repaired.
- 8.4 It was agreed that we should all respect the footpaths and the work that goes into maintaining them. Mr Bucknell stated that a Dog Warden is available if there are ongoing issues with particular dog owners.

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9. Village Hall Report – Mr Leigh

As with years past the Parish Council appointed two councillors to attend the village Hall Committee meetings and provide a liaison service between the two groups and also assist in any extra curricular activity that they could. The primary activity and discussion point throughout the year was the redesign of the current hall to be updated, modernised and expanded. This project is well under way and a series of plans have been drawn up, latterly with planning permission sought and approved for these plans. Also, and as always, the Village Hall Committee have worked tirelessly not just in their capacity as fund raisers for the hall but also in providing a hub to village entertainment and spirit. They have worked on projects greatly enjoyed by many such as the annual Fun Weekend, Music Night and Cricket Weekend. This council applauds and thoroughly backs the Village Hall Committee in these endeavours and I am sure that the Friendship, Toddler and WI groups along with the rest of the village are grateful for the committees continued maintenance and running of the Village Hall.

10. Bridge Report – Mr C Leigh

In the winter of 2008/2009 the bridge in Wistow was subject to a series of vehicle collisions resulting in substantial damage. This necessitated inspection by County Council agencies who prepared a detailed dossier of information to dictate any rework and repair to the bridge. During this process it was found that the bridge no longer conformed to modern legislation regarding the strength of the structure. The County Council proposed a number of options that were presented to this council, none of which were deemed in keeping with the village spirit and original architecture. The County Council then worked on a series of further options which were then discussed by this council and then opened up for viewing and discussion by the greater Parish. A plan was jointly agreed which involved keeping the current bridge design and architecture and restricting it to one way traffic via a stop and give way process. This also involved in land purchase from adjoining properties to ensure correct sight lines. The work on the bridge to implement these designs began in November 2009 resulting in limited road closure and a fast implementation of the necessary structural changes. This council created a working group to assist the County Council in the project and ensuring it was finished to a majority satisfaction. In this regard Stephen Mcgee must be complimented as the County Council liaison as he has consistently tried to listen to this council and assist where restrictions allowed. The project is nearing completion and currently the outstanding issues are completion of a solar powered safety sign which will allow the County Council to take a view on moving the give way sign and area which is seen by many as being too close to the bridge. Also we are working with County Council to ensure satisfactory regrowth of the green damaged during construction and the painting of the Kerb

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to give greater visibility. We would like to thank Wistow in Bloom for also assisting with the replanting of the Village Green.

There was a feeling from the village that there had been a lack of consideration for the environment by the Contractors when finishing the project. The verge areas had not been reinstated, there had been no attempt to soften the impact of the new fence, no thought had been given to landscaping and it was generally felt that the approach to the village had been spoilt. Other issues raised were that water was still puddling on the bridge and the concrete was breaking down between the footpath and verge. Mr Leigh confirmed that it was still a work in progress and the Parish Council would bring these comments to the attention of the County Council.

11. Litter Report – Ms Robinson

Wistow is a tidy and well cared for village which hasn't fallen prey to the general unkemptness seen in many places. However, it is important not to become complacent. During 2009 there were 9 reported instances of fly tipping in the Wistow area; these were cleared by Huntingdonshire District Council. Please report any sightings of Fly-tipping to Deborah Robinson on 822872 or at drobinson1507@hotmail.com who will contact HDC on your behalf. I hope to form a better working relationship with HDC and liaise with the member of the Streetscene team at the council. The district council are keen to pursue fly-tipping offenders so it is necessary for the council to scrutinise any rubbish, prior to clearing, to try and establish the origins of the rubbish so that legal action can be taken against offenders. Currently there is fly-tipping hot spot on the road linking Wistow and The Raveleys. A 'No fly-tipping' sign has been requested and received from HDC and will be erected shortly. Diligence and feed-back from the community will assist in the on-going fight against fly-tipping and general littering.

12. Any other business from the Parish

- 12.1. PC9 streetlight in Church Street was raised. It was confirmed that it was on the agenda for the PC meeting. Streetlight in Manor Street is on all the time.
- 12.2. Concern regarding dams along the brook was expressed. The Clerk would email the Environment Agency.
- 12.3. There was a large pothole at the end of The Grove, Ms Robinson would report it.

Finally, Dr Farrar went round the meeting to ask for any further questions. He thanked everyone again for attending and closed the meeting a 8.45 pm