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The Annual Open Meeting of the Wistow parish Council took place on Tuesday, 29th April 2015 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall with Mr Carter in the Chair.

Mr Carter opened the meeting and welcomed ten members of the public and Rebecca Avery from the office of The Police Commissioner, who was invited to start the meeting with her presentation. She explained that the Commissioner was there to hold the police to account and that her role was go out and about to liaise with members of the public. She asked what the police can do to make the community feel safe. She explained how volunteers are being used to plug the budgetary gaps in police service and Mr MacInnes raised the issues he had been having with Speedwatch and how the rules are frustrating the willing volunteers. Mr Bucknell asked what the position was with PCSO's not being allowed to work on Bank Holidays as it was too expensive. Ms Avery would take our feed back to her office and obtain a response.

1. Apologies for Absence: None
 - 1.1 Present: Mr Carter, Mrs Coles(Clerk), Dr Farrar, Mr Leigh, Mr McInnes, Mr Tew, Mr Bucknell, Mrs Curtis, Mrs Bance, Mr Dransfield, Mr Hurcombe, Mr Parkinson, Ms Leaton, Mr Wiltshire, Mr Coles, Mrs Duke, Mr Williamson, and Mrs Gorman.
2. To approve and sign the minutes of the Annual Open Meeting held on 29th April, 2014
 - 2.1 The Minutes had been circulated around the Councillors and members of the public who had attended the meeting. Mr Carter proposed and Mr MacInnes seconded approval of the minutes, they were unanimously agreed.
3. Financial Statement
 - 3.1 A copy of Wistow Parish Council's Annual Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2015 were available for inspection.

Last year, the Precept was raised to £10,500. Combined with other sources of income including allotment rents, VAT Recovery, recycling and maintenance contributions from District and County brought total income to £14,465. Total expenditure for the year was £12,235 against a forecast of £21,879. The main reason for the difference is the lack of progress to implement the Parish Plan and related projects e.g. introduction of Traffic Calming Signage, and the lack of necessity to use the street lighting replacement contingency

For the forthcoming year, the precept will increase by £500 and, with other sources; the total income is estimated to be £15,068. While the annual routine costs of running the village are forecast to remain at around £12,000, provision must always be made for additional costs, typically streetlamp maintenance/replacement and delivery of new projects. The planned total expenditure is £22,900.

4. Chairman's Report

2014/15 has again been a turbulent year with a number of changes in both Parish and County Council members. I would like to take this opportunity to wish outgoing member our very best wishes and to thank them for all their hard work and commitment to this community. I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to the newcomers. Unfortunately, on balance, we have lost more Parish Councillors than we have gained and we would be very grateful to hear from anyone with an interest in getting involved. In addition after a number of years of significant commitment, our Parish Clerk now wishes to step down to spend more time with her bowls. We would therefore be extremely grateful to hear from anyone interested in taking on this paid role.

The year has seen a number of issues that have involved or been supported by the Parish Council.

Improved Street Lighting – The PC held a number of public consultations enabling the Contractor, Balfour Beatty to clarify the proposals and following this some modifications to plans were implemented at the request of residents.

Traffic Calming – Plans to purchase and install traffic calming speed notices were developed and are at the point of implementation. Unfortunately, coordination with National Grid is proving difficult but this will be resolved in the near future.

Maintenance – A decision was taken early in the year to improve the level of routine maintenance across the village. To this end additional grass cutting and verge maintenance has been commissioned for a small increase in operating costs.

Parish Plan – The proposal document identifying priorities for inclusion in the new Wistow Parish Plan circulated last year was considered by the Planning Sub-Committee. The issues considered included Fast Broadband, support for affordable housing as part of any significant development proposals within the Parish, support for High Tech and Light Business Units, Village Hall improvement/replacement, renewable energy considerations, further traffic calming measures and future challenges concerning graveyard capacity. It should be noted that to develop a formal Parish Plan requires community involvement and cannot be undertaken by the Parish Council. We would be grateful to hear from anyone interested in taking this forward.

5. Playground Report

Each month parish councillors carry out playground inspections and complete a report in-line with our insurance policy requirements to ensure compliance and to assist with the ongoing maintenance and safety of the park.

As part of this process we have continued remedial maintenance, including sanding and painting of some of the woodwork such as the benches, entrance gate and play equipment; much of which was generously done at no cost, apart from the materials, by Gordon MacInnes.

Two significant depressions in front of the goal-posts arose from continued use over the years which were filled in with top-soil and reseeded.

The park is generally well used by a cross section of the village encompassing all ages, which is nice to see, although we do get the occasional issue of anti-social behaviour and littering which is constantly monitored, however this can be very difficult to eliminate completely or indeed control.

6. Roads and Traffic

This is a year that has been in many ways hamstrung due to an admitted lack of budget at District and County level which has led to all but totally essential repairs being cancelled or delays. On a positive note the relationship with Les Middleton the Council highways officer is coming on well and he has been very helpful having already spent some time walking the Parish with me to inspect work that needs doing with another such activity planned shortly. A number of potholes have been filled in over the year, and although there remains work to do this is in a much better state than the year prior. The repainting of the white lines at the junction by the Church are scheduled but have once again been thwarted by lack of budget for non essential work. Finally the work of installing MVAS speed awareness camera's continues with a view to installing this year despite the siting issues that we have had due to buried pipes etc. If anyone wishes to report a pot hole they are able to do so directly via the Council web site or, alternatively, the Wistow village website has information.

7. Speedwatch Report

The year started well with good sessions being conducted by the team, results were showing a decrease in the quantity of speeders, but in certain instances the excess speed recorded was higher. Unfortunately with the sad passing of Lesley we were cut back to a minimum 3 volunteers, which on occasion made sessions tight, though on a couple we had participation from Upwood to help conduct our quota. In autumn, the constabulary brought in a new ex Met officer to oversee things, the result being that the changes required have effectively stopped speed watch in this sector, the old civilian coordinator and the new police coordinator are conducting a wall wetting exercise, for which neither I or the other members of our parish team or indeed other parishes want a part. We just want to get back on it, that said, the latest guidelines from CC if read to the letter mean in our current guise, Wistow will not conform, on the grounds we do not have a dedicated 3 person team as we are only 3 and if one can't attend it cannot go ahead, also there is no proviso for disabled volunteers inclusion within the team. Despite numerous chats CC have still not approached us to assess the team and let us carry out our duties. Latest guidelines were received last Friday, I will contact the other team members and we will discuss how and whether we wish to go forward

8. Countryside Report

Dog fouling continues to be a significant issue, not only on paths and bridle paths but throughout the village. Unfortunately, unless the perpetrators are caught in the act there appears to be little that can be done. Last year we considered putting a map of village footpaths in the bus shelter. This idea remains on our list of jobs to do but has slid in priority due to the recent loss of a number of parish councillors. Two of the footpath bridges, one from Harris Lane over to Upwood and the other by the road bridge, were sanded and painted by Gordon MacInnes last year, again just incurring material costs to the parish council.

It had been reported that cross country bikes were using the footpaths and a photograph was available. The Clerk would forward it to the police once received. Mr Parkinson said that the signage 'beware of the bull' on the path on the other side of the Toll was fading.

9. Village Hall Report

A great deal of work has been undertaken to forge closer ties with the Village Hall Committee and much progress has been made to drive forward a better understanding and clarity for options affecting the future of the Hall. At this time we are supporting a survey to clarify the expectation of the community for the Village Hall going forward. Once this has been completed, it will assist in the selection of the best solution e.g. to renovate/develop the existing hall or build a new hall on new site. Recently, the Village Hall Committee was approached by a Developer offering to contribute to the Village Hall project as part of the development of Top Farm for housing. The proposal has some complex planning issues that would need to be addressed but must be considered formally by the community alongside other options. It must be emphasised that no option can be adopted without the support of a significant proportion of the community.

Mr Dransfield asked when the village is going to be consulted. Mr Carter replied that initially the Parish Council wanted to establish what residents required from a Village Hall and then a further consultation would be done to offer the options to achieve this. It would be done as soon as possible through a survey with as much information as possible. Mr Hurcombe asked how bit a majority will be required and Mr Carter said that this would be confirmed. Mrs Duke asked if the enablement funding would be included and Mr Carter responded that a balanced and round survey would be constructed with as much information as possible. The problems with conservation restrictions on the current hall would apply to a residential building as well as business.

10. Litter Report

This past year has been better than previous, just one call to HDC for a load of waste oil and cans dumped on Raveley bends, as usual HDC were on the ball and collected within 24 hours, and one call from HDC to us about building waste being dumped within confines of playing field, on closer inspection, I assume rightly or wrongly that now we have better contracted grounds staff this is debris that has been hidden in the ditch for a long time. I was notified Saturday about more debris, which looks like children have just fished wood out of the ditch/hedgerow.

May I suggest we get a working party together to clear the ditch and clean up the hedgerow, ie, trim back and de bramble, costs incurred would be for disposal of the rubbish. This could be coordinated with our litter pick at the Toll.

11. Any Other Business from the Parish

Mr Parkinson asked if anything could be done at the Bridge where the traffic calming is installed. Mr Leigh responded that the give way point had been moved back but there was nothing further. Mr Parkinson asked if a no parking sign could be put on the cobbles near to the footpath as someone was parking dangerously.

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Mr Hurcombe congratulated the PC on litter retrieval and asked if there was any regulation regarding how much pavement can be maintained on a carriageway as a family walking in Mill Road came dangerously close to being harmed by traffic. Mr Leigh responded that in a rural environment this is a difficult issue. The Parish Council is looking at ways of reducing speeding. Actions have been taken by County to reduce speeding on B1040 and it is possible that Bury and Wistow could work together to reduce the speed limit on that stretch of road. Mr Dransfield asked about the condition of the Raveley bends, no further work is scheduled. He also pointed out that County had dug a ditch to improve drainage from Footpath 1 but they do not keep it clear.

12. Close of Meeting

Mr Carter thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.30 pm.

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