

Great Bedwyn Parish Council
Draft Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
Great Bedwyn Memorial Hall, Frog Lane, Great Bedwyn
Thursday 11 April 2019 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Howell, Cllr Brunskill, Cllr Clack, Cllr Younger, The Clerk and 4 members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Kershaw, Cllr Stone, Cllr Barry, Cllr Sheering, Cllr Nicholson, Cllr Nunn, Cllr Wheeler (Wiltshire Council)
2. **Approval of the Minutes of the APM held on 12 April 2018**
The minutes were approved and signed a true record of the meeting.
3. **Chairman's Report** (Appendix 1)
4. **Bruce Branch at Bedwyn Report** (Appendix 2)
5. **Village Hall Committee Report** (Appendix 3)

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

Appendix 1

APM April 2019 Chairman's Report on the past year– Cllr. Charles Howell

We have been operating on 'lock down' during most of the past year following dissent at the end of 2017 and the loss of our excellent clerk. Fortunately, we now have a stable Council and have been joined by Francesca Nunn in May 2018 as a new Council member to make up to our full quota. The good news is that in February 2019 we welcomed back Jo Pike as clerk - having put in place safeguards to protect the clerk in the future. Jo has already started the hard work of catching up on policies and accounts that have been neglected in her absence.

In the time we have had no clerk Cllr Ian Barry has done sterling work on the minutes of meetings and finance. Cllr Elise Younger and Cllr Jenny Clack have also done a lot of work organising the allotments. My thanks to them.

Ian Barry has overseen the setting of this year's budget. You may have noticed the smaller parish precept this year this is due to surplus which has partly been built up whilst we are not employing a clerk. The precept is however likely to go up again next year.

The beautiful refurbishment of the phone box as a tourist information point has been completed. Thanks to Cllr Barry, Patrick Pease and Susie Brew of The Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership. Funds came from The North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust. Eric Bailey cut the tape at the opening in November 2018. We have since approved funds for a plaque to commemorate this. At the same time a history information plaque was put on The Cutting Room opposite the church.

Great Bedwyn did not enter the Best Kept Village Competition having won in the previous year.

Last July we learnt that the outdoor centre at Oxenwood had been saved. We supported this campaign. Thanks to Cllr Nicholson for her robust letter and Shalbourne PC.

Much of the work towards a Neighbourhood plan has been completed particularly thanks to Nick Wilkinson (and team.) The plan has now been stalled due the lack of suitable sites especially for affordable housing. Boundary change is the next step.

Affordable housing remains a concern with housing associations selling off stock in the village and replacing it with homes in areas with cheaper house prices elsewhere. We will continue to highlight this problem.

Extension of Bedwyn siding was completed in August 2018 to allow larger and faster trains to turn around. The new trains are yet to be introduced fully and thus new faster timetable will be delayed. We will then see what impact this has particularly on commuter parking.

Tottenham House has recently been sold by the developer. Major building work has yet to commence for the restoration into a major private residence. This will conserve the house and grounds and may provide local job opportunities however concerns remain over development traffic and possible changes to approved plans.

A further payment of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) of circa £2500 received by the Parish Council following the development of the British Legion site. This brings the fund to c £7500 with potential large CIL payments in the future from Tottenham House development. We need to spend this money on defined capital projects. Ideas from the community are invited.

Residents have asked for Residents Parking. We have established that only major towns have resident's parking schemes at present. Great Bedwyn would not meet the criteria under the current Wiltshire Council policy. Cllr Brunskill is looking into advisory parking white lines with Wiltshire Council and arrange a proposal for the Council to comment upon - initially to protect the corners round the bus route from inconsiderate parking.

Cllrs Brunskill & Howell together with the clerk have had a recent joint meeting with GWR and Wiltshire Council to discuss commuter parking. Network Rail have vetoed the idea further nose-in parking at the station as they claim that they need access. It was agreed to that they be challenged on this to ask them to justify their veto. Alternative sites for more station parking were discussed but look unlikely due to lack of funds. We will continue to investigate options.

Cllr Clack and Cllr Younger have made great progress on the allotments by moving to annual charging from October in line with national guidance and reviewing the tenancy agreement to make it more robust. There were no changes in rents for 2018/19 although these will be reviewed for 2019/20. Vacant plots are to be allocated to the waiting list and entry point to Foxbury has been closed to improve security. The drain will be checked and cleared regularly. Abandoned plots are a worry as the size of the deposit does not necessarily cover clearance. We may also have to undertake tree work if this is not done by the landlord.

The Parish Council maintain the memorial playing field and playground under an agreement from The Memorial Hall and Playing Field charity. We pay for the grass to be cut at St Mary's Church and contribute towards the same at St Katherine's and Jockey Green. Much of other grass is cut by Wiltshire Council or the Housing Associations. Most local issues such as highways etc should be reported directly to Wiltshire Council via their Website.

We are able give small grants to local organisations particularly when they are in need. As Wiltshire Council cuts services, we have been able provide short term support a number of local organisations e.g. Youth Group, Great Bedwyn Pre-school.

The public should be aware of our limited powers. We are a small cog in communication to Wiltshire Council on a number of matters including planning and neighbourhood development. We do not make any important decisions alone and should represent the views of parish as a whole.

Thoughts for the Future -

The playground is beginning to require extra maintenance and we are starting a reserve of money to replace the apparatus as it becomes necessary.

The allotments

Repainting of Lamp standard.

Major projects.

Skate park - facilities for older children.

Appendix 2

Bruce Branch at Bedwyn

The Bruce Branch at Bedwyn is now a fully integrated part of the Kennet and Avon canal Trust. Last year we provided 77 weeks of unique Holidays and Day Trips for our disabled, elderly, disadvantaged clients and community organisations like Brendon Care. Many were repeat business and judging by some of the heart-warming letters and comments we have received- a good time was had by all! We run 4 specially adapted wide beam boats- this is more than any similar organisation in the UK. We are entirely run by a loyal and hardworking team of Volunteers. We have one Full Time Employee Robert our Site Manager at the Wharf. David Bruce, our Founder's mantra was that our boats must leave the Wharf in pristine condition. Thanks to our Volunteers this has been happening for almost 30 years We have a tireless and stoic team of winter engineers under our Boats Manager Ash. The result of their work can be seen on the wharf- please note the magnificent new signage by Mike

At our Annual Pre-Season Coffee Morning and this year a delicious lunch in the Village Hall on March 2nd our Chairman Paul Eames reported on the years activities and introduced Chris Sims, the New Chairman of the KACT. Someone we know well and who has always given us his full support. An Innovation last year was the introduction of Sponsored Day Trips. The inaugural trip was on a wet and windy day last September. Sponsored by an anonymous local business man, and arranged by Mary Soellner, Care Coordinator for the Old School surgery at Great Bedwyn. Despite the weather and thanks to Skipper Julian and his Cheerful soaking crew Jeremy, Roy and Cheryl it was a huge success enhanced by a delicious array of sandwiches provided by Simon and Lorraine at the Post Office and washed down by several bottles of wine provided by one of our generous supporters Tom.

This year we have further trips in the pipeline sponsored by a local Resident Meriel Larken lunch by the Three Tuns, Rhys the owner of the George, Vernham Dean who is also generously providing lunch. Thanks to Susie Brew the Pewsey Vale Marketing Guru the members of the Pewsey Memory Cafe will be enjoying the Canal. Most recently Sue Brady of local catering renown has agreed to sponsor a trip. We hope to increase this side of our business to enable more people who can benefit from a day on the water to have the opportunity to do so.

One of the benefits of our membership of the KACT is the superb back up and support we get from our ladies in the Devizes Office Jean, Jen and Becks. My market research shows that we actually answer the telephone and give a full friendly advice service from initial booking to the holiday itself and beyond.

Our narrow boat The Lady Hilda is now fully Serviced and geared up for the use of Young people- Do of E – we already have some Bronze candidates for this year. Guides, Brownies, Scouts and Cubs. Alison Cannon A Guide Leader and Fully Qualified Community Boat Skipper is leading this side of our operation.

Michael a local resident and wheelchair user with his carer Olga came on our first sponsored day trip. During the winter he helped us test our new ramps. He has now kindly agreed to be part of our new marketing poster for volunteers.

The emphasis will be on how volunteers can help people like Michael which is the driving force of our business. We feel very strongly that we are very much part of this fantastic village and caring community. We welcome anyone who can help us with their time in any way.

Finally, we look set fair for another good season -bookings are looking healthy. We have plans to improve facilities on the Wharf. We have an Open day on Saturday 13th April 1000 – 1400. Come and have a look around one of our Boats. Next year is our 30th Birthday which we propose to celebrate in Style and Fun involving the whole community.

Patrick Pease.
Marketing Manager.

Appendix 3

Village Hall Committee Report

The Village Hall Committee is responsible for the Village Hall, the Memorial Playing Field, the Bowls Club and the Tennis Club. The Village Hall Committee is currently working on formalising a new, lit, pathway from the playing field car park to the Bowls Club. It is anticipated that the Youth Club will have access to the Bowls Club. The Village Hall is the Committee's main focus. A new audio and cinema system have been installed. The Woman's Institute was the first to use the cinema system. The Village Hall now has an alcohol licence. quiz nights have been a success with 35 to 40 people in attendance. The quiz nights have raised a large amount of money for the cinema. The Committee has also been interacting with church events and supporting the Pre-School by giving them additional hours. The Village Hall committee is considering ideas to potentially expand the Village Hall and, at an early stage, getting plans drawn up. Any proposals and plans will go to public consultation. The Committee is also considering upgrading the football pitch.

Kevin Challen
Village Hall Committee