

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Portbury Residents
held in the Village Hall, High Street, Portbury
on Wednesday 19th April 2023 at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllr Mr Phipps Cllr Mr Coles Cllr Mr Romanski
Cllr Mr Cheek

Chairman: Cllr Mrs Cowlard

Clerk: Mrs Drower

Others: Thirty four members of the public

Introduction – Councillor Wenda Cowlard welcomed residents and explained the purpose of the meeting. Residents were requested to turn-off mobile devices and advised of emergency exit locations. Cllr Wenda Cowlard asked residents to leave questions until the Q&A at the end of the meeting. Residents were advised that the meeting was being recorded. She also introduced Councillors individually and explained their role within the Council. Cllr Wenda Cowlard introduced:

Cllr Nick Cheek our Vice Chair - a Portbury resident all his life – he cuts the green for free and various jobs around the village including overseeing the installation of the new play park.

Cllr Mike Phipps (retiring) a Portbury resident for over 40 years and former Chair, is our planning and development representative and also our contact for the Village Hall, Social Club and War Memorial, Dock liaison, street cleaning and gullies. Mike will represent PPC with footpaths, rights of way and wildlife.

Cllr Tony Romanski (retiring) resident of 35 years our representative for crime and disorder and street lighting.

Cllr Tony Coles (retiring) a resident of 14 years is assigned finance and donations, parking and street signs, and has been heavily involved in the rejuvenation of the allotments. Although retiring he will still be our point of contact for the allotments.

Cllr Keith Lanham a resident for over 20 years is our representative for Sheepway, highways and road diversions.

Cllr John Mangnall has already retired as he has emigrated to Australia.

Cllr Wenda Cowlard commented that she has been a resident for over 40 years and is assigned the Village Green, health and safety, the village lengthsman, the school, newsletters and bus shelters ably assisted by Nick Cheek the vice chair and all other councillors.

Cllr Wenda Cowlard introduced the Clerk Dawn Drower and explained that she is the first point of contact for residents, either by letter, phone, email or via the website. Any queries will be forwarded to the relevant councillor or authoritative body. The Clerk is

also responsible for finance and keeping the website and social media maintained and up to date and is our ALCA representative.

Cllr Mrs Cowlard commented that meeting details were posted on our website, and Facebook.

Cllr Wenda Cowlard also commented that Portbury resident of over 40 years and former chair Les Summerfield has now retired from looking after footpaths, rights of way and wildlife.

Cllr Wenda Cowlard thanked all councillors for all their hard work which they do without hesitation and for free.

1. Convening of Meeting – Cllr Mrs Cowlard read the Notice to convene the meeting and was accepted as Chairman for the proceedings.

2. Minutes of previous Annual Parish Meeting – The minutes of last year's meeting held on 19th April 2023 were presented and agreed by all.

3. Statement of Parish Accounts 2022/23

Clerk Mrs Drower presented the end of year accounts. Income received totalled £44976.25 which includes the precept £29500, a grant from NSC for £15000 for the new play park and £476.25 from the allotments. Expenditure totalled £24525.24, leaving a balance of £4974.76. As at 31st March 2023, closing bank balances were £46066.26 in the current account, (available £20707.37 after uncleared cheques), and £29082.87 in the reserve account, including a ring-fenced amount of £16658.80 which has been reserved for the allotments, play scheme, and war memorial maintenance. The monies are either donated or set aside by Cllrs at meetings throughout the year.

Clerk Mrs Drower explained that the council meet annually in January and set a budget for the coming year. This is paid to us by NSC as a precept in two halves, one in April and one in September.

A full set of financial statements are available to view on the parish website.

Clerk Mrs Drower advised residents that if they have any queries over the finances, they can contact the office by phone or email.

4. Portbury Parish Council Chairman's Report

Annual precept increases –

The annual precept rises are always kept to a minimum, but as always costs are rising for all of us.

Traffic and parking issues – Cllr Mrs Cowlard commented that speeding is a huge concern to residents, and Cllrs work tirelessly to try and find a resolution to this, but sadly there is no quick fix. Cllr Mrs Cowlard had attended a meeting with the traffic police at their HQ, and felt this would make a real difference, but nothing has happened to bring us closer to a resolution. Traffic numbers are still being captured,

and traffic police are still in attendance monitoring speeds through the Village, and speeding tickets are being issued.

Residents were urged to keep reporting and incidents related to speeding to NSC, then police as well as the parish council.

Cllr Wenda Cowlard commented that the Head of St Marys school was invited to a Parish council meeting, and we offered to fund tabards for the children walking to school with 20mph signs on them, and we are still waiting for feedback on this.

There are concerns about the secondary school children when being dropped off in Mill Lane as there is no footpath. This has been accepted as a risk and the bus stop in Mill Lane will be moved further up the lane by the layby and will hopefully be finished by the end of May. Cllr Mr Phipps commented that NSC have proposed a 'No Parking' bay by the new bus stop site, which may bring about some pavement widening.

The weight limit signage that got missed off of last years budget, is on this years budget, but this doesn't guarantee installation.

Cllr Mrs Cowlard commented that our Ward councillor Nigel Ashton campaigns tirelessly for us.

Cllr Wenda Cowlard commented that parking is also an issue in the village, and when the layby is full, commuters park in the village. Sensible parking is not an issue, but cars parking and causing an obstruction should be reported to NSC if they need to be moved then the police should be called on 101, please remember to take photos.

Cllr Wenda Cowlard commented that during Bluebell Wood when parking invariable increases with visitors to the display, the parking cones that were put out did raise some queries. We are not trying to stop parking, but merely help visitors park responsibly so that the roads in the village do not become obstructed, as happened this year. We keep in touch with NSC about our intentions and bring the cones in during the weekdays.

Cllr Mr Phipps commented that NSC have looked at parking on Church Lane and Mill Close. We sent feedback from residents about parking issues in Mill Close. and asked them to provide us with a solution. Cllr Mr Phipps also commented that a proposed parking scheme for Church Lane is in initial consultation to try and prevent long term parking there.

Crime overview- Cllr Wenda Cowlard commented that thankfully crime is very low in Portbury but reminded residents to remain vigilant and report anything suspicious by ringing 101.

Planning overview including Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Mr Phipps commented that the Village fence has been reestablished, which means that normal planning rules apply within this boundary. This plan remains until 2038, which means that no big development can happen within the fence in the foreseeable future. We are still in the consultation period for the Local Plan as the Government changed the formula for how much building in each has to be supported. North somerset argued that the amount of building expected was too high. We are still campaigning for the provision of a car park for the Village. One important thing we did say in response to the Local Plan consultation was the amount of building outside of Portbury, will increase the traffic through Portbury dramatically, and we have asked for this to be considered.

Litter – Cllr Wenda Cowlard commented that residents are very helpful and are often seen out litter picking.

Allotments – Cllr Tony Coles commented that there has been another good year at the allotments with a full uptake on plots. Going forward the plan is to make it a community area not just individual plots.

Play Park – Cllr Wenda Cowlard commented that the new equipment installed in both playparks from the grant and matched funding (mentioned earlier) has just been finished today. Repairs have also been made to the Zip wire. The play parks are inspected weekly and annually for safety.

The Coronation festivities will be held at the playing field by the play parks.

Website and communication – Cllr Wenda Cowlard commented that we just upgraded our website successfully, but if residents are not able to use this, we also email residents with as much information as possible. We also post news, meetings and agendas on Facebook. All our minutes, agendas and news can be found on our website.

Priorities for the next 12 months to 48 months – Cllr Wenda Cowlard commented that we continue to monitor the traffic on Jct 19.

We are in consultation with NSC re the new bus lane.

Cllr Wenda Cowlard commented that we are looking into providing a car park for the Village Hall.

Cllr Wenda Cowlard commented that we will continue our good relationship with National Grid and monitor the expansion of Portbury Docks at Shipway Farm. We will also continue to monitor the opening of the railway.

We will continue to monitor the traffic situation through Portbury.

Councillor vacancies Cllr Wenda Cowlard asked the members of the general public to put their names forward if anyone is interested in joining us. We currently have four vacancies.

6. Open Forum – Q & A's

Cllr Mrs Cowlard opened a question and answer session, topics included speeding and traffic.

A resident asked why there were some old cheques still on uncleared cheques. Clerk Mrs Drower commented that the old uncleared cheques will be written off. Some of the cheques have been cleared after the date the figures were drawn up.

A resident asked whether or not the CAZ has increased the traffic through Portbury. The general consensus was that it had.

A resident asked whether Sheepway was inside the Village fence. Cllr Mr Phipps commented that he would check.

A resident asked about overgrown hedges over the pavements from private residences and what could be done about it. Clerk Mrs Drower commented to send photos to the office, and she would report it to NSC. Cllr Mrs Cowlard commented that for vulnerable residents we would help out.

A resident asked if we could request the yellow box to be reinstated at the end of the High Street by the lights.

A resident asked what was happening about the dangerous surface on the footbridge. Clerk Mrs Drower commented that NSC have committed to repairing the surface.

Cllr Mrs Cowlard thanked residents for attending and the meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed as a true record of proceedings;

Name:

Position:

Date: