

HERMITAGE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on
Thursday April 17th 2014 in Hermitage Village Hall.

Present.

Ms R. Cottingham

Chairman.

Forty seven members of the public.

1 Welcome.

The Chairman of the Parish Council warmly welcomed everyone to the Annual Assembly.

2 Guest Speakers.

The Chairman welcomed Darrell Gale, the Public Health and Environmental Health Officer from Wokingham Borough Council.

The slide presentation is available through from Wokingham Borough Council.

Questions were invited.

Do people who live in green areas live longer and how does it affect their lifespan if there had been a period of poor experience.

Even If you feel good at, say, fifty five years old, and there had been a bad experience earlier on, then that experience will still affect the life span.

The Chairman thanked Mr Gale for a most interesting talk on a subject to which many people did not give the importance it deserved.

The Chairman then welcomed Alex Drysdale, who is the Project Engineer for road safety at West Berkshire Council, specifically to talk about the parking problems at School.

Mr Drysdale discussed the fact that every School across the District experienced parking problems at School peak times. The essential in solving such problems is to get Parents to actively accept that there should be some restrictions, and not to violate restrictions already in place.

To this end the WBC remit is basically concerned with Parent compliance.

At School there will be restrictions put in place in this financial year, but they will be little use without Parents' help.

Perhaps the walking bus concept could be promoted, but Parents would need hands on help to achieve this. There is only one such scheme in active use across the District. Pupils can be encouraged to walk or cycle to School.

Parking on the pavement, for instance, is a Police issue because West Berkshire Council has very limited authority.

When parking problems arise in the Village West Berkshire Council is always glad to help – it would be useful if any Village problems could be incorporated into School change at the same time.

It is the intention for a West Berkshire Council Officer to come and talk to the Parish Council in the next few months to discuss any further thoughts which may have arisen.

Questions were invited.

Some other areas have 20mph limit signs at peak School times why not this one.

West Berkshire Council hopes to bring this into being across the District.

How much sway has West Berkshire Council with School to try walking buses and similar ideas.

The Council does visit Schools regularly but the answer to that is to try and encourage Parents to organise.

How much would it cost to get a bit of land by the School to try other ways of relieving parking.

This has been tried in some other places – there are planning concerns and the need to physically alter the land surface, all of which adds up to a significant amount, versus the effort needed to convert Parents.

At Cold Ash cars park on one side of the pavement only. Could traffic lights be put in or peak parking restriction signs to allow that here..

At Cold Ash there are real problems of cars parking on the pavement.

It would cost nothing to put in signs.

Unfortunately it is not that easy or simple.

The Chairman asked a School representative if School had views about these difficulties.

School has tried over the years to keep the problem in check, but the inexorable increase in Parents using cars means the problems get worse. If anyone has concrete ideas which would help in reducing or even solving the difficulties please get in touch with School.

The Chairman thanked Alex Drysdale for coming to the meeting and braving the lion's den.

3 Minutes of the last Annual Assembly held on May 14th 2013.

The minutes had been circulated.

There was a proposition from the floor that the minutes be taken as read. The proposition was passed and the Chairman signed the minutes as being a correct record of the last Assembly.

4 The report from the District Councillors.

The formal report is attached.

Mr Pask went on to say that the Council will be facing money shortage for some years, due to Government reduction in grants to Authorities.

One increasing worry is the aging population in the District. People over 80 used to comprise about 25% of the population and this figure is now around 50%. The Council is trying to improve their services for the elderly and keep costs down at the same time.

There is corrective work needed to deal with the load of potholes and road repairs, and the Council is paying a lot of attention to getting repairs done properly.

Flooding – are we going to see better traffic control.

The Council knows of the difficulty and is trying new ways to combat it.

There are ditch leaflets for Riparian Owners who do have a legal duty to keep their ditches clear.

5 The Annual Report of the Parish Council.

The report is attached.

6 The Report of the Responsible Financial Officer.

The report is attached.

7 Village Organisations.

The Chairman invited Representatives from Village Organisations to present their reports.

PreSchool.

The report is attached.

The Horticultural Society.

Mr Marr presented a slide report with a commentary, outlining the activities of the Society, which include visits to well known gardens, a local flower and produce show and regular members' meetings. Visitors to the show and meetings are always welcome.

Village Vision.

The report is attached.

Mrs Whetter took one of the objectives from the Vision and talked about the litter which is visible in the Village. Footpaths should be kept clear for everyone's benefit. Possibly a half year clear up Event might be organised.

Another print of the footpath leaflet is needed for walkers.

Amateur Football Club.

The report is attached.

Scouts & Cubs.

The report is attached.

Village website.

The website was mentioned in the Village Vision itself, and the rejigged website is gathering momentum. Input is needed from any Village Organisation about events.

The Village Hall.

The report is attached.

8 Questions from the floor.

There were no further questions.

9 Grants to Village Organisations.

Grants had been agreed by the Council earlier in the year, and cheques were now presented to –

Hermitage Horticultural Society	£250
Hermitage Scouts & Cubs	£1,000
Hermitage PreSchool	£1,000
Hermitage Village Hall	£1,465
Holy Trinity Church	£1,400

10 Any Other Business

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21.50hrs.

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Chairman

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Date