

# **West Ilsley Parish Council**

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting Monday 10th March 2014

Present: Sean Ryan, Alan Bloor, Dries Hagen, Alan Beaumont, Jo Clifton and Alison Banks. 28 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence  
Anna Sugden, Rollo Duckworth and John Mountford
2. To receive any changes to Declarations  
None received.
3. To receive and if approved confirm the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held Monday 13th January 2014.  
Signed as a true record.
4. Matters Arising – to be taken in the meeting
5. Correspondence received – to be taken in the meeting.
6. Village Flooding

The Chairman summarized the village flooding position:

The village is 1 month on from ground water flooding and conditions are still acute and difficult for many. It has been worse again in the last few days as rain from a week ago filters into the system. This prolonged dry period will help considerably but we expect to be pumping groundwater into April but hopefully the sewers will return to normal earlier, perhaps by the end of March. However no one is really sure of exact dates for improvement.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Hagen and Beaumont for all their excellent work coordinating and meeting with (and hassling) outside parties and also to Andrea Cook who had kept everyone informed so efficiently.

The update from West Berkshire Council, Highways team was that the village drainage from the Duck pond to Hodcott Stables was inadequate and could only cope with “normal rain” so the pumping around the east end of the village was still crucial to keeping the road open and those properties from Forge Cottage to The Poplars and onto Hodcott free from flooding. The pump was also crucial to removing sewage from the middle of the village. The pumps would not be removed until the ground water receded. Highways had been out to view the drainage system and had found many silt traps and soakaways that they were not aware of, further highlighting the lack of maintenance over the years. They were promising a full flush out this week. All agreed that the West Berkshire Highways team had been very attentive during this period. They also are proposing a brand new village drainage system and are putting in a grant application for 225K for this. Alternatively a large submersible pump at Hodcott or a new calvert were also being considered going forward. In the process of their investigations it was envisaged that it would become clear which existing pipes,

soakaways, silt traps and wells would be adopted. For example the current village drainage all goes under The Poplars garden, but never has this been maintained.

The update from The Environmental Agency is that the groundwater will take many weeks to recede. It is not clear if the lack of requirement to provide water for Didcot power station and The Animal Health Institute in Compton had worsened our position. The Pang has currently been routed into the Duck Pond, which seemed to cope (at the back), but then floods into Main Street but also appears in the Paddock at the back of The Vet and then moves on via The Village hall. For the future it would be prudent to consider managing its route through the village and onto Hodcott and East Ilsley.

Thames Water was out and about checking sewers, which were surcharging at West Ilsley House, Bakery Mews and by the Duck Pond. There was no improvement so portaloos were stressed again. Cllr Beaumont and Hagen were pressing for updates from Thames Water.

The Chairman was meeting with Richard Benyon (MP) this week and pressure with all agencies would continue.

The Parish Council would ask all residents to document their stories as all information could be useful for lobbying purposes. Similarly please do contact the PC if you are struggling to cope. He thanked all who were coping under particularly difficult conditions.

#### 7. Village Broadband

Progressing well and the latest update had suggested possible sites for the new exchange box. This would be within 50m of the current one outside Chapel House. Implementation on target for Dec 2014/early 2015.

#### 8. Village Hall

The questionnaire had been returned and showed support for the Hall. As the weather improves the outside (and inside) would be painted.

#### 9. Community Led Plan

The Community Led Plan follows on from the Parish Plan, which many villages have completed. In West Ilsley we are part way to completing our Parish Plan (now to be known as Community Led Plan). The team had met and a draft was being circulated.

#### 10. Village Church

The final section of wire mesh (over the chancel) is now in place and has very successfully secured the loose plaster on the ceiling. This was exclusively funded by Church monies but Mr Fewtrell-Smith indicated that their reserves were now empty

and fund raising would be needed to replenish their funds. (The Winter Warmer had been cancelled because of the village flooding issues).

11. Transport and Safety

Correspondence had been received concerning the village bus service indicating that Route 74 had been saved. However we heard from one resident that it was to make its final journey on May 28th. The Clerk will look into this.

There had been a speed camera in the village and 3 people from outside the village had been caught.

12. Environmental Issues  
See flooding

13. Cricket Club/Tennis Court/Play Area

No updates.

14. Accounts for payment

The Clerk's salary (£850) had been taken from the account.

15. West Ilsley Trust

No donations requested

16. Planning Applications  
None received

17. AOB/Open Forum

Mrs Savage asked if she could ask the Compton shop, who supply our newspapers not to indicate when people were away. All agreed.

**The next meeting is on Monday May 19th in the Village Hall. The AGM will be followed by The Parish Assembly.**

**PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE**