

Boldre Parish Council - Annual Assembly held on 21st March 2016

Minutes of the Parish Council Annual Assembly held at 7.00pm in
Boldre War Memorial Hall

Council Members present:

Mr Colin Wise (Chairman)	Mrs Alison Bolton	Mr Oliver Moore
Mr Ken Thornber (County Cllr)	Mrs Angela Grainger	Mr Patrick Kempe
Mr Tony Broomfield	Mr James Eden	Mr Peter Lock (Clerk and RFO)

There were 13 members of the public in attendance

1. Introduction

Parish Council Chairman Colin Wise opened the meeting welcoming everyone to this year's Parish Assembly. His report is shown in full below:

Apologies had been received from Ms Kay Bailey, Cllr Alan Wooldridge and Cllr James Puttick

The minutes of the last meeting were approved by the Parish Council at a meeting shortly after the holding of last year's Assembly. They were available on the website should anyone wish to refer to them

2. Chairman's Report for 2015/16

A. The year started with some major challenges. Following the May election, the Council found itself short of 3 members which is a large number out of 10. There was no chairman, no vice chairman and Peter Lock had just started the previous month as Parish Clerk. And that wasn't all - on top, a recent act of parliament required all parish councils across the country to publish - by 1st July - not just agendas, & minutes, but details of every payment and receipt together with the many policy statements demanded of councils ranging from Financial practices to those for Health and Safety.

Fortunately, with Peter's help everything was pulled together and we finished up winning a valuable shield for the best Parish website in Hampshire - an impossible achievement without Oliver Moore who gave us valuable advice on choosing the website design and a suitable small firm to create it. He has since taken over as vice chairman. Peter, too deserves our thanks because since joining on 1st April last he has vastly improved our administration and accounting and notably increased our work output.

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Turning now to other things

- B. We must thank the Lymington Society for all they have had done at The Burrard Monument in Walhampton which had become overgrown and was in a poor state of repair. Happily, once more it can be seen from Lymington High Street.

- C. I wonder if everyone is aware that a government commission is reviewing the representation of County Councillors across Hampshire. In our view, this Commission took a very poor decision early on and at the expense of representation in the New Forest increased by one the number of councillors at Eastleigh. If this decision is not reversed then Councillor divisions across the Forest will be much affected and what is important to us, Boldre will be attached to Lymington. Well, we all love Lymington and the people who live there but their particular problems differ greatly from ours. In fact, they look mainly to the coast whereas we look to The Forest and it is important that we work alongside our fellow rural parishes with whom we have common problems.
I hope everyone here will support our strong objection to this decision, which if not reversed, could mean us not being one of a convoy of small ships but a mere dinghy attached to an ocean liner.

- D. I suppose I must mention our failure to obtain permission to make a small car park on the recreation ground at the Burnt House Lane entrance. Perhaps one day we will be allowed to lay protection on the turf to encourage the small number of regular users to safely park their cars close to the entrance at Burnt House Lane and avoid driving across the field to the changing rooms or using the Hall car park.

- E. Hopefully the residents of Norley Wood will have been amused to have the name of their hamlet signposted as if it were on a motorway. For those that didn't come across it, it was as wide as the road itself. I am pleased to report that this sign has now been replaced by Highways with one very much more appropriate.

- F. Something that should be better publicised is that following the Grade 2 listing by members of the Parish Council a couple of years ago the Fleur de Lys has been classed as a community asset. Last year, some 21 members of the community became concerned that it might be lost due to poor maintenance and the way it was being operated by the company that owns it. They applied to have it classified in this way. The Parish Council supported this move following which NFDC has classed it as a Community Asset. This means that the community will have the first right of refusal to purchase it should the Inn be put up for sale.

- G. High speed broadband or the lack of it is a concern. Unless there is a change in policy outlying homes and businesses will continue to suffer from poor reception. A year ago, a group of retired but IT literate residents in the north of The Forest got together and formed a self-help group which has worked out a scheme acceptable to BT/Outreach to finance more extensive

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coverage. New Forest District Council (NFDC) is currently working on a tool kit to help residents in similar difficulties do the same and should anyone be interested I can put them in touch with the NFDC officer involved. (Anthony Climpson)

- H. I wonder how much you all use social media. There is no doubt that it is heavily used by the youth of today and we cannot turn our backs and hope it will go away because it won't. At last week's parish council meeting we decided to run a 6 months' trial of Face Book so if you are into this perhaps you might like to be our "friend".
- I. I could talk more - about parking in Tanners Lane - about accidents at Bull Hill cross roads and the proposed solution to grow gorse along the side of the approach road from Bull Hill; - about the re-naming of part of Norley Wood Road as Carter's Lane where it takes two directions before returning back to one road and of course the never ending fight to repair pot holes but I will finish with how the Parish Council deals with the council tax it collects and then take a quick look forward.
- J. Firstly, as well as winning the valuable shield for our website we also sought and obtained a grant for the transparency demonstrated by our new website. This amounted to just under £1000 which we now have in the bank and more than covers the cost of the website.
- K. Secondly, we joined the Lengthman's Scheme funded by Hampshire County Council this year and have obtained extra help valued at £1000 to maintain our green areas. So I hope you will agree that we do try to give residents value for money.
- L. Finally, after 6 years of maintaining the council precept at the same level of £18.72 per annum for the average (band D) home we find it very difficult to continue without an increase of 5% which works out at an increase of £1 per year raising the total for the average home to £19.72 per annum. This pays for the cost of running the recreation ground and the play area for children, the tending of the small greens in the Parish and generally maintaining the Parish in a state suitable for a rural area and I hope you will all feel it is fair.

Moving finally to a brief look into the future –

- (1) Natural England is starting work to establish a coastal path right round the country. This is already creating a lively interest - especially among those who live right on the coast.
- (2) We have been offered a wheel bed. What is that I hear you say! Listen very carefully as I will tell you only once. It is an ancient iron circular bed on which cart wheels were laid when having red hot steel rims fitted and shrunk onto their wooden rims. As a piece of history and hopefully with the help of a little funding from the National Park this could be sited on Perkin's Piece facing the Red Lion. If you would like to see one, there is one on the right hand side as you enter the car park in Brockenhurst. It is held upright in a brick wall with a cart wheel attached to illustrate how the bed was used.

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I must finish by thanking all my colleagues on the Council – Oliver Moore, Angela Grainger, Alison Bolton, James Puttick, Tony Broomfield, Paul Tanner, Alan Wooldridge, James Eden and Patrick Kempe and last but not forgetting our very worthy Parish Clerk, Peter Lock,

So, in conclusion, we got off to a slow start but we managed to improve as we gained experience and we kept our eyes open for grants to help give residents the best value for money and finally if anyone here would like to join the council or knows someone who does there is an opening for one coming up.

Colin Wise, Chairman, Boldre Parish Council
21st March 2016

Now may I introduce our guest speaker.

Our speaker this evening is George Bisson

He was recently elected a member of the National Park where he serves on its planning and amenities committees. Along with other parishes he represents Boldre. He is well qualified for this appointment having spent his whole life in the New Forest serving the community as he went along.

He has been a leader in the Scout Association at local, district & county level and is a past Chairman of Copythorne Parish Hall

He is a member of Lyndhurst Parish Council and has been for 20 years serving as chairman and as a member of the planning and amenities committees. A past chorister and bell ringer at Lyndhurst Church he and his wife, Joan, are both officers of Lockerley Silver Band although I regret to inform you that he hasn't brought his trumpet with him.

Growing up in a family running ponies on the Forest he has been able to enjoy its beauty from the saddle as well as working and playing in the area we now know as The National Park.

He is a relatively newly elected member of the National Park so I think it is going to be most interesting to hear what he has to say and perhaps he will tell us "why he became a councillor".

3. Mr. George Bisson

Mr Bisson opened by stating his surprise and pleasure at being invited to speak at the Boldre Parish Assembly meeting, and he offered his congratulations on the award given to Boldre Parish Council for the new website. He illustrated his talk with a variety of slides of the New Forest, some of which he had copied from the Boldre Parish Website.

His interest in community affairs went back to involvement in the scouting movement with a special interest in protecting local areas and village interests. He was well aware of the frustrations at local level involving Play Area inspections, dog control and Health & Safety issues. The importance of local planning design statements was a particular interest in these days of pressure to provide more housing.

He joined the New Forest National Park Authority in March 2015, keen to share the park with the Nation, but wanting to ensure its' protection. He understands the need for the park to evolve but is clear that local people living and working here must be custodians of this great asset from coast to forest and have a responsibility to share the New Forest with the nation, while safeguarding the local environment for wildlife, trees, and residents alike. Generally, he thought a good job was being done all round to protect the forest.

4. Questions and discussion with local parishioners

- Ms Pam Knight asked about mud and mess on Burnt House Lane probably caused by run-off and vehicles accessing a local field. Cllr Thornber said this was a County matter which he would investigate. Red dog waste boxes could also be considered for the locality.
- Cllr Kempe asked about traffic calming measures in Jordan's Lane, Pilley Bailey (on behalf of Kay Bailey at Appletree Cottage) suggesting a lorry ban in the village if not delivering locally. Cllr Thornber thought this would be very unlikely.
- There was a question from Mr Clifford Jakes about the volume of caravans using local sites. Numbers have grown from tens to hundreds in recent years, especially when linked to temporary events. The District Council issues licenses for such events. Mr Jakes agreed to email Cllr Wise with his thoughts and specific details.
- Mrs Kempe asked if a local Resilience Plan existed covering significant local incidents (e.g. a major local industrial fire). The New Forest District Council do have such plans. Cllr Kempe will ask the local fire officer if he would speak at a forthcoming Boldre Parish Council meeting.

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- A lengthy discussion of the national Boundary Commission's proposals for Hampshire took place. In summary, the commission is proposing to split Boldre Parish away from similar rural parishes (e.g. Sway, Beaulieu, East Boldre etc) and join it to Lymington, a large urban town. Boldre Parish Council has objected strongly to this proposal, making representation to the Boundary Commission. Hampshire County, and the NFDC, have voted in favour of the proposal despite local objections. Mr Morris asked what else could be done locally. Agreement was reached to prepare a petition to be posted at the Pilley Community Stores, if the store managers were agreeable. In addition, residents were advised to contact the Parish Clerk with their views which would be logged on the Council website. Mrs Pamela Keen was due to send an email to the Parish Clerk about the petition.
- Mrs Morris asked about reports in the Lymington Times that some Amenity Tips were to close. She felt that litter and fly tipping would only increase if closures went ahead. Hampshire County are responsible for the sites which Cllr Thornber suggested would not be closing but may be subject to a reduction in available hours to achieve cost savings.

The meeting closed at 8:15 pm

Peter Lock

Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer to Boldre Parish Council