

## **IWADE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**Held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2013**

**Present:** Cllr. J. Hunt (Chairman) Nick Mayatt, Community Warden  
Cllr. S. Plumb Representatives from: Iwade W.I; Mothers &  
Cllr. R. Rook Toddlers Group; Iwade Herons and Iwade Cubs,  
Cllr. M. Gale Scouts & Beavers Group  
Cllr. L. Mitchell Borough Cllr. Ben Stokes  
Clerk, Lynda Fisher Matt Ramsden, Editor Sittingbourne News Extra  
Borough Cllr. Ben Stokes Hayley Robinson – Chief Reporter  
County Cllr. Roger Truelove James Freeman – Planning Swale Boro. Council  
Jim Wilson – Planning Swale Borough Council  
(A total of 20 Parishioners/Visitors in all)

This is a Parish Meeting called as required by the local Government Act, 1972. The meeting is an opportunity for the residents of the village who are registered electors to raise and discuss any subject affecting the village. Discussion and voting on any subject is restricted to electors, residents who are not registered as electors are welcome as observers. Residents wishing to speak are requested to give their name and the name of their road or street.

#### **1. REPORT FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN ON THE PREVIOUS YEAR**

**The Past Chairman**, Councillor Stephen Plumb, welcomed one and all and addressed those in attendance.

##### **People and Roles**

I would like to thank all those who have served as councillors on Iwade Parish Council over the past 12 months, those who have now relinquished their office and those who have ‘joined’ the team. There is a good skills mix and experience base within the team. The Parish Clerk, Lynda Fisher does a terrific job of advising and guiding members on legal procedure and protocol.

I would also like to thank our Borough and County Councillors who have served the village over the past 12 months, Ben Stokes, Alan Willicombe and Mike Whiting, who throughout the year have regularly attended Parish meetings and worked on behalf of the village on a number of issues and helped in securing finance for various projects.

The Community Warden, Nick Mayatt, regularly attends our meetings and reports monthly on matters affecting the village; our thanks to him for dealing with a variety of practical issues.

Thank you to our Village Handyman, Steve Wakeling, who is employed 23 hours per month by the Parish Council to carry out inspections, risk assessments and general repairs around the village.

Finally, thank you to the residents of Iwade who regularly attend the monthly meetings and bring matters/issues to the attention of the council.

### **Items addressed during the year**

**Village Hall** – The Parish Council fully supported The Village Hall Committee’s vision and attempt to relocate to a purpose built facility on the recreation ground at the end of School Lane. Despite all efforts, it would appear that the School Lane site will not be possible due to time constraints. The Parish Council in partnership with the Hall Committee is exploring other options.

**Traffic** – KCC highways have now introduced parking restrictions, with double and single yellow lines at the School Lane/Ferry Road junction. The introduction of a Road Crossing Patrol Person outside the school is also imminent. There have been a number of issues with HGV’s in the village, new road signs guiding HGV’s to Ridham Dock have been erected. Speed watch has been introduced to help monitor vehicle speed in the village and a 20 MPH restriction throughout the village is being explored.

**Housing Developments** – Ward Homes have begun construction of the Kings Ferry development (approx. 97 homes) to the south east of the village. Persimmon has also begun their Iwade Meadows development (approx. 425 homes) to the south west of the village. The Parish Council was approached by a housing developer concerning the development of land to the southeast of Iwade. A ‘campaign’ led by the Parish Council mobilised through the Iwade Observer, The Village Website and Facebook encouraged residents to contact Swale Borough Council. This ‘lobbying’ played a part in Swale Borough Council excluding this parcel of land and maintaining their original new build figures for the borough when submitting their Core Strategy to Central Government.

**Iwade Localism Live** – Swale Borough Council, in their attempt to ensure that the Localism Act is implemented, has selected Iwade as a pilot project. The Parish Council is in the process of formulating a 10 Point Action Plan following a consultation with local residents.

**Iwade Medical Centre** – Residents had a number of issues concerning the provision of service. These were brought by residents to the Parish Council. Representatives from the health provider came and spoke at a Parish meeting and also set up a Patients Monitoring Group.

**Iwade Nature & Conservation Group** – Interest and Activity is growing among the residents; notably the surveys and the successful pond clearing day in Woodpecker Park.

**Jubilee Trees** – to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth 2 the Parish Council with sponsorship from local employer Knauf planted 6 Hornbeam trees and erected a commemorative plaque, in the grass area adjacent to Church Mews.

**Street Lighting** – The Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance and replacement of twenty-six lamp columns. It was agreed to implement a replacement program and three new replacement columns have been erected this year.

**New Notice Board** – A new Parish Council noticeboard has been erected in the Village Centre outside the Londis supermarket.

**Other issues** – There have been many other issues that have required attention this year, for example the village centre parking and cleanliness, the closure of the School Lane playing fields, bullying on the buses when transporting children to school.

### **Committees**

To help the decision making process and the ‘smooth’ running of Parish Meetings, committee’s for both Finance and Planning meet on a regular basis.

### **Finance**

The Parish Council is aware that the on-going recession will affect households in the village therefore has committed to keeping the rise in Parish precept as low as possible, in fact this is the first rise in 4 years. The precept for year 2012/13 was £29500 with a band D property paying £26.90p per annum.

**Accountability** – The Parish Council for the second year is following the introduction of financial safeguards, risk assessments and procedures, as recommended by the Internal Auditor, David Bucket.

**Grants** – The Parish Council is keen to practically support local community groups/organisations and during the year has given financial assistance to some of these.

### **Planning**

The Council continues to receive a ‘good’ number of planning applications within the parish, particularly from residents who wish to extend/improve their homes. There also is a ‘steady flow’ from a number of local employers (primarily in the Ridham dock area), seeking to improve existing or build new plants.

### **Training.**

Throughout the year The Clerk, the Chair and some Members have attended organised training courses.

**The current Chairman**, Councillor James Hunt, thanked Cllr. Plumb for his report and for all the work he had undertaken over the last three years; he also thanked the rest of the Parish Council for their support. He then welcomed one and all and addressed those in attendance.

The Chairman commented that in the current year the Parish Council is involved in the Iwade Localism Live Project, working with Swale Borough Council. This includes finding out what residents want and would like to achieve in Iwade. The Council and Councillors would like to do as much as is possible for the community: sadly, this is not always achievable but at least we try.

Hopefully this year the Parish Council and Hall Committee will get some idea as to what is going to happen and all being well eventually get our much needed new Village Hall.

The Nature Reserve is progressing and at the moment funding is being sought.

'Iwade Rocks' has become a popular annual community event; it would be nice to see a few more and hopefully if we get a new Village Hall this will open up more possibilities.

The Chairman would like to increase awareness of the Parish Council's role in the community and would like to get more people to attend the meetings so that Councillors can work closely with our parishioners.

The School is proposing to become an Academy, which will be quite a big change for the village and the Parish Council needs to get involved.

The Chairman presented the following cheques to representatives from Iwade organisations who applied for grants for the financial year 2013/14:

1 <sup>st</sup> Iwade Beavers, Cubs and Scouts	£1752
Iwade Mother and Toddlers Group	£900
Iwade Women's Institute	£250
Iwade Herons	£500

## **2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

These were circulated and signed as a true transcript at the monthly Parish Council meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

## **3. PRESENTATION BY JAMES FREEMAN (HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT CONTROL) AND JIM WILSON (MAJOR PROJECTS OFFICER) FROM SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL.**

The Chairman handed over to the two Planning Officers from Swale Borough Council.

James Freeman introduced himself as Head of Development Control at Swale Borough Council; he explained he deals with planning development and building control and Jim Wilson deals with most of the major planning applications for the Borough.

James is hoping to reel out a presentation to other Parish Councils, which will include an introduction to the new Planning Policy and will also briefly reflect on the liaison with Parish Councils on planning applications.

He referred to the new Planning Policy Framework which came into force from April, 2013; the document originally comprised nine thousand pages, it is now down to fifty four! It is in favour of sustainable development; there is emphasis on economic growth and housing development is part of the scenario. It contains references to town centres and the rural economy.

The Borough Council is in the process of drafting a new Local Plan; last year it was referred to as 'Bearing Fruits'. The new consultation will be coming out July/August time and will include site allocations and a new/revised Development Management Policy. Borough Councillors have made a decision to keep to house numbers as proposed in the original document, which might suggest that they are not looking for any additional sites. Junction 5 of the M2 is a major constraint on the Borough; additionally the housing market is not buoyant and can be described as stagnant at the present time.

When dealing with a planning application Officers have five days to validate it; it then goes out to the Parish Council and other consultees. Any comments made by consultees need to be submitted within the twenty-one day consultation period otherwise the application goes through the delegation system. Officers look at site history; consultees' responses and material considerations; they often seek amendments to the application as a result of this process. (Swale Borough Council is a high performing planning authority, which meets Government targets. It deals with 18000 applications per annum, of which 88% are delegated and 12% go to Committee.) After a decision is made Officers have to complete a Decision Notice and legal agreements, before sending out the documentation. All applications have to be dealt with in an eight week time frame. If an applicant receives a Decision Notice refusing permission, he could take the matter to appeal if he feels it has not been dealt with properly. Enforcement action is taken when there has been a breach of planning control; it could involve something like a retrospective planning application.

Planners are encouraging developers to consult with Parish Councils. Neighbourhood Plans are emerging and if going down this route it is important that the Parish Council sets out what it wants to achieve and this has to relate to new development over and above the Local Plan. He is hoping to see Members from Parish Councils to help progress Neighbourhood Plans. However, these are costly and Parish Councils might need to set up a loan scheme because of the sums involved. Plans require a lot of local interaction; take a year to eighteen months and involve going to enquiry and also referendum (needs over 50% vote in the community for the Plan to be accepted); he suggested speaking to Faversham Town Council who have experience of this.

Jim Wilson then took over the presentation and outlined material considerations, which included:

- Principle of the development; establish whether it is acceptable.
- Is it within the built up boundary?
- Consider the layout, design, mass and size of the development, amenity and character – does it swamp an area?
- The impact the development has on the living conditions of the area, particularly neighbours, e.g. overlooking, loss of light and outlook.
- Highway safety; dealt with by Kent Highways – they look at whether it is suitable; needs any comments, etc.
- Noise is a material consideration; they work with the Environmental Health Team – this particularly relates to industrial developments.
- Air Quality – Ridham is an example; the Environmental Health team get involved in these issues; sometimes the Environment Agency has involvement with such things as Permits.
- Ecology and Protected Species, e.g. Great Crested Newts, Noble Chauffer Beetles; all important and protected under international regulations.
- Contaminated land.
- Impact on listed buildings and setting of Conservation Areas and Archaeology
- Flooding e.g. issues with Iwade Stream; need to ensure that new development does not impact on the flood plain areas
- Loss/Gain of employment premises
- On larger developments there are other considerations such as affordable housing, normally 30% requirements.
- Local Plan and policies contained within. There are also policy documents that run alongside this, e.g., Developer Contributions, Education and Open Spaces.

Items which are not a material consideration are:

- History or character of the applicant
- Impact on property values
- Restrictive covenants – a private legal matter to be resolved
- Ownership of the land
- Issues relating to places, e.g. workshop
- Construction of building – dealt with under Building Regulations
- If the application is made retrospectively

Jim advised that the Government is introducing quite a few changes on permitted development rights, where planning permission is not required, e.g. vacant offices will be able to be changed to residential use and agricultural buildings over five hundred metres can go to residential use.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be introduced shortly, running with the emergence of the Local Plan, which will be in about eighteen months' time. Parish Councils will be consulted on the proposals as they move forward. Parish Councils will be eligible for 15% of the levy, or if they have a Neighbourhood Plan in place 25%.

Kent County Council has specific responsibility for Minerals and Waste.

The Chairman thanked James and Jim for the presentation and handed over to the representatives from the local Press.

4. **PRESENTATION BY MATTHEW RAMSDEN (EDITOR – SHEERNESS TIMES GUARDIAN/SITTINGBOURNE NEWS EXTRA) AND HAYLEY ROBINSON (CHIEF REPORTER) FROM THE KENT MESSENGER GROUP**

Matt thanked everyone for inviting him and Hayley to the meeting; he will talk about the newspaper and Hayley will talk about her role.

The News Extra was launched in December 2011 following the closure of the East Kent Gazette and Sheppey Gazette. When the decision was made to launch the new paper it took nine days from the decision to the publication of the first edition. They had every confidence it was going to be a winner, they had a good production team and people liked the paper and by launch time on the first day knew it was going to with them for a good few years!

As well as the News Extra they also produce the Sheerness Times Guardian and the Sittingbourne Extra, a total of three newspapers. The Times Guardian was created in 1858; the Sheerness Times started ten years later, then they amalgamated and became the Sheerness Times Guardian as it is known today.

Anything with a human interest is a good story and should read in such a way as it is very easily understood by everyone. Stories come from various sources, but the social media is an important source; people 'tweet'. They do sometimes pick up stories which are not true and it gives them a chance to put it right in the newspaper.

There are a lot of misconceptions about newspapers as to what their rules are. They try to create a package so that there is something for everyone. Interestingly, the BBC picks up a lot of their stories! Animals often attract people, more than people stories; election times are interesting when dealing with the different parties

Hayley believes her job as a Reporter has changed a lot; when she first started she relied on e-mails and attending Parish Council meetings; now she relies on e-mails and the social network – she's always checking 'Iwade Does Facebook' and 'Twitter'! Reporters still go out of the office, but do rely heavily on the social media.

She is now Chief Reporter; she started with the East Kent Gazette and has had various roles over the years. It is a 'full on' job; never stopping and she often works Saturdays and lunchtimes to meet deadlines. Stories come in in various ways – press releases, e-mails, and people coming in off the street, letters and then there's the social media. Things can be reported immediately; people want to know things right now - the whole of society is changing with technology.

She liaises closely with Matt, meeting deadlines, coming up with ideas for future promotions, etc. The best part of her job is meeting different people and facing things every day. She will write a story and it will go to the news desk, and then depending on the story depends on where it will appear. Five people will look at any one story checking on - it is well written; can it be better written; is there an intro; have we got all the facts and is it legally sound?

A reporter spends quite a lot of time on e-mails and the telephone; it depends on what is coming up as to how often they get out.

The Chairman thanked Matt and Hayley for their interesting presentation and opened up the meeting to the public.

## **6. PUBLIC FORUM**

Residents mentioned Lorries in School Lane and construction noise. The Warden has spoken to the Site Manager regarding this issue. Once sixty houses have been built a haul road will be created to take traffic away from School Lane. It might be worth checking to see if Persimmon is signed up to the 'Considerate Constructors' Scheme.

## **7. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The Chairman thanked Parishioners in attendance at tonight's meeting and those who attend the monthly Parish Council meetings to raise various issues.

He particularly thanked the 1<sup>st</sup> Iwade Beavers, Cubs and Scouts for again providing tea and scrumptious cakes, which was much appreciated by all present.

Finally he thanked the guest speakers for taking the time to attend the meeting and give such interesting presentations regarding their work.

**Meeting closed at 9.35 p.m.**