

## **IWADE PARISH COUNCIL**

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

**Held on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2011**

**Present:** Cllr. S. Plumb (Chairman) Clerk, Lynda Fisher  
Cllr. J. White Iwade Cubs, Scouts & Beavers Group  
Cllr. J. Hunt Val Pugh: Iwade W.I.  
Cllr. S. Harris Diane Underhill: Mothers & Toddlers Group  
Borough Cllr. Ben Stokes  
Debbie McNamara - E.A.  
Rebecca Murphy - E.A.  
Gail Davie – K.R.A.G.  
Hayley Robinson - Press  
3 Parishioners

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

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

The Chairman thanked all those who had served as Councillors during the previous year and gave special thanks to those who had left: Amanda Hurrell, Joan Exley, and Ann Menzies. He also thanked Janet Gregory, who resigned at the last Parish Council meeting. Janet's support and advice to him and the rest of the Council has been much appreciated and will be sorely missed. During the year the Council welcomed new Members who took up office: Roy Jones, Bob Phillips, Terri Avon-Cotton and Steve Harris. He also thanked the Clerk, Lynda Fisher; it has been a time of transition for a number of Councillors and her expertise and many years experience, now and in the past, is highly valued.

He thanked Borough Councillor Ben Stokes, who for the past year has served as Mayor of the Borough and has attended Parish Council meetings whenever his Mayoral duties have allowed. Also thanks to Borough Councillor Alan Willicombe and in particular thanks to County Councillor Mike Whiting, who is normally at every single Parish Council meeting; Mike works hard on behalf of the people of Iwade.

Then there is our Community Warden, Nick Mayatt, who regularly attends our meetings and reports monthly on matters affecting the village; he keeps his eye on the ground and reports any problems to the appropriate authorities and helps people to get on in the most neighbourly way.

Thanks go to Steve Wakeling, our village handyman, for his work within the village.

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

**Bus Shelter** - The Parish Council with the assistance of County Cllr Mike Whiting (who kindly paid for it out of his Member's Fund) has replaced the old bus shelter adjacent to the Village Park in Ferry Road with a new timber rustic style bus shelter. Some residents have suggested 'infilling' the sides panels to prevent rain 'blowing' onto waiting travellers. The council has taken this concern onboard and is currently looking at the best way to do this.

**Village Hall** – The Parish Council fully support The Village Hall Committee's vision to relocate to a purpose built facility on the recreation ground in School Lane. The Parish Council is the 'Custodian Trustee' of the land on which the existing Village Hall is sited; we therefore have a vested interest to ensure that the proposals serve the present and future Iwade Community. An outline planning application has been submitted to Swale Borough Council for ten houses on the existing hall site in Ferry Road, and draft drawings are being prepared for the new hall prior to seeking planning permission.

**Traffic** – There have been parking issues at the School Lane/Ferry Road junction. KCC have committed to introduce both yellow double and single lines in this location and we are pleased see that these have just been installed.

**Housing Developments** – This year Swale Borough Council carried out a public consultation on its 'Core Strategy'; a strategy identifying development sites for housing and industry until the year 2030. There were four proposed options, three of which would have meant further housing development in Iwade. The Parish Council invited other local councils to meet and discuss an appropriate response to Swale's options; the outcome of this was the formation of RAHM (Residents Against Housing Madness). The Core Strategy in its current draft has identified areas/locations for development; Iwade is not such an area but some more housing will be built on sites already identified.

**Prettiest Garden Competition** – Summer 2011 saw the first competition. Thank you to all those residents who entered and congratulations to those who received first, second and third prizes.

**Iwade Nature & Conservation Group** – Cllr James Hunt invited residents with an interest in nature and the environment to join this new group and at the present time there are approximately twenty-five members. They have carried out their first Great Crested Newt survey, which took place during torrential rain and heavy winds in April!

### **Residents**

We are pleased to see that there has been significant interest and attendance by local residents at council meetings, who have brought various items to the attention of the council. Issues raised have included mobile phone reception, the quality of service at Iwade Health Surgery, dog fouling, and parking within the village, in particular in School Lane outside the Village Centre.

## **Sub Committees**

To help the decision making process and the ‘smooth’ running of Parish Meetings, sub committee’s for both Finance and Planning have been set up.

### **Finance**

The Parish Council is aware that with the ‘down turn’ in the economy many households may experience financial pressures and therefore has committed to keeping the Parish precept at the same level as the previous year; making this the third year in a row with no increase. The precept for year 2011/12 was £29,500, with a band D property paying £27.42p per annum.

**Accountability** – The Parish Council is now running a ‘tight financial ship’ following the completion of the introduction of new financial safeguards, risk assessments and procedures, as recommended by Mr. David Bucket the Internal Auditor for the Parish Council.

**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. A new grant application form and process has now been introduced, details of which are on [www.iwadevillage.co.uk](http://www.iwadevillage.co.uk).

**Sponsorship** – There has been increased interest from local businesses keen to help/support the community in Iwade. Currently Knauf have committed to sponsoring the planting of 9 trees to commemorate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, and DS Smith and Wards are offering to help with environmental projects.

**BT Broadband** – Last year BT installed new technology to improve the quality of broadband within the Village; this was partially paid for by a Broadband Grant from KCC. The Grant has been administered by the Parish Council, with a subsidy being offered to assist those residents who wished to take up the offer of BT Infinity. To date the Parish Council has received relatively few applications for this subsidy.

### **Planning**

The Council has seen an increase in the number of planning applications within the parish. To spread the workload each individual member of the Planning Committee in turn researches a particular application and submits a report to the committee and full council of their findings. There are four ‘sources/types’ of application at present: those from residents wishing to alter their existing property, those from housing developers looking to construct ‘new builds’; applications from industry and employers (primarily in the Ridham dock area), and most recently a number from the Gypsy & Traveller community.

SBC regularly hold planning briefings for local Parish Councillors to raise awareness of current and future planning issues in the borough, and Members have benefitted from this regular consultation.

### **Training.**

The Clerk and some Members attended training organised by the KALC (Kent Association for Local Councils) during the year. Members also received financial training from David Buckett.

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

These were circulated and signed as a true transcript at the monthly Parish Council meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

## **3. PRESENTATION BY KENT REPTILES AND AMPHIBIAN GROUP (Krag)**

The Chairman introduced Gail Davie, who explained that Krag is interested in recording, conserving and raising awareness of Reptiles and Amphibians. Gail presented a very informative slideshow on the various types of Frogs, Toads and Lizards that can be found in the surrounding countryside. She introduced us to 'foreigners' (including the Marsh Frog that can often be heard in the village during this time of the year) that have been released into the wild and have colonised various areas of our countryside.

She also discussed the Great Crested Newt, which has quite a population in Iwade, and went on to talk about how colonies move; the GCN's own 'fingerprints' (the yellow/black marking on its belly) and the curious mating habits of this creature.

The Chairman thanked Gail for her very interesting slideshow, which held the attention of all present.

## **4. PRESENTATION BY DEBBIE MCNAMRA AND REBECCA MURPHY ON THE WORK OF THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY**

The Chairman introduced Debbie McNamara, who is the Team Leader at the Environment Agency's depot located in Stickfast Lane.

Debbie explained that she has a team of 13 staff working with her, covering the area from Chatham down to Herne Bay and the whole of the Isle of Sheppey. Some of the numerous tasks undertaken by the team are flood and coast risk management, working with Planning Authorities; prevention of pollution, extraction of water, creating new habitats and achieving natural watercourses. They are on call 24 hours, seven days a week, for flooding or pollution incidents. To illustrate the diversity of the team's work Debbie presented an interesting slideshow of tasks being carried out and projects that had been undertaken.

Debbie introduced a colleague Rebecca Murphy. Rebecca has a keen interest in the Iwade stream. She has recently been involved in clearing out the culvert that runs under Springvale. Investigation by CCTV showed that there was quite a build-up of debris, which included two bikes and even fencing panels! She produced slides showing the culvert before and after the debris was removed and added that there is still a small amount of decomposed matter that needs to be taken out. She went on to explain that it is crucial that debris is prevented from entering the culverts because in times of high water this material rises and damages the walls. The damaged walls could eventually collapse causing the roads above to cave in.

As part of the work to prevent the stream from flooding due to blockages, it is planned to fit trash screens on the downstream side of the culverts in Sheerstone and Springvale. She added that a big problem is people whose gardens back onto the stream, they often throw garden rubbish and other material 'over the fence'; this eventually finds its way into the watercourse, builds up and causes

blockages. Further work on the watercourse will involve the installation of a new tidal ‘flap’ where the stream meets the Swale.

The Chairman thanked Debbie and Rebecca for sharing their knowledge and experiences with those present at the meeting.

## **5. PRESENTATION OF DONATIONS**

The following cheques were presented to representatives from Iwade organisations who had applied for grants for the financial year 2012/13; this expenditure was approved at the monthly Parish Council meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2012:

1 <sup>st</sup> Iwade Beavers, Cubs and Scouts	£1596
Iwade Mother and Toddlers Group	£820
Iwade Women’s Institute	£252

## **6. PUBLIC FORUM**

No comments put forward by those present.

## **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.

He also thanked the guest speakers for their interesting presentations and for the work undertaken in the village.

The Chairman concluded the meeting by commenting that he was pleased to see the flourishing community spirit in Iwade.

**Meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.**