

Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon Parish Council

Events and Actions May 2008 to April 2009

May

1st Parish Council Meeting since the April elections held on Tuesday 6th. The elections were a non-event due to only six individuals offering themselves up for election in this year of 2008. Seven or more applications would have resulted in an Election taking place. As a result the following individuals were duly elected as the new Parish Council.

These being;

Eric Hibbert – then elected Chairman

Bruce Wiggall – then elected Vice Chairman

Elizabeth Brent-Smith

Stuart Fry

Heather Coles

Roy Winstone

Anne Riglesford remained Clerk to the Council

Planning application received re: a property in Gilberts Lane – Porch extension/modification - *No objections from the PC*

The Gypsy Site continued to be a serious problem and although SDC Planning Enforcement had taken some action in issuing enforcement notices. These had to date been blatantly ignored and so more pressure was exerted by the Parish Council to get some action. At the end May the situation was in the hands of SDC Legal Department/David Corker and the Parish Council were awaiting an acceptable outcome. The PC had already elected to put a press pack together in readiness to expose this unacceptable situation and this continued to be the case.

The Corner Field – Naas Lane where again enforcement notices although served continued to be ignored so again pressure continued to be applied by the PC to get an acceptable resolution. The position remained similar to the Gypsy Site above.

Needless to say the PC remained more than disappointed at the poor performance of the District Council and their officers relating to these issues.

June

Monday 2nd saw the start of the roadwork's to install the Traffic Calming Scheme through Brookthorpe and impose a 30 mph speed limit. The work was due to take some 12 weeks ending in late August.

Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd. News that the Hunts Grove Housing Development at Hardwicke/A38 Corridor was to go ahead after all was received through the press and official notification received by the PC that day. The potential affect on the future of possible housing development in and around Brookthorpe and especially Whaddon remained a serious concern.

July

Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 1st July prior to recess for the summer holidays there being no meeting in August. Concern had been expressed to our District Councillor regarding the on-going Traffic Calming Scheme by unknown parties as far as the Parish Council was concerned – so concerned apparently that no-one turned up at this meeting to express the concerns. The Parish Council concluded along with Joan Nash our County Councillor and the Highways department that the scheme should be completed before criticism was levelled. In any case the design success of the scheme would be monitored on completion as a matter of course.

Whaddon/Brookthorpe Housing development in the future was the subject of a site meeting on 4th July attended by Mike Bawden (South West Regional Authority), Council Leader Paul James, City MP Parmjit Dhanda, Stroud Mp David Drew, Parish Council Chairman Eric Hibbert, plus a few others. This was a meeting called to debate the proposal in the RSS document that Whaddon should be considered for major Housing development in the future. There was unanimous agreement that this should not be allowed to happen and that 'Whaddon' itself should not be specifically nominated in this proposal for a start. Hazel Blear's announcement as to the reports recommendations were due mid July after which there would be a 12 week period of consultation and that would give the opportunity for a concentrated campaign to protect this rural location from mass housing development. It was agreed that we would all work together on this.

August

The Traffic Calming Scheme was completed and we awaited the Safety Audit to follow, which would take into account any concerns regarding safety issues as well as any general comments for potential future action.

The Parish Council was in recess for the summer but a closed meeting was held with Stroud District Council officer Barry Wyatt and attended by David Drew and Joan Nash over the lack of an acceptable solution to the continued problems with the 'Gypsy Site'. The Council was persuaded that although very slow there were moves afoot to resolve the situation. The Parish Council agreed to continue to monitor the situation very closely.

Stroud District Council requested comments from interested parties regarding the **Regional Spatial Strategy** proposal for future housing development in the Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon area to be considered by them in for their response to the Housing Directorate to be submitted by 27th August. The Parish Council submitted its comments in a 4-page document format along with pictures and delivered it on time. It was also distributed to David Drew's office as well as County and City Council officers.

The Keep Whaddon Green Campaign was launched in opposition to the RSS Proposals and plans were hatched to organise a walk and a Petition. This was to be a joint venture with the Tuffley Ward of Gloucester City and in particular with the help of Gerald Dee their Councillor.

September

Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd September the Gypsy Site was on the agenda again but no specific news as to any progress.

The Keep Whaddon Green Walk took place on Sunday 7th September when around 200 people some with dogs walked the 45-minute trek around Whaddon using the Public Footpaths. The weather was kind and spirits were high. It was well attended by Parish, County and City Councillors as well as David Drew the Stroud MP and several prospective MPs for the future. All signed the Petition and the event was covered in the local press both before and after the event with excellent articles and pictures to compliment them. Wynstones School kindly donated the use of the School Hall and provided refreshments. Parish Councillors plus several members of the Parish acted as Guides and Marshals.

October

Parish Council Meeting held on 7th October again the Gypsy Site was on the agenda but no progress reported on dealing with some specific problems raised again with SDC but awaiting action.

Stroud District Council after its debate on the **RSS** voted unanimously to oppose any building of houses at Whaddon and called for the total removal of this proposal from the final RSS document. We heard too that the County and City Council were also all opposed were some of the surrounding Parish Councils. They would all be voicing their total opposition and call for removal in their submissions to the Housing Directorate in due course.

Our own final submission was drafted during October and contained a copy of our submissions to SDC in September along with a copy of our Policy Statement, a covering letter, press cuttings, photographs and the original petition from the walk as well as the results of a further petition that we ran after the walk. In all some 400 signatures along with comments formed part of the final ring binder document. A copy is available for viewing and is held by the Clerk.

At a Westminster Debate on the RSS Draft our MP David Drew and Parmjit Danda, one of Gloucesters MPs argued strongly on our behalf in order to protect Whaddon. There was very little if any support for this Draft from any of the members attending the debate.

Proposals for a Parish Plan gathered pace with a decision to call a special meeting in November and invite an expert from the RSS and SDC to come and explain what a Parish Plan is all about and the possible benefits of producing one. The idea of the meeting being to gauge the level of interest and quantify potential help and assistance available from members of the community other than just the Parish Council.

The Bus Stop at Brookthorpe was demolished by an out of control commercial vehicle and steps were taken to remove the debris and obtain quotations to re-instate the same ASAP. Our thanks to the witnesses who came forward and to Paul Gaze for his help in taping up the crime scene on the day.

November

The Parish Council meeting took place on November 4th at which the question of Indemnity insurance cover to protect Parish Council members was again discussed. A quote of around £750 per annum had been obtained from our existing insurers, furthermore a number of other Parish Councils appeared to be equally concerned about their potential exposure and Allianz Cornhill were looking further into cover and costs. It was decided to allow for this potential cost in the next precept whilst further investigations took place.

It was also decided to replace the now demolished Bus Shelter in Brookthorpe with one of the same style and construction as the two wooden ones in Whaddon.

An Emergency Plan for the Parish was discussed as guidelines and the necessary partially completed forms from the government had been received for consideration and further action.

A Parish Plan meeting took place on the 18th November at which Krista Harris of SDC and Angela Barlow of GRCC gave a presentation to the 17 people who turned up to show interest in being involved in some aspect of making it happen. The meeting was deemed very successful and informative and a great deal of interest shown in progressing to the next stage of appointing a steering group.

The Javelin Park Incinerator prospect – a public meeting was held at Quedgeley on 6th November, which members of the Council attended with a view to reporting back at the December PC Meeting. This being a second meeting on the subject, the first taking Place at Haresfield Village Hall and hosted by Haresfield PC.