

CHAIRMANS REPORT 2008/09

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings in 2008 were held every month except August & December. In January 2009 a proposal was made and accepted by councillors for bi-monthly meetings. Should a planning application or any other urgent business need dealing with between meetings the chair or vice chair would call for a council meeting. The WI hall is booked and paid for ten bookings per year. The council co-opted one new member Lesley Clothier to represent Alyton.

FINANCE

The precept for 2009/2010 is set at £3500.00. Income for 2008/9 was precept £3000.00 and £750.00 from the parish paths P3 scheme, having not spent any of the grant the previous year. The bank balance as at 31st March 2009 was £3797.86 and bank interest for the year was £65.84.

Major items of expenditure for 2008/09 were the Clerks salary and expenses £2357.37, Cornhill insurance £297.15, Church donation £200.00 and HELC subscription £165.80.

PLANNING

The Parish council dealt with 8 planning applications:

- Brook Farm Court loft conversion and other internal work and a roof light.
- Hop Kilns, Swallow Farm, Little Marcle - garage and store room.
- The Byre, Aylton Court - single storey rear extension.
- The Old Rectory, Pixley - removal of fir trees and old fence line, erect sound barrier fence, build walls and form gateway to entrance drive. Carry out hedge planting along boundary with road.
- White House, Munsley - develop adjoining barn and garage into separate living accommodation, this development is subject to a 106 agreement.
- Laddin Cottage - equestrian ménage.
- Newbridge Farm - garage and single storey extension.

All of the above were granted planning permission.

There was a ninety day enforcement order placed on poly tunnels at Haygrove.

The parish council received a planning application to consider, the retention of poly tunnels on fields H, M, P, Q, R, W and Z, together with the partial removal of poly tunnels from fields F, G, I, K, L, M, Q, X and Z. Plus a comprehensive landscaping scheme on Haygrove farm. Two planning meetings took place to consider this application, with the largest attendance by the general public at a council meeting for many years. The decision by the parish council was to object to the application in its current form but it would reconsider it with certain modifications. Polytunnels at Z, M, X and W were felt to be too intrusive on the surrounding properties. The Parish Council felt that Z should be reduced by approx. 50% and M by 20%. It was felt that for X and W additional

screening should be introduced above and beyond that contained within the application. It was also felt Herefordshire Council should look at flooding issues and infrastructure in some detail before this application is approved. Concern was also raised regarding the increased volume of traffic in Falcon lane should this application go ahead. The Parish council remain aware of the employment and general benefits this application would bring to the community.

HIGHWAYS

Bus Stop at Trumpet Crossroads. A site meeting was arranged with Councillors Swaites and Hodges and Paul Williamson of the Public Transport Department at Herefordshire Council to discuss the dangers of the present position of the bus stop and to suggest relocating to the Hereford side of the entrance/exit of The Trumpet Inn car park. This was a very negative meeting. We have pursued this suggestion with the help of Ward Councillor Patricia Morgan throughout the year with very little progress being achieved to date.

Mr Ray Wallace Senior Engineer (Traffic) attended our October Parish Council meeting to report on the effects of works completed on the A4172 in 2006. He reported that there had been no casualties to date. He was asked at this meeting to look into and report back on other issues raised by councillors i.e. possibility of double white lines at Pixley Court on A4172 and carrying out a feasibility study for the temporary siteing of a Speed Indicator Devices on various sections of the A4172 and A438 within the Parish Council's Boundary. A response from Mr Wallace is still awaited by the Parish Council. An initiative was put forward by Councillors Davies and Swaites and supported by other councillors and Councillor Morgan for a blanket 50 mph speed limit throughout the county of Herefordshire. This proposal was put before the Environment Scrutiny Committee (ESC) meeting held 24th November 2008 and was accepted by the ESC agenda item for their 23rd March 2009 meeting. During this meeting it was discussed at length by members of the ESC with a range of views put forward. There was no resolution of this issue by the ESC. Councillor Morgan prompted the ESC at the March meeting to come back with an answer during November 2009 which was accepted by the ESC.

PARISH PLAN

No discussions on the Parish Plan have taken place by the councillors during the last 12 months. I am pleased to say that mention of it was made by the Strategic Housing Services when they carried out their housing needs survey recently in the Munsley and Pixley Parishes.

HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

Tina Woods from Herefordshire Council's Strategic Housing Services Department was present at the May meeting to explain, if councillors were in favour, the aims of a

housing needs survey to take place in the Parishes of Munsley and Pixley. There was unanimous agreement to this survey by Councillors. Tina Woods agreed to report back to the Parish Council the results of the survey, which she did at our March meeting. In brief the findings were that was one family in Munsley with a housing need. A housing need survey for the Little Marcle and Alyton area is to be carried out in the near future.

POLICE REPORTS

Alison Dore (CSO) attended 3 meetings, reporting on the main problems in the area and advising members of the council on anti theft measures and equipment available to protect their properties from anti social behaviour.

MISCELLANEOUS

Summary of other items raised during the year

Flooding

A meeting took place between members of the Parish Council and Ward Councillor Patricia Morgan and two members of the Herefordshire Council Highways Transportation Department. Various problem areas were highlighted in the four Parishes. Some of the work has since been carried out but there is still a lot that needs doing if we are to alleviate the flooding of recent years.

Waste Collection System

This will change towards the end of 2009 with the introduction of wheelie bins. They are to be used for the collection of all recyclable materials on a fortnightly basis. The weekly black bag collection will remain unchanged.

Telephone Boxes

BT wanted to remove the boxes from Waller's Green and Little Marcle. At present the box at Waller's Green has been retained. The Little Marcle box is now privately owned with the telephone removed.

Post Office Closures

Even with a great deal of protest from many surrounding Parish Councils the fight was lost to keep the post office facility at Newtown Crossroads Garage open. There is now an outreach facility open a few hours per week at the Newtown Public House.