



Southam Parish Council



MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held at 7.30pm on 14th May 2019

Present: Cllr Adrienne Wood, Cllr John Workman, Cllr Steve Lennon and Cllr Karen Licence

Also Present: Borough Councillor Roger Wilson
District Councillor Mike Dean
John Donovan – Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator
Bob Lloyd – Neighbourhood Watch Field Officer
Gloucestershire Constabulary – Sgt El Lakin and PCSO Pippa Roberts
Parish Clerk – Liz Dowie
18 members of the public.

1. Welcome from the Chairman and Annual Report

Cllr Wood read out her report. (Appendix 1)

2. County Councillor's Annual Report

A written report from Cllr Roger Wilson had been circulated. (Appendix 2)

3. Borough Councillors Annual Report

Councillor Dean gave his annual report. Due to the continued reduction in revenue support from central government, Tewkesbury Borough Council was facing a projected deficit of £3.5M in 3 years' time. However, a mitigation strategy had been put in place and it was anticipated that the deficit would be covered over the next 4 years. The Council had significant property investments generating net revenue of £1M per annum. It was noted that, despite increasing financial constraints, the Council had refurbished its offices, delivered a new leisure facility and improved services whilst maintaining its council tax rate within the 5 lowest in England.

4. Reports from Cleeve Conservators and Village Hall Committee

In the absence of Cllr Hollaway, the Clerk read out the Cleeve Conservators report. (Appendix 3)

Cllr Wood gave a report on the activities of the Village Hall Committee. There had been many well attended events throughout the year including pub nights, film nights, a barn dance and the pantomime. The hall was also used by a large variety of groups such as pilates classes, an art group, the WI and also for the drop in sessions. Various works had been carried out on the building – the fascias and soffits had been repaired and the lighting had been updated. Plans had been drawn up for the possible extension of the hall, but funds would need to be raised for this project.

5. Policing, Neighbourhood Watch and Community Speedwatch

John Donovan, Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator introduced this item by reminding all residents of the importance of advising neighbours when away on holiday and keeping an eye on each other's properties.

Bob Lloyd, Neighbourhood Watch Field Officer for Tewkesbury and Gloucester, gave an informative presentation about the scheme. Of a total of 1771 schemes across Gloucestershire, the Southam scheme is one of 51 in the Bishops Cleeve area. The Community Alert Scheme is proving useful in keeping the public informed about specific incidents or crime reduction information. Any resident can sign up to the scheme and there are currently 13,000 households on their system.

The top targets in burglaries were currently bicycles, cash and jewellery and there had been an increase in the theft of cars from driveways, including incidents in Southam. Residents were urged to keep "smart" keys in protective key pouches to prevent the signal being intercepted. There had also been an increase in burglars gaining entry through back doors where door keys had been left in the lock. It was noted that there would be a cycle marking event in Bishops Cleeve, at which cycles can be marked free of charge and recorded on a central register.

Sgt El Lakin and PCSO Pippa Roberts also attended the meeting and provided crime statistics for the Southam area. For the period from January to May 2019, there had been a reduction in non-dwelling burglaries compared with the same period in 2018. There had been one house burglary in both periods but there had been eight incidents of criminal damage in 2019, compared with one in 2018. There had been a reduction in police resources but there was a strong team covering the area from Bishops Cleeve to Winchcombe. Residents were encouraged to consult the Gloucestershire Constabulary website and to contact the 101 service by email for general queries, but to call 999 to report a crime in progress.

One resident asked how to deal with door to door traders who can be quite intimidating, especially to those who refuse to purchase goods. She was advised to display a cold callers sticker on the door and to report any incidents to 101 or by calling 999 in extreme cases.

John Donovan reported that 3 members of the Community Speedwatch Group had completed the online test and were awaiting further training. This would include advice regarding the most appropriate locations for monitoring the speed of vehicles.

6. Parishioners suggestions & questions

A resident raised the issue of vehicles parking too close to the junction of Southam Lane and Old Road. Although vehicles had been parked slightly further away from the junction more recently, it was acknowledged that this still reduced visibility for cars emerging from Southam Lane.

Anita Wilcox confirmed that she was happy to continue to stand as Footpath Co-ordinator for the coming year.

John Donovan asked residents to contact him if the VAS equipment was not working so that batteries could be replaced without delay.

It was reported that hedges at the junction of Southam Lane and Kayte Lane were overgrown and were forcing vehicles into the centre of the carriageway and it was noted that this was the responsibility of the residents rather than a Highways matter, since the hedges were not on Highways land. This will be monitored.

Cllr Wood thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm. Refreshments followed and residents had the opportunity to put further questions to councillors and the visiting speakers.