

**BROCKWORTH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
WEDNESDAY 27 MAY 2015**

There were 11 people present.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21 May 2014 were received with no comments.

2. Annual Report of the Chairman of the Parish Council – Cllr J Hunt

The Chairman outlined the main points of his report, which was circulated to all present and can be read at Appendix 1.

3. Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2015

The finance figures for 2014/15 were circulated to all present and can be read at Appendix 2.

4. Report from Schools

There was no representative from the schools and no report was received.

5. Report from Representative of the Police – PC Rob Guest

No representative of the Police was present, but PC Rob Guest forwarded his report together with a copy of the crime comparison statistics for the period 1/5/2014 – 30/4/2015. Copies were circulated to all present.

6. Report from Representative of Brockworth Allotments and Garden Association

Cllr Neal read out the report of the Allotment and Garden Association from John Richardson, Secretary.

1. Once again this year the allotments are full with all the plots let, although we have no-one on the waiting list. As usual, 10% of the plots are not being cultivated.

2. We have recently bought some weed killer to use on the weeds that grow along the fence bordering the Roman Way public footpath and the allotments. This will be used as and when necessary. The quantity we now have will last two years and possibly three.

7. Report from the Tree Warden – Mr E Flounders

A comprehensive report was given by Ernest Flounders. See Appendix 3.

8. Report from Brockworth Community Project

Neil Hopwood, Vice Chairman of the Project, gave the report, highlighting the library, where 2000 visits and 2500 issues of books occur per month. Refurbishment of part of the library has resulted in office space now being available for rental, bringing in much needed income.

Updating of the computer stock for public use is also welcomed, together with free wifi. The Youth Club is now open five nights a week with between 130-150 young people attending per week. Core funding is good until March 2016. A goal for the coming year is to improve links between all community groups to share ideas, as well as greater integration between the library and Youth Club.

9. Report on Brockworth's Clubs for the Elderly

Cllr Neal read out the reports for the Welcome Club and Brockworth Day Centre.
See Appendix 4.

10. Report from the Tewkesbury Borough Councillors

As a consequence of a by-election in May 2014, Cllr Turbyfield was elected and gave a report covering the past year only. Refurbishment changes are taking place at Tewkesbury, and many public services; Police, Fire Service, etc, are moving into the building. Cllr Turbyfield stated that housing development will take place, therefore Tewkesbury Borough Council must have a strategic plan to stop developers cherry picking available land. The Joint Core Strategy gives more choice on what can be developed and where. A peer review of Tewkesbury Borough Council resulted in it being identified as one of the best run councils in the UK.

11. Report from Gloucester County Council Representative – Cllr Robert Vines

County Councillor Robert Vines did not attend the meeting and submitted his report which was circulated to those present and can be read at Appendix 5.

12. Public Question Time

The Chairman replied to a question concerning the number of Councillors and Co-opted Councillors presently on the Parish Council, and indicated that a further three Councillors are required to be co-opted before 10 June 2015 to make up a full 17 member Parish Council.

In response to a question as to who owns which green space in Brockworth, the Chairman replied it is defined by who cuts the grass- BPC or TBC. A question concerning litter was raised, to which the Chairman replied that it is a problem as only 2 people turned up at the last organised litter pick training.

There being no further reports or questions from members of the public, the meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

Appendix 1 – Chairman’s Report

Introduction

We are now at the start of a new parish council term, and I would like to reflect on the major achievements of the council over the past four years: Quality Council Status, Parish Plan, new play equipment, outdoor gym, Vibrant Village of the Year 2012 (newcomer category), clearance of Horsbere Brook, and the community centre coffee shop is finally running at a profit for the past year, to name a few achievements. Thank you to all the councillors and staff for their efforts, none of our achievements would have been possible without you all.

This annual report relates to the work of Brockworth Parish Council for the year 2014/2015 and describes the principal activities which it has undertaken over that period.

Planning

In 2014/2015 the Parish Council was asked to comment on 53 planning applications. There are always difficulties and differences of opinion when determining planning applications, particularly in areas covered by Green Belt and AONB. Brockworth Parish Council is always concerned about the future housing development on the consequential impact it has on its roads and other local services.

The housing development of 72 houses at Kennel Lane is now completed and fully occupied.

Building has commenced on the 199 houses at Invista with some properties already occupied.

You will recall that there has been a lot of hard work put in trying to obtain refusal to the housing development application for 1500 houses alongside the A417. The Planning Inspectorate will be conducting a public inquiry into the planning application, as it was “called-in” by the Secretary of State. The inquiry is scheduled to start 28th July at Tewkesbury Borough Council offices.

In addition to large developments, your Council comments on household developments and change of use applications and hope that you find it helpful when Councillors pay a visit to affected neighbouring properties in order that we can take their comments into consideration when dealing with these on your behalf.

Your Council also covers the following areas:-

Rights of Way

The Council is always looking to ensure Rights of Way are kept clear, notifying Highways of potholes in roads and pavements and ensuring that waste and dog bins are kept emptied and in good condition. Doggie bags are available from the Community Centre, at a cost of 50p per pack, which is restricted to two packs per visit.

The Parish Council is very fortunate in having an effective working relationship with the staff at County Highways. It is not possible, due to workload and financial constraints, to rectify every highway, flooding and environmental problem immediately but the Parish Council has been grateful for the prompt responses and action it has received from them. However some of the problems raised have been earmarked for action during 2015/16.

Also hedges and trees along pavements and roads – at this point I would like to ask residents whose land boundary runs along Public footpaths if they would keep them cut on a regular basis in order to reduce time and cost to your Council dealing with complaints.

Parks and Open Spaces

This council has, and are always looking to improve and maintain play equipment on land owned by the Parish.

We have been fortunate to be awarded a grant from Gloucestershire County Council under their “Active Together” scheme and received £7754 for a supernova play item to be installed at Mill Lane playing field.

While we have maintenance costs for the equipment we are pleased to say that the vandalism has been considerably less, and it is wonderful to see the playing fields being enjoyed by so many people.

Brockworth Albion Football Club has completed their new changing rooms at Mill Lane playing field in November 2014 and were used during the 2014/15 football season.

The Parish Council continues to look after the Nature Reserve on Green Street and organised several morning volunteer work parties to maintain the Reserve for the wildlife.

Brockworth News Letter

I hope you all enjoy reading the bi-monthly Parish Magazine, which the Scouts deliver to every Brockworth household on our behalf. Any local news or articles that you would like to be published should be sent to the Parish Office.

Community Building

Over the last 12 months we are pleased to say that the building has been extremely busy with the room bookings continuing to improve even though there has been a national economic down turn on spending. This achievement has been due to the well-maintained building and the pleasant and courteous way in which all the staff welcomes and looks after visitors during their time here.

The coffee shop is no doubt an asset as there are always good breakfasts, lunches and refreshments available from 10am until 3pm Monday to Friday all at reasonable prices together with a smile and a welcome. We also hold a Senior Citizens Luncheon Club every Friday at 12 noon for Brockworth residents at a cost of only £4.50 for a 2 course cooked lunch which includes a cup of tea. To ensure you get a seat, bookings should be made in advance as we are only able to seat 30 people.

Community Bus

The Council-run community bus has now ceased as you may be aware as we were unable to continue to fund this for just a few people. In place of this, we have introduced a Taxi Voucher Scheme, where you can apply to the Parish Council for up to £50 worth of vouchers. These vouchers are issued in values of £2 and are for use up until 31 March 2016. Along with the vouchers, there is a list of the taxi firms that will accept the vouchers and can be used anytime.

Library & Youth Centre

As reported last year, the Youth Centre is now run by the Brockworth Community Project under the management of Monica Constantinescu and had very good results. The youth numbers

continue to increase for the various age groups including an all-girls session which has been a great success. This is of course supported by the Parish Council with grants of £10,000 for youth provision and £3,444 for summer activities.

The library which was transferred to the Brockworth Community Project has now been open under this new management for over four years and is improving each year. However they still need more people to use it and of course still needs money in order to be able to continue to run it. The Parish Council has again supported them with a grant of £10,000 which we budget for through the Parish Council Precept, plus the Community Project also applies for various grants from other organisations.

Financial

At the end of this year (2014/2015) the accounts showed a healthy balance allowing the Council, to approve a budget for 2015/2016 which required a small increase in the Parish Precept (Council Tax). The annual accounts continue to identify specific items of possible expenditure held in the reserve account for such matters as the maintenance and improvements to our Community Building, Play Areas etc.

The end of year accounts will be presented at the end of my report.

Appreciation

The Council would like to once again thank all the Councillors who give a lot of their time in helping to run the Community Building and also to all the staff especially the outgoing-Clerk, Julie Shirley, who has carried out an excellent job in getting the Council through another busy year with her sound advice and support. Sadly, Julie has decided to move onto pastures new and we wish her success. Brockworth looks forward to welcoming a new Clerk to the team in due course.

Appendix 2 – To receive a statement of the Parish Council’s Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2015.

The precept received by the Parish from Tewkesbury Borough Council for 2013/14 was set at £168,660 (made up of £156,460 council tax plus £12,200 Council Tax Support Grant) which was an increase of 2.46% on the previous year. We also received grants totalling £13,255, mainly towards the outdoor gym project.

Staff costs were £102,114 in the last year which was slightly less than the previous year.

The Community Centre cost £104,618 to run in the past year which is a decrease on the previous year. The Community Centre’s income has remained about the same as the previous year:

£65,103 in 2011/12
£81,378 in 2012/13
£83,273 in 2013/14
£83,786 in 2014/15

Grants and other services

During the past year, the parish council has given out grants to local groups totalling £21,625 (list below). We were able to continue the Community Bus for one day per week which cost £7,470 for the year. We have also continued to provide Citizen Advice Bureau services to Brockworth residents through the Community Centre which cost £3,120 for the year. Through the Brockworth Community Project we were able to provide four weeks of summer school holiday activities to young people, at a total cost of £3,444.

Grants & Donations awarded to:

Friends of Castle Hill School
Ryan West
Brockfest 2014
Godfrey Browning Cup School Award
Colin Gommersal Cup School Award
Poppy Wreath 2014
Welcome club
Brockworth Day centre
Brockworth Allotments Association
Brockworth Community Project (Youth & Library)

Public Open Spaces

In addition the council spent £9,659 on grass cutting, £17,738 on Parks & Open Spaces (an increase on the previous year but includes a lot of tree maintenance in the past year).

Rights of Way

Gloucestershire Highways ceased its weed spraying of kerbs so the parish council continued this service which cost £1,520 in 2014/15.

The year end accounts are being audited soon and are available to view on request up until 29th May 2015

Income & Expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2015:

	2014/2015	2013/2014
Income		
Precept	156,460.00	145,155.00
Council Tax Support Grant	12,200.00	20,076.00
Investment Income	907.23	973.96
Burial Ground	8,187.00	4,130.00
Hall and Other Lettings	33,448.90	29,830.98
Office Hire	15,664.02	23,402.54
Parish fete		
Catering Income	31,270.49	27,448.64
Sec 106 Grants - Tesco Community Bus	3,877.00	5,992.49
Youth Centre Lease	3,403.23	2,880.94
Other Grants		
Miscellaneous Income	4,402.89	4,541.74
Youth Centre Repair Costs		
Playground Refurbishment Project Grants	13,255.00	28,129.25
Total Income	£283,075.76	£292,561.54
Expenditure		
Staff Costs	102,114.38	102,911.76
General administration incl Audit costs	22,693.10	30,779.09
Sec.137 and Other Grants	13,625.00	5,795.00
Members Allowance	2,143.27	2,119.90
Burial Ground General Maintenance	1,096.96	1,576.00
P & OS Various	23,048.05	10,382.47
RoW Various	1,760.00	2,625.60
Community Bus	7,470.00	7,600.00
Community Building	38,082.92	40,411.21
Catering Expenditure	7,166.81	8,105.06
Agency Costs	4,398.25	3,388.01
Grass Cutting	9,659.00	9,120.00
Parish Fete	145.00	
Horsbere Brook Project	466.00	3,502.50
Insurance	1,915.37	1,825.42
Training	672.00	1,064.20
Advertising and Publicity	1,643.00	50.00
Youth Provision	10,000.00	12,000.00
Playground Refurbishment Project	24,982.00	49,761.24
Contingency budget	2,021.11	
Total Expenditure	275,102.22	£293,017.46

Appendix 3 – Tree Warden Report

Brockworth Parish Council

Tree Warden Report 2014/15

Introduction

The past year has again seen very little activity for the Tree Wardens. We continue to deal with smaller issues as and when they arise, but no major projects. We must continue to look after our ancient trees and protect others from vandalism development.

Fortunately we now have an additional Tree Warden, and welcome Sean Clifford who has volunteered and we value his contribution and expertise in protecting and maintaining our trees and woodlands.

We have carried out a few small jobs, such as filling gaps in the hedge at Mill Lane, advising a local land owner on his rights with a TPO and consulting on planning applications.

Pat and myself recently walked along the Bridal Way from Abbotswood Farm to Coopers Edge, to check on a number of ancient Oak Trees there. The developers have made a fantastic job of landscaping and replanting the area around the Ancient Oak trees. There is rough pasture land, mown areas, shrub planting and footpaths and bridges leading to and from the ancient Bridle Way.

Shell Meadow

The Willow trees have been pollarded, and the new growth is looking splendid and healthy.

The Woodland Trust "Free Trees" planted by the parish a few years back are now well established, as is a fruit tree we planted there only two years ago. These should require little maintenance for the foreseeable future.

Abbotswood Road

Unfortunately one of the trees planted by TBC on the ground by No 4/6 Abbotswood Road has failed after the winter. We will ask TBC to provide a replacement or permission for the parish to provide and plant later in the autumn. (We had had a similar loss of a tree planted by the Highways on Westfield Avenue)

Four trees offered by the National Grid, to compensate for those they removed from Horsbere Brook are still to be planted along the pathways on the play Park.

Horsbere Brook

The work to control the flow and manage flood water three years ago is now well established and the vegetation, grasses, wild garlic, Dogs Mercury ect has recovered from the disturbance. The three bridges and the stone work are all still in place, as are the log benches and extended footpath.

The area transformed by the work we carried out with financial help from Severn Vale Housing, is being very well used by local people, School Children, Dog Walkers and those Nature lovers who just like to wander along the Brook.

Some of the grass along the footpath in the TBC area has not been kept cut as was agreed. It may be too late to start this now, but we will take this up with TBC.

Godfrey Browning Nature Reserve

Throughout the year we have had several work parties at the nature reserve. We have done a lot of scrub clearance and Coppicing to manage the woodland and let in the sun light. As usual, this has allowed the brambles, goose grass, and nettles to establish but not as many flowers as we had hoped. It may be early days for these.

We have also had a Bat Detection evening, although this was successful and we heard and saw bats it was cut short by the weather.

Royal Trees

We still have three very small Oak trees given by the Woodland Trust from the Royal Forests to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee. These will be planted when they are of sufficient size to stand disruption or vandalism.

Working with Schools

We have done no work with schools this past year. We must work to re-establish our contacts with the three schools in the parish and we look to the Parish Council for help to do this.

What Next

It is with great regret that we have lost Julie Shirley, the parish clerk and Maureen Rowcliff Quarry from the Parish Council. Both these ladies have been a great asset to the parish and through their work on behalf of us all with the Environmental and outdoor projects. I would like to thank them personally for their help and comradeship, and for the success of many of the tasks we have carried out over the past six years.

With the changes at the Parish Council and at TBC, we have also lost Tracy Lewis, the Landscape Officer, we need to re-establish ourselves as the Tree Wardens for Brockworth Parish Council. We need to re-establish the link with the landscape department at TBC, re-look at ourselves and ask what we can do with opportunities and the limited resources available. We ask our Borough Councillors and the Parish Council for their help with this.

Appendix 4 - Brockworth Day Centre 2014/2015

The Brockworth Day Centre is a lunch club now its 38th year, and meets in the Youth Centre on Wednesdays from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Some members bring their own lunch, whilst some buy something from the community centre kitchen.

Over the past year we have lost three members and are now left with only nine, four of whom are the volunteer helpers. Consequently, as a very small club, it is difficult raising enough money to pay the Youth Club rent and have something left over for activities. We do join the Welcome Club for lunches at Xmas, etc., thus sharing the transport costs.

Some of our members are in their 90's and no new people are coming forward. Last May I wondered whether the Day Centre would still exist this year – it does. Now that the transport has ceased, it was known as the 'Tesco Bus', the Council has introduced a Taxi Voucher scheme for the elderly, which seems to be working well.

This May, it is difficult to be optimistic about the coming year, but who knows?

St Patrick's Welcome Club 2014/2015

The club meets on a Wednesday's, 2:00 – 4:00 pm, at St. Patrick's Church Centre during school term time. All over 50's are welcome and, on average, 25 members have attended the meetings throughout the year. A regular advert is placed in the Brockworth Magazine to attract new members.

Sadly, the chairman, Mrs Sheila Hampson died after a long illness. She had dealt with the finances and helped Mrs Patricia O'Connor with the meetings and bookings. Mrs O'Connor has now taken the role of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, with the support of two colleagues, despite having been ill recently.

The members have enjoyed games, quizzes, raffles, Bring & Buy sales, and tea and biscuits at the weekly meetings. The raffles, Bring & Buy and craft work sales help to meet expenses for speakers etc. Special events and visits have included: a visit to Prinknash Abbey with a talk by one of the monks, followed by a cream tea; a visit by Gloucester Film makers; Christmas lunch at the Apple Tree in Minsterworth; a talk on the work of Barnardos; a trip to Littledean with lunch at the Belfry; a talk on Tropical Shells and their use to mankind, with the speaker's fee and a collection from members donated to Shelter Box charity. Plus, of course, the annual trip to Burnham & Weston.

Mrs Patricia O'Connor wishes to convey her thanks to the Parish Council for their support in providing the grant to help with outings.

The Parish Council very much appreciates the effort involved in the management of this club, which is of benefit to the Brockworth community.