



Fourth Annual General Meeting of Wookey Hole Residents' Forum

Thursday 6th April 2017 - 8pm,

Wookey Hole Community Hall, School Hill, Wookey Hole

The meeting was attended by 8 committee members, 19 residents and one observer and was chaired by Rev. Hugh Talbott.

REPORT

Apologies: Paul Harris, Bima Clarke, Jenny+Alec Lewis, Mike+Lyn Astle, Colin Babb, Joanna Davey. Geoff Bacon.

1. Introduction

A Report of the General Meeting of 21st April 2016, (already circulated), was signed by the Chair as an accurate record. The Chair thanked the nine working groups for their work during the year and the Community Hall committee for providing a meeting place for the village.

2. Constitution/Committee

John Grange explained that Clause 4 of the Constitution contained some ambiguities, and recommended new wording. This was agreed unanimously and the new constitution adopted from today's date.

Original Constitution

The committee shall comprise four officers, (Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) and three ordinary members. The committee shall have the authority to co-opt up to 4 additional members. The committee shall be elected for two years with the option of standing for re-election once. The committee shall meet at least four times per annum. A quorum for committee meetings shall be five. Committee members who fail to attend three consecutive meetings shall be deemed to have resigned. The committee will elect the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.

New Constitution

The committee shall comprise four officers, (Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer), and at least three ordinary members. The committee shall have the authority to co-opt up to four additional members. Committee members shall be elected by a General Meeting for a period of two years. The committee shall meet at least four times per annum. A quorum for committee meetings shall be five. Committee members who fail to attend three consecutive meetings may be deemed to have resigned. The committee officers shall be elected by the committee, for a term of one year, and may be elected as officers for a maximum of three consecutive terms.

Under the WHRF constitution dated 8th April 2014, committee members were elected for an initial 2-year term and may be elected for one further term of two years. Seven currently serving officers have served an initial two-year term and are mid-way through a second term. Two officers were co-opted in December 2015. There were no nominations for the position of Vice Chair.

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|----------------|------------------|
| Hugh Talbott | Chair | Mary Gaunt | Committee member |
| Vacancy | Vice chair | Louise Burton | Committee member |
| Nicky Amos | Secretary | John Grange | Committee member |
| Roger Hancock | Treasurer | Julia Scarth | Co-opted member |
| | | David Hudsmith | Co-opted member |
| | | James Lewis | Co-opted member |

3. Treasurer's Report

Roger Hancock

The Treasurer reported that the bank balance is currently £936. Income of £565 has been received during the last 12-months and expenses of £361 paid out. (Some monies are held for the community garden group and the neighbourhood plan group but these amounts are not included in these figures).

4. Report by Chair on activities during the Last 12 months

The chair thanked the leaders of the nine working groups for their hard work during the last 12 months. A new village website, progress with the community garden, an astronomy evening and social events, (winter Bring+Share supper, open garden at Glencot House, visit to Butcombe brewery), were all very well supported. The Committee have met four times during the year and all committee members have replied to many e-mails/phone calls from residents concerned about 'issues' affecting the village. Often all that is required is help with finding the right person who can help, the chair advised.

5. At this stage SCOPC Parish Councillors Ed Danson and David Ball, and District Councillor Mike Pullin gave a presentation on Planning issues, see **Appendix 1**.

6. **Update from Working Party leaders**

Buses + Footpaths

Mary Gaunt.

Mary (tel 674 026), is the Parish Council Footpaths officer. Please let her know if you find a problem with any local footpath. Mary suggested we all do our bit to keep Wookey Hole footpaths clear and take a pair of secateurs with us when we go for a walk. Since Bakers Dolphin ceased operation, our 67 bus has been operated as a non-profit making Community Bus. Mary provided a list of bus times, which are frequent. The times are on the notice board outside the Club and on the village website. Bus passes can be used. Mary is working on a Saturday service and a Market Place stop. Funding is only in place till July. 'Use it or lose it' is the message.

SCOPC Neighbourhood Plan

David Ball for Matt Gilson

David emphasised how important a NP is to the village. The next stage (for the SCOPC Plan and also the Wells City Council NP), is a Housing Needs Survey, which will cost £7,000. It is hoped for grant-funding to finance this, which has been applied for.

Dark Skies Group

Gary Amos

Gary arranged a successful astronomy evening in November, (to see the Andromeda galaxy), and will arrange another in May. He can be contacted at garydouglasamos@icloud.com for those interested. Councilor Pullin mentioned that he tries to make installation of blinds on new roof windows, (i.e. Velux'es), a condition of planning approvals, to reduce light pollution. Comments were made about strong outside lighting on some properties in Wookey Hole and Mike will look into this.

St Mary Magdalene Community Garden

Julia Scarth

This is a very active group and Julia thanked the PCC and the over 60 people, residents and non-residents, who have given time and energy to the project. A Faculty from the Diocesan has now been obtained and an application to use £14,000, of the 106 money from the nursing home restoration, to fund the next stage is in the pipeline. The next Working Party day is on **30th April** and there will be a village picnic in the church garden on **14th May**, which coincides with the first service in Wookey Hole Church to be taken by our new vicar, Sam Denyer. This is a good opportunity for both churchgoers and non-churchgoers to meet Sam and his young family. All welcome. Bring a picnic!

Haybridge Pyrolysis Plant

Roger Hancock

Roger explained that there had been no recent developments but that the planning permission is still valid and building work could be started at any time. Roger mentioned that the plant is 'live' as a legal start has been made. Roger has spoken to Peter Moore of LA Moore Ltd who has advised that the newly cleared land behind Haybridge Villas, is to be surveyed. Mike Pullin advised that the District Council have received a few enquiries about this clearance.

WH What's On

Jenny Lewis

In the absence of a WH What's On representative the Chair thanked Jenny, on behalf of WHRF, for organising the newsletter and keeping everyone in Wookey Hole informed about village events. Anyone not on the mailing list can contact Jenny at j.lewis072@btinternet.com

Wookey Hole Website

John Grange

The website is up and running at wookeyhole.info John encouraged everyone in the village to submit news and articles. John would like to expand the sections of use to visitors and is very keen to receive information on walks, history etc and is very keen that someone steps forward to help him with 'editorial' The site receives about 150 hits a month of which 75 are regular readers. A cyber-attack in March was unsuccessful, if annoying.

Post Box/ Telephone Box

Hugh Talbott

James Heapey, MP has offered to help relocate a post-box in the centre of the village. Hugh advised that legal difficulties with the administration of the estate of the late-owner, has made the Homestead site a non-starter. Councillor Ed Danson advised that SCOPC had offered to buy and maintain the old phone box, which BT have de-commissioned.

Memorial Trees

Scarth Family

Work has started to remove the protective tree guards and Sid Hodges was thanked for his help and the loan of an angle grinder.

7. **Forthcoming events**

Via SCOPC we have been approached by HM Pageant Master asking Wookey Hole to host a '**Battles Over**', **A Nation's Tribute, Beacons of Light** event in Wookey Hole on **11th November 2018** to mark the end of WW1. Although this is a long time off, this notice is so everyone is aware that this celebration will take place and the date. There are a number of events planned for *this* summer, further details to follow.

8. Other

Mr Mardle advised that his family have plans to reopen the Wookey Hole shop/tea-room when the extensive internal refurbishment needed on the property is completed. As there was no other business the meeting was closed and Cheese and Wine was served by the committee.

APPENDIX 1 –PLANNING

A Presentation was given by Chair of SCOPC, Ed Danson, about the role of the Parish Council in Planning, followed by a short talk by District Councillor, Mike Pullin, on the role of Mendip District Council in this regard, followed by a question and answer session.

Background

During 2016, 173 houses were built by David Wilson Homes on the site of the former Thales factory. (Now called Bishop's Green). These are now being marketed and some new residents have moved in. A separate Planning application by Bovis Homes for 160 houses on the field between Thales and Wookey Hole was agreed in 2015???. A variance order to this application has been submitted this month seeking to increase the size of this development by 40 extra houses. There is allowance on this site for a new Primary School to be built. In addition, Persimmon/Taylor Wimpey was given planning permission to build 220 new houses on a green-field site in Haybridge adjacent to Charter Way in 2016, (not withstanding the public objection to this development and a previous decline of planning permission by MDC). It was reported that the Planning Inspector had over-ruled the decline advising that his decision was due to the fact that MDC should have ensured the building of an additional 196 houses in the Wells area during the period from 2006 – 2016, but had not. In addition Gladman Developments Ltd, have applied to build a new housing estate, (number of houses unknown), to the south of Elm Close in Haybridge and after the planning application was refused appealed against the MDC Local Plan Part 1. In 2015 this appeal was withdrawn and reputedly Gladman have abandoned this project. However in the light of the Persimmon success it is possible that the plans will be resubmitted. WHRF have been told that Wells Rugby Club also intend to go ahead with development, (presumably of a club house/ changing rooms), on their land south of the A371 at Haybridge.

Question and Answers

There were many questions concerning the perceived absence of infrastructure planned for these very large new developments, i.e. roads, health services, parking. There was a feeling that new residents would use Wookey Hole for recreation at weekends, i.e. dog-walking etc, not-withstanding there is no pavement into the village. There is a lack of confidence that Planners have taken these issues into consideration when agreeing the developments. As there are few jobs in Wells, many new residents will need to commute and Wookey Hole is often used as a short-cut to main roads into Bristol/Bath/the M5 north, even by large vehicles. The lanes are not suited to this. The audience considered that little consideration seems to have been given to the 600 residents who already live in the Wookey Hole area, and the effect that 3,000 new residents may have on existing communities.

Feedback

The councillors explained that both councils must operate within a planning framework and details of each application are shown in detail on the MDC website. It is possible for both councils to recommend 'conditions' be applied to a planning proposal and in the case of the above **agreed** applications that is the only course of action now possible. Suggesting the developer makes 106 contributions is a useful tool. Councillors advised that it is very difficult to ask developers to rectify difficulties once a development is built. After a vote Mike agreed to ask that the Bovis application be referred to the MDC Planning Board, rather than be decided by the MDC Planning officer, and will put the case that the residents of Wookey Hole feel that there is insufficient space on the site to add 40 more homes and insufficient consideration has been given to the infrastructure improvements needed to support the new housing. There was a strong feeling in the room that providing new housing with insufficient recreation space for children, inadequate landscaping and/or too little parking is to be avoided at all costs.



Nicky Amos

Secretary April 8th 2017.

whrf@dircon.co.uk (Please e-mail me if you would like to be added to the WHRF mailing list)