



TIMSBURY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of 23rd April 2024 at 7.30pm at the Conygre Hall, Timsbury

1. **The Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor K C Bradley**, welcomed all to the meeting. In attendance were twenty parishioners, nine Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk.
2. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllr Josie Pownall, Reverend Martin Blewett, Mrs Rosanna Blewett and Laura Smith.
3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 24th April 2023.**

It was agreed by those present that the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman introduced the Parish Councillors present at the meeting. Cllr Jayne Langley was co-opted onto the Parish Council in June and so the Parish Council now had its full complement of 13 Councillors. The Full Council meets once a month and there are four standing committees, Planning, Finance, Staffing and Communications along with various working groups covering issues such as road safety, applications for Community Infrastructure Levy, environmental concerns and young people. Recommendations from committees and reports from working groups are all debated at Full Council who make the final decision.

The Parish Council is responsible for an annual budget of around £100,000 plus the management of just over £50,000 Community Infrastructure Levy. The Levy has been received via B&NES Council and stems mainly from the Upper Conygre development with its purpose to mitigate the extra strain imposed on the infrastructure.

The Parish Council also has delegates attending the following organisations, the West of England Combined Authority, Avon Local Councils' Association, Bath and West Community Action, the Parishes Liaison Committee, Somer Valley Forum and the Parish Councils' Airports Association who all report back to subsequent Full Council meetings on issues raised or debated by these organisations.

During the last year the Parish Council have made donations to benefit organisations serving the village, namely Midsomer Norton and Radstock Dial-a Ride, St Mary's School Lifeskills visits for Year 6, Royal British Legion Remembrance Day service, Somer Valley Walking Festival, Timsbury Flower Show and for the 50th anniversary celebrations for the Conygre Hall.

In addition, the Parish Council also manages the defibrillator at the Conygre Hall, maintains the play equipment at 'the Rec', funds the monthly grass cutting of both the Conygre Field and the cemetery, funds two Timsbury youth projects, provides the village Christmas tree in the Miners' Garden each year and pays for the Midsomer Norton and Radstock silver band who accompany the carol singing in The Square in December.

In the last 12 months the Parish Council has been asked to comment on 36 planning applications, of which, 29 were accepted without comment, 4 accepted with additional comments and 1 accepted after additional information was requested. The Parish Council objected to 2 of the planning applications.

The Chairman explained that delegates from several organisations serving the village would now give updates on their work and Councillors would provide information on issues that have been progressed by the Parish Council:

- NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

PC Steven Carey, explained that he is the Beat Officer for Timsbury, based at Radstock Police station. In addition, he also has responsibility for 9 other parishes. As part of the Neighbourhood Team he has two PCSOs working with him and PCSO Jess Comer runs the Neighbourhood Team surgeries each month at the Conygre Hall where members of the public can speak to them regarding any concerns. The dates for these surgeries are shown on the North Mendip Neighbourhood Team website or in the Timsbury Letter. During the last 6 months 37 crimes were reported and in the last 28 days 4 anti-social reports. Further details can be found on the website.

- CURO

Neil Rogers is the Curo Residents Engagement Officer and explained that he looks after 160 properties. He is currently investigating a strategy for enhancing the communication between those working in the office and residents to obtain feedback so that issues can get sorted. Curo is currently working towards a 'Homes for Good' strategy by 2034 with residents being proud of the houses they live in. For this to be successful residents need to be involved and where possible to come to meetings and be encouraged to air their views. It would be beneficial if residents' groups could be set up. Currently there are only 4 outstanding complaints in Timsbury and the Customer satisfaction rating is 86.4%

- TIMSBURY YOUTH PROJECT

Jayne Van Happ is the youth worker for the Timsbury Youth Project which is one of the youth organisations sponsored by the Parish Council with the other one being Youth Connect (South West). She also works with the local primary schools. Her group of up to 25 young people meet every Friday night at the YMCA and consists of mainly younger secondary age young people. She stated that it is a very inclusive group and they all interact well with each other and so young people feel accepted and welcomed. Courtne, a user of the youth service, was introduced. She has been a member for 6 years and is now taking her GCSEs. She explained how much she enjoyed the meetings and how much fun the trips are which included trampolining, ice skating and use of the Conygre courts in summer and highly recommended the group for any young person to join.

- CONYGRE TRUST

The Parish Council pays for the maintenance of the play equipment and the mowing of the grass but the governance of the hall and field is entrusted to a separate body of trustees. Martin Kendall, the current chairman of the Trustees addressed the meeting and advised that the hall was struggling financially due to rising costs. It is a very large building of a certain age and its ongoing repairs were proving to be almost unsustainable. For example, the boilers failed during the winter and were likely to cost around £55,000 to £25,000 to replace. The Trust only has reserves of £53,000 whereas the previous year they were £80,000. To try and recoup costs the hiring fees have been increased which has had some beneficial effect, but costs are still exceeding income. Fundraising is still a struggle and lottery funding will only fund capital expenses. An appeal to the village to help was given and any ideas for raising funds would be welcomed.

- **LIBRARY**

Laura Smith is the Co-ordinator of Timsbury Community Library but, being unable to attend the meeting, provided a written report. She manages a team of 15 volunteers and the library is used by many regular customers and is attracting new members. In the past year there have been 2,866 visits and 72 new library members have signed up. The Library has hosted many community events throughout the year, such as Lego clubs, with one session attracting 52 participants, 2 author talks, school visits from St Mary's Reception class and years 4 and 5 from High Littleton. There have also been seasonal events like Halloween story time, Easter crafts and Easter scavenger hunt. The annual summer reading challenge had 38 children participating in it throughout the summer holidays. Each Monday afternoon there is also 'cuppa and chat' sessions where new members are always welcome.

- **STREETS AND SAFETY WORKING GROUP**

Cllr Ray Merchant explained that this group consists of 6 Parish Councillors. It also includes the Ward Councillor, whose membership of the group is valuable in providing the link between the aspirations of the Parish Council and B&NES as the Highways Authority. B&NES has over 50 parishes to manage so have to build a list of requirements gathered from each of the parishes and apply a points system to compile them in priority order. Using this system The Avenue corner was moved up and work undertaken. The next target on the list for the Parish Council is the South Road/Church Hill junction to enhance safety for pedestrians and reduce the speed of motorists. New signage is also needed for the junction of Radford Hill and South Road to restrict turning and so prevent the wall from being constantly knocked down. The Streets and Safety group regularly walk the village to identify areas of concern needing signage and speed indicators and are looking to purchase two further cameras to capture data on speeding motorists.

- **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY WORKING GROUP**

Cllr Mark Foster provided an update on the current situation regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Just over £53000 had been received mainly from the Upper Conygre development and this has to be spent within 5 years of receipt. In the initial trawl 15 ideas for projects came through of which 4 were selected. These were the installation of vehicle activated speed signs and autospeedwatch cameras, cemetery repairs and improvements to give greater accessibility, cycle hoops and cricket club scoreboard and roof repairs. A 2nd trawl for projects resulted in barriers being put in place on the footway exit onto Lippiatt Lane next to the allotments, electric doors at the Conygre Hall for easier accessibility, and the provision of gazebos and equipment for Grow Timsbury for use at the village market.

- **PLANTING AND SPACES WORKING GROUP**

Cllr Mary-Anne Ansell co-ordinates the maintenance of the planters in the village to make them more sustainable and her, and her very small team of volunteers also look after the Miners' Garden, the Triangle and Church Lane. Particular thanks were given to Theresa Andrews and her partner Chris for the work they have carried out in the Miners' Garden to make it look so tidy and attractive. The budget for planting has needed to be reduced in the budget and so any assistance to water planters and also help keep them looking tidy would be welcomed.

- TIMSBURY COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH TEAM

Christine Bowes, a member of the Speedwatch team, gave some background to how the team operates. It was set up 7 years ago and now consists of 9 volunteers working on a rota but the team is always looking for more volunteers. All sites must be approved by the Police. and the optimum number of volunteers per session is 3. There are 6 sites approved for carrying out speed monitoring, 2 on North Road, 2 on South Road, 1 on Radford Hill and 1 on The Avenue. All speeds indicated as being over 26 miles per hour are reported. The results are submitted to Avon and Somerset Police and data is collected to prove how many vehicles exceed the speed limit. The Police are very supportive and the aim is not to prosecute but to make people aware of the need to maintain the legal speed limit and the implications of not doing so.

5. Financial Statement by the Clerk

The Parish Clerk, Angela Wilson, presented the statement for the Parish Council's financial year ending 31st March 2024 including a breakdown of each budget heading. She explained that budget is formulated from consideration of current commitments, future commitments and proposed projects whilst being mindful of the need to keep reserves maintained at a healthy level. She highlighted areas where expenditure had been higher than the budgeted amount such as with the rocketing price of electricity and water charges and the difficulty in predicting the final outcome for the annual pay award. Expenditure was below budget for the play area where the cost of repairs was less than expected and for grass cutting at the cemetery due to renegotiations of the contract. With regards to income, advertising revenue is still down but is picking up slightly and the VAT reclaim is higher than predicted. At the end of the period the cash held by the Parish Council in their current account and savings account is £70,441.53 but included in this is £20,295.45 Community Infrastructure Levy which has been allocated to projects but not yet spent. When this is taken into account the actual financial reserves of the Parish Council stand at £50,146.08 at the end of the financial year 2023/24.

6. Items raised by Parishioners

- A resident of Sunnyside Gardens stated that the sign needs replacing. This was owned by CURO and so Neil Rogers, CURO, advised that he would take this request back to the office for actioning.
- A resident advised that the garages at the rear of Newman's Lane were in a poor state of repair and suggested that they should either be upgraded or knocked down to make a car park.
- A question was asked whether the Parish Council were aware of all planning applications as it appeared that one or two had not been brought to meetings for discussion. There was particular concern regarding the Loves Hill camping site where barbecues were deemed to pose an inherent fire risk and changes to the planning application for Upper Conygre. The Parish Clerk advised that all planning applications come to the Full Council for consultation, however, some submitted by applicants are for legal or procedural changes only for which the Parish Council are not statutory consultees. These would be dealt with solely by the planning authority and so would not be received by the Parish Council. This was the case regarding both the Loves Hill camping site and the Upper Conygre amendments.

7. Closing statement by the Chairman

The Chairman acknowledged the commitment and unseen endeavour that goes into keeping the village in such good order, the majority of whom are unpaid volunteers. Although some may have been mentioned earlier in the meeting, he wished to offer particular thanks to the following for their unstinting efforts:

- Angela Wilson, the Parish Clerk, for her support and advice on legal and financial matters.
- All of the Councillors who are elected to public office but give their time freely and conscientiously for the wellbeing of the village.
- Laura Smith who oversees the Timsbury Community Library and all the volunteers who run the library.
- Madeleine Potts for editing and producing the Timsbury Letter
- Clive Pearce for co-ordinating the distribution of the Newsletter and the team of volunteers who help deliver it.
- Sharon Mallon, the village litter picker, who keeps Timsbury looking tidy.
- Cllr Mary-Anne Ansell and her team of volunteers who assist by looking after the Miners' Garden and other green spaces and keeps the planters blooming!
- Austin Sage for mowing the grass on the Conygre Field and at the cemetery.
- Ben Benetto for maintaining the Haha.
- The allotments committee, who spend a lot of time ensuring that the allotments are kept in a neat and tidy condition and manage the change of tenants and collection of the rents on behalf of the Parish Council.
- The Duke of Edinburgh students who have been working towards their awards by helping out in the village.
- The Community Payback team, who visit Timsbury each month and help out with tasks.
- Larry Cunningham who helps with the turnover of the Timsbury walking books and is knowledgeable about permissive paths.
- The Somerset Miners' Welfare Trust for providing the silhouette of the miner at Coalpit crossroads and returning to build the requested plinth at no cost to the Parish Council.

The Chairman apologised if he had inadvertently missed anyone off his list but assured all who help out in the village that their contributions are very much appreciated.

He thanked all those who attended the meeting and for those speakers giving reports on their organisations and invited all to remain after the meeting to enjoy the light refreshments which had kindly been provided by Timsbury Co-op.

Approved and signed as a correct record of the meeting

Chairman:.....

Date: