

BRAISHFIELD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting of Electors held at
Braishfield Village Hall on Tuesday 2 May 2017

Present

Members of Braishfield Parish Council:

Chairman John Bevan
Vice-chairman Mike Edwards
Cllr Carole Renvoize
Cllr Mark Swinstead
Cllr Peter White

Others:

County Councillor Alan Dowden
Borough Councillor Martin Hatley
6 electors
Clerk to Braishfield Parish Council Kate Orange

(Note: questions from the floor are in italics)

26. Apologies

Braishfield Parish Councillors Jane Bennett and Richard Brazier sent their apologies.

27. Welcome and Introduction by Chairman

Chairman of Braishfield Parish Council, John Bevan, welcomed those in attendance.

28. Minutes of Meeting held on 3 May 2016

The Minutes of the Meeting of 3 May 2016 were agreed.

29. Presentation by Fran Clifton on the Braishfield Horticultural Society scheme to plant apple trees in the Parish.

Fran Clifton introduced herself as the Chair of Braishfield Horticultural Society. She has worked in horticulture for 30 years.

The Horticultural Society can obtain some historic and local varieties of apple tree, which are surplus to Hillier's requirements. They have been raised by a nursery and will be ready for planting in the autumn. They propose planting them around the parish in public areas. The proposed locations include:

- Crook Hill – 5 trees
- Braishfield Primary School
- the allotments – 2 to 3 trees

- near Chalk Pit Cottage

The varieties date back to 1750, and are of national importance. 90% of orchards have been lost since WW2.

It is envisaged that the fruit would be offered for passers-by to collect for free.

The costs will include:

- Purchase of the tree £35 each
- License to Cultivate (from Hampshire County Council, where cultivating the verges) £8 to 10 per tree
- Label and compost for planting
- total approx £50 per tree

The Horticultural Society will buy one, and other local sponsors, including individuals, will be given the chance to do so.

Cllr Alan Dowden liked the scheme. There are 8 community orchards in Valley Park. Cllr Martin Hatley also liked the scheme. Both will look at offering some grant funding.

An elector asked how maintenance will take place. Fran Clifton explained that ultimately the trees will be self-sufficient, but some initial pruning will be done by volunteers.

30. Chair's Report on Braishfield Parish Council

Chairman of Braishfield Parish Council, John Bevan read his report on the Council, and copy of the report is attached to these Minutes.

There was the following question and answer:

- *When was the Village Design Statement approved, and how often does a Neighbourhood Plan need to be revised?*

Cllr Martin Hatley responded as follows. The Local Plan is the first document to consult (published January 2016). Barker Mills Estates objected to it, so it was considered by the High Court, who threw out Barker Mills Estates' case and awarded costs. So, the Local Plan has been approved by the Planning Inspectorate and the High Court. The Local Plan is for 2011 to 2029; but reviewed every 5 years. By the end of 2020, a revised plan is needed.

Supplementary planning documents are further to the Local Plan. These also need regular checks and updates.

The Village Design Statement (VDS) describes the characteristics of the village, as they stand.

Some parishes have nothing other than the Local Plan. Others have a Neighbourhood Plan. These are expensive and not really what Braishfield needs.

The parish is in Northern Test Valley. There are housing supply figures for North and South. In the North, it is easy to secure permission to build homes in Andover, so there is little pressure on Braishfield.

The VDS must be taken in to account by the borough council when deciding an application. It can influence design for the next decade or longer. Much of Braishfield's VDS is

successful because very little has changed.

Cllr Peter White noted that the VDS for Braishfield covers location of development, and this seems to be outside the scope of a VDS. An update will not help from that point of view.

Cllr Hatley noted that descriptions of views, green spaces etc can be used to offer protection, without stipulating that certain locations cannot be built on. There is a Planning toolkit from TVBC.

Braishfield Parish Council will ask to talk with David Bibby of TVBC, regarding the current VDS and whether to review it.

31. Report from PCSO Storm Perrott

PCSO Storm Perrott attended with a colleague. PCSO Storm Perrott is Braishfield's contact, following the retirement of Jo Cole.

There was very little crime in Braishfield last year.

- Action Fraud: 1
- Burglary – dwelling: 1
- Burglary – non-dwelling: 4
- Criminal damage: 0
- Suspect activities: 7
- Theft: 5
- Vehicle Theft: 5
- Antisocial behaviour: 1

Regarding the dwelling burglary, the police may have identified someone who has committed 30 burglaries, and possibly committed this crime too.

If you see a rogue trader, report them.

The season of theft from vehicles is beginning. If you park at a beauty-spot, eg Mottisfont, leave no valuables in the car.

Reports of suspicious incidents allow the police to target their patrols and allocate resources, so residents are encouraged to report. Do not be embarrassed to do so.

Visits can be arranged if someone needs advice.

The numbers to call are 999 for emergencies, and 111 for non-emergencies.

There was a comment from an elector:

- *Speeding traffic is the norm on Braishfield Road* – PCSO Storm Perrott noted that 2 rural officers have been trained in the use of speed-guns, and she will ask them to come to Braishfield.

32. Report from County Councillor Alan Dowden

Cllr Alan Dowden presented his report, and a copy is attached to these Minutes.

33. Report Borough Councillor Martin Hatley

Cllr Martin Hatley presented his report, and a copy is attached to these Minutes.

34. Electors' Open Period and Questions

- Sheila Still spoke on behalf of Braishfield Village Association (BVA). Chairman Jimmy Chestnutt sent his apologies, and asked her to give his report.

Regarding broadband, there have been improvements to boxes for those in the core of the village. BVA has collected information on those in outlying areas. These will not have a programmed upgrade. There is a possibility of laying a new cable and having a box at the north of the parish, but the cost will only be partly funded by Hampshire County Council.

Mobile broadband is an option. In conjunction with landowners BVA have identified 3 sites for new mobile masts, in addition to the site put forward by the Parish Council. Updates will be published in BVA News.

Cllr Mike Edwards confirmed that cabinet 4 near the War Memorial, is scheduled to be upgraded by the end of the year. To take advantage of higher speeds, you need to have VDSL instead of ADSL and have a new upgraded subscription and router.

- *The suggested site for a new mobile mast is in the vicinity of the school?*

Cllr Mike Edwards confirmed that the site which the Parish Council have suggested for a new mobile phone mast is on the Recreation Ground. Cllr Martin Hatley noted that TVBC commissioned a report on the safety of mobile phone masts. The radiation at the head of the mast is not at a level likely to affect health.

- *Vehicles travel too fast on Eldon Lane, a derestricted single track road. There have been 2 accidents so far this year. Cyclists and horse riders use this lane and they are frightened. This question was raised by a resident of Eldon Lane, who had brought with her a petition signed by other residents.* Cllr Hatley uses the lane sometime so he knows it. He considers that even 30mph is too fast. Cllr Dowden noted that the drawback of "access only" is that it must be enforced by the police, who will not, in practice, have time to do so. The conclusion was that the residents should send the petition to Stuart Jarvis (Hampshire County Council), and concerned residents could write to the county council.
- *An elector suggested that the speed limit on Eldon Lane could be reduced to 20mph.* Cllr Hatley and Cllr Dowden observed that traffic regulation orders are very expensive, but residents should write to Hampshire County Council, who will contact the Parish and Borough Councils and consult them.

Annual Report of the Braishfield Parish Council – May 2017

Introduction It is my first duty here, to thank all the Councillors for their hard work and dedication during the past 12 months. They have been a tower of strength to me in this my first year as Chairman, where their support and enthusiasm has done them all immense credit. It is also my great pleasure, to thank our Clerk, Kate Orange, who has been quite brilliant in providing first class input to the decision-making processes. We could not have a more qualified and diligent Proper Officer supporting us. We have also welcomed a new Councillor in Jane Bennett who stepped in when Mike Prince stood down last May. Our current vacancy is filled this evening by Mark Swinstead who replaces Clive John. Mark's knowledge of the agricultural side of our village will be a big bonus. We also formally here thank Clive John, not only for his time on the Council but also for his outstanding work alongside the Village Hall Committee in the detailed management of the building of the Village Pantry.

BVA/Village Hall While we are here allocating thanks we, on the Parish Council, are delighted to have the continued help and cooperation of the BVA, under the excellent Chairmanship of Jimmy Chestnutt. I meet regularly with Jimmy and Ian Knights, the Village Hall Committee Chairman, with the view that we all sing from the same song sheet in matters affecting the village. Jimmy, who with Councillor Mike Edwards, who has sought support from the major phone providers, together have made considerable progress in identifying suitable mobile phone mast locations which could realistically improve massively the signal reception, which remains currently very patchy, hopefully up to 4G plus. This is an on-going task with the BVA and the Parish Council working together.

Roads/Highways The Parish Council has pushed hard for the on-going improvements to our village roads, and particularly Braishfield Rd which continues to be heavily used by increasing amounts of traffic. In attempts to restrict this, Test Valley Highways have, on our behalf and, through Ray Alborough, established Nationally Regulated width restrictions for HGV's in all of our main and linking single track roads. This means that over width HGVs using them as link roads can be prosecuted. Obviously, the word hasn't yet got out! Highways maintenance under Jonathan Bambridge, have been very good in their dealing with obvious problems quickly. The blocked ditches along Dore Lane, the water leaks at the War Memorial junction and the soakaways at the junction near the Manor have all been dealt with quickly and efficiently by Jonathan's team which, together with a new hardstanding at the post box in Lower Street, does them great credit. There remains however, work to be done on road surface repairs outside Pond Cottages and North to the Braishfield Manor junction. This "edging" work is scheduled for this year.

Footpath 712 The on-going saga of the Footpath in/out of Braishfield from the Dog and crook pub to the Jermyn's Lane roundabout remains a frustrating issue for us all. However, as I indicated in the latest BVA Magazine, the footway will now happen this year, but only after the Secretary of State has examined the 3 objections to the diversion of the existing footpath 712 (1a) to a new footpath within the Hilliers boundaries alongside Braishfield Rd and down Jermyn's Lane to the entrance of Hilliers Arboretum. These objections, I must say, from a pedestrian safety perspective, are entirely without merit or logic but, democracy must have it's say given that it is a "rights of way" issue. If, despite all logic to the contrary, the diversion is denied, the footpath will still be constructed but, alongside the highway. Hampshire prefer the Hilliers option as it will be considerably less expensive. Moreover, it will be less likely to cause traffic hold-ups during construction! We now have a copy of Hampshire County Council's completed document supporting the diversion, which includes our strongly worded input regarding pedestrian and school children safety. Both Alan Dowden and Martin Hatley also feature in support of our position and for which we thank them. Hilliers too, through Wolfgang Bopp, are looking after the groundwork on the roundabout by way of encouraging cooperative support for our position regarding the footpath.

Development

Grants The re-allocation of S106 (now called CIL) grant monies from local developments affecting Braishfield, is directing these monies from playground area development to the higher priority needs of the Village Hall where, among other things, the toilets need urgent renovation and upgrading. This is being handled by Cllr Brazier and the Village Hall Committee. The Carpark is also approaching the time when we will have to spend money on it to

repair 3 areas of broken surface. The obvious choice of patching may well not be enough. The straightening out of the Common Hill Rd junction with Braishfield Rd at the school entrance, designed to reduce speed at the junction, is one example of the benefits of S106 or (Cil) funding. (See Overleaf)>>

Recreation Ground (Trees) Since the necessary felling of one tree close to the entrance to the Carpark, in the interests of Health and Safety, we have also had a Tree survey carried out of the whole Recreation Ground area and this has recommended that work is carried out over a specified period ranging from immediate, through 6 months to within 2 years! A lot of this work is suitable for the efforts of a working party in order to reduce obvious costs. The arrangements for this working party effort are in the capable hands of Cllr Jane Bennett, who will be looking for volunteers in the very near future!

Planning Issues: We currently have 9 planned or new developments in Braishfield where previously, developments were few and far between. Recent planning decisions affecting certain developments in Braishfield have, without argument, put the value of our Village Design Statement into serious question. In the interests of a valid assessment of any Braishfield Planning Application being provided by the Parish Council, the VDS is our primary source of what the residents of the Village feel might be an acceptable or unacceptable development. When our collective objections, taking account of village input, and after considerable reference to the VDS and quite often long discussion, are ignored or even undermined by Higher Authority Planning Staffs, it reduces our confidence in the value of the document. The latest Test Valley iterations on the subject and their published Planning Guidance, seem to now, reinforce the view that a Village Design Statement has little value above advisory comment on building design and ignores our VDS observations on where, for example in the village, a building should, or should not, be positioned. The relevance of our Conservation Area Protection Document has also been called into question by a recent planning application approval by Test Valley which rubbished the contents of this document, the VDS, and Parish Council input as irrelevant.

We therefore, subject to full Council agreement, now need to reassess where we, the Parish Council, stand in the decision-making process as the elected body of this village. The recommended way, indicated by Test Valley's advisory documents, is to develop an approved Neighbourhood Plan. A Village, or Parish Plan goes nowhere near the authority needed to agree, or deny, developments which the Village at large (and by documentary regulation) seeks. A Neighbourhood Plan would take some time to develop and, ideally, must be a product of a Voluntary Team of Villagers, supported and directed by the Parish Council as the Legal Body and closely assisted by Test Valley "experts" who will ensure parity with Higher Authority Planning regulations to make it a proper planning document which has "bite".

Bottom Line: There are currently about 10 open areas in Braishfield, some of which are already identified as suitable for multiple dwellings. Given the close proximity now on our Parish Boundaries to such developments, w and when we look at the application for 60 houses in Kings Sombourne, we need to be on our guard if we don't want our delightful village and countryside here to be filled with houses.

John Bevan

Chairman Braishfield Parish Council

HCC Cllr Alan Dowden's Baddesley Division 2017 Report

I have now represented the Baddesley division on the County Council for over 25 years and in that time I have seen the continuance of reductions by Central Government of Local Government Funding.

The settlement last year covered four years from 2016 to 2020 and, following the acceptance by the DCLG of the County Council's Efficiency Plan for the period, the expectation was for minimal change to the figures published last year.

The Revenue Support Grant (RSG) for 2017 to 2020 is unchanged compared to the forecast position, and confirms a further reduction in grant of £37m for 2017/18. By 2019/20 the County Council will no longer receive any RSG from Central Government.

Councils' core reason for being is to deliver local services, not central government cuts.

Local Authorities have all needed to reduce costs and a result of this has seen a massive redundancy programme of employees at the County coupled with reductions and cuts to service provision.

This year's Hampshire County Council Tax will increase by 4.99% and 3% of the rise will be ring fenced and allocated to Social Services. Therefore a Band D Council Tax for County Council services will rise to £1133.10p and at the same time residents will see, many services being reduced or cut altogether.

The failure of the Central Government's provisional local finance settlement not to find any new funding for social care was hugely disappointing.

The results of less Social Services funding put far more pressure on the NHS. We hear of hospital beds being blocked by older patients who could be cared for, but there is insufficient Social Care finance in order to provide the adequate packages of care.

Council Tax and how we pay for social care both need a major overhaul.

Funding for Adult Social Care

Last year the Government introduced a social care Council Tax precept of 2% a year for the current Comprehensive Spending Review period 2016 to 2020, no indications have been given thereafter. This year Government has granted local authorities the flexibility to **bring forward** some of this increase and to raise the precept by up to 3% this year and the year after within the cap of 6% over the next three years to 2020.

Taking up this flexibility would yield, **on a one off basis**, additional income of £16.6m for the County Council in the next two years to put towards meeting the huge pressures facing adult social care needs.

New Homes Bonus

The New Homes Bonus is currently paid 80% to District Councils and 20% to County Councils and last year the Government consulted on potential reductions in the level of grant paid in order to divert resources into adult social care.

The Government has now published its response to the consultation on cuts to the New Homes Bonus. The main changes reduce the number of years for which legacy payments are made and introduce a baseline for housing growth set at an initial level of 0.4% of the council tax base for 2017/18. From 2018 the Government will also consider withholding payments from local authorities that are not planning effectively.

The County Council has received slightly less New Homes Bonus than predicted and this was largely but not wholly allocated to fund highways works under the Operation Resilience Programme.

This has been extended, but the changes in funding announced do not impact on this previously agreed investment..

Hampshire County Council manages 3000 miles of footpaths, Bridleways, Rights of Way and cycleway as well as having five beautiful Country Parks. There is something for everyone to enjoy in Hampshire's beautiful and diverse countryside.

My County division borders Eastleigh and there is a new recycling centre that opened towards the end of 2016. It is located off Chestnut Avenue at Stoney Croft Rise, Chandlers Ford, SO53 3YU.

Last year **charges** were introduced at waste & recycling centres but this is being legally challenged. However I fear introducing charges and shorter opening times will cause a further escalation in Fly Tipping.

Despite the strong business case for a single county authority in the **Deloitte report**. This did not gain public support. In respect of the review of local government the County Council's position for the immediate future is to maintain our historic support for the current two tier arrangements for county & districts, and to seek opportunities too enhance the system, including a greater role, where desired, for Town & Parish Councils.

In the meantime the Government, preoccupied as it is with **Brexit** and other domestic challenges, has yet to set any clear direction on its view about devolution.

Last year there were a number of enjoyable moments for me. I attended the official opening of the Braishfield Village Pantry Shop and Café and have visited many times since to hear that it is a thriving facility for residents. I also really enjoyed the Braishfield Christmas Tree Festival at the All Saints Church and was impressed with the standard of displays. What a lovely way for the community to celebrate the festive season.

I always enjoy the North Baddesley over 60's Christmas lunch and this year was no exception. It was enjoyed by everyone who attended, so it is a pleasure to be able to financially fund this event. In Chandlers Ford I was invited to attend the Happy Bunch over seventies club after supporting them with a large grant so that entertainment & activities can be provided to prevent many from feeling isolated..

Along with Primary School children from Valley Park, I attended the Test Valley in Bloom ceremony and jointly accepted two Gold Awards for the Valley Park Parish Council and for the community floral displays. The children help each year with planting spring bulbs along the verges around Valley Park. After gaining business sponsorship it is my intention to carry out a planting scheme of 4000 daffodils on Botley Road, North Baddesley next Autumn. Matt Le Tissier has kindly offered to come and assist. I hope both the Junior and Infant school will be able to provide children to do the planting next Autumn..

Volunteering at the Knightwood Youth Club, running the football slot on Friday evenings and being amongst young people helps keeps me active and fit. They are our future and those teenage years are when they can need the most support.

Annual Report of Borough Councillor Martin Hatley

Braishfield Annual Parish Assembly – 2 May 2017

As well as being your local Borough Councillor I remained Deputy Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy and Transportation.

It was in the latter role that, as reported in last year's report, I had a meeting at the House of Commons with Brandon Lewis, the then Minister of State for Housing and Planning together with my fellow Portfolio Holder for Building Control. We highlighted various deficiencies in the planning processes including the methodology used for calculating the 5 year housing land supply figures which often led developers to create land banks of building land on which permission had been granted which in turn led to further applications having to be granted on less suitable land. We are delighted that the Government's new Housing White Paper (Fixing our Broken Housing Market) has taken on board several of our suggestions.

The Borough Local plan which we adopted this time last year is now in place and is protecting the Borough from unwanted development. There was an unsuccessful High Court Challenge by local landowners in the south of the Borough but the High Court Judge threw out their challenge and awarded the Borough Council costs.

The proposal to increase the Borough's Band D council tax by £5 per annum (10p per week) was not made lightly but, faced with continuous cuts to our budget from central government, we must safeguard the increasing demands on our services as well as strive to meet the aims and aspirations of those who live, work, enjoy and contribute to our Borough.

We do this by continuing to invest in Test Valley and by scrutinising every pound we spend to ensure value for money. We have not only invested in visible projects such as enhancements to Romsey and Andover town centres but also less visible projects where financial prudence and business acumen in property investments have given us a greater return for our money than the banks – called Project Enterprise. This in turn can be re-invested for the benefit of all.

So, let us look at what some of those investments and benefits have been during the last year.

The successful bidders for the Leisure Management contract intend, this year, to commence improvements at the Romsey Rapids, Romsey Sports Centre and Knightwood Leisure Centre. In addition to providing us with much better facilities, it will help us make significant financial savings.

Our new housing strategy was put in place and is already helping local people access a decent home. We have not just been building houses but we have been building communities – with first class facilities for residents.

In Romsey, the new community hall, pitches, pavilion and area of nature conservation at Abbotswood will be complemented by Ganger Farm becoming a hub for Romsey's sporting infrastructure and home to a consortium of local clubs. Its vast facilities will include grass pitches, floodlit astro pitches, a massive sports pavilion and other vital 'sporting' accommodation.

We have committed £250,000 to a Romsey Flood alleviation scheme and I am pleased to report that Test Valley now has more Community Resilience Plans than anywhere else in the county.

Despite the challenging financial situation, we have still invested £1.5m from the New Homes Bonus to directly benefit community projects. Some 153 projects have benefited through our Community Asset Fund and the Councillor Community Grant scheme - including both the Ampfield and Braishfield Village Halls.

Our work with 8 pilot parishes, funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government for Neighbourhood planning, has led to the production of a Test Valley Community Planning Toolkit which will benefit all parishes.

The Romsey Future Project, which I chair, launched its main document during the summer with its initial action plan. It has already delivered on some ambitions, including making the town centre more accessible and producing a management plan for Fishlake Meadows.

Through Project Enterprise we will continue to develop innovative ways of generating new income streams and the rate of return on our completed projects is forecast to be 7.8% in 2016/17. That's an extra £1.3m over what we would have received if money had remained in our reserves.

We eagerly anticipate having the land and the investment to implement the management plan for Fishlake Meadows in Romsey. More than 60 hectares of highly sensitive wetland, will be made accessible to the public for ecological pursuits and informal recreation.

More enhancements to Romsey town centre are scheduled to start early next year. The improvements will provide residents, as well as visitors, with a fresh-looking town centre that will be easier to navigate on foot, while maintaining the look of the town's historic character.

New safer footpath alongside Braishfield Rd one stage closer to getting a green light.

Finally, here in Braishfield, the installation of the proposed new footpath from the Sandy Lane/Jermyns Lane roundabout to opposite the Dog and Crook is one step closer.

The Planning Inspectorate have confirmed that they believe they are in receipt of **all** the necessary written evidence in order for them to make their decision. I believe the evidence in support of the diversion of the right of way through the Hillier Gardens to the proposed footway alongside the Braishfield Road is overwhelming.

This footpath, which I originally suggested to the Abbotswood Consortium, will enable a safer route for **all** pedestrians but especially the school children and students who have to walk along this length of Braishfield Road during the dark winter afternoons and evenings.

An independent inspector from the Planning Inspectorate, will now examine **all** the evidence to the diversion of footpath 712. Hopefully he/she will agree with me, John Bevan and the rest of the Parish Council, County Councillor Alan Dowden and the County Council, and the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, that the proposed new route (which incorporates a major part of the new proposed footpath alongside Braishfield Road) ***'will not affect public enjoyment of the path as a whole'*** and ***'will actually enhance the experience for walkers'*** and ***'it will offer greater connectivity and safety improvements for pedestrians'***.