

# Minutes of Braishfield Annual Parish Meeting

(The Annual Parish Meeting is also known as the APA Annual Parish Assembly)

Minutes of the Meeting of Electors held at Braishfield Village Hall

27<sup>th</sup> May 2021

## Present

### Members of Braishfield Parish Council:

Cllr Chairman Jane Bennett  
Cllr Vice-chairman Ian Knights  
Cllr Richard Brazier  
Cllr Peter White  
Cllr Sally Yalden

### Others:

County Cllr Alan Dowden  
Borough Cllr Martin Hatley  
5 electors  
Clerk to Braishfield Parish  
Council Jane Ray

## 62. Apologies

Apologies have been received from Cllr Renvoize due to family commitments.  
Hazel, Mike Prince and Mark Swinstead.

## 63. Introduction

Chairman of Braishfield Parish Council, Cllr Jane Bennett welcomed those present and introduced Cllr Alan Dowden (Hampshire County Council) and Cllr Martin Hatley (Test Valley Borough Council), and Members of the Parish Council. Cllr Bennett gave congratulations to Cllr Dowden on his forthcoming appointment to Deputy Mayor of Test Valley and thanked Cllr Hatley for his work as mayor over the last two years.

## 64. Accuracy of Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 May 2019 were agreed as an accurate record and a copy was signed by Chairman of Braishfield Parish Council, Jane Bennett.

## 65. Chairman's Report on Braishfield Parish Council

A copy is attached to these Minutes

## 66. Reports on specific parish matters

### **Planning:**

#### **a) Village Design Statement**

The TVBC consultation ends on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021.

#### **b) Neighbourhood Plan**

An advertisement for volunteers was placed in the April 2021 edition of the Braishfield

Village News and currently there has not been any interest from parishioners. Options will be considered again at the July council meeting.

#### **c) Nitrates**

Cllr Hatley spoke on Nitrates and a copy is attached to these Minutes. There are two planning applications within the village (Little Beeches and 12 Hill View) that will be heard at Southern Area Planning on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

### **Hampshire Highways:**

#### **a) Roads**

The Council continues to receive support from Hampshire County Council. The removal of housing signs has been chased. Sadly there has been a case of possible vandalism at Lower Street resulting in the destruction of the Parish noticeboard, road sign and post box.

#### **b) Footpaths**

Footpath 4 has been successfully diverted. Discussions are ongoing regarding stile/gate replacement by HCC. A parishioner suggested stile sponsorship by local businesses and this will be discussed at the next Council meeting.

#### **c) 30mph Speed Limit**

A 30mph speed limit throughout the whole village would be a benefit to everyone especially with the increase in larger farm vehicles, cyclists and horses on the roads. The council are looking at the options to purchase a mobile speed radar and restarting the Traffic Working Party.

### **Resilience Plan:**

The SSE grant for the generator to be fitted to the Village Hall so that it can be used as a refuge in the case of power outage has not yet been used. The Community Resilience Working Party will be reviewing the Emergency Plan for the parish and liaising with HCC and TVBC on current guidelines. The Braishfield Village Hall committee has agreed for the generator to be installed in the village hall subject to certain conditions. The village will be consulted regarding any potential plans for a grant application/purchase of a Generator. Tom Greenwood was thanked for all his work on this project. A parishioner suggested setting up a Buddy system to support vulnerable members of the village.

### **Communicating with the Village:**

The new website – [www.braishfield.org.uk](http://www.braishfield.org.uk) – is now fit for purpose and Peter Quarendon was thanked for his support with the transition from the old site. The council are currently reviewing the notice boards in the village and this will be discussed at the June meeting. The BVA have kindly donated £1000 towards the project. The BVN and Email Network are both really effective means of communication and parishioners should be encouraged to use them.

### **Grants available for the Community**

TVBC have a Community Asset Fund available for one application per year which can combine a number of projects. Should the council go ahead evidence of community support is required e.g. community consultation, social media campaign.

### **Climate Change**

Cllr Yalden spoke and her report is attached to these Minutes.

### **Maintaining Village Identity**

Cllr Brazier spoke on the boundaries of the village and how properties are advertised by estate agents. Abbotswood, Ganger Farm and Kings Chase are classed as Braishfield. Royal Mail determine the Post Codes which is part of the problem.

67. Report from our Police Officer  
No police officer in attendance.

68. Report from our County Councillor, Alan Dowden  
Cllr Dowden gave his report and a copy is attached to these Minutes.

69 Report from our Borough Councillor, Martin Hatley  
Cllr Hatley gave his report and a copy is attached to these Minutes.

70. Electors' Open Period and Questions  
A parishioner queried the VDS consultation deadline for comments.  
Cllr Knights thanked Chairman Jane Bennett for her dedication and hard work.

Signed:

Date:

# Chairman's Report on Braishfield Parish Council May 2021

## Introduction

This is usually an Annual Report but as there was no Annual Parish Assembly last year I am updating, where appropriate, on how matters have progressed over the past two years. There will be more detail given under the various agenda items.

I would like to thank all the Braishfield Councillors, Cllr. Martin Hatley and Cllr. Alan Dowden for their hard work and commitment and in addition, all the volunteers who have contributed to the success of our working groups.

During the past two years we have had a change of Clerks, saying farewell to Kate Orange in July 2019, Carol McFarland as our locum and then Keith West in 2020. We were pleased to welcome Jane Ray in September 2020 and she has reported this week that the auditor does not have any matters that he needs to draw to the Council's attention so despite changes of personnel we are in a good position and I thank them all for the work they have done.

After serving as a Councillor for a few years, Mark Swinstead has resigned due to work commitments. The Council and village have benefitted from Mark's wealth of knowledge and expertise in farming, footpaths and dealing with stray animals and we thank him for this. Mark has offered to always support the Council, if required, in his areas of expertise.

We are now taking forward the vacancy we have on the Council.

## The Council and the Village

### **Covid -19**

The Council and volunteers supported the village from the outset of the pandemic giving every household in Braishfield and Farley a leaflet with much information to support them through Covid – 19. These leaflets were delivered on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 before the official lockdown on the following day. Braishfield volunteers were also on the Unity list so together with the amazing work of The Pantry in "supply and deliver" and the Social Contact group keeping in touch with members, we all did our best to keep everyone safe.

### **Remembrance commemorations**

In 2019 we joined with All Saints and the United Reformed churches for the Service of Remembrance at the War Memorial followed by a service at All Saints. Due to the pandemic, the 2020 service could only be held at the War Memorial with the event being organized by All Saints and the Council to ensure all Covid-19 guidelines were met. Due to Covid restrictions, the Brownies and Braishfield School children did not attend but contributed by displaying pebbles and poppies around the War Memorial.

The Remembrance Day commemorations were led by the Parish Council.

### **Flags**

We are very grateful to Tim Howkins and Mike Knowles for raising and lowering the flags as agreed by the Council and organised by Cllr. Richard Brazier.

### **Grants/ Contributions**

The Parish Council awarded grants of £3500 in May 2019 and February 2021 to the Village Hall and £1173.14 in March 2020 and £350.96 in 2021 to All Saints PCC for the expenditure on the

Burial Ground.

Cllr. Dowden gave us a grant of £500 for the wildflower plants which also included the licence from HCC.

Cllr. Hatley gave a grant of £500 for the War Memorial survey on 26th January 2021.

The Parish Council gratefully received a contribution of £1000 towards village Notice Boards from Braishfield Village Association.

## Planning

The importance of planning to the village and to the council has been reflected in having a planning committee under the chairmanship of Cllr. Richard Brazier. This enables us to conduct meetings where the sole focus is planning matters. We continue to receive a number of planning applications, including those for new dwellings and for extensions. The appropriateness of the proposals and their design details require us to exercise considerable judgement and refer to the Village Design Statement (VDS) where appropriate. We continue to have a policy of site visits, albeit reduced during the pandemic, to ensure our better understanding of proposals. Some applications are on hold due to the Nitrate problem.

A VDS working group was formed under the chairmanship of Jimmy Chestnutt who kept the Council and parishioners informed of progress throughout despite difficulties with meetings and presentations being arranged during the pandemic. Cllr. Richard Brazier and I had a Zoom meeting with TVBC following submission of the draft VDS and supplied them with evidence of numerous updates to the parishioners. This has enabled TVBC to ask for any comments from other interested parties including Braishfield parishioners by 31<sup>st</sup> May. We thank Jimmy and his team for all the work they have done for the benefit of our village.

Cllr. Richard Brazier continues to lead on the allocation of s106/ CIL money.

I would like to highlight some points relating to planning:

- Please ensure a planning application is made before carrying out work that needs permission. This ensures neighbours and others have the opportunity to comment favourably or otherwise and it avoids the Council or a parishioner notifying the Enforcement Officer.
- The golden rule when objecting to a planning application is that to carry any weight with the Local Planning Authority (LPA), any grounds for objection need to be based on what are accepted as planning grounds or reasons.

The definition of what is and what isn't a valid planning reason is not easily ascertainable (there is no comprehensive list anywhere); in general it is easier to categorise an argument as invalid than valid, but in many cases there are grey areas and objectors may be inclined to raise an issue, to see whether it is taken into account.

The one category of issue which can never be a valid one for planning purposes is matters of title, such as boundary claims or restrictive covenants. The LPA is exercising its function under planning law, which is a public law function, and cannot involve itself in, or pay any attention to, matters of title which are questions of private law between landowners.

Every applicant must complete a statement at the end of the application form certifying that he/she is the sole owner of the land, or that all other persons having an interest in it have been consulted and consent to the application. The LPA, however, do not question that statement, even when its correctness is called into question.

## Roads, Highways & Footpaths

Although primarily the responsibility of Hampshire County Council, the Parish Council does report the condition of the roads, highways and footpaths. Cllr. Carole Renvoize has worked closely with TVBC and Cllr. Ian Knights with Hampshire County Council. These partnerships have greatly benefitted the village in particular the work on Crook Hill and the installation of Gateway Signs, with oak tree logos, at the main entrances to the village.

The Planning Inspectorate was involved with the redirection of Footpath 4 which has now been approved

and redirected.

Working with Romsey Extra, we were able to influence the siting of the bus shelter in Jermyns Lane which will now be maintained by Hampshire County Council.

## Lengthsman Scheme

This scheme provides us with access to a handyman who can undertake minor tasks under our direction. This scheme continues to work well.

## Climate Change

The working party was set up by Cllr. Sally Yalden in January 2020 and currently has 10 members from different backgrounds.

The purpose of the group was to support TVBC in its declaration of a climate emergency in 2019. As nothing seemed to be happening since the declaration, we thought a more localized group was needed rather than just waiting. Our aim is to look at different ways of sustainability and try to enhance and protect our village's surrounds.

## Emergency Planning

The emergency planning group includes volunteers from the wider community. Its focus is to be able to respond to any emergency in the village whether caused by extreme weather or by failures of infrastructure. We have made progress and were successful in our grant application to SSE and they agreed to fund 50% of a generator together with associated costs. Due to the pandemic this has been placed on hold. However coordinated community action has helped us to deal with emergencies, particularly the pandemic and we are very grateful to all our volunteers.

## Footpath from Dog & Crook to Jermyns Lane Roundabout

We were pleased to have the Crookhill footpath completed and aptly named the John Bevan path. We thank all Councillors past and present, TVBC and Hampshire County Council for all their work over many years which has enabled this to be completed.

## Village benches

We were very pleased to have benches donated in memory of Arthur and Robert Rose k/a The Braishfield Boys, Ron Blizzard and Eric and Jean Irish.

## Recreation Ground

The Recreation Ground continues as one of our major responsibilities of the Council as sole trustee. We have continued to ensure that the trees, equipment and the car park are kept to a high standard thus satisfying health and safety regulations. In the past year we have had tree work carried out in line with the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) recommendations as well as emergency work where SSE took the lead. The play and fitness equipment have been closely monitored by Cllr. Sally Yalden and action has been taken when any form of maintenance has been required. We are making good progress with the Football Club lease which Cllr. Richard Brazier is leading and this should be finalised in the near future. The council was concerned over abandoned vehicles being left in the car park at the recreation ground for long periods. A process is now in place which can be applied when necessary.

## War Memorial

The Council is also sole trustee for the War Memorial and at the present time we have a surveyor regularly monitoring the movement of the memorial.

To sum up, there has been a lot going on in Braishfield and I would again like to express my thanks to everyone who has given their support. As always, there is more to do, and we look forward to another year of challenges.

Cllr. Jane Bennett  
Chairman, Braishfield Parish Council

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## Report of Borough Councillor Martin Hatley

This time last year I think we all hoped that the World would have been able to get Covid 19 more under control than it has by now. In the UK our immensely successful vaccination programme, social distancing etc. means that we are the envy of many other countries. However, worldwide it seems Covid may not have peaked yet (eg. in India) and so at the Borough Council, although we remain optimistic we are not complacent and the pandemic related work continues as well as all the normal workload, while of course monitoring very carefully any new variants of the Covid virus.

The last year has been a very difficult one for many residents and many of us have had to adopt to new ways of working and to be flexible in carrying out duties which are new or different. This has been particularly true within Test Valley Borough Council. Fortunately our flexible modern telephone and computer system, and our willing and resilient workforce, has meant that a large number of normally office based staff could become home based in an apparently seamless way, as far as the public were concerned. Many staff, including my Mayor's assistant, answered over 3,000 calls to the special Test Valley Community Helpline. Staff have also worked tirelessly checking Covid related grant applications and distributing over £56 million of Government aid to 3,280 local businesses and village halls in the form of business support grants and rate relief. Unlike in some authorities, our bins continued to be collected regularly (56,363 each week – 2,930,876 in total). Staff from other departments e.g. the Parks and Leisure Services showed brilliant goodwill and were willingly drafted in to support the service. 440 homeless households were helped into permanent housing including virtually all those sleeping rough in the Borough (a very small number including one in Romsey unfortunately refused the offer).

As a result of Covid 19 and the reduced possibilities of face to face meetings, I was humbled to be asked to continue as Mayor for a consecutive second year. This being a first for Test Valley. I have missed meeting many representatives from various local charities, groups, nursing homes etc., although I did of course have the immense privilege and honour to meet a great number of people during my year as Deputy Mayor and the first three quarters of my first Mayoral year. When Government rules and guidelines have allowed I have been able to carry out a limited number of personal engagements- including remembering and honouring those who gave their lives for our country at somewhat reduced, but still special and appropriate commemorations, on both Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day. The Deputy Lord Lieutenant and I also paid our respects on behalf of Test Valley residents to the late Duke of Edinburgh, at a very small but poignant service in the grounds of St. Marys Church, Andover. It has however been fascinating, and often unintentionally quite entertaining, to take part in numerous virtual meetings of many organisations including a talk on Broadlands given by local historian, Phoebe Merrick, to the Andover Town Twinning Association. I was able to speak to folks in Andover, Hants, Andover, Massachusetts, USA and Goch in Germany.

As well as attending virtual meetings, I have recorded a number of short video clips for showing to members, residents, staff etc. of various groups



Two interesting things have happened in the last year during the lockdowns. The amount of garden waste has increased greatly and so has the amount of glass collected in the bottle banks. Consequently, an extra green waste collection vehicle has been purchased and a number of extra bottle banks have been acquired. I hope this does not mean residents are mowing whilst under the influence of alcohol!

Finally, on behalf of all the residents of Test Valley, enormous thanks go out to all of you in Braishfield who have continued to help, in so many different ways, not only our local community but also other neighbouring areas, to cope with this pandemic. They join some 1,986 recorded volunteers within Test Valley – there are of course many more other unrecorded good Samaritans. It is no exaggeration to say that in many instances you have literally been a lifeline to individuals. Well done and thank you!

***Cllr. Martin Hatley***

### **Report of County Councillor Alan Dowden**

**Hampshire needs hope, and new direction in 2021/22.  
As County Councillor for the last thirty years for the Baddesley Division, I believe we need a vision to put hope back into Hampshire.**

The Council Tax will rise by 4.99%, a Band “D” property will be charged £1350.45p a £64 increase. There will also be an additional £15 for a Band “D” from the Police precept. Many vital services have already been reduced or cut and this heavy increase of council tax will be an additional pressure to many families during this most difficult of years.

As we start to recover from Covid-19 the County Council must put people and communities first, fix problems, and have the vision to address the climate emergency. We need our County Council to truly recognise young people as the future, and respect and value older people and those in need of help. We also need a County Council that backs skills and business to generate the wealth to support world class services.

### **Our Climate Emergency**

Hampshire has a plan for zero emissions by 2050, but is this 20 years too late! I believe there should be a plan of tackling our climate emergency at the heart of all our policies, recognising it will be too late for our children and grandchildren if we don't. That means rethinking transport to minimise unsustainable journeys, learning lessons from the Covid emergency, and supporting safety with reduced speed limits, where there's local support. It means greening new and existing homes, promoting walking and cycling, tackling air quality and demanding a healthier Hampshire for all.

### **Our NHS, Health and Social Care**

We should be working towards preventing ill health, and that leads to longer and more enjoyable lives and takes pressure off our doctors and NHS. We need to protect and enhance public health budgets and put mental health first from schools to old age. We also need to rethink all our 'people' services from restarting youth services, working towards a Hampshire where food banks are consigned to history and where elderly care is celebrated as a valued part of life.

### **Our Homes & Infrastructure**

Roads and pavements are collapsing with pavement resurfacing down to once in every 99 years. Bus services axed.

The County Council should be working with district councils to ensure infrastructure comes first, with the right homes in the right places. Backing Green Belt plans such as in South Hampshire, to allow our communities and wildlife space to breathe and move. That means bringing forward investment in sustainable transport, integrating rail and bus services, support for buses and improved community transport, and a County-wide plan for electric charging points.

### **Hampshire People: Our Communities**

We have witnessed major cuts to community groups and the arts announced in the middle of this pandemic. It's time to foster that spirit for the future. We will only do this by encouraging and supporting our communities and thinking afresh about local services. That must include an end to library closures, and partnership with villages and communities for new library spaces with extended hours.

***HCC Cllr Alan Dowden  
Baddesley Division***

### **Report on Climate Group by Cllr Sally Yalden**

Although we currently have 10 members we would welcome any other parishioner here who might be interested in joining us.

For information, as it's a parish council working party, we have produced a Terms of Reference and we ensure to produce an agenda and minutes for every meeting. Any recommendations or suggestions from our meetings are then reported back for discussion and approval at the parish council.

During lockdown we carried out an online residents' survey to gauge opinion and to start the first steps of community engagement. We received 51 responses which was indicative of some residents as it was only carried out online. However, the survey and some of the outcomes have enabled us to focus on 4 themes: to improve local recycling, to explore green energy use, to share information and to support and enhance a greener environment.

Traffic volume and speed in the village were identified as crucial concerns from the survey, and we passed on these comments to the Parish Council and its Traffic Working Party.

In April we organised the spring community litter pick and we intend to organise another one in autumn – show PHOTO. We managed to collect quite a haul and to also spot and report some hidden fly tips. We wanted to personally thank those of you

who are already community litter pickers and for doing this task all year round and in all weathers.

Another of our recent projects has been to explore the planting of wildflowers on verges. As some of you may know, a lot of verges are the responsibility of Hampshire County Council. We applied to the Council for what's called a cultivation licence to be able to plant alongside the road and decided that the verge alongside the John Bevan footpath was an appropriate location as it is also the gateway to the village. We also applied for a grant to Cllr Dowden and we would like to thank Cllr Dowden for the grant which has enabled us to carry out this project.

We planted 300 native perennial plug plants which were suitable for the type of soil on the verge. We should start to see the results from this year. There are about 24 different native species. We will be producing a poster soon with further details of the wildflowers and will make it available for those who might want to spot and identify them as they start to flower. For those wondering about mowing, we allowed for the obligatory mowing strip which is undertaken by the local authority as an annual requirement for road safety and visibility. We also updated both HCC and The Sir Harold Hillier Gardens who have very kindly mowed the verge in the past.

We've also been busy making contacts, and supporting others in the surrounding area. For example, when the new headteacher Mr Jim Cascarini takes up post in September, we would like to involve and support our school in it becoming an Eco-School. Through finding out more about what that involves at other local schools, we've forged links with Cupernham School and a teacher there who has special responsibility for sustainability and environmental education.

We've also recently attended an online masterclass organised by Community Energy South who have been sharing ideas, initiatives and projects from other villages and towns in the south. We've also been liaising with the group called Wilder Romsey which will be officially launched this summer and has a wide range of members, including other councillors and council staff.

So, despite the challenges of Covid and lockdowns, we've had a very positive start. Our next steps will be to engage and support the local school as well as to look at other possible projects which will enhance and sustain Braishfield. For example, next year marks the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. An initiative called the Queen's Green Canopy has been created whereby everyone is being encouraged to play their part to enhance our environment by planting trees from October, when the tree planting season begins, through to the end of the Jubilee year in 2022.

We are hoping to support this initiative alongside the council. We will continue to keep you all informed. Lastly, I'd like to thank the other parish councillors for their positive support and encouragement.

Thank you.