

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 Braishfield Village Hall

18th May 2023 8pm – 9.15pm

Present:

Members of Braishfield Parish Council

Cllr Chairman Jane Bennett	County Councillor Alan Dowden
Cllr Richard Brazier	Borough Councillor Sally Yalden
Cllr Michael Stubbs	Clerk/RFO Jane Ray
Cllr Peter White	Public: 6

80. Apologies

Cllr Ian Knights, Sheila Still,
Carole and Steve Renvoize

81. Introduction

Chairman of Braishfield Parish Council, Cllr Jane Bennett welcomed those present, introduced the Clerk, Parish Councillors, Cllr Alan Dowden (Hampshire County Council) and Cllr Sally Yalden (Test Valley Borough Council).

82. Accuracy of Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd May 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

83. Chairman's Report on Braishfield Parish Council

'It has been a year with quite a few changes.....

Peter Quarendon decided to resign as a Councillor but has joined the Neighbourhood Plan group. We welcomed Cllr Michael Stubbs who was co-opted during the year. After 4 years of serving on the Council, Cllr Sally Yalden did not seek re-election and neither did Carole Renvoize who has served for 17 years. I would like to thank all the Councillors for their work this year especially Carole for her huge contribution to our village over so many years.

Sally was successful in the election as Borough Councillor for Ampfield and Braishfield taking over from Cllr Martin Hatley who after 25 years of service did not seek re-election. We thank Martin for his significant contribution to the Council and our village, and we wish Sally every success. Cllr Alan Dowden continues to represent Valley Park and Hampshire County

Council and is a great help when we need a contact point.

Special thanks to Jane as Clerk who is a real asset to the Council. She has obtained her CILCA qualification and now works 10 hours a week.

The Council and the Village

We have many volunteers who support and have contributed to the success of working groups and social occasions.

Royal events

For our late Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June, I represented the Council at the TVBC Civic Service in Romsey Abbey. Braishfield celebrated by having a service in All Saints' Church, and a party on the Recreation Ground on Sunday 5 June 2022 organised by the BVA, Social Contact Chair and the Parish Council.

On 15 March 2023, pupils from Braishfield School and Councillor Renvoize took part in the nationwide initiative to plant trees as part of the Queen's Green Canopy in honour of the late Queen, and a field maple donated by Hillier Nurseries was planted in the Recreation Ground. Sadly, Queen Elizabeth II died on 8 September. A letter of condolence was sent to King Charles III which was acknowledged by him from Buckingham Palace. As a village we celebrated the King's Coronation on 7 May with a Service in the Village Hall followed by The Coronation Big Lunch.

Remembrance commemorations

In November we joined again with All Saints' Church and the United Reformed Church for the Service of Remembrance at the War Memorial with the event being organised by All Saints and the Council. We were pleased to have the Scouts, Guides, and Brownies represented. The Remembrance Day commemorations were led by the Parish Council.

Carols on the Rec

In December, we organised Carols on the Rec with All Saints' church and the support of the Village Hall and The Pantry. We were pleased to have over 150 people attending with the Chandlers Ford BB Brass Band playing and the Happy Fryer serving fish and chips. The sum of £307 was donated to Action for Children.

Flags

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

Communications

The Council website is the main communication point where all the latest information can be found. This not only includes meeting agendas and minutes but links to news, emergency numbers, policies and the Village Design Statement (VDS). We work together with the Braishfield Village Association to share information in the Braishfield Village News and the Network, and at times Facebook.

Grants/ Contributions

We were very pleased to receive grants from:

Braishfield Village Association	Noticeboards	£1000.00
HCC	Play area	£500.00
TVBC	Play area	£22500.00
SSE	Resilience	£9687.80
Cllr Martin Hatley	VDS Printing	£200.00

In addition, we received £1500.53 from those who donated to the Play Area through Crowdfunding.

The Parish Council awarded grants/ contributions to:

Romsey Festival	£50
HCC for church directional sign	£250 (shared cost with All Saints' Church)
All Saints' Church	£1200 - church clock - approved in the year; paid 2023/24 (other church grant for Burial Ground of £619.02 was not approved till April)

Planning

The Council continues to have a planning committee under the chairmanship of Cllr Richard Brazier who also continues to lead on the allocation of s106/ CIL money. We continue with site visits and review applications for both current and retrospective applications in line with the revised VDS which was adopted by TVBC in March 2022. In the last year we reviewed circa 50 applications.

The VDS is online and for the benefit of all villagers we are arranging for copies to be delivered to every household. We again thank Jimmy Chestnutt and his team for all the work they have done for the benefit of the village.

In November 2021, a Neighbourhood Plan presentation was given by Sarah Hughes, TVBC to the Council and parishioners.

In June, we invited all residents to say whether or not they wished the Council to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan. The consensus was that we should proceed and we are pleased to have Mark Sennitt as the Chairman of this group together with other volunteers. They are now at a stage where they require the views of parishioners to help inform the next steps in developing this Plan.

Roads, Highways, Footpaths and Notice Boards

We have ongoing concerns regarding the state of the roads and we ask that all residents report these problems to HCC. We are trying to establish what plans are in place for resurfacing, dealing with potholes and footpath finger posts which need to be repaired. We have recently made contact with the right people and will apply for funding for three gates on the Monarch's Way and the Malthouse.

As a result of the data collected during the traffic speed monitoring exercise, it was decided to invest in a movable speed signage system that is located at strategic points in the Village. This has been in place since August/ October 2022 and the results will be used to inform future action.

The Parish Council's large footpath map and flyers have encouraged walkers and in addition there are two groups set up by TVBC who regularly walk in Braishfield.

The refurbished Notice Boards are being regularly inspected and maintained.

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 group was set up working alongside the Council with regular meetings being held with other groups in the village and community. The group continues to take forward litter picks, wildflower planting and the need for more dog bins.

Community Resilience

The emergency planning group includes the Parish Council and other volunteers from the wider community. Its focus is to respond to any emergency in the village whether caused by extreme weather or by failures of infrastructure. We have been attending Resilience meetings organised by TVBC which provide for excellent up to date information from various sources including SSE. We have been awarded another grant which we are ensuring meets the requirements of the village in the event of any incident which requires the plan to be invoked.

Recreation Ground

The Recreation Ground is one of the 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.

On 16 July we officially opened the Play Area after having received a grant from the Community Asset Fund and other contributions for the replacement of equipment and matting.

A new safety sign for the play area and three new signs for the Recreation Ground provide a reminder of guidelines for use of the Recreation Ground and also emphasise the Parish Council's role as sole trustee.

The Football Lease has been finalised and the income is now on stream; £827.00 has been paid for earlier years' dues.

The car park repairs are ongoing with the Council's aim of resurfacing the car park and replacing the fencing in the near future.

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 of their time and support.'

84. Reports on specific parish matters

 Cllr Brazier reported on continuing problems with Hampshire County Council

and the state of the roads within the village. The Council has managed to obtain a new contact at Hampshire however he is unable to provide any details of planned work. All residents are encouraged to report potholes/damage via the HCC website.

85. Report from Mark Sennitt, Chairman Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Mark spoke about the Local Plan which is due for consultation in October 2023. He confirmed the importance of parishioners completing the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan Survey as this will form the basis of the Plan and shape the future of the community. The Plan will be written over the winter and hopefully presented to the Parish Council in March 2024.

86. Report from our County Councillor, Alan Dowden

Cllr Dowden has been appointed as Vice Chairman of Southern Area Planning. His report follows:

‘Hampshire County Council tax will increase this year by just under 5%, raising the band “D” Council tax to £1,460.25 which is an increase of £69.45.

All councillors know the system of local government finance is broken and has been for a very long time; caused by cuts to government grants since 2010 and largely unfunded social care pressures. Pressures which have been exacerbated by post-covid demand across children and adult services. Those services which still survive today are continually getting worse each year. There will be a further £700K of cuts to Voluntary Organisations in Hampshire. This will have significant consequences; volunteers are the essential component that have kept many services available to residents. Unless the upper tier Councils receive more government funding next year Hampshire County Council will not be sustainable. The Government have treated Hampshire very badly indeed.

The latest impact on families who are just about managing is the further increase in the cost of school dinners. Many families are really struggling to make ends meet with the cost of living crisis

Following complaints from local residents, I assisted the Braishfield Parish Council to gain a white-lining scheme to try and prevent inconsiderate parking in some areas of Braishfield Road.

All areas of Hampshire have suffered potholes and Hampshire’s Highway’s Department have received a large amount of complaints about damage to vehicles. Getting them repaired is a lottery, as there are so many, but I have worked tirelessly to try and get them fixed within the Baddesley Division.’

87. Report from our Borough Councillor, Sally Yalden

'Firstly, I wanted to say thank you to everyone who supported me and for the good wishes which I'm very grateful for. Within 24 hours of the result, I started to receive some case work in the role of your ward councillor and (what with being a juror this week on Jury Service and lots of induction and training courses) it's been hectic! It feels a privilege to be doing something which I feel passionately about and that's to help and support every corner of our wonderful community.

I thought it might be interesting to take you on a journey of becoming a borough councillor. After filling out and signing what seems like endless forms, Test Valley HQ held an induction meeting for us to meet some of the officers and Heads of Services: Community and Leisure, Environmental Services, Finance and Revenues, Housing and Environmental Health, Legal and Democratic, Planning and Building, Planning Policy and Economic Development, Property and Asset Management and Strategy and Innovation.

From talking to a lot of people it strikes me that many don't know the difference between what a borough councillor does, or a parish councillor or a county councillor, but all those roles are intertwined with everyone working together for the good of our communities.

On Monday evening I attended an induction session on planning which is probably one of the most challenging and contentious topics for local councils. My observations were that the officers are well informed and knowledgeable, but there are constraints or pressures and influence from central government.

Being a borough councillor isn't just about sitting on various committees, although there are many meetings and committees to attend. I've been selected to stand on the OSCOM committee which stands for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It's a check and balance panel which holds the Cabinet to account. It ensures that the Council has the best policies in place and makes the best decisions for local people. The Cabinet is the leading party which under the current system is the Conservatives.

To share some of my initial thoughts and plans – I'll be finding the best ways of providing regular updates from Test Valley Borough Council and how to be visible, accessible and approachable. Before the elections, TVBC had been in the process of writing a Corporate Plan which sets out its vision and strategy, so I wasn't involved in that process. There was a deliberative engagement survey. One of the themes is about rural communities and there was a brief summary of data and insights. Some of the outcomes of that were about pride in where we live, rural transport, and ensuring that local communities are affordable. I'll find out and share more as time goes on because it's about involving you and keeping you informed on things which might impact you.

Just to end on the subject on money matters. I'll explain more over the coming months, but there are various grants for community groups and projects. A borough councillor is allocated a budget based on the area's population. I've got a meeting soon with our local community engagement officer to discuss grants in more detail so I'll keep you posted.

Finally, I recognise that there are many volunteers and groups in our community who work hard to make it such a great place to live or work. We're lucky to have an excellent parish council with hardworking councillors. I'm looking forward to working with you all. Thank you for listening.'

88. Electors' Open Period and Questions

Q – Has the Council considered planting a tree to commemorate the Coronation?

A – Yes, to be discussed at future council meeting

Q – Can some stiles be replaced with Gates?

A - The process is underway – obtaining quotes, applying for grants

Q – How will the Resilience Plan be invoked?

A - The same rapid response as happened at the onset of the Covid pandemic. Once complete, a full copy will be held by TVBC with a revised version available on the Parish website detailing a full scenario for a range of emergencies that could occur within the Village. The Council will be discussing next steps at the July meeting.

Q – Is it possible to move the settlement boundary?

A - The Council may revise this in the future.

Q – Who is responsible for emptying the roadside drains?

A – Hampshire County Council

Signed:

Date: