

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Charminster Village Hall on 5th May 2009

Present: Cllr M Simons, Chairman, Cllr Ian Vincent, Cllr Brian Charman, Cllr Dave Gulliford, Cllr Mark Ellis, Cllr Peter Hopford, Cllr Phil Hanson, Cllr Tony Mackle,

Sarah East (District Councillor), Crayston Lee (CDVH)
Sarah Engerran (Clerk)

There were three members of the public present.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Jane House, Cllr Keith Beeson, Cllr Mike Ostridge and Jeremy Elliot.

2. **Report from village organisations**

- a) St Mary's First School Charminster - a report by Joanne Holmes was read out by Mark Simons and copies were available at the meeting (report attached). Cllr Dave Gulliford suggested sending a letter to the school congratulating them on their achievements.
- b) Charlton Down Village Hall – Crayston Lee (Hon Secretary) read a report of the activities at the Village hall over the last year (report attached)
- c) Charminster Village Hall – Mark Simons read a report submitted by Jeremy Elliott on behalf of Charminster Village Hall Management Committee and copies were available at the meeting (report attached).

3. **Report from Mark Simons, Chair Charminster Parish Council**, on the council's activities in the past year. The report was read by Mark Simons (report attached).

4. **Comments, observations and suggestions from electors to councillors.**

- Kenneth Addison suggested that parish council meetings should be held every month. It was agreed to put this on the agenda for the next council meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19.20hrs.

St Mary's C E V C First School

Report from Joanne Holmes May 2009

The school currently has 192 children on the school role in seven classes. The average class size is 28. 7% of the children are on the free school meal register.

There were a number of changes to the academic staff at the beginning of the academic year. Becky Riddell joined full-time to teach Oak class and Caroline Drysdale and Lynda Charles job share to teach in Beech class. Caroline has been teaching 2 mornings and every afternoon with Lyn the other 3 mornings. They have contributed well to the school this year and the job sharing in Beech class has worked extremely well. We also welcomed Jacqui Kirby and Belinda Bessant as teaching assistants, supporting various classes. Helen Timms has been working each morning in the school office. As the school has grown so has the amount of administrative support required and Helen has been able to take some of the strain off Jane this year. Suzanne Garner was awarded permanent deputy head teacher early in the Autumn term to replace Melanie Austin who is now head teacher at Broadmayne school.

In February the school had a very successful Ofsted inspection. The two inspectors were very impressed with all the children and staff and made many favourable comments about the school. The parents were each asked to complete an Ofsted questionnaire and the response rate was very high with many very positive reports on the school. The school was judged outstanding in every section. To be given this highest possible grading is a testimony to the dedication and hard work of the excellent staff in school and of course to the children. If anyone is interested the official report is available on line to read.

The breakfast club continues to go from strength to strength. In October a visit was made by a Local Authority monitoring officer who deemed it to be exemplary. In addition to the school Ofsted inspection, an extra Ofsted inspection was made to the breakfast club and it was awarded outstanding status. This is a tribute to both Helen Pegram and Sonia Newman who run it so successfully. Helen is now moving onto pastures new but Sonia will continue to run the club with two other popular teaching assistants.

A lot of work is done in school to help the children develop awareness and understanding of their rights and responsibilities as young citizens. St Mary's is now a Rights Respecting School, as identified by UNICEF and shows that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is at the heart of the core values of the school. The various aspects of the UNCRC are supported on a daily basis within the school but to further the children's understanding a Rights Respecting School day was held in the Autumn term. £150 was raised that day when the children paid to not wear school uniform. This money was sent to Children in Need.

The Christmas play was again an outstanding performance. Entitled jesus@bethlehemstable.com it was a modern take on the Christmas story. Again the school made use of the beautiful Herrison Hall at Charlton Down for one of the performances.

There have been various small building projects this year within the school. The first was a major change to the school library. A room was totally refurbished to allow the school to have a dedicated library. This has been painted by a number of parents and members of staff to make it a friendly and inviting place, particularly to the small children. All the school library books were replaced, as many of the old books were out of date and damaged. Finally a new hi-tech lending scheme was installed that allows the children to borrow books by simply stamping their thumb print on the computer screen. The other area to be developed is the small kitchen by the hall. This has been completely refitted to support the new school meals service, breakfast club and the food technology curriculum – not bad for such a small space. Hot school meals are due to start being served on Monday 11th May for the first time since the 1970's. We hope that they become popular with both the children and staff.

The children continue to partake in many activities within the school most too numerous to mention but a few examples include: Book week which raised over £600 for new books for the new library; Harvest assembly where the produce given by children is made into hampers and sold off to raise money for Water Aid; Operation Christmas child where over 100 shoe boxes were sent to Samaritans Purse; Various church services at St Mary's church including those at Christmas and Easter, DASP choral festival; After school clubs such as, computer, choir, French speaking, games, animation, country dancing and football

Joanne Holmes, May 2009

Charlton Down Village Hall

Registered Charity 1097442

Report to Annual Parish Meeting - Charminster Parish Council 5/5/2009

Whilst Charlton Down Village Hall is still holding it's head above water in terms of finance, like everywhere else it is now being affected by the national recession with bookings this last four or five months showing a downturn in the region of 20%, mainly due to the NHS not taking as many bookings as it had been in the past. Fortunately, most of the local groups and organisations are continuing with their regular bookings and we have had new meetings started, most importantly WeightWatchers which now has a weekly Friday gathering of up to twenty five people.

Some of you may know that Busy Kids Nursery ceased to operate in December, due to falling numbers and the loss of Government funding, which made the operation no longer viable. However, in January, we were approached by Marriane Strong of Starlight Childcare, based in Poundbury. They fully re-equipped Toad Hall in CDVH and following a granting of full OFSTED approval, started a new Nursery operation in February. The main difference between them and Busy Kids is their ability to take children from age 0-2, a facility which apparently is sadly lacking in the area.

There is now a vibrant Charlton Down Local History Group which meets around five times a year, the next meeting being on May 20th. This is to be addressed by the Dorchester Town Crier, Alistair Chisholm. His meeting is to be entitled "Dorchester - Small Town - Big Story"

There was recently a Barn Dance held in aid of the Charminster War Memorial Fund, which by all accounts was very successful, so much so that another Barn Dance is to be held in October in aid of the Local History Group.

Other major events booked for the year include two concerts by the Summer music Society of Dorset, run by Lady Digby; Weymouth & Portland Louviers Society annual supper event; a dance festival by the West Dorset Schools Partnership; a concert by Dorchester Choral Society; the annual concert by St. Mary's School; the Brownies sleepover and concert and several others including a Wedding Reception and our first Wedding Ceremony. This latter event follows our granting of a Wedding & Civil Ceremony Licence on 4th December last.

In order to bring CDVH up to 21st century standards, we have applied for funding grants from among others "Awards for All" which will go towards the purchase of completely up to date Audio Visual facilities.

The Hall itself is standing up well considering the Ballroom part is now 114 years old. Although maintenance costs are not inconsiderable, annual checks on most of the facilities within the building throw a spotlight on any work that needs doing.

We hope that the next twelve months will be at least as busy and successful as the last twelve.

Signed

Crayston Lee (Chairman & Hon Secy CDVH)

Dated 5th May 2009

CHARMINSTER VILLAGE HALL
Note for Annual Parish Meeting 5 May

It is pleasing to report that the much-needed improvements to the Hall in recent years have resulted, as we planned, in an increase in the number of regular bookings and in particular of bookings for private functions. We have achieved our aim of transforming the Hall into a warmer, more comfortable and more attractive place for the people of Charminster to use.

What is more, the finances of the Trust are now in a sounder state. We are grateful to the Parish Council for the increase in the subvention you give to the Hall.

We will continue the renovation work this summer by replacing the fixed stage so as to enlarge the floor space, to provide the flexibility for more and varied activities, for example indoor bowls.

The Annual Meeting will be held in the Hall on Wednesday 20 May at 7.30. It is open to all residents, and we do hope you will come along.

Jeremy Elliott
Chairman

Chairman's Report 2008/09

2008/09 has proved to be another good year for the charminster parish and a mixed year for the Parish Council. There is a huge range of things that could be mentioned but I will just some of the major items...

Time goes past very quickly and some issues that are current at the beginning of the year are still not resolved by the end of the year and this can be frustrating.

At Charlton Down a number of things are now finished. The building work on the nursing home has now been finished and was opened last summer. Also the associated flats (close care units) are now also completed. The initial setting up of the nature area has now been done thanks to a number of dedicated helpers. Another area where a lot of effort has gone in are the allotments which now appear to be flourishing. Other facilities owned by the parish Council – such as the tennis courts and the orchard are ticking over nicely. Some of these things have helped to the recent success in the best kept/ best community village competition.

One particular thing that is still outstanding and is a constant source of frustration is the uncompleted MUGA and young children's play area extension. These combined with the endless wrangling over the legal transfer of the open spaces fail to bring about anything for the young people of the village. In last year's annual report I said "Will yet another summer go by without the project being completed?" Sadly it has been even longer than that.

Other issues that have been of public interest over the year are the planning application for the pub and parking and traffic problems.

In Charminster the main visual change has been the completion of the development below Highfield Close. This development will hopefully add to the community at Higher Charminster.

Many of the issues in Charminster seem to relate to the roads, and more particularly North Street. Considerable work by members has gone into agreeing a traffic calming scheme with the County Council to improve pedestrian safety. At last we are seeing some minor elements of these schemes being put in place but the major part, a resurfacing and "re-defining" of the narrow part of North Street seems to have failed at the last moment. This is very frustrating but the Parish Council will continue to press the County Council to implement what has been agreed.

Also the scheme requested by the residents of Cocklands to install improved street lighting has gone ahead – and seems to be well received by the public

However, much of the work of the Parish Council goes on mainly unseen. The cemetery, playgrounds, orchard, rights of way and nature area are well kept and improved.

The Parish Council are also very aware of the importance of keeping the public up to date the current issues via the back page (and inside pages) of the Pilot.

The Council itself has had major issues to contend with itself over this past year. The Council has had 5 different clerks in office over the last 12 months and this has made it tremendously difficult to fully function. The clerk is vital to the organisation. There is a steep learning curve in taking on the post so the disruption to the council functioning smoothly can be significant. A big thank you to people who have assisted by taking minutes and notes during meetings and dealing with post and cheques etc. Lets hope our relationship with our new clerk Sarah Engerran is long and stable.

To end on a positive note...

Finally, members will remember the long (2.5years) saga of the broken finger arm at Broken Cross, Charminster. The Council have tried endlessly to get DCC to mend it ...all to no avail. Well, sometimes you have to just take positive action yourself...

Here I circulate a picture showing the new DIY finger post arm in position. Who would know – slightly shorter and only lettered on one side- but fixed at last.

Mark Simons, April 2009.