

**The proceedings of
Whittington Annual Parish Meeting
Held in Whittington Village Hall on:
Monday 30 April 2018**

Present:

On behalf of Whittington Parish Council – Councillors Barbara Atkinson, Stuart Close, Colin Hall, Eric Pelter (part time).

On behalf of the people of the Parish: - 18 Members of the public.

Chairmans Introduction:

Cllr. Colin Hall (CH) took the Chair explaining that the Eric Pelter (EP) Chairman of the Parish Council could not be present at the commencement of the meeting due to family commitments and had asked CH to chair the meeting in his absence. However the EP has said that in previous years he has been frustrated by the poor attendance therefore CH was pleased to welcome the significant numbers of Parishioners who attend this evenings meeting, which he believes is the best attended on record.

Gillian Hodgson (GH), the Parish Clerk, is unfortunately not able to be present and sends her apologies.

He stressed that the Annual Parish Meeting is not a Parish Council Meeting it is purely a meeting for the residence in the Parish of Whittington, and is an open meeting. He had been reading up on the rules and procedures for this meeting, until he was sick to death of it.

Although it is not a requirement that Minutes be taken he has asked John Keegan (JK) to record the meeting, which he does anyway, and he will do a transcript or a precise of it so that everybody knows what has been agreed, so that it can be considered at the Parish Council Annual Meeting in May.

Finally, although some Parish Meetings have Agenda's, and some don't, CH decided to produce an Agenda because he had received nothing from the village. Item 4 of the Agenda is an Open Discussion on Parish Affairs, not to be confused with affairs of a marital nature, within the Parish.

There will be refreshments at the end.

Defibrillator:

CH pointed to the defibrillator that the Parish has acquired, sitting on an adjacent table. He said that he hasn't managed to get it working yet. It cost us £600-£700 and we have a grant from the British Heart Foundation, and now are waiting a secure cabinet that can be fixed on the outside of the Village Hall. We will then run a training opportunity so that anyone interested can learn how to use it, open the box or what one should do if it's needed. This will be advertised and held by a First Responder from Kirkby Lonsdale, in the Village Hall.

So far we have had one very kind lady in the village, who is a nurse, who as volunteered to be a First Responder, and take some responsibility for the defibrillator. We will be looking for volunteers to play the role of "the dead dummy".

Police Report:

(CH) Every two months the Parish Council has a breakdown of crimes in the Parish. Normally it says "0 crimes". But in January and February 2018 we were concerned that there seemed to be a sudden increase in blackmail, burglaries, rustling, "sexual assault", events that the Parish Council were concerned about.

(CH) Speaking to the people in the village nobody could relate to them, so we wrote to the Police and they kindly responded, going into a little bit more detail. It transpires that the area's figures are collated nationally and aren't that accurate. They have offered to attend the next Parish Council Meeting if we want it explained. Although the Police have provided more detailed information but I couldn't see anything that suggested that Whittington was a hotbed of crime.

(CH) I wouldn't like to put these figures onto the village websites but I have them here if anyone would like to look at them.

A parishioner said that his concerns would be that events like someone being broken into or dodgy characters wandering around the village and the Police know about it, that they tell us and we can get it on the Village Blog or PC Website so that everybody's aware immediately rather than two months down the line. CH said that was an interesting point because the Police officer who responded said "I send out a regular updates by email, if you would like this please advise me so I can include you and the information can be disseminated around the Parish". I'll get GH to get back to him and say, yes, could you give us an update on a regular basis.

There followed a general discussion on this subject and in particular the service we previously received from PACT, information that is available on the internet and the Consumer alerts which the County Council send to the Parish Clerk. One parishioner said that you should ring the Police when you see something suspicious in the area. CH said that he recently noticed a "Neighbourhood Watch" sign on a gate in the village. KP asked specifically about the sexual assault and whether that was in Manchester or locally. A parishioner responded saying that according to the crime map it was local, in out postcode area. CH referred to the information that he had received indicating an event was shown as local because, although the offence took place at Manchester Airport the person concerned came from the upper Lune Valley.

In particular the offences reported in January and February involving sexual assaults were of a domestic, historical nature and not actual current offences. However there was no mention of the blackmail in Church St. which had been reported.

JK undertook to follow up the exchange of correspondence which he had with the Police and Crime Commissioner, a year or so ago, to see if the police car which visits the village periodically can stop in at the coffee morning.

A parishioner asked if CH knew where the email report from the Police was sent. CH regretted that he did not know the answer to that and he was uncomfortable with the level of information put out to the village. He pointed out that GW was concerned that communications in the village were so poor and rudimentary. Despite two websites and a Blog the most effective communication was CH's own method of shoving things through people's doors. Wagtail is one route but even that comes out three or four weeks out of date. One parishioner suggests that people sign up to an email circulation list.

GW stated that we did not know how many people have access to the internet. It was suggested that we do because B4RN know who has been connected (the claim is over 70% of the village). But it was said that the number of people signed up to use the connection is unknown. It was felt that if the information was on the Blog or Website then people can access it. CH pointed out that we already do that. KP pointed out the difficulties in putting sensitive information on websites and that the content would need to be edited.

JK said the Consumer Alerts from Lancs County Council do go on to the PC website and the Village Blog, as well as the Parish notice boards. Some information is there but you cannot force people to read it.

CH said that he was quite happy to get back to the Police Officer who had assisted him and ask what the best method of getting information was and what would the frequency be. It would then be up to the PC to get it through the Minutes and onto the Blog and the PC Website. The meeting agreed that the matter should be left with CH.

Open Discussion of Parish Affairs

CH - This is the opportunity for everyone present tonight to suggest anything, discuss anything or even vote on anything which can then be put on the Agenda of the Parish Council Annual Meeting, which is the meeting at which the Chairman gives his report on the past year, and at which the officers are elected for the coming year.

Traffic Speeds through the village.

GW interjected with a suggestion. He said that at last years Parish Annual Meeting a number of things were discussed and seemed to have been agreed, so it occurred to GW that a member of the Parish Council should take responsibility for individual issues and they should appear as an Agenda item of every Parish Council meeting until resolved.

GW So, to get the ball rolling, what's happening with traffic speeds through the village? It was agreed last year that the Parish Council would contact the County Council to say that we are not

satisfied with the service we are getting from the Highways Department. Has that happened?

CH, GH has written to our point of contact, who had promised us the earth. Councillors had attended a meeting at Arkholme Village Hall. The chap who addressed the meeting has been written to on more than one occasion and asked for follow up and further information and they have totally and utterly ignored us

GW But has the Parish Council written to our County Councillor saying we are not getting a good enough service? CH I don't know.

GW Then, one item for the Agenda is that the Parish Council write to the County Council saying that the service we are getting from the Highways Department is not good enough. CH I think Gillian did but I will put it on the Agenda for the next PC Meeting.

KP Asked what suggestions had been made at the previous years meeting. JK said that the full details are on the Village Blog. CH said that the problem is that the PC is toothless. However the speeding matter has been going on so long it tends to slip by unless JK or GW reminds us.

There was a general discussion which repeated the matters raised the previous year, regarding traffic calming measures opposite the size and speed of vehicles, who were not exceeding the speed limit, but driving to quickly bearing in mind the nature of the roads in the village.. MB felt we should seek advice on what measures can be taken and in view of the growth in 20 mph speed limits around the country we should ask for a 20 mph limit through Whittington.

GW If we are going to ask for advice we shouldn't get fixated on a 20 mph speed limit when there are other things that can be done. EP affirmed that a 20 mph limit has already been asked for and rejected, they just wouldn't accept it. GW Can we have a copy of the note that says, no. EP said he didn't know if it could be found. JK mentioned that it was minuted by the PC in, he believed, 2008. JK undertook to search for the minute. EP also pointed out the impossibility of policing a 20 mph limit.

CH Can I make a suggestion that the matter goes on the Agenda for the next Parish Council Meeting with a view to the PC writing to the appropriate authorities pointing out the concerns voiced by Parishioners at the Annual Parish Meeting, in two consecutive years, and seek advice regarding the measurers available to us.

Village sight railings

CH drew attention to the fact that a particular parishioner (MB) had kindly offered to paint the railings and the work had commenced. There followed a discussion on the history of how the railings came into being and who's responsibility they were. Irrespective of the history the village has accepted that it is now responsible for the cost of painting, which is now being carried out in black and white Hammerite paint, in the belief that this will provide a longer life.

The Dragons Head

A Parishioner asked if anyone had knowledge of the current situation regarding the Dragons Head. It was reported that there had been no further planning application to date. There have been complaints that the building is falling into disrepair, but CH understands that there is nothing the PC can do about this.

Village Plan

A parishioner said that there had been talk of a Village Plan, CH yes, talk only, it would be nice to start a Village Plan now. If anyone would like to step forward, after the meeting they would be welcome. JK said that our City Councillor PW had mentioned a plan at the January PC meeting. CH pointed out that this was a City, regional, plan and not to be confused with a Parish Plan. Casterton are very dynamic and they have a village plan, it might be possible to plagiarise other people's plans. CH it would be great to have a working party or think tank, not necessarily all Parish Councillors. It's just a matter of finding the time to do a questionnaire that's acceptable to everybody, then sending it out and arranging to collect it, because that's the best way of getting a response, collating it in a sub committee or think tank, and see what the Parish come back with.

MB said that he would have a look at what the work would be but if Casterton have already done it they will have done a lot of the hard labour anyway. He asked what sort of things such a plan should consider. CH – Repairs to equipment, traffic calming, children's playground I would imagine, potential building sites, essential housing, tennis courts and swimming pools (laughter).

A pensioner interjected with "potholes". CH we have actually written to the Fix-My-Street website.

I must admit that if everybody here went on the Fix-My-Street website and said that Whittington was an abomination, it wouldn't do any harm. GW suggested contacting Lancashire County Council. He said that he had contacted them over two issues in the last eight weeks. When asked had he had any response he said, yes, instantly. One was regarding a street light outside the Old School House and the other was a pot hole close to Loyne Park. Over the Easter Bank Holiday I took a photograph of it. If you contact Lancashire County Council with a complaint you get a reference number.

CH Can I make a suggestion? Would you, GW, take it upon yourself to take photographs and contact the same person that you did last time. GW some Counties are now saying that they will only deal with potholes if they are over a certain size. GW I am quite happy to go round, if somebody lets me know where there is a pothole giving concern, and I will go out and take a photograph. CH Can I tell you Church Street, because that's one big pothole. We would be very grateful. GW – Yes.

Any other business.

Eric Pelter, Chairman of the Parish Council, said that he would like to thank Colin Hall for chairing the evenings meeting. He said that as many people would know, his sister is not very well and as a result he just couldn't make it.

KP said that on behalf of the parishioners she would like to thank the Parish Councillors for all their work on our behalf. The Councillors present thanked her.

At that point the Chairman brought the meeting to a close.