

MATHON PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Parish Meeting held at Mathon Parish Hall
On Wednesday 20th May 2015 at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr S Harte, Cllr C Green, Cllr N Walker, Cllr R Lawrence

In Attendance: Clerk, Mrs D Taylor, Mr D Baldwin – Malvern Hills Conservators
Mr Geoff Fielding – Footpaths Officer

Public attendance: 3 parishioners attended the meeting

Apologies: None received

Chairman's Report

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported on the work of the Parish Council during the year to 31st March 2015, as follows:-

Nothing outstanding to report for the year. However, we still have outstanding problems with the Cliffe and its declining state. Potholes are still appearing, but the past year has seen major repairs carried out on many of the road in the Parish, with some sections being completely retarmaced and others where tar and chippings have been overlaid.

Financially this year we again remained in budget. As well as the Precept we received a grant towards grass cutting of the triangles and around the bridge and church. This work was carried out by Ron Hadley and Ted Stewart. We also received a grant under the P3 Scheme for the maintenance of our footpaths. This work is done by Ted Stewart under the supervision of Geoff Fielding, our Footpaths Officer, and we thank them both for all their efforts in keeping our footpaths up to standard. Geoff has had a number of problems with Balfour Beatty's running of the scheme through the Locality Steward, and for a number of months no work was able to take place on the footpaths. However, thanks are due to Geoff's perseverance and diligence, and we hope that the coming year will run more smoothly.

The Council paid for green to be cut and mowed, and again thanks to Ron Hadley for all the extra care and work he does on this task.

The Council again gave a grant towards the upkeep of the churchyard, and also to the Parish Hall which helped to fund the cost of a kitchen upgrade. The Hall can now offer excellent facilities to villagers and others wishing to use it.

In January 2015 we set our Precept with an increase of below 2% and hopefully this will be enough to keep up with the ever increasing legislation we now have to comply with.

Planning has seen the usual extensions and barn and agricultural buildings conversions, plus one proposal for a new build, mainly on the grounds that there is no strategic plan in place. However, this was refused. This highlights the need for a Parish Plan and Neighbourhoods Plan to be in place for the future, as these will be the main guidance for the granting or refusal of planning permission.

The condition of the Parish Map which is the responsibility of the Parish Council, has caused concern, with spots of white mould appearing. However, the Clerk has tracked down a restorer and the Council will be paying for her to clean and repair the map.

The continuing problems with the Cliffe have again been reported to Herefordshire Council – the most recent being the erection of bollards at the entrance to the car park. The Conservation & Listed Building Officer has visited the premises and spoken to the owner. The Council will continue to keep an eye on the situation and push for an outcome which sees the Cliffe restored as a village pub.

The Cluster Group which was formed originally by local Councils in the Ledbury area to deal with the issues raised under the Localism Act, still meets regularly, but has been reduced to only five or six Councils. Future meetings are still planned for the near future.

The Parish Council finished the year and this term of office with a full complement of six Councillors. However, we start the new term with only four due to Thelma Barnes moving out of the Parish and Paul Davies being abroad during the nomination period. However, we plan to co-opt Paul back onto the Council at the Annual Council Meeting to be held after this meeting. I would like to thank Thelma for her years of service to the Council.

Mathon Parish Council appointed David Baldwin as their representative on the Board of Malvern Hills Conservators. He regularly attends our meetings and keeps us up to date with all matters relating to the Conservators and the hills. Our thanks to him for carrying out this role.

Finally, I would like to thank our Clerk, Diana Taylor, for keeping us on the straight and narrow and dealing with the ever increasing paperwork and legislation Parish Councils now have to comply with. Also thanks to my fellow Councillors who give up their time to attend our Council meetings, and keep the Parish Council as a going concern.

Public Question Time

A parishioner raised the question of speeding vehicles along the narrow country lanes in the Parish. The Council agreed that this was a major problem, not just in Mathon but all rural areas. The Council would look into this matter and put it on their Agenda for the next Parish Council Meeting.

Close of Meeting - the Chairman thanked all those present and closed the meeting.