

PARISH OF MISTERTON

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE CHURCH ROOM ON TUESDAY 8TH MAY, 2007

Present: Councillor H. M. Brand in the Chair.
23 members of the public were present

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Brand welcomed Mr. Jim George and Mrs. Lynda Ogilvie, Chairman and County Secretary respectively of Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting were received.

3. CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS FOR 2006

Mr. George presented the Misterton Parish Council Citizen of the Year Awards to Miss Rachel Clifton (senior) and Master Jack Douglas (junior).

Miss Clifton was given the senior award in recognition of her longstanding service as Clerk to Misterton & West Stockwith Joint Burial Committee over the last 10 years. She recently left the post. The Parish Council felt that her community spirit in carrying out the work, including visiting the cemetery in all weathers to mark out graves, etc, was commendable. She stayed in post for probably a year longer than she wanted - after giving notice of her intention to leave - because of the difficulty in replacing her.

Jack Douglas is an extremely willing boy, always keen to help. At last year's village spring clean, he was one of only two young people who turned out to help. He was also a great help at the Misterton summer gala, when the organisers were pleased to have him.

The public present showed their appreciation in the usual manner.

4. MISTERTON AND WEST STOCKWITH JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE

Councillor Batty submitted the following report:

There are roughly about four meetings during the year and the last one was on the 12th April 2007.

In November 2005, our Clerk Rachael Clifton resigned. Fortunately she remained in post until her replacement was found and it was only at the beginning of this year that we were finally able to appoint Chris Bramham as her replacement.

In the latter part of 2006 we put in an application for funds under the Building Better Communities Scheme for a new road and a turning circle. As yet we do not know whether we have been successful.

So far this year the cemetery has suffered quite a lot of tree damage caused by the gales and in particular the shelter is in need of some refurbishment. In the latter part of 2006, tree planting was completed on the cemetery extension.

The cemetery continues to look very tidy and in keeping with our application for the Best Kept Village Competition, partly due to Paul Hinds, the grass cutter and Robert Otter who does quite a bit of extra tidying up within the cemetery.

The cemetery is still well used and an asset to the community.

5. THE CHARLES COOPER TRUST FOR ALMSHOUSES

Councillor Simmons was unable to attend the meeting owing to illness. However, he had contacted the Clerk to the Council with a brief report on the Charles Cooper Trust.

In essence, the Trust was financially sound. A flat was to be let on 12th May, 2007.

6. THE CHARITY OF GEORGE WELLS

Councillor Brand reported that the Charity met in December 2006 and agreed 23 charitable donations to people in difficult circumstances in the village.

Instead of educational grants to individuals, the Charity made a donation of £100 to the Primary School to support an educational trip to the Egyptian exhibition. The donation was made specifically to help any children whose families could not afford to pay for their child's trip.

7. SCHOOL GOVERNORS

Councillor Brand reported as follows:

The Governing Body met on a number of occasions for both the term formal meetings and interim less-formal meetings. An over-riding concern has been the falling school roll, which means less income for the school and difficult decisions had to be made about staffing and the priorities for the coming year.

We have already heard that the school pool has been refurbished with the help of a £10,000 grant from the Parish Council. And beautiful the new changing rooms look, too

8. NORTH EAST BASSETLAW FORUM

Councillor Brand submitted the following report:

Mattersey joined the Forum during the year, bringing to seven the number of villages participating in the Forum. The Forum continued to meet four times a year, usually inviting speakers on topics that have a bearing on residents across the seven villages covered by the Forum, such as developments at Robin Hood airport, and health services. The Forum was successful in obtaining funds to top-up its own resources to push forward writing and publication of a report on transport across the villages.

9. MISTERTON AREA PARTNERSHIP LIMITED

Councillor Brand reported that, As far as MAP is concerned, it has been a quiet year as we've largely taken the Parish Plan as far as we can without the help of a project officer in respect of which a grant application is awaiting a decision.

10. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk submitted a detailed report on the financial position of the Parish Council, which indicated that the General Fund balance as at 31st March, 2007 was £19,646.

Details were given of the reasons for the increased precept in 2007/08, mainly the need to include a contingency of £15,000 to cover possible legal costs in connection with the never-ending Packet Inn site problem. The Parish Council had no choice in the matter, being under a legal duty to budget for such eventualities. The £15,000 was specifically earmarked, and any part of it which was not spent would be used to reduce the precept in 2008-09.

Details were given of Section 137 payments made during the year.

A donation of £10,000 was made from the capital reserve to facilitate the improvements to the Primary School swimming pool, using powers contained in Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

With regard to the Combined Charities, at Christmas 2006 £340 was distributed to 68 Parishioners - each receiving £5.

The Village Charity Account working balances, as at 31st December, 2006, stood as follows:

Haxey Gate Endowment	53.68
Misterton Pools Fund	20.79
Standring's Charity	102.08

11. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Councillor Brand delivered the following report:

It's been a busy year – and one that this Parish Council and residents should be proud of. Before I go on to outline some of the village's achievements, I would like to say thank you to:

- people in this community who make a positive contribution to village life – many quietly and in an unassuming way
- those working for organisations with which we work in partnership: the District and County councils, the Police, the school, the Youth Club, the Sports Social Club, the numerous voluntary organisations – and many more
- members of this Parish Council, who demonstrate their commitment to this community by giving freely of their time in many more ways than just turning up for meetings – and, generally, getting little thanks for it!
- finally, special thanks to the Clerk, who has had the vision to advise this Council and the tenacity to manage the process through some difficult moments.

Achievements

Well, what a year that was! The good news began on 12th May when, together with Everton and Gringley, we became the first parish councils in Bassetlaw to be awarded Quality Accreditation, after working towards it for nearly three years.

We followed that by winning Category A of the CPRE Nottinghamshire Best Kept Village Competition, and also the Best New Entry Award. This was the first time Misterton had entered the competition for many years. The judges commented on the “obvious community effort which made a very varied village special.” They also observed that “Misterton was good all round, and although there was no one area that was absolutely outstanding, the village managed to impress despite the unavoidable presence of the various redundant commercial sites outside of parish control, awaiting redevelopment.”

If that wasn't enough, we were also runners-up in the Calor Building Community Life Competition, and our entry, Ranters Farm, won joint first prize in the Harry Johnson (Architectural) Award.

All these were stunning achievements and a credit to all the people of Misterton who made an effort.

Our own Most Improved Property Competition was won by Sally Deakin and Simon Hartley, of 55 Station Street, with second prize going to Betty Wheewall, of 31 Newells Terrace. The awards were presented at the October Parish Council meeting. People like Sally, Simon and Betty made a real contribution to our successful bid to win Category A of the Best Kept Village Competition.

This year, we need to work just as hard in order to hold on to our title, as the competition will be as tough as ever. Judging will be in June/July, but, if we get through to Best of Notts., there'll be further judging in August/September.

The main thing the judges will be looking for is a clean and tidy village, free of litter, dog dirt, weed-infested pavements, untidy gardens, etc. We learnt valuable lessons last year, and we're hoping that individuals and organisations will help us to do well and win more prizes. To kick start this year's effort, our annual village litter pick took place on 21st April.

Our other big achievement last year was in being selected to represent Nottinghamshire in the Calor Village of the Year Competition. This was a tremendous honour. Our written submission was produced last November, and we decided to reproduce it in brochure form, to be distributed to every household in the Parish as well as being made available in public places. The judges visited Misterton on 25th April, when we put on a presentation at the Methodist Hall before taking the judges on a tour of the village. Thanks to everyone who took part in the presentation or helped in other ways.

People

We're sorry to report that Mark Tillen has left the Parish Council, mainly owing to business commitments. Mark did an excellent job in the run-up to Quality accreditation, and has been a tremendous help with regard to sport – particularly cricket. The good news is that he's to remain a valued member of Misterton Cricket Club.

On the bright side, Andrea Sly was appointed Receptionist at The Misterton Centre.

The Misterton Centre

Every household should by now have received a leaflet saying The Misterton Centre is open for business – if you haven't, then please call in and collect one. There's also a feature in our Spring newsletter on the service provided.

In essence, The Misterton Centre is a mini business centre/community one-stop shop operated in partnership by Bassetlaw District Council, Misterton Parish Council and Nottinghamshire Police. Misterton is a large, but remote village in the north of the county, surrounded by a number of smaller villages. This initiative is an attempt to make life easier for residents of these villages, avoiding the need to make a longish journey to Worksop or Retford to access facilities which are now on offer at the Centre, or will be in the near future.

Packet Inn Site

Unfortunately, this matter continues to drag on through no fault of ours. Hopefully, it will be resolved soon with a sale of the common land. We were obliged by law to include a contingency in this year's budget to cover current and possible future legal costs. We decided on £15,000. This money is ringfenced, and any of it not spent will be used to cushion next year's precept.

Neighbourliness

We held a public meeting in January and followed it up with a feature in our winter newsletter. Whilst a few public-spirited citizens responded with offers to join good neighbour schemes, extended neighbourhood watch and Speedwatch, numbers were nowhere near adequate to get things off the ground. Reluctantly, we'll have to leave these initiatives on the back burner for the time being.

Citizen of the Year Awards

The 2005 awards were made this time last year to Martyn Johnson, for his work with Five Villages First Responders, with the junior award going to Rachel Duffner, in recognition of her services to the Church and her assistance in delivering our publications.

Youth & Community Centre

We have been working with the police and other agencies to come up with ways of combating the mindless vandalism which has bedevilled the Youth & Community Centre in recent months. Hopefully a solution will soon be found. As is usually the case, a small number of out-of-control young people are ruining things for everyone else. So far this year they've cost the community many thousands of pounds of taxpayers' money.

Misterton Community Trust

We were hampered last year by a proposal by the District Council to have the Village Hall listed. The matter rumbled on for five months before the Secretary of State ruled that the building is very plain and not worthy of listing. We've also twice been refused planning permission for redevelopment of the site for residential, mainly on highway visibility grounds. A third application is being submitted which will hopefully be third time lucky.

We held a public meeting in June, mainly to look at the Victoria Institute. It was unanimously agreed that comprehensive discussions should take place with the County Council, and other relevant organisations, with a view to providing a sustainable use for the building, possibly by transferring the library into it with excellent facilities including an information technology suite. The discussions also addressed the future of the whole of the County Council site adjoining, with a view to rationalisation and improvement of the public buildings present. Following the discussions, which appeared positive, we're still awaiting draft proposals from the County Council. What we want to see out of all this is facilities fit for the 21st century for our young people and residents of all ages.

Misterton Sport Social Club

Although planning permission for residential development on the former factory site was refused on appeal, the club is still under threat. Various sites are being looked at, and the Parish Council is assisting in any way it can.

Sports Field

We've completed our security improvement over the past year with the intention of preventing unauthorised vehicular access. The facilities in the sports field continue to be well used and successful. Unfortunately, our hopes for an on-site facility for cricket teas failed, with the Bowls Club not being able to agree that cricketers could use the bowls pavilion. And our landlords, JND Technologies, refused permission for us to either build an extension to the sports pavilion or to bring a portacabin on site. North Notts Landscapes again beautifully maintained the sports field.

Routine Matters

Paul Hinds, who also maintains the Joint Burial Committee burial grounds, once again skillfully, maintained the village amenity areas.

The Summer Gala was rain-free last year, and successful.

The Christmas illuminations were beautiful as ever – thanks mainly to Derrick Wheewall, but with thanks also to Clive Burton, the Lions, the Methodist Church and a donation from the Co-op.

We continue to try to get something done about the Old Bank, but without success, and there's nothing more we can do about it unless the owner comes forward.

We're now running two websites, one as a village community site and the other as the official Parish Council site. There's a message board on the community site, so please make use of it. Little use has been made of it so far, but one gentleman used it to report an abandoned vehicle, which was removed as a result.

The Christmas Charity Distribution was made as usual. Councillors continue to play an active role on the four village charities, being the Haxey Gate, Poors, Standrings and Wells Charities, together with, of course, the new Misterton Community Trust.

Donations to local voluntary organisations continue in the usual way. This year we also gave a significant donation to the school as a contribution towards the visit to the Egyptian exhibition in London. However, we made an exceptionally large donation of £10,000 from our capital reserve to the school, towards the £35,000 cost of bringing the swimming pool up to standard. The headteacher confirmed that the project would not have gone ahead without this major donation.

We continue to work hard on infrastructure issues, and are currently trying to get Minster Road resurfaced and three unadopted roads adopted.

Closing Remarks

So – it's been a busy year but a successful one. We have standards to maintain but I am sure that, with the community working together, we can have a fair crack at this year's county awards – and, who knows, we might even do well in the national Village of the year awards, too.

12. MATTERS RAISED BY ELECTORS PRESENT

- (a) Mr. Stan Casson made it clear that under no circumstances would the Bowls Club allow the Cricket Club to use the bowls pavilion for cricket teas. He said that the Parish Council had a letter which explained the situation, but he was also concerned about the cricketers vandalising the bowls facilities in the same way that the Victoria Institute had been vandalised. Councillor Brand said that it was most unfortunate that organisations could not work together.
- (b) District Councillor Simpson reported that movement on the issue of the derelict old bank on Station Street was expected.
- (c) Mrs. A. Potter said that residents were blaming her for the cost of the new pedestrian gate in the sports field. She said that she had suggested to the Clerk that the accessibility problem (caused by the new motor cycle barriers) could be overcome if people with double buggies and prams were given keys to the main vehicle gate.

The Clerk responded by saying that Mrs. Potter and her daughter had attended the site meeting called after her daughter alerted the Parish Council to the problem, and she was aware of concerns about four wheeled vehicles getting unauthorised access to the sports field. That was why the decision had been made to install a pedestrian gate and issue keys accordingly. There was no suggestion that Mrs. Potter's daughter would allow unauthorised vehicular access, but, for example, keys could be lost.

Councillor Keat informed Mrs. Potter that the Parish Council could not prevent people from talking.

Mrs. Potter stressed that she did not blame the Parish Council.

- (d) Mrs. A. Potter enquired whether it was true that recycled steel had been used in the new fencing in the sports field. The Clerk confirmed that it was. Mrs. Potter then requested details of the cost of the fencing, which the Clerk provided.

Councillor White condemned the quality of the fencing, and received support from District Councillor Simpson.

Councillor White, assisted by Mrs. Potter, then distributed photographs of the fencing around the room. The photographs appeared to show serious rusting. The Clerk explained that a parish councillor had informed him in April that Councillor White had showed her some photographs showing rusting on the fencing rear the sports pavilion. The Clerk had examined the fencing and found there to be minor rusting at the base of the fencing where the steel mesh joined the base support. He had asked the contractor to attend to the matter, which he had. The Clerk had found no serious rusting.

Mrs. I. E. Charman said that she had noticed barbed wire attached to the new fencing behind the sports pavilion. The Clerk agreed to have a look.

- (e) Mr. B. Overton asked for a report on the current situation regarding sale of the common land off Station Road, and the Clerk gave a comprehensive answer.