
Minutes of the
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
of the parish of
Oswestry Rural
held at 7 pm on Tuesday 21 May 2019
at Morda Village Hall

Present:

Chairman: Cllr. Peter Richardson, Cllr. Pam Broomby, Cllr. Arthur Brown, Cllr. John Davies, Cllr. Shirley Jones, Cllr. Martin Jones, Cllr. Shirley Jones, Cllr. Bob Kimber, Cllr. Les Maguire, Cllr. Phil May, Cllr. Tony Milner, Cllr. Robert Milton, Cllr. Elliot Roberts-Jones.

Shropshire Councillor Joyce Barrow

Representatives from:

- Trefonen Heritage Group
- Stonehouse Brewery
- Knockin & Kinnerley Cricket Club
- Morton Playing Field Committee
- Treflach & Trefonen P3 Group
- Shropshire B.O.T.S.

Approximately 16 members of the public

In attendance:

Clerk, Sharon Clayton

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the annual meeting for electors. He explained that it was not a Parish Council meeting but a special meeting for electors to have their say and to learn more about what is going on within the parish.

2. Minutes

The minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22 May 2018 were considered for approval. Following two abstentions it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the minutes be signed and ADOPTED as a true record.**

3. Annual Chairman's Report

The Chairman explained that since the last Parish Meeting the role of Chairman had changed. The previous Chairman, Cllr. Paul Milner was unfortunately unable to attend to present his Chairman's report and, in his absence, the Chairman, Cllr. Peter Richardson presented Cllr. Milner's written report as follows:

"I'm sorry I can't be with you this evening so please accept this written report which outlines some of the Parish Council's activities during my term of office as Chairman.

When I was elected as Chairman in May last year, I was also appointed to represent the Parish Council on the Trefonen Playing Field Group and it's been good to learn of the good work that they do.

During the year we have seen some councillor resignations and we have welcomed new councillors to take their place. It's good to have new blood within the Council and we are all working together for the good of our community. Unfortunately, one of these vacancies was due to the sudden death of Tony Cheetham which was a very sad occasion for all of us. Not only is he a sad loss to the Council but also to the community.

We have seen Speed Activated Signs installed in Morda Road which is helping to reduce speeding although we are disappointed that the Weston Speed Reduction Scheme has been delayed.

We have transferred green spaces, which we are now maintaining. We have also made improvements to Trefarclwdd cemetery.

We undertook quite a large task last year when we carried out a Housing Needs Survey. Thank you to all those who took part in this important survey. The survey revealed that countryside status for the parish was strongly supported as well as identifying areas for development. We now hope to work with Shropshire Council to help deliver affordable homes within the parish in accordance with the views expressed in the Housing Needs Survey.

We have agreed a new maintenance/repair schedule for all our notice boards in the parish and we are now seeking quotes to either repair or replace them.

We have awarded £2,500 in grants to local community groups and we are grateful to them for all the good work that they do within our community. We have also been awarded £1,500 from Shropshire Council which will go towards our costs for the maintenance of green spaces within our parish.

I have enjoyed the past 12 months as Chairman and I wish our newly appointed Chairman, Cllr. Peter Richardson a happy and successful year."

Following this report Cllr. Peter Richardson wanted to add some comments and gave his report as follows:

"We have seen many events and activities taking place during the last year, not least the resignation of Carole Warner as Clerk and the appointment of our new Clerk Sharon Clayton who is extremely well qualified in the role of Clerk with a BA (Hons) in Local Policy and many years of experience as a Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. Sharon is also a Fellow of the Society of Local Council Clerks.

Parish Council meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month and members of the public are encouraged to attend and speak on issues affecting the parish. The December meeting takes place on the Tuesday falling in the week prior to Christmas normally in the date range between 10 to 19 December, this year falling on the 17th December.

A Housing Needs Survey has been completed to ask all households in the Parish to complete a questionnaire with their views on what housing is required in the parish and 1,893 questionnaires were posted out in April 2018 with a response date in May 2018. 283 responses were returned, which is 15% of the households in the parish. The full survey analysis is available on the Parish Council's website with a link on the home page. The overwhelming view was that the parish should retain its countryside status with some affordable housing where a local need has been identified and confirmed.

Shropshire Council is currently completing a Local Plan Review, which can affect parts of the parish with Trefonen being identified as a Community Hub where potential housing development can be considered and this has been opposed by the Parish Council and although several sites were put forward by local landowners none have been allocated for development in the period leading up to 2026 and hopefully until 2036 when the next review will be completed.

As far as I am aware only one councillor has died whilst being an active member of the Parish Council and in recognition of this the Tony Cheetham Community Service Award has been created and this will be presented tonight based on nominations that have been put forward and the winner was chosen at the last Parish Council meeting. The Tony Cheetham Community Service Award is sponsored by Stonehouse Brewery.

Grant awards for worthy causes in the parish will also be presented tonight based on submissions and representations made at the last parish council meeting.

This meeting is the Annual Parish Meeting for electors and item 8 on the agenda is an open forum and is an opportunity for you to discuss local matters and have your say.

The next full meeting of the Parish Council is next Tuesday the 28th May in Rhydycroesau Village Hall and you are all welcome to attend."

4. Police Report

There was no report from the police since there was no-one on duty to attend the meeting.

5. Trefonen Heritage Group

The Trefonen Heritage Group gave a presentation on the work that they do. Their beginnings are linked to the major development work that took place on the 'Field' in 2011 which entailed drainage and re-orientation of the football pitch, new play area, a car park, a trim trail, and a tree and shrub planting programme. The Group saw an opportunity to celebrate and promote Trefonen's heritage including its industrial and mining past and was awarded a grant of £17,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund which enabled a new fence to be installed around the entrance to the bell pit along with sculptures of two miners and two information boards. A further grant enabled the production of a free booklet of six walks taking people to places of historical and heritage interest.

Since its establishment the Group has celebrated "Lights out Trefonen" which was a national commemoration of the beginning of WW1 when the lights went out all over Europe. A new cross has been erected on the top of the pit mound with a poppy for each person named on the war memorial in the centre of the village. A ceremony of 200 people walked from the old memorial to the Field as dusk fell where they were involved in music and verse. The "Lights out Trefonen" group have joined with the Trefonen and Treflach P3 Group to create four WW1 Centenary Trails which lead past the places of work and houses of the thirty-one people that were killed in WW1. Maps of these walks are available and shortly there would be interpretation boards installed with information about the trails.

The focus of the Trefonen Heritage Group's research is preservation and promotion which includes Offa's Dyke and Trefonen's industrial period with the mines, pottery, quarries and fascinating social insights and these are promoted on a dedicated website. Working with others the Group organised a Victorian exhibition and fete with a grant of £10,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Group is also helping the Parish Council to produce a map of the old cemetery in Trefonen and a dedicated website has been created for this venture. The Group's current project is to help the Offa's Dyke Association celebrate its 50th anniversary and to further promote the Dyke by providing one of two signs that will be placed at the start and end of the Offa's Dyke walk. The Group was also organising a two-day exhibition to portray a walk-through time along Offa's Dyke. The message the Group wants to share is "What shall we leave for future generations to treasure?"

6. Tony Cheetham Community Service Award

The Chairman announced that Val Smout had been chosen by the Parish Council as the winner of this year's Tony Cheetham Community Service Award. He explained that the Parish Council had commissioned a rather smart piece of glassware which unfortunately was still with the engravers. In the meantime, the contingency plan was to present a nice bouquet of flowers and a certificate with Val's name on it. Since Val was a very good friend of the late Tony Cheetham, the Parish Council felt it only fitting that she should receive the award, and its sponsors, Stonehouse Brewery presented Val with flowers and a certificate.

Val thanked her friends and family for attending the meeting and said that she was surprised and very pleased to have been chosen for the award. She said that she enjoyed everything she does in the parish to help in the community because she felt that the world would be a better place if everyone helped each other. She said there is great satisfaction in helping others which no-one can know how great it feels unless they have done it. She said what activities she was involved with including the school she attended as a child and to which her grandchildren now attended. She said people need to work as a team to make things happen. She had spent most of her life in the parish and she had been helped by friends in a time of need and she hoped that what she was doing in the community was giving something back to those who had helped her and also those who need help. She said the award was very special to her because of its connection with Tony Cheetham who had been a great friend to her and had done an enormous amount of community work himself. He would always help, he was missed, and it was a privilege to have known him. She thanked the Parish Council for voting for her and she felt very honoured and humbled to accept the award.

7. Grant Awards

The Chairman presented the following grant awards from the Parish Council:

- Knockin & Kinnerley Cricket Club - £595
- Morton Playing. Field Committee - £595

- Trefonen Heritage Group - £595
- Shropshire B.O.T.S. - £595
- Trefonen Heritage Group - £120

8. Open Forum

The Chairman invited members of the public to speak.

Mr Reece explained about his intentions to divert public footpath number 31C on the definitive map in Treflach. He wanted to move the path to the edge of his property rather than it pass through his land. A formal consultation ended in September 2018 and the process was stopped following two objections. One objection was due to the steeper gradient of a new path and one due to the heritage of the original path. Mr Reece would be happy to install graduated steps with shingles. The current path being walked was not on the definitive map according to the Rights of Way officer and Mr Reece had concerns about privacy as some walkers were walking on his land. He said that his amended plans would improve the path for walkers and not make it worse. He was trying to set up meetings with those who were concerned.

One member of the public lived at Croesau Bach, which is on the link road between Trefonen and Oswestry road and has a national speed limit of 60 mph. She said the road is basically a lane with areas where two vehicles can pass with care but there are also sections where the road is not wide enough, and one vehicle has to pull over. She had lived at this address for 13 years and she felt that the speeding traffic was getting worse because there are two straight sections of road. She lives on a blind bend and, as a horse rider as well as a car driver, she has encountered speeding traffic when entering the road which has led to several skid marks. She had expressed her concerns to Shropshire Council. Although there was lots of signage, some of the road markings had worn out, and people were not taking any notice of the warning signs. She had lost pets who had been run over and she doesn't know what the answer is, but she wanted some traffic calming.

The Clerk said that the PCC, John Campion would be attending the next Parish Council meeting where he had been asked to explain the criteria used to set speed limits and she encouraged anyone with the same concerns to attend the meeting.

Cllr. Joyce Barrow said that such concerns should be raised with the Parish Council who would bring it to the attention of Shropshire Council. Cllr. Barrow also offered to ask Shropshire Council to renew the worn-out road markings.

With there being no further questions from members of the public the Chairman once again congratulated Val Smout and the grant recipients and closed the meeting at 19:42.

Signed: _____

Chairman