

SWAY CIVIL PARISH – ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 2016

Minutes of the Sway Parish Council Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 19th May 2016 at the Jubilee Field Pavilion, Station Road, Sway.

Present: The Chair of the Parish Council, six further Parish Cllrs, the Parish Clerk, County Councillor Ken Thornber, twelve members of the public and representatives from Lymington Times and Sway News.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Fleet, Gresham-Hale, Pepper and Turner.

Introduction by Cllr Barry Rickman

Councillor Rickman welcomed the members of the public to the meeting and introduced the main speaker – Nick Wardlaw of The South of England Forestry Commission.

2. SPEAKER: NICK WARDLAW OF SOUTH OF ENGLAND FORESTRY COMMISSION TO TALK ABOUT THE WOOTTON RIVERINE WETLAND RESTORATION PROJECT

Nick Wardlaw gave an illustrated presentation on the work the forestry Commission were undertaking to restore the natural meanders to the Avon Water. Work had already been successfully undertaken to a section of the stream in Burley and the next phase planned was for the area around Wootton.

The stretch of river affected was approximately 3-4 kilometres. The original meanders had been taken out during the nineteenth century at around the time of the construction of the Southampton - Dorchester railway. By restoring the natural meanders, a more diverse range of habitats for wildlife will be created. It was also hoped that as the flow of water slowed, and the stream would be more resilient to periods of flood and drought.

The work was being funded under the terms of the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme which drew upon EC and central government funds. The work was planned to take approximately nine weeks per year - and was scheduled to commence in July 2016 with a second nine week period of work due to start in July 2017. Commencement of the work was subject to a planning application which was due to be heard in June.

Nick Wardlaw advised that whilst there would be some disruption, the Forestry Commission were planning to keep this to a minimum, and signs would be put in place to enable walkers and other forest users to avoid areas of work. The car park at Wootton Bridge would continue to be useable.

Following further discussion and questions and answers, the Chair thanked Nick Wardlaw for his interesting and informative presentation.

3. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Councillor Tarling briefly outlined the recent work of Dementia Friendly Sway. This followed on from the public consultation which had been undertaken to ascertain the suggestions of the residents of Sway on the areas where Sway Parish Council might be able to help. The three main concerns were road safety, hedges and ditches and older people. Councillor Tarling reported that with regard to road safety the Parish Council supported the Community SpeedWatch initiative to try to ensure that drivers through Sway did not exceed the speed limit. The new clerk was getting to grip with the issue of hedges and ditches, and through Dementia Friendly Sway the civil parish was working towards becoming a dementia friendly village. Following training, Sway Deli had already been approved as dementia friendly, and it was planned that this would be rolled out to other retailers and businesses locally.

4. PUBLIC SESSION. TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS RAISED BY THE ELECTORS OF THE CIVIL PARISH OF SWAY.

The Chair then invited members of the public to raise any matters of concern which they wished the Council to be aware of.

The first question related to signage and in particular whether or not there could be additional signs to the Village Hall. County Councillor Ken Thornber advised that signage was the responsibility of the County Council. Unfortunately, recent cuts in the County Council's highways budget meant that there was less money available than was previously the case. If, however, it could be shown that visitors to the village were creating a driving hazard through their inability to locate the village hall, then a request for signage might be sympathetically received.

The second question was in relation amenity land. Concern was expressed that a section of public amenity land had been annexed; and the Council was asked what they could do about it. It was explained that unless the land in question was Parish Council land the powers of the Council were extremely limited. It was clear, however, that this was an issue which raised strong feelings among local residents.

A related question asked whether or not the Council could do anything about residents who put tarmac (or gravel) on grass verges bordering onto the highway. County Councillor Ken Thornber requested that any residents who were unhappy with the way the highways department of Hampshire County Council dealt with any complaints regarding this matter should report their concerns to him.

There being no further business the Chair thanked all those attending for coming to the meeting.

Meeting closed 20:30 pm