



Minutes of the Twyford Village Partnership AGM
Held in the Twyford Room, Loddon Hall
Monday 27th April 2009

Present: Patrick Heather (Chairman), Christian Wrigley (Vice-Chair), Kathy Peck (secretary), David Hymers, Duncan Edwards, Stephen Conway, Sue Goddard, Geoff Pilgrim, A. Morris, J. Hardman, Paul Minton, Anne Pinnock, Emma Donald, Paul Bromley, Claire Heather, John Illenden, C.G. Smith, Roy Mantel.

In attendance: Lewis Rudd (Wokingham Times)

Apologies: Diane Lee (Finance Officer), Tim Palmer, Rev. Simon Howard, Rick Sinfield, Richard Winterburn, Lorna Minton.

1. Welcome

2. Minutes of general meeting held 13th February 2008

Signed as a true record.

3. Chairman's report – Patrick Heather

This has been a busy year for Twyford Village Partnership with many significant changes:

In April 2008, at the meeting following our general meeting, it was decided to change our name from the Twyford Village Centre Management Initiative (TVCMI) to the much simpler Twyford Village Partnership (TVP).

In June 2008, at the Donkey Derby, we marked the start of the Parish Plan process with a launch event.

There have also been a few changes in the Executive Committee membership. We are grateful to Diane Lee for coming forward at the Donkey Derby and agreeing to become our Financial Officer. In January 2009, Josephine Blyth moved house and stood down as chairperson I took over as Chairman.

More recently, we have just produced a questionnaire which is being delivered with Twyford News to every resident and business in the parish of Twyford. We need a good response rate so please fill it in online or return the paper copies to the library or Waitrose before 17th May. We are aiming to display some of the initial results at our stand at the Donkey Derby on 7th June.

We were very disappointed to learn that Wokingham Borough Council would not be awarding us our annual grant that goes towards the popular Christmas Fayre. We have sufficient reserves to hold that event in December 2009 but we will need to attract further funds to finance future events.

Unfortunately our guest speaker, Nick Christo, is unable to make it tonight but we are very grateful to David Hymers, Chairman of Twyford Parish Council, for agreeing to stand in at the last minute to talk about the differences and synergies between our two organisations.

4. Financial officer's report for the financial year 2008/2009 – Diane Lee

The Finance Officer has changed from Verne Magnusson to Diane Lee during the year. TVP would like to thank Verne for his time and commitment over a long period of time. Similarly, Diane has taken over from Cedric Gilson for the finance role on the Christmas Fayre committee.

The accounts have not yet been audited so the figures presented here should be considered provisional. No unusual times or changes are expected but this is subject to the auditors opinion. The same auditor (Accounting Etc.) has been asked to undertake the audit for 08/09.

Activity in 2008/09 has been similar as previous years with the largest single area of both income and costs being the Christmas Fayre. This event attracted virtually all of 08/09 revenue. This appears higher than previous years due to the late payment of the grant from Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) relating to 07/08. Revenue relating to 08/09 from WBC was £4.6k. WBC have decided not to grant any funds for the 2009 Christmas Fayre. TVP reserves will allow the Fayre to continue for at least one year (2009) but alternative sources of funding will need to be identified if the future of the Fayre is to be guaranteed. We are seeking advice from WBC on how this might be approached. Costs relating to the Christmas Fayre remained similar to previous years with minor variations due to one off items such as a new banner to promote the event. Overall the Fayre made a loss of £2.6k, inline with previous years and better than budget.

TVP have now begun to invest in the Parish Plan and costs such as printing, research and survey analysis have been incurred. Costs will continue in 09/10 as the next phases of the project have already begun. This is

expected to be the focus of effort and spend in the coming months. Additional funding will need to be found and Kathy continues to apply for grants and other funds in order to underpin the project.

During the financial year, TVP joined The Civic Trust and subsequently renewed for 09/10. Unfortunately, The Civic Trust has since gone in to administration. Although TVP will seek to recover the costs of membership it is unlikely that this will be successful and the full cost of membership has been expensed in 08/09. One benefit of membership of The Civic Trust was access to cheaper insurance. As a result, TVP is now insured with Norwich Union and the insurer has confirmed that this will continue through 09/10 despite TVP no longer being a member of The Civic Trust.

Some headline numbers:

*TVP began the year with £4.2k cash and at the end of this year has £8.0k with the increase due to the late receipt of last years grant payment reducing the opening balance.

*Income of £12.1k was received during the year with £9.3k from two years of the WDC grant and the majority of the remainder relating to Christmas Fayre stall hire and donations.

*Costs during the year were £7.9k with £4.7k relating to the Christmas Fayre and £1.5k relating to Parish Plan work.

*Therefore, the receipts exceeded costs by £3.8k. This increase to reserves can not be expected in future years because we effectively received 2 years of grants in 08/09 due to the late grant payment by WBC for 07/08, and we will not get any grant from WBC in 09/10.

5. Parish Plan Progress report

We did admittedly get off to a bit of a slow start this time last year. There is no statutory guidance for the Parish Plan process unlike the rest of the planning system. A useful "Parish & Community Planning Toolkit" is published for parishes in the South East but this is deliberately not too prescriptive as parishes can vary in size from a couple of hundred residents to places like ourselves with nearly 6,500 people. However, looking back now over just 12 months we have achieved a great deal.

The first stage of the Parish Plan process for Twyford has been to complete 5 very lengthy "healthchecks" or fact finding exercises. The summary Snapshot one was fairly concise and very factual. The remaining 4 are:

- Environment
- Social and Community Issues
- Transport and Accessibility
- Economy and Education.

Again, the factual or statistical questions in all of these have been completed but some of the more subjective questions are awaiting replies from the next stages of the parish plan.

So, we are now at the very exciting main consultation stage. A questionnaire has been drawn up which is being delivered to every household and business in the parish. You will find this inside your copy of Twyford News which you will be receiving from tomorrow onwards. This can either be completed by hand and left at Waitrose or the Library or better still, the questionnaire contains a link enabling you to complete it online. Advance notice of this questionnaire was sent to people on our mailing list and we've had 68 replies already. Andy Nicholls has promised to take us out to lunch if we achieve 700! So here's hoping.

Alongside this questionnaire, we are holding a series of Focus Groups with Senior Citizens, Mums and Toddlers, Environmental Organisations, Women's Groups, Rail commuters, teenagers and local businesses. These meetings give us chance to discuss issues in more depth and start to come up with action points to be included in the final version of the Parish Plan.

We are already being presented with so many possible actions that it is obvious we are going to need working groups to sift through them all and decide which are the most feasible and important. Some actions will be fairly quick and easy to implement, like regular litter-picking events but at the other end of the scale there will be more long-term visions like redeveloping all the 1960's shops and parking area on London Road!

Other actions that keep being mentioned are:

- Obviously the need for a permanent library, but also in conjunction with a parish office, some exhibition space, drop-in centre and a small museum;

- A local authority (as opposed to private) gym, leisure centre including an indoor swimming pool possibly shared with Piggott School;
- Low-key gateway features at the 4 entrances to the village to reduce traffic speed and give more identity to the village;
- Enhancement of Bell Corner;
- Produce new maps of Twyford itself and the surrounding countryside to encourage more walking and cycling. This is being done in conjunction with the existing historical "Village Walks" publication, and work is already underway with this thanks to Gerry Wise of the Loddon Valley Ramblers.

Depending on how many responses we receive to the questionnaire, we hope to have some preliminary results at least to show you at the Donkey Derby on June 7th.

We now need a few more volunteers to help out with these Working or Task Groups to look at these possible actions in a bit more detail to decide if they are worthy of inclusion. Then the aim is to produce a draft Plan by the end of October and put it out to consultation with all the various service providers i.e. people who will be implementing these actions.

On our current timetable we should be celebrating the endorsement of our Parish Plan by WBC and its publication by February of next year.

6. Christmas Fayre committee report – Geoff Pilgrim

The present organising committee have been together since 2005 and they work with great enthusiasm from spring each year to organise the Christmas Fayre. The main event is our stalls. Last year we had 46 stalls – the largest ever. The Scouts and Guides do a wonderful job providing food and drink and we are very grateful to the Scouts for setting up the electrics for the event. Entertainment is provided by the Maidenhead Band, clowns, Pelham's, free face-painting for children, carols from St Mary's church choir and of course Father Christmas (thanks to the Round Table). Unfortunately last year the Fire Engine was unable to make it as it was called out on an emergency. We are also grateful to Twyford Parish Council for their donation towards the Christmas tree which goes up for the whole of December. Sadly, due to past vandalism it was decided not to light the tree this year. We receive donations or donations in kind from 40% of the local businesses we approach and we would very much like to see this increased this year. Funding for last years event came from Wokingham Borough Council, Twyford Parish Council, the Louis Baylis Trust, Waitrose and local businesses. Sadly the funding from Wokingham Borough Council is no longer available. Twyford Village Partnership can fund this year's event from our funds however Wokingham Borough Council have informed us that these sorts of events should be self-funded. They have offered to help us develop good relations with businesses in the area in the hope of getting funding that way, but it means that every year will be a challenge. This years Christmas Fayre will be in Friday 4th December in the centre of the village, we hope that the weather will be kind and hope to see you all there!

7. Friends of Twyford Library report – Stephen Conway

Our hopes of securing a new library on the J W Greens site were dashed when Wokingham Borough Council did not include the costs for this in their capital program – despite the best efforts of many people who met with council officials, including members of Twyford Parish Council, Christian Wrigley and myself. I have lobbied various executive members to put the case for Twyford Library however despite hopeful noises, nothing has happened. The option of securing J W Greens now seems lost, with the lower storey now a restaurant and the upper storey has planning permission to be a gym, but it is still possible that part of J W Greens may become available again in the future. I have had further meetings to discuss alternative funding sources for the lottery, e.g. a lottery bid. If J W Greens does not become available, we still have opportunities to explore other locations.

8. Adoption of new constitution – Kathy Peck

There are certain clauses, such a dispersal of assets that grant-giving organisations look for in a group's constitution before they will consider grant applications from those groups. Unfortunately the TVCMI constitution did not have these clauses and was in need of updating to reflect the changes in membership and committee structure that have occurred as we have changed into the Twyford Village Partnership. The fundamental parts of our constitution, such as the group's aims and objectives, remain unchanged. We have included the option of charging for membership to the group if this becomes necessary for the continuation of the group in the future. Currently however, membership is free on completion of a membership form. It is the recommendation of the Executive Committee that we adopt the Civic Trust model constitution with a few minor modifications. Copies of this document were made available to those present (also available to download from our website). The constitution was adopted by unanimous vote. In response to a question, it was confirmed that groups can join as members of Twyford Village Partnership.

The Executive Committee agreed to continue in their roles and these positions were uncontested. Kathy announced that she would like to stand down as secretary as soon as a replacement could be found (there were no volunteers present) so that she could concentrate on the Parish Plan work.

9. Guest speaker: David Hymers – Chairman of Twyford Parish Council

I was asked to fill in at the last minute to discuss the roles and relationships of Twyford Parish Council and Twyford Village Partnership. When TVCMI was started, the main reason was that it could access grants that the Parish Council could not. The Parish Council is limited to what they can apply for and also what they can spend money on. Also, process through the Parish Council can be slow, as all decisions need to be discussed and agreed on followed a set procedure. The Twyford Village Partnership can react more quickly. To give an example, about 7 or 8 years ago the Parish Council did initiate a Parish Plan themselves and sent out a questionnaire. Unfortunately this did not generate much interest from residents and the Parish Councillor who initiated the project then retired from the Council. This time there is more community enthusiasm and devices such as the electronic questionnaire and e-mail are more prevalent. The Parish Council is very much behind this and hopes that the Parish Plan will encourage Wokingham Borough Council to consider the opinions of Twyford residents when making decisions that affect our residents. The Parish Council are very aware that the money we spend is your money and we have done our best to keep our share of the precept as low as possible each year. For full details please come to the Parish Council's Annual Meeting on May 14th at 8pm at St Marys Church Centre. We are very grateful to Twyford Village Partnership for their work on the Parish Plan and encourage and support that work.

10. Questions / Open discussion

The website is well presented and the work that Sue has done so far on the Parish Plan is fantastic.

How are we going to extend the membership? Could approach community groups, also use the Donkey Derby to encourage more members to join. We hope that it will also follow on from the Focus Groups.

Claire Heather, Eco-prefect for the Piggott secondary school has collected 144 red elastic bands dropped by postmen in her road over the last 3 months. She will be writing to the Post Office to complain about the environmental effects and the waste of money. She has also done a project listing the location of recycling facilities and what is available. It is hoped that this will be published in the next edition of Twyford News. Projects at school include a new pond and orchard area. They are growing their own fruit and veg with the aim of using this produce in the school canteen. The eco-group is also interested in doing a local litter pick.

Twyford Parish Council was invited to take part in the Borough-wide litter pick organised recently, however the Parish Council organised a litter pick in June 2008 that was well advertised and quite a few people turned up to help, but they actually struggled to find much litter. It would be much better to target specific areas e.g. along the A4 near the Piggott school and along the ditch by Stanlake Meadow.

We are very fortunate to live in a safe clean village.

The Henley Arts Trail is taking place from Saturday 23rd – Monday 25th May. The best concentration of artists is in Twyford and their displays are well worth a visit. Leaflets are available.

One solution to combat take-away packaging litter (used in another village to combat sweet wrapper litter) would be to write the person's name on the wrappers so the litterer could be identified. There is a problem with take-away packaging litter in Sycamore Drive where it joins the main road.

11. AOB

Nick Cristo was unable to attend as guest speaker, however we hope to arrange another date for him to come and meet with us. Many people had issues they wanted to raise with Nick, including:

- the closure of public toilets across the Borough
- provision of public toilets for users of King George V playing field (children's play area, ball court, skate park etc)
- the monitoring of services provided by the Borough Council e.g. paving repairs that don't match the original
- there were several actions following a meeting Nick had with Charvil Parish Council that also need pursuing

12. Date of next meeting

Provisionally set for Monday 26th April 2010 at Loddon Hall.