

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY MEETING

THURSDAY 21ST APRIL 2016 7.00pm IN THE VILLAGE HALL, TALBOTS END CROMHALL

There were 14 people present, including 5 Councillors, guests and Clerk. The Chairman welcomed everyone and explained this is a statutory meeting that the Council has to hold – it is a meeting for the residents and no decisions can be made at this meeting.

A minute's silence was held for all the people no longer with us in Cromhall but who have been an integral part of the community.

CHAIRMANS REPORT

"At last year's Annual Parish Assembly, Mr Bernard Doyle, Chairman to the Parish Council, addressed you all and now due to a number of changes on the council, you have me.

The elections in May 2015 (a couple of weeks after the APA) saw a lot of changes to the Parish Council. 3 councillors decided not to re stand – Mr Bernard Doyle, Mr Tim Jeffery and Mr Drew Whitefield. Mr Roland Hobbs, Mr Tim Johnson, Mrs Alex Gent and Mr Mick Line all returned to the Council. 2 new councillors, Mr Dave White and Mr Keith White (me) were welcomed to the Council. The elections were uncontested and as there was one vacancy following the elections, Mr Steve Aston agreed to be co-opted on to the council. (Mr Aston had been a councillor previously – but due to work commitments had stood down – however – finding more time on his hands – he felt able to return). At the first Parish Council Meeting Mr Tim Johnson was elected as Chairman and Mr Mick Line as Vice Chairman.

The year has continued to be somewhat turbulent. Mr Doyle, Mr Jeffery and Mr Whitefield should be thanked for their service to the council. Both Mr Doyle and Mr Whitefield served as Chairman / Vice Chairman. Drew had decided not to re-stand last May due to failing health and it was with much sadness that we heard of his death in September. He is remembered fondly by many, as was shown at his service of remembrance held at St Leonards Church in Tortworth. Drew was involved in village life for many years, not only serving on the Parish Council but supporting St Andrews School and Church. He wore the chain of office with pride, and was always happy to help wherever he could.

2015 – 16 was a year of 'Goodbyes' – Mrs Esther Saunders, Head Teacher of St Andrews school retired after 17 years and a wonderful tea party was held on the last day of term which saw Students, Teachers, Parents and Governors from over the years attending and wishing her well. Revered Jenny d'Estere also retired in July / August 2015 leaving a big gap not only at St Andrews Church but around the benefice.

Just as the Parish Council thought things were settling down in November 2015 Hannah Saunders Parish Clerk handed in her notice. We were fortunate in New Year to recruit Daphne Dunning to the position and for those of you who haven't met Daphne, we Welcome her this evening to her first Annual Parish Assembly. Like Daphne, this is my first Annual Assembly too! I was elected as Chairman earlier in the month when Mr Tim Johnson resigned as Chairman and from the Parish Council. Tim has been involved with the Parish Council since 2010 and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all his hard work and dedication and wish him well for the future. As such we now have a Casual Vacancy! There are notices about this at the back if you fancy joining the council then please speak to one of us after the meeting and we can let you know a bit more. So as I was saying a turbulent year for the Parish Council, hopefully things will settle down now as we enter 2016.

I won't speak for much longer other than to briefly fill you in as to what else (other than filling vacancies) the Parish Council has been up to:

- The Village Plan – has been completed and action plan drawn up.
- One of these actions is investigating whether residents are interested in carrying out a Neighbourhood Plan. This has been discussed at length and some leaflets were sent out with last copy of 5 Alive to gauge opinion. Thank you to those of you that took time to fill in. I won't bore you with the details of why Cromhall and other surrounding villages are having to consider a Neighbourhood Plan but given situation that South Gloucestershire Council are in need to find more land to develop as they don't have a 5-year housing land supply (as demonstrated at appeal last year – Charfield Green), the village is at risk of development. A Neighbourhood Plan won't stop this development BUT it will mean that we can have a say in the type of development and what we get out of it so that we get the best for existing residents and future residents / generations.
- A Neighbourhood Plan will cost money and it will take time and commitment and as such the precept is likely to have to be increased – another reason for finding out what people's thoughts are on the subject. There are grants available but this would only cover part of the cost.
- Broadband has played a key part in the year. Although Cromhall was part of Phase One of the BDUK roll out it has seen mixed results with those properties being either near to cabinet on Cow Ship Lane or those being near to Falfield Exchange benefitting, but a large number in the middle of the village are still struggling with slow speeds that in this day really aren't acceptable. More money has been set aside by both government and local council to look into this and I can assure you that the Parish Council will stay on top of this and hopefully can see some further improvements.
- The Quarry Liaison Group continues to meet on a quarterly basis and one of the initiatives that has been underway at Wickwar Quarry has been the installation of their gas pipeline. This does mean that some residents in Cromhall will have the choice of moving over to gas in the future if they so desire. The Parish Council appreciate that the contractors have made a bit (putting it mildly) of a mess of certain roads/verges and with other parties are endeavouring to sort this out.
- The Safer Stronger Group meets again now at the Chapel only 3 times a year but it is good that it is still going.
- Speed Watch are pretty active in the village and one of the other areas that has come out of the Parish Plan is road safety so the Parish Council is working actively with S Glos Council and highways to look at reducing speeds to what they should be.
- If you take a wander up to Hawkers Knapp you will see some trees that have been planted – making this area even more of a haven for wildlife. Thank you to Tim Johnson and to Roland Hobbs for all the hard work they have put in up there.

I am going to sign off now and we will then open the floor to Questions”.

VILLAGE REPORTS

Poor Allotments Charity by Sue Wray

The object of the charity is for the relief of the poor in the parish of Cromhall. Any one can apply for help as long as they are in genuine need – in years gone by coal may have been provided for heating but now-a-days it is difficult to know if there is anyone in hardship and the income is distributed to Senior Citizens, near Christmas, in the way of vouchers to be used in the village shop.

The charity raises funds by the sale of 'Grass Keep' annually on land which it owns (Jubilee Lane). The land cannot be sold and only the income from the land can be used for the purpose of the charity.

The charity is run by four appointed trustees who all have to be appointed by the Parish Council – currently the trustees are Eric Scolding, Gordon Cornock, Caroline Massey and Tony Bryant. However Tony is resigning and a new trustee is needed. (Any volunteers? – Trustees meet only once or occasionally twice a year.)

Brief presentation of Accounts 2015

Income was generated primarily by the Grass Keep - £1,700 and a Rural Payment Agency payment of £1,300 plus small sums including water refund and electricity wayleave.

Total income = £3,220

(The RPA will not continue so this year the income is expected to be considerably less.)

Expenditure included water rates, secretary fee, agent's fees and the Christmas Gifts (£1,140)

Total expenditure = £1,660

Profit over the year = £1,550

Trustees agreed that the profit should be maintained so that this year, and in the near future, the value of the gift need not be reduced.

The Charity holds £22,000 in the bank.

Trustees:

Gordon Cornock, willing to stand needs to be re-elected 2016

Tony Bryant, resigning, new appointment needed in 2016

Eric Scolding, due for re-election in 2018

Caroline Massey, due for re-election in 2018

School Report - Mike Line, Community Governor at St Andrew's Primary School, Cromhall

The school currently has 64 children on roll, with 26 in the Infants and 38 in the Juniors.

The last year has seen changes at the school due to the appointment of our new head teacher Mrs Green who has settled in well and is doing a sterling job.

This school year will have seen an introduction of four houses for the children to be part of, after many suggestions they were named Townwell, Talbots end, Heathend and Bibstone.

The children have also enjoyed many trips; Highlights include Cardiff Castle, The Holborn museum in Bath and also the Redgrave theatre to watch a production of Wind in the Willows.

In school KS2 children have been learning the French horn and have even put on a concert for parents to hear their progress.

Extra-curricular activities continue to be well attended with recorder club, tag rugby, football and board games all taking place on a weekly basis. The children have also been attending tournaments such as cross country, small schools football and dodgeball.

Children are also being given opportunities to lead collective worship mainly through drama; a house each week is responsible for leading one assembly. The children are enjoying this and it is working well.

The Governors continue to go from strength to strength by attending many courses to learn new skills and support Mrs Green in her new role.

A new IT system has been integrated into the school which will help the teachers exchange information better to improve education also a new parent mail texting service is up and running and will be used to inform parents of any changes and when news letters are issued.

I will finish by saying a big thank you to Mrs Green and all the staff for everything they do for the children.

Grants made during the year:

Village Hall Toddler Group	£100
Citizens Advice Bureau	£100
St Andrews School	£500
5vAlive	£300
St Peters Hospice	£100
1st Woodend Scouts	£200
St Andrews Church – churchyard	£750

1st Woodend Scouts outlined what their grant was used for
Stephen Youngs accepted the grant of £750 towards the up-keep of the churchyard.

PRESENTATIONS BY:

Martin Tidman from Wessex Water gave a presentation on the challenges in maintaining sewers in the parish and an update on planned repairs.

Robert Moreton from the Tortworth estate gave an illuminating talk on "Tortworth Brook and its challenges"

Stephen Youngs gave a fascinating talk on the challenges in maintaining St Andrews Church

The chairman thanked the presenters and parishioners for attending.

Meeting closed at 2130hrs