

# **Annual Parish Meeting**

Minutes of a Meeting held in the Pearce Suite, Memorial Hall, Trull  
on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2006 at 7.00 pm.

## **1.0 Welcome by the Chairman of Trull Parish Council**

1.1 Mr. Geoff Hewett, Chairman of Trull Parish Council, welcomed those present and explained the format for the evening. The meeting was to be followed by the scheduled Parish Council meeting and all were welcome to attend.

## **2.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

2.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2005 were agreed and duly signed by the Chairman.

## **3.0 Matters Arising**

3.1 There were no matters arising.

## **4.0 Chairman's Report**

### **4.1 Post Offices**

Reference was made to the importance of the Post Office and other local amenities within the Parish, with particular emphasis being given to the potential threat of rural Post Offices being closed in the near future. It was imperative that awareness was raised and to campaign against any adverse decision being made in respect of Trull.

### **4.2 Councillors**

There had been three resignations during the course of the previous year, but all had been replaced under the co-opt scheme. Councillors John Guy, Ann Hudson and Nick Hudson were introduced to the audience. It was stated that they were enthusiastic and capable members of the Council and were making a significant contribution.

### **4.3 Precept**

The budget set meeting held in December 2005 had considered a number of community based projects and the majority had been approved. Despite the anticipated costs involved for these items, the precept had been maintained at the same level as the previous year. Thanks were given for the support of the SCC District Award Scheme, which had provided a very welcome contribution to the income.

### **4.4 TAP**

The Trull Action Plan had been published in 2005 following a wide-ranging survey and consultation, and it had received the overall support of the Parish Council. One of the main priorities within the plan was to reduce the level of dog fouling within the playing field and a number of measures were being implemented, such as fencing off of the top and bottom of the field with access gates for the footpaths. Members of the Parish Council will be working with the TAP organisers on other specific tasks in due course.

### **4.5 Party in the Park**

The event would be held again on 1<sup>st</sup> July after having had a rest year in 2005. Mr. Barry Bloxham was very advanced with the programme planning and the success of the previous events was likely to be repeated.

#### 4.6 Planning

The Parish Council acts as a consultee for applications made to the Borough Council that are within the Parish. During the course of the year, a total of 50 applications were considered. Of these, 34 were supported, objections lodged on 8 and 'no comment' recorded on the remaining 8. TDBC subsequently made only 4 decisions that were contrary to the Council's recommendations.

The Regional Spatial Strategy had been debated on a number of occasions, and the Council was keeping a watching brief on the situation, as well as maintaining close links with the TDBC Forward Planning Unit Manager. It was noted that Mr. Archer had arranged for the Officer to attend the next Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June in order to answer any questions that may arise.

It was advised that the Gatchell Oaks development was currently on schedule, and represented the single largest increase in units within the Parish in recent years. Completion of the site was due on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

Mr. Archer was thanked for his significant contribution as the Planning Lead Councillor.

#### 4.7 Playing Field

The playing field continued to be well used and was a strong feature in the TAP. With the grant aid received from the SCC District Award Grant, three wooden benches had been replaced and an additional metal bench was waiting to be installed in the under 5s play area. A replacement litterbin had also been purchased and was due to be installed when the new fencing had been erected.

#### 4.8 Footpaths

The footpaths were in good condition at the present time and credit must be given to Mr. John Guy, who recently took over this role and now commits a considerable amount of time clearing the footpaths and liaising with the SCC Rights of Way team. Numerous improvements had been made to the gates, stiles and signs, with the most noticeable being laying hardcore to the surface of Claremont Lane. Further work in this area was planned for later in the year.

#### 4.9 Allotments

The allotments were as popular as ever, and all of the 31 available plots were let. The rent remained at a very reasonable £14.00 per annum and represented good value. A number of small storage sheds had been erected, following a request from the Tenants at the now annual meeting in October.

#### 4.10 Newsletter

The Newsletter continued to go from strength to strength, and was a useful link between the Council and parishioners. Thanks were given to the Editor, Mrs. Wooldridge, and to the Post Office and Trull Stores for their part in distributing the copies.

#### 4.11 Web Site

The web site had undergone development by a local company, Mediakitchen. It was now intended to make it available to other local interests, such as Trull Scouts.

#### 4.12 Somerset Highways

There had been a number of issues raised with Somerset Highways, and it had proved difficult to resolve them on occasion. Agreement had been given from the Assistant Highways Services Manager to treat the area outside Trull Stores and a limited amount of surface dressing to Honiton Road later in the financial year. It was also planned to hold a site meeting with the Assistant Manager in the autumn.

The Chairman thanked the members of the Parish Council for their enthusiasm and hard work, and looked forward to completing the agreed projects during the forthcoming year. A request was made for any questions at this point and the following were raised: -

4.13 Mr. Barry Bloxham referred to the issue of rural Post Offices being rationalised and queried the source of the information. The Chairman stated that it had been obtained from the proprietor of Trull PO and that he had written a letter of concern to Mr. Jeremy Brown MP. A prompt reply had been received on 21<sup>st</sup> April pledging support if needed. Mr. Martin-Scott indicated that up to 60% of the rural Post Offices in Somerset were under review and could close in the summer. Mr. Bloxham offered his assistance in this matter if it were necessary.

4.14 Mr. David Roberts stated that the postal collections times were deteriorating. Mr. Martin-Scott agreed and advised that he had written a letter of complaint to the independent monitoring body, Postwatch.

5.0 **Financial Report for 2005/6**

5.1 The Clerk gave a report on the financial position of Trull Parish Council. The accounts had been subject to an Internal Audit on 2<sup>nd</sup> May and were found to be satisfactory. The appointed External Auditors, Moore Stephens of Bath, would be undertaking a further Audit on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2006.

5.2 It was explained that the total expenditure for the year was £16,478.75 plus £1,306.88 VAT (£17,785.63). The expenditure was divided under six main headings as follows: -

- a) Playing Field & Open Spaces      £3,510.60      For utility bills, provision and repairs to the play equipment, payments for grass cutting contract, dog bin servicing and the maintenance of two mowers.
- b) Allotments                              £265.83      For the supply of water and compost.
- c) Footpaths                                £4,342.00      For cleaning and maintenance. (Includes repairs to Carter's Way footpath).
- d) General Administration            £6,763.10      For the purchase of stationary, postage and printing costs, Clerk's salary, subscriptions, donations, insurance premium and Audit fees.
- e) Party in the Park                      £1,097.22      Return of funds.
- f) Web Site                                  £500.00      Development cost

The total receipts for the year were: -

	£	
Precept on Trull Council Tax Payers received via Taunton Deane Borough Council	10,000.00	
Allotment Rents	406.00	
Taunton Deane Borough Council Grant:		
Church Yard Maintenance	335.00	
Open Spaces	700.00	
Footpaths	<u>175.00</u>	
	1,210.00	1,210.00

VAT Refund 2004/5	626.50
Village of the Year Award	50.00
SCC District Award Grant:	
TAP	1,500.00
Litter bin	240.00
Gross Interest Received	157.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,190.15</b>

5.3 The Total Balances of the Parish Council as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 were £9,846.24

## 6.0 **Village Charity Reports**

### 6.1 **Parish Lands Charity**

The Chairman advised that this report would not be available until June. Mr. John Guy, as Treasurer of the Charity, gave a verbal summary and advised that the investment portfolio is currently returning a profit of £15 – 20k per annum.

### 6.2 **Trull Village Memorial Halls**

A financial report was not available at the meeting but Mr. Barry Bloxham, as Chair of the Development Committee, gave a summary of the current position regarding a replacement facility. A meeting had recently been held between the Development Committee and the Executive in order to approve the 3<sup>rd</sup> draft of the drawings. It was agreed that these were now suitable for public consultation, and the Executive had been asked to appoint a Quantity Surveyor to establish indicative costs for the new building. It was noted that the old Village Hall would be sold to offset the construction costs involved. A date would be advised of when the consultation would be held in due course.

### 6.3 **Trull, Pitminster and Corfe Almshouse and Relief in Sickness**

Mr. Keyte, Trull Parish Councillor, stated that a financial report was not yet available. It was explained that the Parish Council had a seat on the board of Trustees and that Mr. Keyte attended the meetings. The four properties concerned are located at Sellicks Green, Pitminster, and it was noted that a number of windows had recently been replaced. Income for ongoing maintenance is limited as it is derived from the rental charges and there are restrictions on how these are set.

## 7.0 **Any Other Business**

7.1 There were no additional items.

## 8.0 **Questions from the Public**

8.1 Mr. David Roberts advised that DEFRA had contributed to the costs of building a new Village Hall at Stockland. Mr. Martin-Scott stated that the committee had examined all known sources of funding but in this particular instance, Trull was classified as an associated settlement to Taunton and was therefore not eligible for funding.

8.2 Mr. John Webb queried why the Trull Parish Lands Charity report was not available. Mr. Guy explained that this was due to the Charity changing the year-end date from December to April several years ago. This meant that the financial information was not available for the May meeting, but a report would be presented at the June Parish Council meeting. Mr. Webb also expressed some concern about the effect of inflation on the capital sum since the sale of Ladylawn. Mr. Guy confirmed that only income was distributed, but he would try and investigate the point further. The majority of the capital sum was invested in the Stock Market.

8.3 Mr. Barry Bloxham referred to the Parish Party in the Park and encouraged parishioners to support the event. There had been good support from sponsors and a wide variety of activities were planned.

9.0 **An address on 'The Role of the SCC Rights of Way Team'**

9.1 Ms. Tamsyn Matthews of the Somerset County Council Rights of Way Team explained that SCC were responsible for ensuring that the public were able to use and enjoy all of the identified footpaths, bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATS) within the county.

Somerset currently has one of largest rights of way networks in the country, being some 3,752 in length. Trull has 57 footpaths and accounts for 14.9 miles of this total. By way of comparison, Devon is almost 50% larger in area but has only 3,045 miles of public rights of way.

The implementation of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 placed a duty on Councils to develop a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) by 2007. This must consider the opportunities provided by the RoW network for exercise, tourism and the rural economy. It was estimated that the South West Coast Path generates some £300M for the regions economy and helps to support 7,500 jobs.

The RoWIP will be a consultative exercise and will not seek to increase the network as this would lead to increased maintenance costs. Priority will be given instead to creating 'missing' links that will enable off road circular routes and facilitate long distance trails. In addition, provision for use of the network by those with poor mobility and impaired vision will be a prime concern.

There were a number of new projects underway, such as a bespoke data base that would be made available to the public on 1<sup>st</sup> July - the entire RoW had been digitised onto a mapping programme. Related information and maps could be accessed on the SCC website, and volunteer working groups were being set up to help keep the paths clear.

Questions from the audience were invited and the following were raised: -

Mr. Neville Sharp advised that the footpath at Sweethay was overgrown and currently not in a condition to be used.

Mr. Sid French referred to the numerous stiles and fences that farmers are obliged to maintain at their cost. It was advised that funding up to a maximum of 25% of the cost could be reclaimed from SCC but this was becoming restricted.

Mr. Don Archer stated that he was a member of a local walking group and queried the issues relating to accessibility and the DDA. It was asked if consideration had been given to replacing the stiles at either end of Trull Meadow, and it was advised that stiles were being replaced with gates where possible but control of livestock was a consideration.

Mr. Peter Parris stated that footpaths were mainly used for leisure and therefore should go around the edges of fields. It was explained that although the improvement plan may present an opportunity, the paths followed the routes given in the definitive map and any deviation from this would require a legal process.

Mr. Martin-Scott commented that the recently opened 36-mile Coleridge Way footpath linking the Quantock Hills with Exmoor National Park was proving to be extremely popular.

The Chairman thanked Tamsyn for attending the meeting and for giving a very interesting insight into the work of the Rights of Way Team.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.15 pm.

Signed.....  
Chairman of Trull Parish Council

Date.....