

## **Milborne St. Andrew Parish Council AGM. 28<sup>th</sup> May 2010.**

### **A report by Sue Gould**

The AGM of the Milborne St Andrew Parish Council took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> May in the main hall. After the crowded noisy atmosphere on the previous Wednesday, I was expecting similar numbers, but only about 15 members of the public attended. The Parish Councillors had hoped to be able to action some of the decisions not made at the last meeting, but rules are that 3 whole days have to elapse to allow people to read a new Agenda. So the fact that, once again, there was only two councillors attending, made little difference to the outcome. As no one showed any interest in taking over the Chair, Simon agreed to take this responsibility for another year, although he had intended to step aside.

AGM's can be a pretty dry affair, as it necessitates all the yearly reports to be presented, but some of the reports were quite illuminating. Anne Snape put in her final report about the footpaths, what became very clear from her report, that despite repeatedly asking the footpaths department to deal with things like overgrown paths, dangerous or broken stiles, and flooding, Mr and Mrs Snape ended up doing the work themselves, as nothing was actioned.

Simon's report showed how difficult it is to be all things to all people, but also showed that some projects could be completed. I include here a few edited highlights.

"This year has been a very busy year for the Parish Council made all the more difficult by the loss of a couple of Councillors retiring and I thank all members past and present for their hard work, time and support in often very challenging circumstances. The work of Councillors seems rather thankless and all my past public service and community roles over the years have not quite prepared me for this job of Parish Councillor.

I agreed to continue as Chairman back in May 2009 knowing that there were still tasks to complete and projects close to fruition. The Parish Plan Questionnaire had been published, awaiting results. We had been working on a number of projects of concern to residents. Many of these were highways related and sometimes partnership working with DCC and NDCC can lead to delays. It is pleasing to report therefore that a number of the schemes have now been realised.

The pavement at Lane End has now been completed together with installation of the gates, which residents can access on foot for informal sport and recreation. The Council was successful in the grant funding application of £5000 from CPEND for continuing that path down to the pavilion. The Council successfully worked with Dorset County Council Rights of Way to open the footpath behind St Andrews View. We welcome a new Footpath Warden, Peter Anthony and thank Mr and Mrs Snape for all their hard work with our local paths.

The Council successfully lobbied Dorset County Council to convert under-powered, vehicle activated signs (VAS) - 30mph warning signs set at each end of the village, from battery to mains power. It is pleasing to see that these works are now being completed as I report. Parking at the shop has been of concern and the Council initiated and funded white lining of the shop car park, I'm told this seems to be working well and my thanks go to Dave Andrews, Ed Frost and Tony at Grays Stores for making it possible.

The works to the crossing point at the A354 and corner of Milton Road have now been completed and the second agreed phase involving the landscaping of the corner would also have been completed by now had it not been for a group of residents signing a petition to Dorset County Council, seeking to stop said works. Councillors have met with concerned residents and heard views and have taken on board some recommendations for adjusting the scheme, although with the time delays it may now be that Milborne St Andrew will have lost the funding for the required ground works anyway.

Dogs, or rather dog *owners* have been a persistent problem in not cleaning up properly after their pets. Virtually every Parish Council meeting this year has involved some discussion on this to the point where I've even pleaded for no more poo stories! Two of the three desired bin moves have now been relocated, and we have encouraged residents to report incidents to the District Council Dog Warden.

Councillors have considered the move of the Dorchester bound bus stop from its current position to the lay-by at Blandford Hill by the Telephone Exchange. Resident views are mixed, although Parish Plan figures indicate a majority in favour.

Council have continued monitoring the flow of the stream and have kept in touch with the Environment Agency. The current Flood Wardens wish to retire, it will be important that Council can secure new volunteers to take over this crucial role. We thank Mr Andrews and Mr Cullum for their work as Wardens. This year we were also concerned with ice on the pavements and roads and Council have now agreed to fund some grit bins. Locations will need to be identified, but it would be expected that the hills around St Andrews View and Milborne First School are a priority.

Council also have had meetings with the Village Hall regarding provision for our youth. Concerns were raised over location of equipment and of ongoing maintenance, it was agreed that Councillors would work with the aspirations of the Village Hall Trustees where appropriate, and especially where there was potential for local public money to be required at some point in its ongoing maintenance or future replacement.

It is disappointing that the middle and lower area of the Sports Field site has not yet been grassed but a poor winter delayed stone picking which I believe has now re-commenced and with the new storage container for maintenance equipment, it is hoped that the facility will see further improvements and especially at a time when the Football Team has had such success with its promotion to the next division – well done all involved!

Many of the schemes I have outlined here were talked of when the Parish Plan was first being developed and the year ahead for Council will be largely shaped by the outcomes of the Parish Plan Questionnaire and further consultation, of which recent experiences have shown that no amount of consultation is ever enough. It will be for the whole community to respect the needs of the few but the desires of the majority and to respect the independent, expert opinion, ahead of any personal prejudice. To understand that with gain, can also come sacrifice. I hope Council will lead, where it can, with fairness, dignity and impartiality, as Milborne St Andrew considers its future direction informed by the Parish Plan.”

The meeting continued with a presentation of the findings of the Parish Plan by Tony Dyer, which took 5 years to complete from “idea” to “documentation”. He highlighted that, by completing this plan, the village then have an evidence based document that could be used to, for instance, counter any pressures on excessive housing development.

At the end of the meeting, the public once again re-iterated their concern over the corner planting. Whilst many of the issues were similar to those on the previous Wednesday, it was presented in a calmer manner, however it was very clear that these would have to be addressed in further meetings. Some said that the flowerbed was OK (if smaller), but the seat would be abused, some that the flower bed would be a mess, but the seat was OK. Another asked for boxes similar to those at the Royal Oak.

And here endeth another Parish Council Meeting.....

Sue Gould