

**CROPTHORNE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Monday 3rd April 2006 in
Crophthorne and Charlton Village Hall at 7.30pm**

Present: E Taylor (Chair)
J King (V/Chair) WCC Cllr E Eyre
R Tisdall
A Hughes
T Meikle
C Whittington

In Attendance: R J Coles (Clerk) 15 Parishioners

Copies of the Agenda and the Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st March 2006 were available to all present.

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Apologies were received from Hilary Hall & Lucy Horne, Parish Path Wardens and WDC Cllr M Meikle.
3. The minutes from the meeting on 4th April 2005, having been previously circulated, were proposed for signing as a true record by David Miller, seconded by John Ayliffe and agreed.
4. Matters arising from the minutes –
 - a) WCC has issued two new definitive Parish Footpath maps to the clerk and the Wardens. The information is also available on their website. Further copies are not available until WCC marketing decides on what services to provide to support the information.
5. It was proposed by Chair Liz Taylor and seconded by Cllr Tom Meikle that the Receipts and Payments Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2006, having been previously circulated, be approved for onward auditing and finalisation at the Parish Council Annual Meeting on Tuesday 2nd May 2006. The meeting agreed.
6. The Chairman gave her report (copy attached).
7. Hilary Hall & Lucy Horne, Parish Path Wardens, submitted a report in their absence delivered by V/Chair Jacqui King (copy attached).
8. A report of The Randolph Meakins, Patty's Farm and Widow Lye Charity was given by Mr John Ayliffe, Chairman of the Charity (copy attached).
9. The Chairman asked if there were any questions from the floor: -

- Mr David Miller asked why the precept had increased 8% for this year and Hilary Harris also pointed out the potential rise of 60% over 5 years was indicated. Chair Taylor replied that the adoption of advice from CALC to hold reasonable reserves, coupled with a £3,500 donation to the Village Hall £330,000 appeal and partially financing a lengthsman had made the increases necessary. It was pointed out that there were substantial contingencies included which if not spent would allow future increases to be eliminated and a possible reduction to take place always assuming that the future Parish Plan did not identify additional needs.
- Sandy Hewitt asked where the balances were invested and was informed that they were held in a 30 day Account.
- Chris Hall and Peter Harris requested further information with regards to the recent Affordable Housing open evening given by Nexus. There was some confusion as to whether a needs survey of a few years ago was ever completed and its results fed back. Concern was expressed over ‘need’ and ‘locals’ taking precedence. This point needs clarifying and it is planned that the June Council meeting will invite Nexus to present their findings and provide clarification of what is being proposed and how it can be protected. Peter Harris indicated that the land in question may have been given a special status in years gone by.
- WCC Cllr Eyre stated that footpaths were subject to needs and therefore budgets were in favour of urban areas at the expense of rural. Verge work was only agreed to if safety was an issue. Local roads are in reasonable repair but work often took a long time to complete due to batching of needs in an area in order to improve contractor/cost efficiencies, lengthsman can provide some help. A decline in percentage of Council expense from Central Government was pushing up Council Tax locally. Most money goes on Education, then Social Services. WCC are no 1 in the country for value for money. Police improvements in local areas are being promised through extra beat officers and support officers centrally funded.
- David Miller thanked retiring Chair Liz Taylor on behalf of the Village for all she had done over the past few years.
- Cllr Richard Tisdall appealed for volunteers with either specialist knowledge or general helpers with the forthcoming Parish Plan exercise. Affordable Housing would no doubt be on the agenda.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm

Signed:

Date:

Chairman