

**Minutes of the Stratton-on-the-Fosse Annual Parish Meeting
Held in the Village Hall
on Monday 28 April 2003 at 7.30 p.m.**

PRESENT: Councillors Mr J D Padfield (Chairman), Mrs J Davies, Mrs A Chisholm, Mr A Norris, Mr D J Stock, Mr W Quinn, Mrs J Gibson, Mrs Tonks.

IN ATTENDANCE: Clerk, Dist Cllr Dr P Gait, Mr André Fournier.

At the start of the Meeting 12 members of the public were present.

1. APOLOGIES: Mr R F Jones (Vice Chairman), Cllr Maj R T W Mellotte, Mr J Dando (MSN Rugby Club), Mrs M Jones (WRBL), Mrs R Bailey (St Vigor & St John).

2. MINUTES of the previous Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 22 April 2002 were approved and signed as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING:

There were none.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

The Chairman highlighted a few matters that this council discussed during the past year: -

4. 1 To celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee last June, the village arranged a Fete based at the Royal British Legion. Various side shows, a children's party, together with distributing of the commemorative mugs to them followed by a disco in the evening. There was also a garden party at Fosse House Nursing Home. The Parish Council believes it was a great success and it was proposed to hold a similar event bi-annually.
4. 2 The extension to the Burial ground has become a saga. The boundary wall was to be removed and rebuilt on the boundary of the extension, but the Parish Council was then informed by the Diocese of Bath and Wells that the existing wall was listed and could not be removed. As the Duchy of Cornwall insisted that the new boundary wall should be built of stone, the Council felt it was ludicrous to have this small extension abounded by two 6ft high walls. The Duchy was contacted again, pointing out the Council's objections with suggestions that a post and rail fence together with a hedge would be more acceptable. They agreed - so hopefully this project can be finalised soon.
4. 3 The new Council is to be elected in May and only 10 candidates have replied. The Council needs 2 more people to apply.
4. 4 The Chairman reported at last years meeting that there was a proposal to create a Leisure Complex on land owned by Downside Abbey Trustees, which if proceeded with might involve selling the Village Hall site to part-fund the project. This project will not now proceed.
4. 5 The Parish Council had to raise quite a large sum of money over a number of years to fund the burial ground extension, but with the much reduced financial cost of the scheme it has been able to pass on some of these monies to the Village Hall Trust to fund some crucial maintenance work.
4. 6 Parishioners have, no doubt, seen yellow-coated councillors pointing a speed gun at them (that is if they drive). The Chairman hoped that everyone had been driving within the speed limit. The Parish Council joined the scheme recently, by which Stratton-on-the-Fosse share a speed gun with other parishes. The councillors are trained by the police to operate the equipment and have the power to report speeding motorists to the police who in turn send a warning letter to the motorist. Subsequent offences can result in prosecution.

- 4.7 The web-site for the parish Council is up and running – thanks to Roddy Mellotte. The Chairman requested parishioners keep him up-dated with information.
- 4.8 Most of the village is covered by the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. The only areas not covered are The Mead, Bath View and Horne Close and the row of houses at the southern end of the village. The Parish Council would encourage those areas to join up, as it is definitely a good idea, particularly with increased rural crime.
- 4.9 On behalf of Councillors, the Chairman wished to thank Valerie Attwood for her unstinting work as the parish's Clerk and to Dr Philip Gait, its District Councillor, for his attendance and advice. Unfortunately, the Chairman could not say the same for Stratton's County Councillor, who has never attended a meeting or has made little contact with the Council.

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk gave a detailed Financial Report of Income & Expenditure for the Financial Year 2002/2003. The Accounts were made available for inspection.

6. REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS AND SCHOOLS:

The following Organisations and Schools presented very detailed and in-depth reports to the Meeting. These will be available to any person wishing to study them more closely.

- 6.1 ST BENEDICT'S PRIMARY SCHOOL – Presented by the headmaster Mr Cahill.
- 6.2 ROYAL BRITISH LEGION – Presented by Mr Bill James, Secretary.
- 6.3 VILLAGE HALL TRUST – Presented by Mr Tony Price, Chairman.
- 6.4 MIDSOMER NORTON RFC – In the absence of Mr J Dando, Treasurer the Chairman read out the report that he had forwarded.
- 6.5 ST VIGORS & ST JOHNS PRIMARY SCHOOL – Presented by the Head, Mrs Rosemary Bailey.
- 6.6 LITTLE ANGELS - TODDLER'S GROUP – Presented by Mrs Sue Padfield.
- 6.7 THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION WOMEN'S SECTION – In the absence of Mrs Mary James, Hon Secretary, the Chairman read out the report that had been forwarded.

7. SPEAKER – CAM VALLEY WILDLIFE GROUP

- 7.1 Mr André Fournier, Chairman of the local Cam Valley Wildlife Group, had been invited to give a talk on the group's activities. He had intended to include a slide show with his talk but, unfortunately at the last minute, his Projector was found to be faulty. Undeterred, he carried on and the meeting was given a most interesting and informative talk.
- 7.2 He explained that the Group was an independent group, but it worked with, and some of its members belonged to, other large groups within the area. It held regular walks – most being able to be enjoyed by all the family and talks – four at the Centurion Hotel. Topics such as birds and botany were covered and also surveys undertaken for National purposes, but also towards a local Flora Handbook. Workdays were also arranged such as hedge laying at Radford Farm. The next Owl Watch would be held on 29 May 2003 and those wishing to participate should ring to book, as the group size is limited and it would be cancelled in the event of rain. He stated that his personal interest was “animals at night” and gave those present an insight into what that entailed.

7.3 **Barn Owl Conservation** – the reason why they don't breed being the modern farming methods and loss of hedgerows, which creates a decline in the number of voles and therefore less food for the owls. There are 9 sites at present in the area equalling 6 breeding pairs (with 1 pair in Paulton). **Barn Owls** don't hoot - their call is like a screech, their young are very noisy and loud – sounding like snoring! **Tawny Owls** nest in trees and also boxes and the sound they make is the typical "twit-twoo" noise associated with owls – although it takes two owls, not one owl, to make this call. (The male makes the "twit" and the female makes the "twoo".) This is the most common species in this area. **Long eared Owls** are rare in this area, although there is a pair in Priddy. They often nest in old crow nests and inhabit conifer woodland. They make a "Whooo" sound. **Short-eared Owls** are *very* rare in this area. Their natural habitat are salt marshes and estuaries where they nest in the ground. The sound they make is akin to a chimpanzee – "oo-oo-ooo-oo". **Small Owls** are originally from the Mediterranean and the Victorians brought them back and released them in Leicestershire. It makes a bird sound and nests in hedgerows and farmland. It eats insects from cow pats and it was very common but is now on the decline, not only in this area but in Europe as a whole, owing to crop management by farmers ie spraying and removal of hedges. **Snowy Owls** are very large and breed in Scotland. **Eagle Owls** are very vicious to other birds and if they escape into the countryside, from private ownership or zoos, it is important that they are captured as they endanger the local wildlife.

7.4 **Bat conservation** and surveys are carried out by the Group. There are 16 species of Bats in Great Britain – 10 in this area! They are split into 2 groups:

1. **Mouse featured** of which **Pipensel** is the commonest – it nests in new houses and sounds like dwarfs clapping, **Ceratiens**, and **Nocturals**, which are large and fly at dusk with swifts – they make "pop-goes-the-weasel" sound.

2. **Horseshoe**, which have a leaf structure over nose, consists of **Greater** – these are very rare and **Lesser** – these inhabit the South West region. (Bishops Palace at Wells.)

7.5 The Chairman thanked André Fournier for a fascinating talk and commented that he had done extremely well without the aid of projector.

8. MATTERS OF REPORT & ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:

The Chairman thanked all those present, with a special thank you to the ladies who had prepared the food, and invited them to attend the Cheese and Wine Party that followed.

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 9.0 0p.m.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____