

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Gurnard Electors held in the main hall at Gurnard Primary School in Hilton Road, Gurnard on Tuesday 28th April 2009 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: 22 electors, IW Councillor Hobart, 2 Safer Neighbourhood Officers, Kathy Barter (speaker), Sheila Caws (speaker) and the Parish Clerk.

1. PRESENTATION: “A LIFE OF SERVICE AT OSBORNE HOUSE” WITH KATHY BARTER

Kathy Barter gave a fascinating insight into a life of service in the non-pavilion sections of Osborne House which were used as an officers' convalescent home. Kathy started work there at 15 years of age and made this her life's work until retirement at 60 years of age! Her presentation was very detailed in terms of all the chores and daily routines that were all part of working life at the home, but what really came across is just how hard she had to work - with very little time off! Her week was a basic 48 hours, and Sundays were treated as a day off plus another half day off in the week. There were different uniforms for different times of the day often to include a starched collar, and there was an inspection regime of living quarters that was not dissimilar to the military – all staff worked on a “live-in” basis until about 15 years before she retired, at which time the uniform standards were also relaxed to overalls and tabards. Another striking point was not just the volume of work that each day was filled with, often starting at 6.30am, but that very high standards were expected without the benefit of today's modern materials and cleaning techniques! Kathy was thanked for the revelation of her life at Osborne, and questions followed.

2. PRESENTATION: “GURNARD PAST AND PRESENT” WITH SHEILA CAWS

Sheila Caws, a Gurnard resident herself, gave an illustrated presentation some of which was based upon her book which unfortunately is now out of print. What really brought this presentation to life was the huge array of old photographs transferred onto transparencies for the overhead projector, and of particular interest was the range of photographs of what is now the Portland Inn with past roles including a shop, a cycle shop and a bakery. Rew Street is apparently the oldest road in the Village, probably dating from Roman times and is in fact part of a route to Carisbrooke Castle. The earliest mention of the Village on record is in 1280 when a map shows a place called “Gurner”. The Marsh used to be a harbour, where Charles 1 allegedly landed on his way to Yarmouth. In 1703 there was a bad storm which destroyed the Village as it was then. In the early 1800's farms were built, funded it is believed from the sale of a Captain Wilkinson's estate. An ordinance survey map from 1861 shows the appearance of some villas in Worsley Road, and a succession of further maps beautifully illustrated progressive development in the Village until about 1939 after which little fundamental change has taken place. An interesting picture was of Hilton Road with very few houses in it, as well as other pictures of seemingly “wide” streets with no cars! Gurnard Beach to the east of the current Sailing Club used to feature a lagoon which was very popular for recreational activities and these included greasy pole competitions, local regattas and swimming. Sheila was thanked and questions followed.

3. PRESENTATION: “GURNARD SAILING CLUB” WITH SHEILA CAWS

Sheila Caws gave a short presentation on the history of the club, which dated back to its original founding in 1931. The focus was, and still is, dinghy sailing and original membership stood at about 61 with 11 boats and activities included rowing races and dog races from boat to shore. The 2nd World War curtailed activity somewhat, and club activity was not really resurrected again until 1946 when there were just 4 boats, no safety boat and no special clothing. In the following few years boats were usually stored on the slipway, and on at least one occasion a boat was stolen by an escaping convict! The original clubhouse was only 16 square feet in size, and this was replaced and built by members in 1953. Attempts were made to rebuild the clubhouse again in the 1970's but funding proved impossible to access. The slipway was extended and the sea wall rebuilt in 1994, by which time the clubhouse had become a structural liability almost. Serious efforts were made to replace this, and about £500K was eventually drawn down to build the clubhouse you see today, which was opened by Princess Anne. There are now about 50 boats and the total membership is probably in the order of 900, and the club puts much effort into making dinghy sailing accessible to young people. Sheila was thanked again and questions followed.

Refreshments were served at this point

4. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Wendy Peskett and Jane McKean.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting, held on 22nd April 2008, were taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising

7. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

a. Parish Council Meetings

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting the Parish Council has met formally for a total of 11 full Council meetings. It has continued to act on behalf of the local community on many wide and varied issues, and also responds as a Stakeholder Consultee for the IW Council, Central Government and other Bodies on several wider local government issues.

The Planning Committee has also met regularly during the year, on 9 occasions in fact, in order to respond to planning and licensing applications within the deadlines set by Development Control and Licensing. A total of 56 planning applications have been considered and commented upon during the year, which amounts to a reduction on last year of 11.1%. The Parish Council has recently been invited to attend Planning Inspectorate appeal site visits.

The Community Projects Committee, which started work in December 2006, has met 6 times since the last APM – twice as frequently as 2008, and continues to work through the Parish Plan Action Plan.

The Parish Council thanks Ward Councillor Sir John Hobart for his support and the regular reporting on events at County Hall as they affect Gurnard, and wishes him well as he moves on to pastures new after the June elections. The Parish Council is especially grateful to Sir John for his sterling work replacing the Southern Vectis bus service with a Wight Bus service, that some have said is even better than the previous service provision.

A strong and positive relationship has also been maintained with the Cowes Safer Neighbourhood Officers (Police) and the IW Council's Neighbourhoods and Environment Officers (Rural Area Managers), and the Parish Council is indebted to Police Constable Mark Thomas and his colleagues as well as Grahame Deacon and Jacqui Darby for their enthusiasm shown by attendance at Parish Council meetings to give reports.

b. Gurnard-in-Bloom Jubilee Fund

This organisation continues to serve the Village well and everyone can see the fruit of their labours. The Parish Council is hugely grateful to the small band of people who create such colour in the Village, and it has been a pleasure to continue to support their work. The Parish Council managed to secure a further £1000 grant under the "One Million Blooms" funding umbrella which is being used to complement the existing planting schemes in Worsley Road, and to extend the spring bulb planting.

c. Waste Management

A wheelie bin has been supplied for the tourist season for the past 4 years, and is in place again now on the Esplanade and will remain there until the autumn half term holiday. There are 14 dog bins in the village, 9 of which the Parish Council funded. It was hoped to take part in the En Cams "Big Tidy Up" campaign last month, but there was not enough response to the appeal for help in the Village to make it work.

d. IW Walking Festival

Last year Gurnard led a walk under our Walk Coordinator Jo Moore, and the route was from the Outlook Café on the Marsh to Thorness and back. Gurnard doesn't feature in the 2009 programme, but there are plans for Gurnard to host a walk again in 2010.

- e. Parish Councillors, Committee Members & Youth Advisors
1 Councillor stood down in September 2008 and the seat was filled through calling a by-election which was uncontested, and Mrs Elaine Butler from Hilton Road was welcomed into the fold. Parish elections take place on 4th June 2009 when all Councillors have to stand down. Various training has been undertaken by both Councillors and the Parish Clerk which included a Parish Master Class exercise, code of conduct, health and safety, 1st Aid, bid writing and 2 conferences. There has been Parish Council representation on the IW Assn of Local Councils, Cowes Youth Club Management Committee, Island Waste Advisory Group, Marsh Road Residents Association, the IW Parish Task Group, the May Queen Committee and the IW County Training Partnership during the year, and all of these have involved outside meetings and other activities from time to time. One Parish Councillor also serves as a Parish Tree Warden alongside Richard Bolwell. Attendance by Parish Councillors at Full Council meetings has averaged 89%, an improvement of 15% when compared with last year. The Community Projects Committee is up to full strength again, with Vicky Spencer and Cathy Marriott coming on board during the year. With effect from July 2008 the Parish Council has benefited from the input to 2 committees and 1 working party from a total of 6 youth advisors - 4 from Cowes High School and 2 from Solent Middle School.
- f. Grants
The Grants programme runs during March and April, and the Parish Council approved grants totalling £950 on 14th April 2009. Full details of all grants paid last year (2008) are in the financial statement.
- g. Grass Cutting.
In addition to the verge cutting undertaken by the IW Council, the Parish Council has continued to fund the maintenance of the grassed areas at Pond Green and Gurnard Heights. The local contractor appointed in 2008 continues for this year. Some major shrub and tree pruning work was also undertaken during the year at Pond Green.
- h. Website
The website has continued to be regularly updated, and is increasingly being used by both residents and people from outside the Village as well as some from many Countries across the world – there are between 300 and 350 visits per month!
- i. Traffic Management Plan
The Parish Council's Traffic Management Plan Working Party which consists of 10 members, only 3 of which are Councillors, has met 5 times in total during the past year. Issues dealt with during the year include speeding, signage, parking & school run traffic problems, and it has also carried out a residents' survey exercise in Hilton Road.
- j. Village Hall
The Parish Council continues to be indebted to the Hall Management Committee for all its hard work, and of course there was the first and very successful AGM in 2008. The Parish Council has granted a total of £8000 to its work in the past 2 years, and is hoping to draw down some external funding to support it again this year - 2 Parish Councillors serve on the committee.
- k. No Cold Calling Zones
The No Cold Calling Zone was officially launched in 2007, and this covers the whole of the Village. Signs at all entrances to the Village warn rogue traders or door-to-door salesmen of the fact, and the few problems that have occurred have been reported to Trading Standards.
- l. Projects
The main project has been the Play Area on the Village Green, and all the preparatory work is now completed. Several funding applications have been submitted to move this forward, and about £12000 has been raised so far. 2 promising further applications are lodged at the moment and we await the result.
Some tree planting has taken place, both new and replacement trees, and negotiations are on-going as to how the Parish Council can partner with the IW Council on the toilet block management to improve things there.
External funding to the tune of £2500 was drawn down to support an older person's project in the Village, and the money has been shared between the group that started meeting this year at Bucklers View and also the Fish Project, which will soon be operational to the rear of All Saints Church.

The Parish Council has decided to create a Gurnard Community Association and register it as a charity. This will primarily be used to draw down funding for projects that the Parish Council is unable to apply for, whereas voluntary groups can. Trustees/Committee members will be needed for this, so if this interests you please do make contact with the Parish Clerk.

m. **May Queen**

The Parish Council decided last year to try and offer more support to this Village event, in addition to the funding support it has given over many years. A Councillor now forms part of the May Queen committee and it is hoped, provided the community proves to be behind it, to help grow this fantastic event that is envied by many Island communities.

The Parish Clerk was thanked for his enthusiasm and effort.

8. PRESENTATION OF PARISH AWARD

The Parish Council recognised the huge contribution made to the Gurnard community in so many areas by Mark and Vicky Spencer, but especially with respect to the Gurnard Bonfire Society. The Chairman presented them with a framed certificate.

9. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Clerk presented a summary of the accounts to 31st March 2009, which has been approved by the Parish Council subject to audit. Income for the year was up from £26831.43 last year to £45169.54 this year, mainly due to funds being drawn down from outside sources. Expenditure was only marginally up from £32681.66 to £33558.98. The General Fund (carry forward figure) at the end of the financial year has increased from £14718.59 last year to £26329.15 this year, which was almost totally due to grant funding money not being spent before the year end. £1450.00 was paid out in community grants, and there was an £11072.26 under-spend for the year when just comparing the annual income with expenditure, and again this was due to grant funding money received not yet being spent.

10. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Pat Clayton reported that it had been a quiet year in Gurnard, with very low level report incidents. During the year there have been 11 monthly meetings at Cowes Police Station that involve Cowes, Northwood and Gurnard, and these meetings have been well attended every time. There have also been quarterly meetings at Newport Police Station for the Island Coordinators, and these two sets of meetings have kept everyone up to date with all current crime fighting initiatives. Smart water marking of property, which has been distributed by PCSO's, was a great new innovation, and available for older people free of charge are timers and low energy bulbs. Pat stated she has served as Gurnard Coordinator for the past two years but is standing down this year, and she closed by announcing that her replacement as Coordinator would be Mr Ken Chapman from Church Road.

11. SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

PC Mark Thomas gave some statistics for the year: there have been 11 neighbourhood watch meetings during the year and the street briefing events have averaged about 1 per month. As attendance at street briefings has often been very low, if at all, these are being replaced with a "Street Mapping" initiative where streets will be mail-dropped with a view to arranging one-to-one meetings with householders in their homes. Crime figures for the year have remained low with 1 dwelling burglary, 12 instances of criminal damage and 5 assaults. Figures for his beat have dropped by 20.6% this year. Questions followed.

12. IW COUNCILLOR

Councillor Hobart outlined what had been a busy year for him and this included his involvement with school reorganisation, highways and the new private funding initiative (PFI), investigations into the provision of an IW abattoir, cross-solent travel, IW heritage (HEAP), Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Wightbus services for Gurnard, power to the parishes conference held in Gurnard, the coastal footpath and sea wall, THWART, a community safety action week event and an energy summit. He paid tribute to the IW firefighters and their fundraising efforts for an IW based body scanner, and made reference to some changes in County Hall manpower as well as more support and resources for the planning enforcement department. He will not be standing for election in Gurnard next month, but stated how he had enjoyed representing the Gurnard Ward and how he valued his relationship with the Parish Council.

13. OPEN SESSION

Only one item was raised by 2 residents under this section, namely the 3 fir trees planted on the Village Green and how inappropriate they felt they were and took issue with what they saw as a lack of consultation.

The meeting closed at 10.10pm.

CHAIRMAN