

**Minutes of the proceedings of Annual Parish Assembly of Valley Park Parish Council held on Monday 17 May 2010 at 7.30pm at the Knightwood Leisure Centre Valley Park**

**Present:** Councillor A Dowden (Chairman) and Councillors, C Anderson, R Bryan, J Barton, G Compton and Mrs C Dowden.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Dyde, Mrs L Guy and Mrs K Oliver.

**Action**

**1 Chairman's Report**

Councillor A Dowden reported upon another successful year for the Parish Council: see Appendix A for report.

**2 County Councillor's Report**

County Councillor A Dowden's annual report is attached at Appendix B

**3 Borough Councillor's Report**

TVBC Councillor Mrs C Dowden presented, in her absence, TVBC Councillor Mrs A Dyde's Borough Councillors report and is attached at Appendix C.

**4 Open Period**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

The meeting closed at 7.41pm

**Chairman's Report**

2009 has been another successful year for the Parish. The Council has had a busy year, achieving a number of objectives as follows:-

- The Valley Park in Bloom Event was successfully launched by the editor of the Daily Echo Ian Murray accompanied by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Alan Dowden, Cllr Ray Bryan and children from St Francis and Knightwood Primary Schools
- Another event, this time involving School Children from St Francis and Knightwood primary schools planted 1,000 daffodil bulbs on 3rd November at two locations in Valley Park. They were assisted by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Alan Dowden and the local MP Sandra Gidley also turned up to assist. The Parish Council also had a further 2,000 bulbs planted along Templars Way. Test Valley Borough Council staff helped to prepare the ground and Veolia provided free compost.
- A Parish partnership has been agreed between the Parish Council and Hampshire County Council to provide a new footway at Raglan Close to School Lane along Templars Way to make it easier for pedestrians.
- Two new bus shelters have been installed by the Parish Council in Shannon Way and four bus shelters in Wicklow Drive have also been refurbished. The Parish council also agreed to install a further three new bus shelters in Templars Way and Knightwood Road.
- A total of 13 grit/Salt bin had been installed in the Parish during 2009 and these had greatly assisted residents in what has been the coldest winter for 15 years. A further two bins would be installed before the onset of next winter.
- Hampshire County Council Accredited Community Safety officer Clive Fortune is pioneering a scheme to provide youth provision for children in the Valley Park area of Test Valley. A room has been donated by Chris Hughes of the Knightwood Leisure Centre which will provide a base to give local children something to do on a Friday night. A number of volunteers had come forward to assist the project.

- HCC accredited community safety officers and TVBC Wardens continue to make regular patrols thus making Valley Park a safer environment in which to live.
- Another piece of good news is that Chamberlayne Estates have responded to the Parish Council's request for them to reconsider their decision not change the covenant on land East of Knightwood Road, to allow allotments to be established. Before they will reconsider their position on the matter Chamberlayne Estates has information on a number of matters and also requested the Parish Council to undertake a public consultation to ascertain residents views on the change of use from public open space to allotment use.
- Last year the Parish Precept was cut by 10%. This year the Council considered it prudent to leave its element of the Council tax unchanged thus keeping the Council Tax burden to a minimum for residents.

In conclusion I am sure you will all agree that the Parish Council has achieved a great deal throughout 2009/2010. The Parish Council will continue to strive for the best interests of the local community.

Cllr Alan Dowden

Chairman of Valley Park Parish Council

Baddesley Division County Councillor's 2010 Report

I was first elected to represent the people of the Baddesley division in January 1992 and on June 4<sup>th</sup> last year I was particularly pleased to retain my position with over 60% of the votes cast. It is always encouraging to any Councillor to know they have a large majority of the support of their electorate.

I am the Spokesperson for the opposition for Adult Social Care and a lead member of the Safe & Healthy People Select Committee. I am also a member of the Hampshire Pension Fund Panel. In July 2009 I was appointed to the New Forest Family Placement Panel. Each of these posts demands responsibility and dedication, but I enjoy the work and always seek to achieve the best possible outcomes for people.

Last year, finally, saw the completion of the Cycle Footpath Bridge crossing the railway at Flexford / Baddesley Road. It helps to ensure safer crossing for cyclists and pedestrians, particularly the school aged children. When the planned new landscaping matures the impact of the structure will be lessened. Some residents have criticized the structure of the bridge itself. But my understanding is that the County Council needed to implement a structure that met **Railtrack** specifications

The Hampshire Commission, of whom I was a Member, completed its work last year making final recommendations to the Government on the Green Paper on the Future of Adult Social Care. Many of the recommendations within the Green Paper were in fact in line with the Hampshire Commission's recommendations. This was to be followed with a Government White Paper which was to address how the growing demand from an ageing population is to be funded. Instead, the Government obviously found it would be too expensive and is now pushing the Personal Care at Home Bill through Parliament. This will inevitably increase the financial burdens of local authorities. The Government, if re-elected, hopes to implement this bill in October 2010. It would entitle some people with the highest needs to an element of free personal care. Presently many are denied by the eligibility criteria set by most authorities, including Hampshire.

The County are in the process of rolling out from April one of their key priorities of 'SDS', self directed support, after its successful pilot in the Basingstoke area. At the same time they are continuing their transformation programme in other key areas of the Hampshire Model – This will offer a universal offer of free crisis care, free advice and preventative measures in order to continue independent living where possible. I have strongly supported all of these measures.

Hampshire County Council have set a council tax that will rise by 1.9 per cent and that means another £20 annually for Band "D" council taxpayers.

You may wonder where the money comes from in order to provide the services. The Government will be providing £146.8 million out of the £672 million needed and the remainder is financed by Council Tax and other charges. Central Government separately provides the huge amount of funding for schools.

The County precept is the major share of Council Tax rising to a Band "D" precept of £1037.88p. Other authorities funding needs are added. Test Valley Borough Council,

Police Authority, Fire Authority and your local Parish Council are added to the overall cost of Council Tax.

The County Council are hoping to improve its resilience to extreme weather conditions. It is the intention of the County to provide additional salt barns, at a cost of £1 million pounds, in order to be able to store an additional 6000 tonnes of salt. It is also committed to providing salt/grit bins should parish councils request them.

The County will also need to deal with considerable damage to Hampshire's roads, from the winter months. Everyone has witnessed the huge numbers of potholes and cracks in highways, which will need expensive repairs. Much of this has been caused by insufficient finances being allocated to highway maintenance, over the last three years. "A stitch in time saves nine" comes to mind.

This year a new footpath will be built along Templars Way financed by the Parish Council and Hampshire County Council in a partnership scheme. Three new bus shelters will be installed, two on Templars Way and one on Knightwood Road. These have been financed by TVBC Section 106 developer's contributions and a small contribution from the County Council. The Parish Council will then be responsible for the maintenance of these shelters.

Pupils from Knightwood and St Francis School worked with me to plant Autumn bulbs to improve the appearance of our local area. We will soon be witnessing the results of their hard work.

I was delighted to be able to assist individuals and organisations, within my division with grant aid from my annual Community Grant Allocation Fund. As a County Councillor my aim is to try to improve the quality of life for residents within my division and across the County of Hampshire.

**HCC Cllr. Alan Dowden**

**Baddesley division**

Borough Councillors Report May 2009 to May 2010

It has been an interesting year which has seen the countrywide financial situation significantly impact on the discussions and decision making processes within council to ensure that the best value decisions are achieved and implemented. All the Borough Councillors have worked hard within committees, panels and council to influence wherever possible the decision making process for the people of Valley Park and Test Valley.

Councillors Louise Guy, Alan Dowden and I sit on the Southern Area Planning Committee as do all the councillors of the Southern Area of Test valley. The committee has seen both small planning decisions and also large development fiercely debated and where ever required Valley Park's needs and interests have been voiced and the views represented by the Valley Park Councillors. The Great Covert Planning application is still awaiting the full environmental assessment.

This has been a challenging time with the Planning Overview document called the Core Strategy having been withdrawn and needing to be rewritten. This makes Valley Park vulnerable to developers putting in planning applications and whilst the Borough Councillors debate the needs of Valley Park, each application must be considered on its planning merits and appeals to the secretary state are always possible.

Councillors Louise Guy and Alan Dowden also sit on Planning Control which is the next tier up in the planning process within Test Valley Borough Council. When the decision by the Southern Planning Committee does not concur with policy and may result in the risk of appeal, officers determine that applications should be finally decided by the Planning Control Committee. This process demonstrates that the Council planning decisions are made on appropriate grounds, and that the council is not subject to costs awarded against the Council by Planning Inspectors, which would ultimately have to be found by the council tax payer.

I sit as a member of the Standards Committee, this committee deals with the Code of Conduct which is a set of standards which Councillors must adhere to when they are within their council role and to determine the outcome of when it is alleged that code has not been

met. It can be a time consuming role because there is a need to read through extensive written evidence and to sit at hearing or determination which may take all morning or afternoon. It is a privileged role for those who are committed to improving standards of those who have a public service role.

I am also a member of the Licensing Committee and members of this committee have two main roles, policy making within the committee and then deciding licensing applications which are brought before a sub-committee of three members of the licensing committee. In a year, a member may sit on up to six licensing sub-committees.

There is a committee called Overview and Scrutiny Committee which scrutinises the decisions made within the council. This is a fascinating role which provides the checks and balancing role which is fundamental to our British democratic and executive system. There is a large work load for overview and scrutiny and therefore the work may be delegated to panels made up of members of the committee who each take a portfolio (Like corporate or leisure) and scrutinise that portfolio's decision making by a series of written and face to face questioning. I am fortunate to be part of the committee and to sit on the panel looking at the legal and corporate services within the council and was able to ask several questions which scrutinises the information given in response to questions posed to the heads of service and portfolio holder. I was particularly involved in discussion around legal services and customer care and helped to form recommendations for improving services and processes within the council and will be looking forward to review the implementation of those recommendations.

This year has been challenging and the coming year will be even more so, as a change in government will necessitate changing policies and the financial climate will require building on the already extremely prudent decision making and the need to evidence the care in our decision making to those we serve in the community.

Cllr. Andrea Dyde