

**Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
for Perton held at the Perton Civic Centre, on  
Wednesday 27th April 2009 at 8.00 p.m.**

Mrs C.Young (Chairman)  
A.A. Bourke (Vice-Chairman)  
Mrs. P.N. Pitt  
Mrs. R. Heseltine  
Mrs P.Allen  
Mrs S.Bott  
Miss C.Duffell  
D.J. Billson  
A.K. James  
A.K.Black  
S.K.Bott  
D.Heseltine  
D.Fereday  
N.P.Caine

Also in attendance:-

County Councillor – R.J.Marshall  
District Councillor – Roy Moreton  
Parish Clerk - Tony Tappenden  
Wombourne NPU Sgt – Daryl Kenny  
Members of the public – 7

1. **WELCOME**

The Chairman, Mrs C.Young welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Mrs. A. James and Wombourne NPU Inspector Andy Chapman who was able to provide a substitute.

3. **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2008**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16th April 2008 be confirmed as a true record and the Chairman of the Council duly signed them.

4. **PERTON CIVIC AWARDS PRESENTATION**

(a) **Citizen of the Year**

The Chairman presented the Citizen of the Year award to Paul Chapman of Hepworth Close. Congratulations were offered to Paul and he was presented with a certificate of award, a Parish 'Coat-of-Arms' plaque and £50.00 cash. The award followed nomination by local parishioners citing Paul's dedicated on-going efforts in respect to Perton FC.

*No nominations were received in respect to Young Citizen of the Year.*

5. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

**WELCOME**

Welcome to all members of the public who have come along this evening and fellow members of the Council. Once again it has been a very busy year for Perton Parish Council with progress in many key areas.

**PERTON CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

Perton is a great place to live for many reasons one of which is that we are blessed with local members of the community that work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that Perton has many of the facilities and resources that it needs and deserves. One such community minded person is Paul Chapman and we are very pleased to award 'Citizen of the Year' to Paul in recognition of his continued focus in ensuring that Perton youngsters receive high quality football coaching and team membership through Perton FC. Paul established Perton FC in 1999 which then, through his efforts became an FA charter standard club and is affiliated to the Staffordshire FA. The club is a purely voluntary organisation run solely to provide football teams for the children of our community and those running the club take no money out of the clubs funds. All the club coaches and managers are trained to FA Standards; CRB checked, have attended child protection courses and are trained in first aid. Perton FC has teams going from under 10's through to Adults football and has been recognized by the FA for high standards by presentation of a fair play award. As the club has grown it has become more than just a football club, integrating more with the local community to provide a social outlet for players and their families and friends. All of this has come about due to Paul's considerable efforts and community spirit. Congratulations and thanks to Paul.

**PLAYGROUND & MULTI-USE GAMES AREA**

Our fund raising and project management of last year finally came to fruition this year with September 6<sup>th</sup> witnessing a family fun day to mark the grand opening of our new playground and multi-use games area in central Perton adjacent to the upper lake. These play facilities coupled with the new paths and landscaping in the same area also completed this year by the County and District Councils has transformed the area and made Perton a better place to live whilst delivering much needed play facilities for local children and youths. The fun day was very well attended even though heavy rain for part of the day meant that some of the festivities had to be relocated into the Civic

Centre. Nonetheless it was my privilege to formally open our new facilities and the day was very well received by local families who enjoyed football coaching from Wolves together with Wolfie, face painters, a cartoon workshop, comedy magic show and circus skills featuring Checko the clown and a DJ road show with many spot prizes. Additionally the Parish Council entertained a number of civic guests all of whom entered into the spirit of this wonderful occasion.

Since that day in September it is with great pride that we look at these new facilities and recognise just how well used they are by Perton youngsters and aside from the contribution made by Perton Parish Council we thank again those that helped make it happen which include the Big Lottery as part of the South Staffordshire Play Strategy together with grants from the District Council, County Council and Youth Opportunities fund, Bromford Housing, South Staffordshire Housing Association and Harlequin Pantomime Productions and not forgetting the excellent efforts of Perton residents in winning the Goodyear Annual Playground Appeal.

#### **PRECEPT**

The precept for 2009/2010 has been set at £200,000 which is maintained at the same level as 2008/09. There were pressures to increase the precept this year, particularly given the situation with Perton Youth Club, but the Parish Council were very keen not to increase the burden on taxpayers given the severity of the current recession. To put the Parish Precept into context the annual charge equates to £54.88 on a band D property, or £1.06 per week.

#### **INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2008/2009**

Aside from the Precept income of £200k the Parish Council also generated just over £65k of receipted income primarily via the Civic Centre which represents quite a drop from last year as a result of the ongoing recession, £6.6 k from interest received and over £90k of incoming grants primarily in respect to the playground and Muga. Our total expenditure for the year ending 31st March, 2009 was a little under £412k with just over £194k of this expenditure attributed to the playground and Muga.

#### **POLICING**

The Parish Council receives more complaints regarding nuisance, littering and anti-social behaviour than any other type of issue. The neighbourhood police team continue to be located within the Civic Centre building to ensure more policing time on Perton and a greater visibility of uniformed officers and therefore many parishioner

complaints are now focussed directly towards the police team who at the current time principally comprise three Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). Whilst the PCSOs do a good but difficult job the Parish Council recognise that the PCSOs should be a complementary force to 'beat' Police Constables but unfortunately at the current time it seems as if we have traded the PCs for PCSOs who have very limited powers, we hope this situation may improve this year. Most parishioners will agree that many of the anti-social problems experienced on Perton are drink related and with this in mind the Parish Council ensured that Perton became subject to a 'Designated Public Places Order' in respect to alcohol consumption and control order signage is now very visible across the area, I am pleased to say that since the introduction of the DPPO matters have improved markedly although further improvements could be made via public co-operation and improved policing.

### **LITTER**

Not surprisingly a continual source of complaints from residents relates to littering, broken glass and dog fouling. South Staffordshire Council provided additional bins in Anders Square and our own Litter Warden has a seven day a week focus to ensure that the litter is cleared from Public areas when the public are about in numbers. Thanks also must go to volunteer groups from Perton Christian Fellowship and other local Perton residents that perform regular litter collection; it is always good to see so many people taking pride in the village of Perton. In spite of all of this, litter issues seem to be increasing and it is important that this matter is given high profile in the education of youngsters both in the home and at school since many young people are amongst the worst offenders.

### **COMMUNICATING WITH PARISHIONERS**

The Parish website remains a principal source of information for parishioners and provides a broad array of information which we strive to keep up to date and interesting. The web pages include a 'Guest Book' which seems to be a popular medium for many, the site also has a capability to enable parishioners to subscribe to free electronic news letters delivered direct to their e-mail address and we would like to make better use of this feature. However, to-date, we have less than sixty active subscriptions so this does not really justify its use at the current time so we would encourage more people to log-on and subscribe. Additionally we ensure that newsworthy items reach the local press where possible and we also now often take a page within 'Perton Place' which is distributed to Perton Village homes every month

and is a useful medium for broadcasts concerning Parish news, the Centre and forthcoming events.

### **NOTICE BOARDS & SIGNAGE**

The website and door delivery services referred to above are also supplemented by regular updates to the Parish Notice Boards located within the Civic Centre, Anders Square and around The Parkway. These are visited on a very regular basis to ensure that parishioners are kept well informed regarding events and current affairs relating to Council matters. Additionally the Parish Council spent a total of £1859.00 to provide and install official notices in respect to the Designated Public Places Order together with a public notice announcement in local press, £832.15 for new signage at Perton Playing Fields entrances to highlight prevailing bye-laws and a further £741.76 for signs at the new playground and Multi Use Games Area acknowledging financial contributors and establishing rules for use.

### **BUS SHELTERS & SUBWAYS**

The shelters and subways continue to be subject to random attacks of vandalism and graffiti, probably because these facilities tend to be places where youths meet and congregate. The worst of the bus shelters is at Leasowe Drive where the shelter and phone box regularly have glass smashed and the shelters at Shackleton Drive and Offas Drive are also often targeted. The three subways are also regular meeting places for youths who are often rowdy and spoil the area with litter and graffiti. All these facilities continue to receive monthly contract cleaning to improve their looks and cleanliness. The walls of the Lower Lake subway have been so regularly damaged with graffiti that they were recently re-painted with anti-graffiti paint in an attempt to restore the damaged surface. During the fiscal year we spent a total of £3092.00 on maintenance of these facilities and this is a cost that is directly associated with vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

### **INTER-PARISH GAMES**

Perton fortunes bounced back in 2008 with a creditable third place with 143 points, we being one of only three teams to break the 100 point barrier, this followed a sixth place finish in 2007. The 2009 programme is already in 'full-swing' and after the first five events Perton is the outright leader, lets hope we can keep it up. A very special 'thank you' goes to our Perton District Councillor Roy Moreton who has pulled out all the stops coordinating this broad range of exciting and challenging events.

### **YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES**

We again supported a number of exciting events over Easter and last summer with a wide range of 'Sussed' activities; these events are very popular with Perton children and they can again look forward to a full programme this coming summer.

Probably the biggest issue that Perton Parish Council faces at the current time is to find a manageable and cost effective solution to the pending closure of Perton Youth Club. Some while ago Staffordshire County Council embarked upon a programme of rationalisation and cost cutting in respect to youth club premises and Perton was one of the losers despite having a very high youth population compared to other areas of South Staffordshire that are better served with youth facilities. Despite huge representations the Parish Council was unable to reverse this decision but we did win a twelve month 'stay of execution' which expired at the end of March 2009. However the youth club currently remains open since the County Council has agreed to support us whilst we make alternative arrangements to provide alternative premises. Our deliberations on this matter have covered many alternatives but our preferred option is to extend the Pavilion at the playing fields and plans are currently in preparation to move forwards with this as a solution. However the big inhibitor is cost and we are currently seeking available grant opportunities or the possibility of partnering with another organisation. We are hopeful that in the coming year we will be able to deliver a permanent solution for a Perton Youth Club.

### **UPPER LAKE**

Recent months have seen a concerted effort between the District Council and Perton First School to reduce if not eradicate the problems caused by Canada Geese at the school playing fields. The upper lake and surrounding area is a natural habitat for these birds but unfortunately the birds, a natural inhabitant of the wide area, cannot be confined to the areas of general acceptance and overspill into areas such as the school fields where they become very problematical. Whilst many people take enjoyment from feeding the birds at the lakeside the majority do not realise that this act encourages the birds into the area, including the school fields, whilst also the feeding of bread is also bad for the birds themselves. It is proving to be very difficult to manage the problems caused by the geese whilst also trying to maintain and support the wildlife aspects that make the lake attractive to so many.

### **GRANT AID**

Grants totalling £4955.00 have been made to various applicants, of which £4000.00 went to the Playing Fields Association.

### **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

We have processed 54 planning applications during the year which represents a significant reduction on the figure of 75, for 2007/2008.

### **CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS**

Anders Square decorations were re-erected as per last years show and again the Civic Centre was decorated with light festoons on three sides and this was achieved using multi colour change LEDs which were agreed to be very effective and were well received by most residents. Once again we also made arrangements for installation and take-down with a local electrical contractor and saved a considerable sum and restricted the total cost to £1735.00.

### **THE CIVIC CENTRE**

The Centre Management Committee has been hard at work with regular management meetings and has taken appropriate action to ensure that the Centre is well maintained, secure, inviting and cost effective. Costs have risen considerably over recent years but the Council has made huge efforts to shield Civic Centre customers from the worst of the credit crunch and inflationary pressures. In the same way that the Parish Council decided not to increase the precept for 2009/10 a similar decision was taken to fix room hire rates at existing levels which means that prices have been fixed for four consecutive years. However this situation is not likely to continue after March 2010. Also, in addition to direct grants a number of worthwhile charities and local public groups have received benefit by way of 'Concessionary' room hire rates which are subsidised beyond the 'break even' approach that generally prevails with Civic Centre budgeting.

Reflecting on a very sad event many Perton residents will know that last year the Village Nursery Manager Mrs Madeline Moore passed away after a brief illness. Madeline was very well known, liked and respected by many parishioners and in honour of her memory tonight's meeting agenda closes with a brief ceremony that will see the Civic Centre 'Bradford Room' renamed 'The Madeline Moore Room'. Also, following a collection at Perton First School, Perton Sandown School and Perton Village Nursery a bench will be provided in the new playground with an appropriate

inscription that will be dedicated to Madeline's memory.

### **HARLEQUIN PANTOMIME PRODUCTIONS 2009 & 2010**

Following two previous successful seasons at Perton Civic Centre Harlequin Pantomime Productions returned to Perton in January to present their new production of 'Aladdin' to the people of Perton which was again a wonderful success being very well received by the sell out crowds. The Parish Council is delighted that Harlequin have now made Perton Civic Centre their home base since not only are the productions hugely anticipated and enjoyed by so many local residents but Harlequin themselves are helping to improve the production facilities in the main Civic Centre hall and are now also significant benefactors to the local area with a large slice of last years profits from Puss-in-Boots being donated towards the new children's playground and a commitment has already been received that a significant part of this years profits from Aladdin will help kit out the new youth club once it has been built. We are delighted to note that Harlequin return once again in January 2010 with a production of 'Mother Goose'.

### **NEW YEARS EVE**

The regular Parish Council sponsored family Disco was once again very well attended on New Years Eve 2008 with music provided by 'Nightfever Disco Roadshow'. As in 2007 tickets were sold in advance and the event 'sold out' well before Christmas. After the deduction of costs the Council retained a profit fractionally over £770.00 which, as stated during the event promotion, will go towards the new Youth club project. We have already committed to a repeat event for New Years Eve 2009 and, by public demand, we have booked the 'Raymond John Disco Roadshow' following the success of this show in both 2006 and 2007. Also following feedback from a number of attendees at the last event we will be making a few changes to this years arrangements with a small increase in ticket prices and an overall reduction in the numbers allowed in to the event to prevent over crowding. In order to be fair to all tickets will be sold on a first come first served basis with no reservation list.

### **QUEENS DIAMOND JUBILEE**

2012, the year of the London Olympics, will mark sixty years as our reigning monarch for Queen Elizabeth II if she is still on the throne at that time. The Council feels that this is a very significant occasion to be celebrated at a local and national level. With this in mind we have ring-fenced a further sum of £2000.00 in 2008/09 year and we will

make similar budget contributions yearly until 2012 when the money will be utilised in some special way to celebrate this very special occasion. With the £2000.00 contribution for year 2009/10 already ring-fenced the fund currently stands at £8000.00

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, I am pleased to say that the last twelve months has again been very busy and very productive and, as this report demonstrates, we have made some very real progress for Perton making this an even better place to live. The new central play areas are a lasting monument to the positive decisions made by this Council and we hope to repeat a similar success dealing with the issues arising from the Youth Club closure. Accordingly I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their support during the last year.

The help from my Parish Clerk Tony Tappenden has been gratefully received and his office has had a great deal of involvement in all of our projects and Tony assures me that his support relies very heavily on the support that he receives from both the Assistant Clerk Alison Moreton and also Becky Hodgetts so I thank them all for their efforts and dedication. Also the Council and Centre staff who have all worked very hard to ensure good results, showing attention to detail and a very helpful and co-operative attitude, I thank them all.

Thank You.

### (a) **QUESTIONS**

There were no questions arising from the Chairman's Annual report.

## 6. **POLICE MATTERS**

Sgt Daryl Kenny introduced himself to the meeting and provided a very brief overview of his role explaining that as a result of minor restructuring at the NPU he now has specific assigned responsibility for Perton.

## 7. **QUESTIONS FOR POLICE**

- 1) Mr T.Harding asked it would be possible for the PCSOs to patrol around the Lower Lake stating that there were often people fishing out of season. Sgt Kenny said that this area is patrolled and he personally had been in the area recently with the PCSOs. Mr Harding also commented on the soon to be provided Speed Indication Devices (SIDs) and suggested a specific location for one of them which is fairly in line with the already agreed position.
- 2) Cllr Mrs P.Allen asked who should now be the prime point of contact for issues and given that restructuring was taking place would it be possible to get PCs

specifically focused on to Perton. Cllr Mrs C.Young further stated that it is well known that PCSOs have virtually no powers of enforcement and we very rarely see the Perton PCs. Sgt Kenny said that Insp Andy Chapman remained the prime daytime contact within the NPU and that he was aware that PCs had been displaced by PCSOs but he believed that the plan was to have a specific PC role for Perton.

- 3) Cllr Mrs P.Pitt asked if it was correct that there was now no direct contact numbers for the PCSOs and that all contact was to be made via the call centre, however Sgt Kenny was not totally sure on this point.
- 4) Cllr Mrs S.Bott said that very recently she had to call police due to young drinkers at the Playing Fields but she had come to the Civic Centre and directly involved the PCSOs.

**RESOLVED** that the Clerk will write to Insp Andy Chapman highlighting the needs of Perton and again request dedicated Perton PCs.

*Sgt Kenny left the meeting at this point.*

8. **VOTE OF THANKS**

On behalf of all the members Cllr S.K.Bott thanked the Chairman Mrs Christine Young for all her hard work and dedication over the previous twelve months which had been busy and productive and also extended thanks to the Clerk and his staff for their support throughout the year.

The Chairman thanked those attending and invited all present to join her for the official opening of the 'Madeline Moore' room followed by light refreshments.

The Meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.

Chairman

11<sup>th</sup> May 2009