

UFTON
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
held at the Village Hall
on Tuesday 2nd March 2010 at 8pm

1. The meeting was chaired by J Tayler (Ufton Parish Council). He welcomed the guest speaker Mick Chambers, from Biffa and his colleague, Giles Wolffe, District and County Councillor Bob Stevens and 17 residents. Cllr Tayler then introduced the Parish Councillors and Clerk.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 2nd March 2010

Last year's minutes had been displayed and were approved and signed. There were no matters arising. Proposed Cllr Wilkinson, seconded Cllr Van Kesteren.

3. Guest speaker – Mick Chambers. Cllr Tayler welcomed Mr Chambers, the site Manager at the landfill site, once again to the meeting. Mr Chambers advised that he had joined the Ufton site in April 2010 and has 28 years experience of dealing with landfills and recycling. Giles Wolffe was responsible for the composting unit. There is also an Operations Manager, Weighbridge Clerk and 5 skilled workers. It is anticipated that the life of the landfill will be 4/5 years from now. A Planning Application will be approved for the final contours of the land before restoration – it is hoped this will commence in the summer. There is an application to increase the capacity of the plant to energy. It is the intention in the next 2/3 years that 50% of the site will be capped off.

The operations are now screened from the road in a contained area. Covers are used to prevent odours on site.

As from April there will be a landfill tax for every ton of waste – anticipated to be £56.00 per ton.

Within 5 years this tax will rise to £80.00 per ton. As a Company, we are looking at turning waste to energy. We have recently bought a large recycling company. In 5 years time, we will be finished as we are today.

The IVC is basically running in compliance with waste management – which processes green and food waste. This takes place in enclosed sheds and all the raw material goes through a shredder before being enclosed in heated tunnels for 48 hours, which removes any salmonella etc from the material. It is then stock piled and left for a week before being processed as soil improver, which is at present, being used on the landfill site for restoration.

Q. Are they the original contours?

MC – it has gone through the local planning authority but I can't say if they are higher/lower, as I didn't know the site before.

Q. What are the two peaks?

MC – they are stock pile of compost but will go next summer. It will not look out of character.

Q. Will there be trees and shrubs?

MC – these are normally planted around the edge of the site

Q. Is Puddling Clay still being excavated?

MC – the last phase is just complete and there will not be anymore. (It was suggested that this may be useful for the restoration of the pond and had in fact, been offered free of charge. MC asked for this in writing)

Q. What about the smell which comes from the site?

MC – suggested that details of the time/date and wind direction are given to any Councillor or the Clerk, so that this can be investigated. There is an odour management process which is 85% complete. Cllr Baldwin observed that sometimes the smell may come from farmers spreading their fields.

Q. How many trucks use the site every day?

MC – between 50-70 vehicles in one day. In the peak season, we are not far off the limit of the amount of material we can process.

Cllr Tayler thanked Mr Chambers and Mr Wolffe for their contribution to the meeting, which was interesting and enlightening.

4. Round-up of the year's activities – the Chairman then explained there would be some reports given by Village organisations and our District/County Councillor Bob Stevens.

5. WCC/SDC Representative's Report – Cllr Bob Stevens

- As always it has been a busy year and this has been more so as a result of the General election in May and subsequent legislation. There are 4 bills going through parliament at present which will have an impact on Ufton. The Localities Bill introduced by the Secretary of State for local government is intended to devolve more power to local authorities in particular over planning. The regional special strategies will be abolished and Local development plans presently out for consultation will take their place. I don't believe as far as Ufton is concerned they will be too relevant but you never know!!
- The changes to the NHS are also quite significant as GP's become their own fund holders. It is envisaged that GP's will work in Consortiums of which Warwickshire is likely to have 4 namely S Warwickshire, Rugby, N Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth (part). At the same time the public Health responsibilities will move to the County council. All this will happen by April 2013.
- The police Bill is envisaging more democracy to local forces and the introduction of an elected Police commissioner who will be the chair of the newly formed Police committee. This will make the police force more answerable to the public. Indeed despite the cuts the Warwickshire police have as their main priority Community safety and hence the enhanced role of PCSO and local Police. Southam police station will not be closing for the foreseeable future but will be a base for community policing. The Old magistrate's courts will remain as a forensic laboratory whilst Leek Wootton will be closed and sold.
- Lastly is the emphasis of the government in introducing the big society and asking communities to run their own services where possible. Community forums are presently the way ahead but they must not be allowed to take over the role of Parish councils which are the legal 3rd tier of local government. Services which spring to mind are Libraries and youth services. More locally the recent Budget rounds at WCC and SDC have been challenging. Both authorities have to find 20% reduction over the next 3 years, In the case of the County this is £60 million in a £300 million budget and with the district it is £2.5 million in £14 million.
- As a result of this WCC are reviewing Library and Youth club provision, changing the emphasis on Adult care from Care homes which are very expensive to run to extra care homes used to be known as sheltered housing, and reducing rural transport. There will be in the region of 1800 posts removed as well as a reduction in directors from 6 to 3 and Business managers from 24 to 17 involving a complete reorganisation of Council structure.
- SDC are also reducing staff cutting from 3 to 1 Director and 9 to 6 departmental Officers. They have agreed not to charge for green waste or parking in Southam as was originally rumoured but will be looking into sub-contracting the Public toilet contract either to local firms or local councils. Both Councils are turning to commissioning rather than providing services.
- And so to Ufton matters. As we have heard there is an active liaison with Biffa and the improvements to the road as a result of the S 106 agreement were completed last summer. I was able to obtain a grant towards installing steps at the rear of the church and improvements to the road to Bascote cross roads. Dallas Burston still has plans outstanding to build a hotel and improve his grounds - the trouble is he keeps changing his mind.
- HS2 is another problem looming on the horizon. As you know the consultation started yesterday and lasts until July 31st. Please all respond -hopefully against but also try and persuade friends/relations living outside the envelope of the track to respond also. There is no economic business case and with

the country in such financial dire straits we cannot afford it. Environmentally it has no gains and trains will not stop on route between London and Birmingham but there is likely to be fewer trains on existing routes. All this to save 15 minutes once it is up and running in 2020 earliest.

- Once again I have had an enjoyable year as your District and county Councillor and have been able to work very supportively with your parish council. Although 3 score years and ten is not old by modern standards I have decided to step down as your district Councillor this month. There will be an election for my successor on May 5th - the same day as the AV referendum. I will still be your County councillor and expect to be attending your Parish Council meetings as usual.
- I have enjoyed working with your excellent parish Council and I look forward to coming to your parish fete and other events and meeting you as I walk around the village.

Q. Gillian Ingham asked if there could be a meeting re HS2 in the village with Graham Long as speaker. Colin Baldwin suggested there should be speakers 'pro and con' HS2.

Q. The flashing lights at the Bascote crossroads do not appear to be working correctly (going towards Southam)
Cllr Stevens: Highways to be advised

Q. Has the £40,000 given by Biffa, been spent?
Cllr Stevens: Yes, as far as I am aware

Cllr Tayler thanked Cllr Stevens for his presentation tonight and was pleased to hear Bob is to remain our County Councillor.

6. The Village Hall Committee – Gillian Ingham introduced the VH Committee: Lesley is Chairman, Freda is Vice Chairman, Mary is Treasurer, and I'm the Bookings Secretary.

- **Meetings** – 4 plus AGM

- **Bookings** were up on the previous year

-In addition to the twice weekly pilates classes and band rehearsals we now have Tai chi on Monday nights
-there were several private parties during the year, it is an ideal venue for children's parties
-the Church has used the VH for services during the winter and for PCC meetings;
-there was an enjoyable Harvest Supper in October and Christmas drinks after the carol concert in December and Men's Breakfasts with a speaker proved popular.
-the Parish Council meets regularly on the first Tuesday of the month.

- **Fund-raising** - The Christmas Fayre raised £490 (inc £238 from the turkey raffle) for Hall funds-it was disappointing that not many children came to meet Father Christmas.

- **Maintenance** - The damaged front stone wall was repaired, unfortunately not very well and the severe winter caused the mortar to flake off. It's being redone with different mortar in the Spring. There's always something that needs doing – now there's a problem with flaking patches on the walls/skirting caused by damp. As with the front wall, we're having problems finding someone to do the work at a sensible price.

- **Thanks** The Committee would like to thank Greg Henderson who financed the clearing of the scrubby hedge and bed and ivy off the street light. Finally our Chairman would like to thank the Committee for their efforts.

- New members and ideas for activities are always welcome.

7. **Village Fete** – Emma Masefield sent the following report, which was read by Lesley Van Kesteren. ‘We couldn't have asked for better Weather or turn out for this Year's Fete! According to the takings for the Gate, over 230 Adults came this year - and that's just the ones Ian managed to catch for payment. All the stalls were certainly extremely busy all of the time. In fact, a few ran out of stuff for which to sell tickets - so MORE DONATIONS next year please!!

The men running the skittles hardly had time to catch their breath. They took a staggering **£61.50** which, at only 50p a go, means they had to set the skittles up at least 123 times!! Well done, Guys. The draw might have been the bottle of Whisky kindly donated as the prize, so thanks must also go to Ken and Dot Bailey.

The inspired Wonderland area was hugely successful. Thanks to Mary, Simon and Lizzie for their decorating skills. Children paid an entrance fee of £1 and had a stamp put on their hand, which entitled them to as many turns as possible on the activities in that area. We were a little concerned that this would mean that we wouldn't take as much money for those stalls compared to their combined amounts from previous years. However, we need not have worried as we actually took MORE - nearly 60 children went through to Wonderland. Lots of parents commented that they really liked the idea of giving their children a little bit more freedom, knowing they would be safe and that they could have a cup of tea without being constantly pestered for yet another 20p.

The Wonderland Raffle Boxes looked fantastic - Thanks again to Karen, for her artistic arrangement. Because of this we took nearly **£200** on the Raffle this year- I think this might be a record?! Thank you to everyone who donated items for the raffle. Thanks to Ann Ainscow's prolific baking and to many others who baked and donated cakes. The cake stall took a record amount of **£179.50**. Otherstalls also upped their amounts from previous years including Better-Bric-A-Brac which made **£88.55** - more than £50 up on last year.

I have to say, the tea tables looked especially lovely this year with our new table cloths (made and donated by Cath Wilkinson) and the vases of fresh flowers and herbs from Ann's garden. The ladies on teas were kept very busy and took **£213.42**. Everyone's amazing efforts amounted to a Grand Total of: **Over £1400.00**

It may be of interest to know that the 10% of the money raised usually given to the Community Fund was this year given back to the Church and put into the 'Friends of Ufton Church' account.

We were a little down on helpers this year and some stalls could really have done with more help. So next year, if you have the time to spare, please come forward and offer your support. The success of the Fete relies heavily on the help of willing volunteers and Karen, Lesley and I are very grateful to all those who did give their support.

This coming year, especially, we are in need of more helpers and more organisers. Karen is away this year, Lesley has the lovely Michael to take care of and I may not even be in the village by then. So please come forward and help to continue this wonderful tradition. The rewards are not only monetary for the Church; it feels great to have contributed to an event that so many people enjoy - I have been stopped by people, whilst out shopping, who want to say how much they have enjoyed Ufton Fete.

Let's keep it going - for an intrinsic feeling of well-being, for the church, for the village and for the wider community.’

8. **Lunch Break** – Emma Masefield sent the following report, which was read by Lesley Van Kesteren. ‘This year, Lunch Break has seen the arrival of some new comers and new hosts which has been lovely. We do still struggle for hosts though so if anyone else is interested in offering we would be very grateful. It is a lovely way to get to know some of one's fellow villagers and the commitment in hosting is only

ONE HOUR A YEAR AND A FEW CUPS OF TEA! We do not have a host for March, unfortunately - I have been too busy with many things to chase around looking for a likely candidate. If anyone would like to offer for April or June or July then let me know.'

9. The Parochial Church Committee: Ian Crowther reported the following:

Our church continues to flourish, but to say these are challenging times is something of an understatement. There are usually three services in the village and on the fourth Sunday the congregation joins the Service at St James in Southam, where our vicar, the Reverend John Armstrong is based.

Understandably, he can't be in two places at once, so to run the two parishes he relies on the support of Lay Readers and volunteers. When I moved to the village 5 years ago he could count on three Lay Readers and three volunteers; that has now dwindled to NO Lay Readers and four volunteers. Last year we were obliged to drop to just two village Services per month, but we are determined to keep the church alive here in Ufton and an increased commitment from volunteers has brought us back up to three.

Whether that will be enough to see the church survive in its present form remains to be seen. Since the heating is only "adequate" to say the least we move here to the Village Hall after Christmas and return for Mothering Sunday, which this year will be on the 3rd April. However, warm as it is, the Village Hall understandably does not have the same feel as the church and perhaps the congregation prefer ministers to volunteers; whatever the reason numbers are falling. Our Electoral Roll consists of just fifteen people, only 2 of whom are wage earners and an average congregation can be twelve; recently we have dropped to as low as three.

That if you like is the bad news. The good news is that the church continues to support and develop village life. Thanks to Emma, Lesley, Karen and their team the Village Church Fete, back at Ann Ainscow's once more, was a great success on a sunny June afternoon, raising £1,400, 10% of which was donated to the Friends of Ufton Church.

Other social events included the Pancake Race (this year's takes place a week today), the Harvest Supper, the Tea & Punch Party, the Quiz Night (where Colin Baldwin excelled as Quiz Master) and the Men's Breakfasts. Since that is my own "baby" I cannot resist this opportunity to give it a "plug".

Usually held on the fourth Saturday, we used to meet at The Stoneythorpe, but now it's here in the Village Hall, which is a much better venue. The format is always the same; a "Full English at 8.30am, followed by a talk from an invited speaker and everyone away by 9.45am. The speakers are varied - we've had two lady prison visitors, a musician who's appeared on the same billing as The Hollies (if you can go back that far), both Archdeacons and this month, on the 26th, it's a retired bank manager. In the Stoneythorpe days numbers were low as six, but since moving here we've always been in double figures and last Saturday was a record 20! Not only does that help the Village Hall coffers, it also means we are raising money for the church too - £56 last Saturday.

"Why, oh why" I hear you say "is the church always talking about money?" Well sadly because it's a fact of life. I know there are many in the village who think that all monies received by the church should remain there, but our faith teaches us that it is better to give than to receive, so in our own small way we have tried to help the disadvantaged, whilst at the same time allowing the congregation to specify if their offerings should not be used for that purpose. During the year we have made donations to the Barnabas Fund, Myton Hospice, Afghan Heroes, Leamington Christian Mission, The Children's Society and the British Legion's Poppy Appeal. Total donations in 2010 amounted to £323.

The church is also scheduled to benefit from donations; thanks to Colin Baldwin's considerable efforts the Friends of Ufton Church is now in being. Supported by village members and totally separate from church coffers the idea is that when there is a specific need the church can apply to the Friends for funding; whether that is approved is the sole decision of the Friends' committee. It is a wonderful idea and the church is most grateful for the potential it offers, but sadly from Colin's point of view the original voiced support has not

been reflected in the number signing on the dotted line. Currently it is being supported by 15 families and with the addition of Gift Aid we envisage that it will bring in some £2,500 per year.

That leads me “nicely” – if that is the right word – to the nub of my report this evening, because I am very doubtful that the church will be open this time next year.

Last year’s expenditure of £7,300 consisted of 3 principal items:-

41% - £3,000 Parish Share – the amount we pay to the Diocese to cover their costs not only in providing our Vicar, but also the costs of training new curates and providing pensions for retired ministers. £3,000 may sound a lot, but it’s £1,432 short of what we were supposed to pay. To put that in context, Southam’s were supposed to pay £38,000 and were short by £16,000 and annual Parish Share for the larger churches in Leamington can exceed £70,000.

25% - £1,800 Insurance – when I first became Treasurer I discovered that we were not paying the full premium; valued at £970K we were insuring the building for just £400K. Following the arson attack at Radford Semele I advised the PCC that we would be unwise to continue that policy and in the short term we would have to “bite the bullet”. Valued at £3.1 million the premium rose by a staggering 268%.

34% - £2,500 general costs of upkeep – reduced by £500 thanks to this Parish Council’s generous contribution to the mowing of the churchyard.

If we are to pay the Diocese Parish Share in full in 2011 I calculate that our costs will rise to well over £9,000. An analysis of the Income we received in plate collections last year averaged £67 per Service or £2,250 per annum. That’s enough to pay the Insurance, OR 50% of the Parish Share but that’s all – that means we will have an Income shortfall of £147 every week of the year.

I can balance the books in 2011 by NOT using the £5,000 cheque we received from the insurance company to pay for the collapsed wall on Ufton Hill, but instead using it to covers our costs. What that means in real terms is that it’s highly likely that the church building will have to close permanently in 2012. I know the Friends of Ufton Church are scheduled to produce about £50 per week, but donors have always made it clear that their funds are NOT to be used for the daily running costs, only for exceptional items.

Thank you for listening to me; I will be producing a written report to accompany the next issue of the Ufton Newsletter, but I felt that tonight was the ideal opportunity to acquaint you directly with the issues that our church faces.

10. Chairman’s Report: John Tayler reported the following:

Firstly, I’d like to tell you very briefly about several things which have especially pleased me and my colleagues of the Parish Council in 2010.

- the speedwatch initiative in which 2 councillors and four villagers will be trained to operate speedguns in Ufton Fields. Speeding motorists will firstly receive a letter from the police advising them to observe the limit.
- we caught a fly-tipper who was fined £175; we hope the press publicity will act as a deterrent to such idiots
- we have built a new and attractive website – www.uftonvillage.com – which is proving reliable and popular (about 100 visits to 400 pages each month).

But I really want to speak now on a view of Ufton as a community (a 'small society'?). To build on what we've heard from our speakers this evening, let's put the spotlight on some of the unsung heroes and heroines of the village.

- the 10 ladies who regularly clean the church

- the four parishioners who've joined forces with us to address the speeding issue in Ufton Fields
- the team of 6 who create and deliver the Ufton News
- the many parishioners who man the stalls at the fete and Christmas event
- the many people who can't pass a piece of litter without picking it up
- those who tidy, cut grass, and repaint things

Especially can't resist thanking 4 individual 'local heroes/ heroines':
(no names, but they will know who they are!)

1. the parishioner in White Hart Lane who cleaned out the bus shelter, and replaced and repainted the bin
2. the parishioner in Reed's Park who moved some flytipped rubbish 3 feet east, in case the Council refused to move it by arguing it wasn't on public property
3. the parishioner in Ufton Fields who was alert enough to record the number plate of the white van guilty of fly-tipping – I don't think we'll see white van COG 63R in Ufton again
4. the parishioner in Ufton Fields who has personally stopped speeding traffic outside his home and given them advice

Counting up everyone involved, and removing duplicates, I reckon that over 60 people of our village get involved in giving their time and effort for the village. Let's think about that, 60 people, it's almost one-third of the village.

These people show a real community spirit. It's an attitude where Ufton shows that we don't always need to turn to other parties to sort things out but rolls sleeves up and gets on with it. They demonstrate a fellow-feeling, a sense that they can, in smaller or greater ways, make life more pleasant for others.

So I want to end not just by thanking tonight's speakers for all they have done, but to extend those thanks to the rest of those 60 people who aren't here tonight, for their contribution to our community – it all helps make Ufton an excellent place to live.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm

Chairman.....

March 2012