

## HEAPEY PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of the Annual Meeting held 9 May 2006 at 7.30 pm in the White Coppice Rooms, St Barnabas Church, Heapey.

Present Cllrs J Geddes (Chair), D Berry, D Greenhalgh, J Ross-Mills, R Smith.

Also Present Borough Cllr M Gray and 1 member of the public

1. Apologies for absence

None received.

2. Chairman's Report

I began last year's report by recording my thanks to Sheila on her departure and so I begin this report by welcoming Raymond to the council. This brought the number of members to full strength after a long gap. Sadly, this will not continue since Eunice decided not to stand for election owing to family commitments. I would like to record my thanks to Eunice for all her work over the past 12 years. She was valued member of the council with her commonsense approach to issues and her attention to detail. If discussions were getting too airy fairy, Eunice would bring us down to earth with a bump. If we were trying to spend too much money, she would make us think twice. She would often ask a simple, but relevant, question at a crucial time. Thank you, Eunice.

I am disappointed to have to report that the acquisition of the sand quarry has not made progress during the last 12 months but I am hopeful that this situation will be remedied in the coming year.

On a more positive note, the noticeboard has eventually been erected, although not on the planned site. However, its revised location and appearance seem to have been favourably received by residents. Permission has been received to construct a raised flower bed on the land adjacent the A674 and I am optimistic that this will become a reality in the near future.

The Village Hall management crisis appears to have receded as more people have come forward to organise events. I have accepted the role of chairman of the committee and it is for this reason that it is my intention not to stand as chairman of the parish council. Fund raising will remain an issue for some time and support from the parish councils will still be required for the foreseeable future. However, it is intended that, when a development plan for the building has been completed, it will be possible to apply for grants towards its execution.

The council has produced 2 newsletters during the year, which is a considerable improvement on the previous year. There has also been an improvement in communications with the local police team and the area now has a Community Beat Manager and Neighbourhood Policing Sergeant.

Lancashire County Council has produced a draft charter between the county and the town and parish councils and is also developing its Lancashire Locals in an attempt to elicit local opinion. Despite these initiatives little seems to have changed as, 1 year on, still no progress has been made in the Parish Partnership for Highway Matters. Meanwhile, Chorley Borough Council is rolling out its programme of Area Forums. Whether these attempts at involving local people in decisions affecting them are successful or a cynical exercise in ticking the right boxes only time will tell.

One project which was brought to a successful conclusion was the production of the joint Heapey and Wheelton Parish Plan. After almost 2 years of hard work, the plan was launched in

February. It is now time for the even harder work of progressing the goals set out in the plan. The parish councils will have a large part to play in achieving these goals, which why I feel that there should be a council member appointed to liaise with the action group. I also think that it would also be useful for the chairman of the steering group to attend a future meeting of the parish council in order to discuss a mutually acceptable way forward.

The council's finances are set out in detail in the statement of accounts and it can be seen that they are such that it has been possible this year to maintain its precept at the same level as the previous year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the council and the clerk for their support during the past year.

### 3. Mayoral Report

Her Worship the Mayor of Chorley provided an insight into her year in Office which began with hosting of a tour of the Borough for other Lancashire Mayors and took in numerous charity events in support of other Mayors charities.

The most memorable event was the Celebration to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the War in Astley Park involving a march past and a parade in Chorley.

The most enjoyable events frequently included children and a particularly notable one was a trip to Pleasureland at Southport with children from Mayfield School.

The Mayor twice welcomed the Princess Royal to Chorley and also the Countess of Wessex on one occasion.

At the other end of the scale the Mayor attended a Gala Day at Eaves Green and a Charity Day for St Catherine's which, despite the hard work of the organisers, were both very poorly attended by members of the public.

During her term in Office the Mayor attended 251 engagements and her fund raising events, arranged through the Borough Council's Charity Committee raised almost £10,000.

The Mayor was also very pleased to attend the Launch Event of the Heapey and Wheelton Parish Plan.

### 4. Financial Report

The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2006 was accepted by the meeting.

### 5. Residents Points of Interest

The judging criteria for the Lancashire Best Kept Village Competition has been revised, with roadside hedges, ditches and walls now being marked. The difficulty of maintenance of areas and objects will be taken into account.

A report had been received regarding the gullies and surface water grids on Chapel Lane not functioning satisfactorily leading to localised flooding and large amounts of surface water running down the roads in heavy rain. Councillors are to inspect the areas during periods of wet weather.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed.