

# Burley Parish Annual Assembly

Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Parish held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall to be signed at the Annual Assembly 2020.

**Present:** Mr Philip Daubeney (Chair), Parish Councillors: Mr Peter Russell, Mr Robert Clarke, Mr Neal Martin, Cllr Veronica Johnstone, Cllr Peter Egerton; also present were: Mrs S Gale (Clerk), Mr Steve Avery from NFNPA, Mr Bruce Rothnie (Forestry Commission), Cllr K Mans (HCC) & 19 local government electors.

**Copies of the agenda, minutes of the Annual Assembly 2018, draft annual accounts summary 2018-19 and 2019-2023 BPC Strategy were circulated to electors.**

**1. Apologies** Cllr M Steele (NFDC)

**2. Minutes of the last meeting** The full minutes from the Annual Assembly 2018 were agreed & signed.

**3. Matters Arising** None

**4. Chairman's Report** See attached Chairman's report and BPC Strategy 2019-2023. An elector asked if there were plans for better provision of Broadband at Burley Street Cllr Martin said that this is a work in progress and the top end of Burley Street needs provision in the form of another cabinet.

**5. Heritage Centre. Plans were displayed and available for all to view for an outline Heritage Centre in an existing building in the village.** Cllr Russell spoke about the previous work done by the Burley Living History (BLH) project and the resulting Burley Village History Trust (BVHT) formation. He spoke of land sold to NFNPA for affordable housing and a possible Heritage Centre (HC) and also of a second possible HC site in an existing building in the village. A Lottery grant application by BVHT has been turned down for conversion of the existing building. Cllr Russell thanked Richard Young, architect, for drawing up the plans without charge. An elector said that the estimated £2 million project was an ambitious plan financially and asked whether it could be completed in stages: Cllr Russell said all possibilities are being investigated. Another elector asked about the ongoing running costs and personnel for a HC: Cllr Russell said that BVHT had looked at museums at Fordingbridge and Corfe Castle which collect voluntary donations to survive. He said approximately £12,000 a year running costs would be required as the HC would be run by volunteers.

**6. Report from the NFNPA by Mr Steve Avery.** Mr Avery said the NFNPA received 1000 planning applications last year, 73 from Burley - 1 of those was the NFNPA planning application for 2 new affordable homes and a HC. Access requirements over the NFDC car park are currently being arranged. The houses will be built and let by NFNPA. A further 2 affordable homes could be built on the site if an alternative Heritage Centre site is found. Mr Avery also spoke about: new planning policies which should shortly to be adopted following consultation; conservation and managing recreation in the NF; cycle events; the introduction of a Charter for Commercial Dog Walkers. Mr Avery thanked BPC for its assistance with "Dig Burley" and in finding possible sites for affordable housing.

An elector asked about the potential of "Right to Buy" on the new affordable houses: as the NFNPA houses are leasehold there are planning and lease restrictions, reducing the risk of the houses being bought in the future.

An elector asked why much of the New Forest is heathland and whether there are plans to replant woodland: Mr Avery replied that heathland is prize habitat in the New Forest and it has international designations as important habitat sites. (See 7 for a further response from Mr Rothnie, FC).

An elector asked about consideration of removing permitted development rights e.g. replacement with UPVC windows. Mr Avery said replacing windows is not development even in conservation area.

**7. Report from the FC by Mr Bruce Rothnie** It was noted that the FC is now known as "Forestry England". Mr Rothnie thanked BPC and other local contributors to litter picking. The FC spent £300,000 removing fly tipping in the last 12 months. Mr Rothnie thanked BPC for its support with the Pound Lane tree planting project, particularly Cllr Robert Clarke.

An elector asked why much of the New Forest is heathland and whether there are plans to replant woodland: Mr Rothnie described William the Conqueror's hunting forest of open heathland and woodland and said the NF is very similar now; enclosures were introduced in the last 200 years. The NF has extremely rare habitats and due

to the long-term stability of that habitat the flora is exceptionally rare. The FC plans to plant more trees at a national level. The species diversity in the NF is exceptional; climate change will affect the ecology and therefore to maintain species diversity, diversity of habitats also needs to be maintained.

Control of Dogs: Mr Rothnie said unfortunately there are always a small proportion of user groups that are not as responsible as others. New Forest Dog Owners Group meets with the FC regularly; the FC also runs dog training events and has held meetings with commercial dog walkers and the NFNPA to create a new charter. Bye-laws can be enforced if a dog is out of control; however name and address is required to proceed to magistrates.

Cllr Mans said there is legislation in place but it is the ability to enforcing the law that is a problem.

An elector asked about NF Affordable Housing/FC properties in Burley for commoning families: Mr Rothnie said that less than 4 FC properties in the NF are charged at open market rent – these are 6 bed hunting lodges. The rest are discounted rents, below social rents. The FC spends more in maintenance on those houses than they receive in rent. Mr Rothnie agreed to feedback further information on this subject after ministerial feedback that is due shortly (BR)

An elector commented that the new Dragons teeth are good at supporting verge recovery.

An elector asked about the numbers of grazing animals and the balance between this and young tree regeneration. Mr Rothnie said that grazing numbers are currently higher than in recent history as a consequence of the supporting grant benefit. However Natural England is not currently concerned. There is not a consistent level of grazing everywhere: there are locations where there are intensive numbers of animals causing erosion; these sights are being monitored. There are pulses of regeneration of trees through time that correspond to lower animal numbers; a natural cycle of regeneration happens over hundreds of years and therefore there is not concern in the short term.

**8. Report from HCC from Cllr Mans.** Cllr Mans reported on HCC finances and said there are good reserves in Hampshire compared to other counties. These Hampshire finances are managed by investing in projects that reduce expenditure in the future. HCC is a pioneer in AI and digital care of the elderly e.g. use of Amazon Echo/Alexa by a disabled man to switch lights on and off rather than needing staff support.

Cllr Mans said he had £8000 in his devolved budget for local groups and last year £1800 of this went to Burley projects.

HCC will continue to work with NFNPA on the balance between conservation and recreation in the NF.

No questions were asked to Cllr Mans

**9. Any Other Business** None

**The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05pm.**