

CATCOTT PARISH MEETING
Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 9th May 2006
at 7.00pm in the Catcott School Hall

2006/2007 APM - 1

- APM 06/07/1 **PRESENT:** Cllr Westmaas (in the Chair)
- APM 06/07/2 **ALSO PRESENT:** DCllr S Kingham, CCllr D Huxtable, 14 members of the public.
- APM 06/07/3 **IN ATTENDANCE:** Julia Marshall (Clerk to Catcott Parish Council)
- APM 06/07/4 **APOLOGIES:** received from Mr G Wheeler, DCllr McGinty and PC Jacobs.
- APM 06/07/5 **WELCOME:** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- APM 06/07/6 **MINUTES** of the previous Parish Meeting were confirmed and signed.
- APM 06/07/7 **CATCOTT PARISH COUNCIL:** Ron Westmaas, Chairman of Catcott Parish Council presented the following report. On behalf of the Parish Council I welcome everyone to the 2006 parish meeting. We thank you for attending, for your interest in the village and for your many and varied contributions to Catcott throughout the year. It has been an 'interesting' one! I will start with the good news. As far as we are aware, in the last 12 months, no one has run into the Jubilee Stone. As for other matters, looking back, I note that the last Parish Council Report referred to 2005 as having been a quiet year on the planning front. This year could hardly have been more different. Quiet it was not. Along with other Polden villages, Catcott has, in the last 12 months, experienced in earnest, the pressures of building development. Whilst we cannot expect to be immune from the political, social and economic forces behind today's drive for development, we had hoped at least, that the planning control system might do what we imagined it was there to do. Instead, we have been frustrated by what appeared to us, at least, to be inconsistencies in the application of policy and we are disturbed by the sense that so little regard is paid to the wishes and needs of the local community and to those with local knowledge. This Council does not wish, nor does it expect Catcott to be preserved in aspic. However, we do feel that when change does occur, it should not be allowed to degrade and despoil the character of the village. Unfortunately, some of our recent experiences have shown that too often this is precisely what is allowed to occur. We will continue to do our best to resist the rot. The Parish Council received with regret the news that Catcott Post Office and Stores was to cease trading. This has been a severe blow to the village which is keenly felt. We thank John and Judy Rose for their past contribution to Catcott and wish them well for the future. And so to Highways. The 50mph limit is now in force on the A39 and we are now all able to admire the decorative work carried out around the Catcott and Moorlynch junctions. Overtaking at these junctions is surely now a thing of the past. On the positive side, perhaps half a loaf is better than no bread. Despite our many representations, at 60mph no less, the speed limit on Scotts Lane is 10mph faster than that on the top road. We have been informed by the Highways Department that Scotts Lane meets the criteria for this speed and that 'rules is rules'! So much for common sense then. I will skip the details of our many attempts to get adequate repairs done to various road surfaces in the village. I can only say that we continue to press for a better service. Finally, back to decoration and the fact that we somehow completely fail to appreciate the skill and artistry involved in the painting of the bus stop signs. Perhaps we're just old fogies who don't understand the artistic merits of graffiti. That yellow mess is, literally, a graphic illustration of the poor standard of care and workmanship we have sadly come to expect. On a happier note. As in the past we have again been able to offer support to St Peter's and have also made small grants to other local causes. One of our notice boards has been renovated and through the good offices of CCllr David Huxtable, the second board will be replaced. Through David we also obtained a grant for the Parish Plot gateway which has been installed. We would like to take this opportunity to thank David for his help and advice during the year and for attending our meetings whenever possible. Thanks too to DCllr Kingham for keeping us up to date with District Council matters, for his support and advice on various issues, and for his frequent presence at our meetings. The parish website continues to grow and we thank Julia for being such a diligent webmaster. If you haven't visited the site we encourage you to do so. It has many useful links including those to the District Council. The web address is at the top of the agenda. We thank Julia for her work during this trying year and I would like to add my personal thanks for all the help Julia has given me in my role as chairman. I also thank my fellow councillors for their support and guidance. Finally the council extends particular thanks to those of you who, through rain or shine, and sometimes through fog and frost, have attended our meetings and supported us in our work for the village. We very much value your interest, your contributions and your company.
- APM 06/07/8 **CATCOTT PRIMARY SCHOOL:** Mrs Anita Hayne a Governor of Catcott School presented the following report and answered questions. Catcott is a very good school. This is the view of the Governing Body but is supported by the Ofsted inspection which took place last year. The report said: "This is a very good school which gives good value for money. High quality teaching is a significant aid to pupils very good achievement." The school is one of just 421 picked out this year "by the Chief Inspector" as being particularly successful. Ofsted and annual performance and assessment reports show that standards are well above average in all the core subjects of English, Maths and Science. Standards of teaching are very high and the staff work well beyond the call of duty to provide a first class learning environment. They are currently working hard to introduce more creativity into the curriculum. This helps to develop problem solving and thinking skills and allows pupils to become more independent learners. A consequence is that cross curricular links are strengthened and the new approach is bringing more excitement and involvement into the classroom. The school is fortunate to have a good level of teaching assistants who also make a big contribution to pupils' learning. The school is very well led by Mike Ellis" supported by Ann Fontaine as deputy head. ICT has been a major focus for

Chairman

Date

CATCOTT PARISH MEETING
Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 9th May 2006
at 7.00pm in the Catcott School Hall

2006/2007 APM - 2

the school and we are keen to maintain and develop the computer suite and distributed PCs and interactive whiteboards in each classroom. We have an advanced skills teacher, Mrs Elaine Cosser, who specialises in ICT and helps to support other schools in their use of ICT as well as leading on this at Catcott. She is helped by Nicky Mills who supports pupils as well as providing first line support for software and hardware. Building and site maintenance is a high priority and the school has effective plans to continue to keep the facilities safe and in good repair. The school hopes to be able to make changes to the car park so that buses can pick up and set down pupils away from the road. Relationships between the school, the community and parents are good. The school communicates with parents in a variety of ways including regular newsletters. In summary, Catcott School is providing the young people in the area with an excellent all round education which must provide a very secure foundation for their further education at secondary level and beyond.

APM 06/07/9

CATCOTT AFTER SCHOOL CLUB: The following report was presented by Mrs Esther Rushforth. The club was formed in 1996 with a small start up grant and became self supporting in 1998 when the grant had been used. It is open during term time - Monday - Friday 3.30 - 5.30 pm for child care and other activities. Children are primary school aged - 5 - 11 years. from all the Polden Villages. At present we have on average over 60 children attending gymnastics each week and over 70 children attending for child care. There are 3 permanent paid members of staff. The club is entirely self supporting and receives no financial assistance from the school. Parents use the club for childcare - if they are working - or. to give their children opportunities to take part in organised activities. Staff members regularly participate in First Aid courses and any courses necessary for their specialization -i.e. gymnastics. Parents pay a small hourly fee for their children to attend. This does not cover all expenditure, particularly for large equipment, materials and training. Extra funding has had to be obtained to meet these needs. The club aims to provide a high quality service and has had to ask for grant assistance this year, locally. We believe strongly in equal opportunities and offering parents and children from all areas the accessibility of our service. Children with special needs are also catered for. Children are benefiting from gymnastics which is provided by the after school club with the aid of highly qualified teachers. Recently our competition team has been successful in gaining places in the finals of two National competitions at Stoke - on - Trent. This has put a strain on the finances, as we have to cover the travelling expenses of our gym coach, one of the reasons we are asking for help. Children from the gymnastics club have performed at local fetes and helped to raise money for village causes. The club helps the school to raise funds by having a stall at their annual Christmas Fayre.

APM 06/07/10

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH: Mrs Hilary Mackay provided a written report read by Mrs Joyce Hamblyn as follows. Incidents reported to my by coordinators and villagers, in the last year have fortunately been relatively few and far between. There were several small thefts of property and one of vandalism, but there were also two major break-ins. Last October a quad bike was stolen and a milk van tampered with - a quantity of squash, milk and cheese was stolen. Last week a builders' yard was broken into and locks on new steel doors were broken. At the time of reporting a full inventory of stolen goods was not available, but a large quantity of diesel oil had been lost. Police have been informed on all occasions. At the street coordinators meeting last October it was decided that only two meetings would be held annually as there was relatively little to discuss - we are fortunate that we live in a low crime area. The telephone Round Robin system does work when necessary with information being passed to each street coordinator. They in turn can pass on relevant details to their neighbours. The recent Post Office closure has meant that information on Neighbourhood Watch is no longer so easily available for villagers to see. Police email messages are received regularly, most reiterating the need for householders to be vigilant in protecting their property and keeping valuables under lock and key. There has been a reported increase in recent weeks of burglaries on the Poldens. PC Rob Jacobs is once again working as beat manager for the Poldens and his presence within the villages is very welcome. His beat number is GB 013 West Poldens Beat.

APM 06/07/11

PLAY AREA: Mrs Eileen Chilcott reported as follows. Following the resignation of Matt and Jo Lendon (chairman, vice chairman, secretary & treasurer) for which we thank them for their term of offices, Candy Brooks took over as acting chairman with Alison Witcher acting secretary. Rob Lush took over as treasurer. Rob has now moved from Catcott so that post is open at present; Eileen Chilcott is acting treasurer. Candy Brooks has now accepted the post of chairman and we are grateful to her as she is very enthusiastic and energetic also taking over responsibility of the appearance of the Play Area. I appealed to Chris Jones and she is now our efficient secretary, also Hilary Mackay has been appointed as the church representative and has been a great helper. We are open and very grateful to any help that any one can give, not much time is involved now we are up and running. Last summer we did a door to door collection on most of Catcott and a small part of Edington. We have also had four table top sales, October to March, which were very popular BUT with £38.00 for the hall and two adverts at £35.00 that takes a big chunk out of any monies made. We thank Wyke Cheese for the donations of cheese each time and I badgered Arthur and Enid Beasley into manning our own table, for which we thank them. We appeal for any donations (which can be given to any committee member at any time). The Play Area has been renovated in as much as all equipment needed repairs, the SCC via David Huxtable made a grant towards this maintenance and a small seat in the shed. Wollands of Glastonbury sponsored the sign explaining the history of the Play Area and the safe. Anthony Jenkins undertook this work and built and supported the materials free for the post box which houses the safe. This safe has proved a nice little "saver/earner". We are very grateful and thank them all. Now a picnic table has been purchased and roses are to be planted along the front hedge. A "Green bin" has been ordered from Sedgemoor District Council for grass cuttings, etc. As I am personally against

Chairman

Date

CATCOTT PARISH MEETING
Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 9th May 2006
at 7.00pm in the Catcott School Hall

2006/2007 APM - 3

the cost of the Play Area being put on the council tax we appeal for help, support or donations at any time. We have already arranged to hold table top sales at Edington Village Hall on the following dates: 8th October 2006, 19th November 2006, 28th January 2007 and 4th March 2007. Being a small committee and not very physically capable this is the only thing we can manage to do that gives us a fair return for little work manually. Thanking all who have helped, donated or supported us in the past year.

APM 06/07/12 **POLICE:** PC Rob Jacobs had telephoned the Clerk who said that most of the information had been incorporated in the Neighbourhood Watch report. PC Jacobs anticipated the possibility of a meeting to set up a Local Action Team (LAT). The Community Support Officer is Linda Ebdon and one or other of them try to get round the villages on their beat as frequently as possible. Horse Watch is a scheme which is now on the increase along the Polden villages. Details of a burglar to be on the look out for were given to the meeting.

APM 06/07/13 **SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL:** The following report was given by County Councillor, David Huxtable. The County Council set itself the task of moving from "Fair" in CPA terms to "Excellent" in two years (starting in 2004) and whilst it is fair to say there has been some improvement in "score" I suspect very few people have noticed an improvement in service. We have improved our score by being better at filling in Government forms and, under the old inspection scheme, I am sure that we would have achieved "Excellent" but the Government has (perhaps understandably) made the test harder! The Government is trying to "modernise" local government, it seems either by Regionalisation or Unitary Authorities. Both subjects have been visited before and none seem to be popular with the electorate or show any cost savings. You will have noted the attempt to get our Police to merge (voluntarily) and we await the result of compulsion. On a positive note, with all party support, we have agreed to merge our Fire Service with our neighbours in Devon. I will report at length about this if you wish at your next meeting. Your Council will by now be aware of the Council Tax settlement at 5% the highest in the Country and (hopefully!) have noticed my attempts along with colleagues to reduce the burden by concentrated our efforts to control our ever increasing staff. Again if your Council wishes I will report more fully at a later meeting. The Polden Hills have survived another year of Local Government largely unscathed and I look forward to continuing to defend your way of life in 2006. In response to a question David said LAT (Local Action Teams) are a very good Government initiative. It would result in more CSOs in the amalgamated areas. The Poldens are due to amalgamate with Bower and Sydenham which would be preferable to the further away Quantocks. It should result in an increase to 4-5 police officers.

APM 06/07/14 **MARY GODFREY CHARITY:** Mr Syd Jones reported from notes provided by Mr Gerald Wheeler. The charity is going on quite well. They want to sell two water logged fields, one of just over an acre and another of about two and a quarter acres. They distributed £575 prior to Christmas 2005. Mr Wheeler has indicated that he will be retiring from the charity at the end of the year.

APM 06/07/15 **CATCOTT EDUCATIONAL CHARITY:** Mr Peter Mackay reported that there was no change from last year with the financial situation almost stagnant. There will again be a small distribution to the school in due course.

APM 06/07/16 **RHODA NORRIS CHARITY:** Mrs Eileen Chilcott reported that the situation remains as last year. Approximately £104 in the bank.

APM 06/07/17 **SEDGEMOOR DISTRICT COUNCIL:** The following report was given by District Councillor Stuart Kingham. Over the last year since your last Parish Meeting many things have happened at Sedgemoor. Bridgwater House is now complete making it a modern and a better working environment for staff to work in. It was completed on time and within budget, with many extras included. Staff are still being moved around, still part of the fine tuning. Sedgemoor has agreed in principle to move their housing into an ALMO, it has set up its board to run it, but it will all depend on housing gaining their 2 star rating on the standard of housing. (large grant) The Almo (Arms Length Management Organisation) goes live in October. The Port of Bridgwater have just had their annual inspection of all their navigational aids buoys, lighthouse, beacons, etc. All were checked during the winter months by Trinity House and were found to be good and efficient, especially good as no maintenance had been done. We are also waiting for a new replacement Pilot Boat, which is currently under construction at Southampton. The current one was purchased second hand from Watchet. Transformation is still working its way through the Council to help keep the efficiencies and savings on-going. Planning some of you may already know, can now be viewed on line through Sedgemoor's web site. Sedgemoor are one of the first authorities in the country on line with planning applications. This year Sedgemoor has once again set one of the lowest Council taxes in the country. Stuart also mentioned: Partnership working; CCTV; Building Control.

APM 06/07/18 **JAF LUTTRELL MEMORIAL CHARITY:** This Charity known locally as the Luttrell Trust was founded in 1898 by Mrs Luttrell of Edington Manor. A hundred years ago, she established a Cottage Hospital for the local community. Today the charity is designed to be of assistance to those who may be ill, in hardship or distress within an area covered by Edington, Chilton Polden, Catcott and Burtle. The Trustees of the charity meet annually in October to allocate grants but will consider requests on application at other times if the need is more pressing. These applications are in confidence. The grants may be awarded in kind or may be money grants. We still find that people are either unaware of the provisions of this charity or are uncomfortable about asking for assistance so the trustees have been more proactive in seeking out people and organisations who may benefit under the conditions laid down. This year the charity

Chairman

Date

CATCOTT PARISH MEETING
Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 9th May 2006
at 7.00pm in the Catcott School Hall

2006/2007 APM - 4

has continued to support the exercise class for cardiac rehabilitation which due to its success is now held in Edington village hall, awarded a grant for hospital visiting, and provided essential equipment to enable a villager to be discharged from hospital to their own home. A grant has also been approved for Catcott School for a suspended ceiling which is required to upgrade a classroom to the required specification for those with hearing difficulties and also to assist with funding for pupils with special needs. If you know of anyone who would like to be considered for help or who might benefit from the Charity's assistance, then please talk to one of the Trustees or apply in writing to Mrs Agnes Auld, Clerk to the Trustees, West Close, Church Road, Edington.

APM 06/07/19 **ST PETER'S CHURCH:** No report received.

APM 06/07/20 **CATCOTT VILLAGE ASSOCIATION:** No report received.

APM 06/07/21 **SAGE:** Mrs Pat Hill-Cottingham had contacted the Clerk to say there was nothing to report.

APM 06/07/22 **CHARITIES - POSSIBLE MERGER:** The possibility of merging the small charities who have similar aims was discussed. It was felt this should be feasible without any of them losing their individual identities.

APPENDIX

Because of the inadvertent omission of a report from St Peter's Church this is now added as an appendix as follows:

The most momentous event of the year was the retirement of our Honorary Secretary, Val Hollis, after more than thirty years of devoted and scrupulous service to the church. A presentation was made, though obviously none could adequately represent our debt to her. We have secured the services of Fran Walsh as our secretary. We have also welcomed a new Treasurer, Brian Tilbury. With the completion last year of the "health and safety" balustrade at the back of the west gallery, and Syd Jones's splendid restoration of the west door, there are at present no major structural projects in view, if one discounts the ongoing "difference" between us and the Diocesan Advisory Committee about the best affordable way of heating the building. In an attempt partially to offset the loss of the Post Office as a social hub of the village we have embarked on a series of monthly (not in the summer) coffee mornings as a forum for the exchange of news and gossip. Hilary Mackay also mounted a highly successful "Loaves and Fishes" lunch. The Church was full for the sad occasion of the funeral of Gayle Ronald, late of Catcott Post Office, and for our two major festival services, the candle-lit midnight Communion on Christmas Eve and the main morning service on Easter Day. Dissatisfaction had been expressed with the churchyard mowing by Mr Dunster (who has moved to Wellington), so we now have Mr Chidgey of Highbridge who has been doing a much tidier job. We are very grateful to the Parish Council for their grant towards the maintenance of the churchyard.

Chairman

Date