

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish held on Wednesday 22nd May at
7.00pm in Pitton Village Hall**

Present

Geoff Lowndes (Chairman)

Tony Ashworth

Jaime Latham

Chris Hewitt

Catherine Purves (The Clerk)

There were no members of the public

AGENDA

1. **Apologies** – There were none.
2. **Minutes** - The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th May 2012 were approved as a correct record.
3. **Matters arising** – There were none
4. **A report on the year** – The Chairman reported the following:

The year has passed uneventfully except for one major area.

This was of course the Pitton flooding. Prolonged rain during the early part of the year raised ground and aquifer levels to the north of the village.

Contingency plans were mobilised at an early date. These included cleaning out of the siphon, and successfully requesting Wiltshire Council to make an auxiliary diesel pump available. We were pleasantly surprised when it actually arrived on site along with almost enough piping for the discharge (the other length or two being readily available) Quotes were also obtained for the hire of an electric pump, but this proved to be not required in the presence of the larger diesel pump.

In the event, water levels up Dunstable Road rose to about a depth of 10 inches above the road level, making vehicular progress through it slow but not impossible.

Water levels in the village stayed below the highway level, and the ditches on the west side of the High Street coped with the incoming flow, as did the siphon. After three exciting weeks, the level started to drop and it became clear that the threat was abating.

1 of 3.

So no houses were flooded, unlike 10 years ago, and interference with the drains was minimal. No sewage escaped into gardens or onto fields, so no health problems were experienced.

The only apparent problem was that floodwater ingress into the sewers filled up the sump in Slate Way faster than it could normally be pumped out, so that Southern Water had to run emergency tankers several times, including at night to prevent overflow. The problem of floodwater entering the sewers should be addressed in time for next winter. We would like to thank Southern Water for their prompt response this winter.

So we offer our thanks to the many people who helped in many ways at all times of the day and night to mitigate the effects of the rains. I know from my conversations with many Pitton villagers that they join me in this. The cost to the Parish Council was minimal, being confined to buying sand and bags, the latter being stored for another time.

The old Methodist Chapel in Pitton received permission to be converted into two separate dwellings, and other planning matters in the villages were generally not controversial.

The Parish Council hosted or took part in several meetings concerning the Broadband future, but firmly agreed not to take sides in the matter of choice between BT and Gigaclear.

Planning policy for the two villages remains unclear, but at present no development outside the existing Housing Policy boundaries looks possible. Indeed, the Housing Policy boundaries may probably be removed, meaning the whole villages lie in open countryside, so that current infilling spaces become undevelopable.

The Precept discussions decided to slightly reduce the Parish Council's expenditure for 2013-14. In spite of this, due to changes in the way the tax base is calculated imposed by the Government, our precept demand rose by 5%. Fortunately no adverse comment on this was received by me.

The main problem that exists at present is the state of the roads. Pothole filling has been slow and often ineffective, and is not keeping up with normal wear and tear. This remains a serious problem for motorists trying to avoid potholes and collisions, and an even greater one for 2 wheel vehicles.

The elections in May for Wiltshire and Parish Councils were unopposed. Chris Devine therefore remains our Wiltshire Councillor, and one Parish Council place exists at Farley, and four at Pitton.

2 of 2.

Finally, I would like to thank all Councillors, our Wiltshire Councillor, and of course our Clerk for their hard and conscientious work during the past year. Thanks are also due to the many helpers who have assisted in so many aspects of our duties.

I wish the new councillors the very best for the year ahead.

G.C.H.Lowndes

Chairman 2012/201

5. **Any other parish business** – nothing raised for discussion.
6. **The meeting closed at 7.15pm.**

