

## **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 6.30pm in the Bridford Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllr. Topley (Chair); Cllr. Purser (Vice Chair), Cllr. Marriott; Cllr. Gallagher and Cllr. Ashenden-Pearce; Tamsin Mowat (Clerk) and 9 members of the public. Refreshments were served.

**Apologies:** Lorraine Hart – Wives, David Price – Woodland Park and Sue Hamilton-Cox

### **Summary of presentations and discussion:**

All Councillors, the Clerk and all members of the public introduced themselves

Cllr. Topley and Dan Tidball - maps from Parish Council records dating back to 1980s to be given to Jan Deane for History Club or West Country Library

Folder of Alvary Scott's History Group – records of the history of Shippen Farm at Bridford – Cllr. Purser to ask current owners – Lampards if they'd like it. Needs to go to History group first to be scanned and recorded. Something in the church safe as well about the history of the village.

Cllr. Topley to pass relevant records to History Group to be scanned and recorded

Cllr. Topley and Ray Spurr - links between Parish Council and Village Hall committee working well

Lucy Smerdon - Wildlife Warden – Teignbridge scheme – working on verges – swift boxes been put into the church. Wooden signs to go up on verges to inform people. Wildlife warden information to go on the noticeboard beside the telephone box – Cllr. Marriott to liaise with Lucy Smerdon, Wildlife Warden.

Joseph Dunkley – wildlife and woodland liaison and TVCH link – keen to get something done about lighting in the village that is too bright and on in the early hours of the morning – dark skies issue could be looked into – Three Parish meeting – can public attend? Clerk to check. Teign Valley Community Hall meetings – heating and renovations to the building main focus of late

Graham Padgham – Head of the village fete committee – set up primarily to give all members of the village a fun day. Village Hall, Parish Council and church to benefit from profits as well as community projects such as Acorn

Pip Morrison – co-chair of Bridford Twinning association with Trudy Cronin – hosted 30 people from twinned village in Normandy, France for the weekend – very wet but very enjoyable weekend – Swannaford visit and Dartmoor trek, Dartmoor prison. Return visit to France planned for next year. Need younger people to join the Twinning association to keep it running. French film night at TVCH planned with twinning groups from Dunsford, Bridford and Christow. Twinning events are for all to attend and enjoy.

Snow warden – Anne Mayes – organises the team of volunteer gritters – warm winter so only went out 12 times so not as many as some years but still a commitment as some volunteers go out after work. Water supply remains an issue but grateful for use of water supply from Nigel. Grateful thanks to all involved. Anne has asked Highways if they can let her know if the secondary routes have been gritted. Party for volunteers to be thrown again this year.

Kathy Fitzjohn – Treasurer of Bridford Church – only 4 people on the Parochial Church Council – no younger members coming up so concerns over viability for the future. Call out to younger members of the community to step up. Attendance at Bridford is very small. Fundraisers, cleaning, flowers and churchyard maintenance all very helpful but actual number of churchgoers very small. Churchyard upkeep is expensive. Unity magazine and the Welcome Booklet – volunteers who deliver Unity identify newcomers to the village – Kathy delivers copy of Welcome booklet to them to welcome them to the village.

Lorraine Hart from Bridford Wives sent report (full text at end of minutes) as unable to attend – meets monthly and talks open to everyone - £5 per year. Evening meetings. Summer trips. Younger members very

welcome. 25 members currently. Skittles over winter – October to March – run by Village Hall committee – profits from skittles benefit Wives.

David Price – Tree Warden – sent report as unable to attend (full text at end of minutes) 30% of Bridford Parish covered by woodland, mostly broad leaved. Loss of any woodland by felling would be a concern. Dan Tidball added that parts of the Parish are now defined as temperate rain forest.

Food bank is situated in the church lobby – a team of volunteers go over to Christow and bring food back. Open to all – those in need and also trying to reduce food waste and air miles.

Kathy Fitzjohn said thanks to the Parish Councillors for their work.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm

### *Bridford Wives Report*

*The Bridford Wives meet monthly either indoors in the village hall from September to April or outdoors for activities in the summer months. Ideas for our yearly programme are provided by members at our AGM which is also a social event with food and drink.*

*The yearly membership fee is a modest £5 and currently we have 25 members. A monthly raffle for a donated prize raises more revenue. In addition, we are grateful to the Village Hall Committee who donate to us a share of the winter Skittles income. We give a portion of our funds to charitable causes each year.*

*We are lucky to be able to draw on the talents of local enthusiasts whose passion and knowledge about their special interests have provided us with some fascinating talks. Over the last year we have learned about women spies and undercover agents in WW2, the training and provision of guide dogs, the unusual childhood of a member whose parents were medical missionaries in Asia, and how to do Christmas crafts. We have had musical entertainment with a quiz, and an Eco printing workshop which was the third of a series of workshops given by a talented local craftsperson. Visits to the theatre, to Canonteign Falls, Ugbrooke House and Powderham Castle have been enjoyable outside events not to mention our Christmas dinner at The Bridford Inn.*

*Lorraine Hart*

*Secretary to the Bridford Wives*

*June 2024*

### *Tree Warden and Bridford Trust Reports – David Price – June 2024*

#### *Bridford Parish*

*Based upon studying the OS maps for the parish and my local knowledge, I estimate that roughly 30% of Bridford Parish is covered by woodland, of which around 60% is broadleaved. The bulk of the coniferous plantations are near the reservoirs. There has been considerable felling and replanting here over recent years, however, the replanting is including an element of broad-leaved trees, and this, combined with the different age structure of the growing conifer woodland, is helping to improve the variety of habitat in these woodlands.*

*Additionally in places other than woodland there are some hedges where trees have been allowed to grow to maturity. These provide an important habitat within the farmed landscape, and despite the overzealous annual cutting of the hedgerows on the farm immediately surrounding the village, it is encouraging to see that in places selected sapling have been "spared" to grow on into mature trees.*

*As has been stated in previous reports the most important woodland habitats in the parish are the broadleaved woods represented by Bridford Woods, Westcott Wood, the Woodlands Farm areas and parts of Christow Common/Stone Farm woodlands. Much of this woodland is probably ancient (i.e. many of the trees are over 300 years, or where they have been coppiced the actual stools from which they are growing are this age). Loss of any of this ancient woodland by clear felling would be a matter of concern. No particular threats have been brought to my attention in this respect, and I'm not aware of any significant new plantings, though one or two fields in places appear to have been left to "rewild" themselves with scrub and trees, which is a certain way of improving biodiversity.*

#### *Bridford Trust*

*Insofar as the Trust created a Woodland Park and acquired Rowdon Valley Wood, we have a relatively small, but locally important, acreage of woodland. (However, we are not the Woodland Trust, a term used incorrectly by many people to refer to us! The Woodland Trust is a multi-million-pound charity covering the whole of the UK and we're not quite in that league yet!).*

*Over the past 12 months, most management work has been involved with maintenance – ie trimming back paths edges and removing trees that had fallen across them to maintain access routes, and in the Woodland Park other (non-woodland) activities to preserve the park-like character of the site. Additionally, we have continued with thinning the stands of mature trees where they are too dense for individual trees to have the space to grow into properly developed mature trees. In particular the large self-sown Willows in the Park which tend to outgrow everything else continue to be systematically removed and the stumps treated to stop them re-growing. Letting light into the woodland in this way has significantly benefited the understorey with more shrubs appearing and the welcome colonisation by Bluebells.*

*The extremely wet winter and spring has posed some problems in the park, with very muddy paths creating access difficulties. This was not helped by the visit of some 120 cows to the site in October, and two rather wild galloping horses in January. Once the ground had dried out reparation work has been underway but this has inevitably diverted our activities away from managing the woodland areas, so some catching up to be done on that score.*

*In addition to the two main sites, we have "adopted" the small roadside area at the top of Church Lane and sought to open it up and generally tidy it, as it had become totally choked by Blackthorn, Brambles and other rampant vegetation, and the old seat by the gate had effectively "disappeared" within it. This was cleared last year and a new bench (courtesy of Mari Turner), installed. However, before embarking on replanting it was left "fallow" for a season to see what seeds were in the ground waiting to come up once the shading vegetation had been removed. This was a sensible move, as the area has turned into a "forest" of teasels and thistles. Removal of these before they go to seed is underway and will hopefully leave the area ready for some more subtle brook-side planting and the encouragement of more manageable flow.*