

BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL

We invite you to our Annual Meeting with Parishioners on
11 May 2015 in Binegar Memorial Hall at 7 00 pm

AGENDA

1	Introduction
2	Minutes To note the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 13 May 2014
3	Annual Report To receive a report from the Chair
4	Parishioners' questions Your chance to put questions to the Council
5	Next meeting The next Annual Meeting with Parishioners will be on Tuesday 3 May 2016

Diane Abbott
Parish Clerk
4 May 2015

BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting with Parishioners held on 13 May 2014 in the Memorial Hall

Present: Roger Anderson, Philip Blatchford, Richard Higgins (Chair), Cath Law, David Stone

In attendance: Mr Brian Perry and 25 members of the parish

1.	<p>Introduction</p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting by relaying the sad news of the death of Douglas Hill on 1 May. He said that Douglas had made great contributions to the villages and church as parochial church councillor, as chair of governors of Binegar School and as a parish councillor.</p> <p>The meeting kept a minute of silence to respect Douglas Hill's memory.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the 7 May 2013 meeting be signed as a correct record.</p>	
3.	<p>Annual Report of the Chair</p> <p>Richard gave an apology for absence from Gus Halfhide who had been Chair for almost all of 2013-14. He read to the meeting the report prepared by Gus:</p> <p>"My 3rd and, as it turned out, my last year as chairman proved to be the most challenging of all. "Our clerk resigned in January 2014 (I'll say a some more of that later), Roger Anderson was absent through illness for much of the year and Jude Robbins resigned in March 2014. I resigned as chair at the meeting in February and Richard Higgins has since been elected chair.</p> <p>"The Parish Council's regular business consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintenance of the village open spaces• Upkeep of the churchyard and cemetery• Running the children's playground through the Binegar Playing Field Group• Chasing up highways in respect of village roads and rights of way• Consideration of planning applications referred to the council• Ensuring we are properly insured• Keeping abreast of various national and local issues affecting the parish <p>"In the past year there have also been some significant activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of a new website for the council• Computerising the burial records and the implementation of a Burial Policy• Continuing to provide an excellent playground, which won a bronze award during the year• Obtaining funds and donations for a defibrillator (special thank to Cath Law for hard work) <p>"The most significant and regrettable aspect of the past year however was the long absence, through illness, and subsequent resignation of the clerk Rachel Thompson. There were irreconcilable differences between the council and Rachel towards the end. Nevertheless, on behalf of the council I would like to thank Rachel for her many years of service.</p> <p>"The clerk's absence meant that workload had to be shared amongst all councillors but notably Philip Blatchford who became the acting clerk and Richard Higgins who became responsible for</p> <p>the council's financial matters. Their excellent work made my life as chair a lot easier than it might have been.</p> <p>"We had 6 applications for the post of clerk and this has resulted in the appointment of Diane Abbott who will take up the position from 1st June 2014.</p> <p>"My thanks to my fellow councillors for their time and support during the year."</p>	

	Richard added that he would like to thank a number of residents who had been Good Citizens: For work to reduce the threat of flooding: Chris Burr, Paul Milverton, Karen and Paul Weller; For masterminding the appeal to get a defibrillator: Cath Law.	
4.	<p>Mr Brian Perry, Director, Gurney Slade Quarry The meeting welcomed Brian who addressed the meeting.</p> <p>Brian said that he knew that the Quarry had to work with its neighbours and be responsible about the environment. At the same time, stone was needed and it had to be dug where it was. Though business had picked up, the past five years had been poor for business.</p> <p>Brian mentioned that the ready-mix plant had been relocated into the quarry and away from the road – an improvement for residents and road users.</p> <p>He stated that, in the next 5-10 years, it was planned to move the quarry entrance so it was directly off the A37 rather than off Tape Lane. He promised that, before any planning application was made, he would consult the Parish Council, which represented local people who were the ones who lived with the quarry.</p> <p>Philip asked whether the daily water dousing of Tape Lane could also include the entrance to Francis Flowers' plant. Brian stated he had received no request and suggested the Parish Council write to Francis Flower.</p> <p>Brian ended asking that any problems be reported. If it were about a lorry, he asked that a note of date, time and registration number be taken.</p> <p>Richard thanked Brian for his contribution to the meeting.</p>	PB
5.	<p>Parishioners' questions There was discussion about the planned pedestrian, which Philip stated would be installed in the current financial year.</p> <p>On traffic speed through Gurney Slade, Sister Anne suggested residents use speed guns. Following discussion, it was agreed to consider this proposal further.</p>	RH
6.	<p>Date and time of next meeting It was agreed to hold the next Annual Meeting with Parishioners on 5 May 2015</p>	

BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL

Chair's Annual Report 2014-15

For Councillors, the major event of the year was appointing Diane Abbott. Diane quickly took up the reins of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer and we now benefit from her hard work, organisation and enthusiasm.

Perhaps the most visible event was felling the cypress trees in the cemetery. When we asked parishioners, views were mixed. Most favoured felling and, given the age of the trees, this was what the Council decided. Since then, we have been asking how we can improve the cemetery. Ideas include a Lych gate, a seat to rest and trees to shelter the boundary.

Not all was well in the cemetery this year. When the Council did its safety check and laid unstable headstones down on the ground, there were huge protests. We accepted that we had not followed best practice and apologised for distress caused. This next year, we shall review how we put our policy into practice.

The churchyard of Holy Trinity Church, which celebrates its 950th birthday this year, is also a Parish Council responsibility and we replaced the gate. The old gate had done sterling service for 60 years.

Binegar Playing Fields Group, led by Philip Blatchford, runs the playground, which continues to be a popular attraction. What you may not know is what this involves. There has to be a weekly safety check, regular maintenance and replacement of old apparatus. Volunteers, including Councillors, do this. The *Group's* efforts raised £1,540 this year that it put towards a new seesaw and swings.

Mendip District Council routinely asks parish councils about planning applications. There have been several controversial ones brought on by relaxed planning rules. Among these was one for a housing estate behind Flowerstone. The applicant withdrew this application in the face of opposition. Most parishioners were relieved. Developers, however, continue to challenge Mendip's planning rules and the parish council must do all it can to secure orderly development in Gurney Slade and Binegar.

There has been a less happy outcome at Emborough Pond where the owner has wrecked the view, built fences and planted hedges to keep local people out. Mendip has allowed this to happen even though Emborough Pond is one of its protected *Special Landscape Features*. Mendip's enforcement has been weak. Sadly, that has just helped a free-for-all development culture to run riot.

Kath Newman received the *Award for Services to the Community* from Somerset County's Chairman. Kath is an inspiration and has, for 40 years, worked tirelessly to make our villages better places in which to live. The Council salutes Kath.

As part of its quest for better communication with parishioners, we have put up new notice boards and we keep a full record of all we do on our website at www.binegar-pc.org.uk. This included installing a bin for dog waste and training a number of local people in basic life support.

Finally, three Councillors retired in the year: Jude Robbins, Roger Anderson and Gus Halfhide. They all volunteered and contributed to making a difference locally. On behalf of the Council, I thank them. In their place, Phil Roberts and Jon Abbott joined us. With other Councillors, they continue, after the election, to give freely of their time and energy to help our community.

Richard Higgins
April 2015