

WIDCOMBE ASSOCIATION
Minutes of the 2010 AGM, held on April 29th at Widcombe Junior School

1. **Welcome** The chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting.
2. **Apologies for Absence** Apologies for absence were read out from Mrs J Allan, Mr & Mrs Calvert-Jones, Brook Whelan. David Waterstone and Mayveen Blackwell. Mr & Mrs Woodman also sent their apologies.
3. **Chairman's Report** Richard explained that the newsletter, excellently produced by Paddy Doyle, shows the wide range of activities we have been involved in and the Events Programme sets out our exciting summer events, tirelessly organised by Sarah Lewis, and one of the great attractions of the Association.

In the absence of a Parish Council, we do our best to make Widcombe Residents' views known to B&NES, responding to consultations, and helped by our two councillors, lobbying on issues that affect our area. The Rossiter Road scheme at last seems to be on the home straight. After thirty years, we now have a scheme that has passed Council tests and meets safety requirements. Since the issue is seen as political, a meeting has been arranged for the week after the General Election, when we hope for a decision to proceed to public consultation.

Our committee member for Traffic and Highways, Julian Williams, has been involved in many issues besides Rossiter Road, including a review of parking zones, traffic calming and safety measures, Widcombe 20 campaign(see later) and Community Speed Watch led by Councillor Gilchrist. More volunteers are needed for this and the chairman asked anyone interested to see Ian after the meeting.

The first aim in our constitution is to protect Widcombe and to this end we monitor planning applications. This area is a minefield and we are fortunate to have the experience of Andrew Gordon-Duff on the committee. We have only made one objection during the year and the application has been refused. Any member making an application which might be controversial should talk to Andrew first. We do not enter into any discussions after an application has been made.

The Two Tunnels Scheme has become a very difficult area as the interests of various sections of the Widcombe Community differ. The debate is on-going.

The final issue for the Chairman was subscriptions. Chasing them has been a nightmare for Mayveen Blackwell, our membership secretary. He asked if

at all possible for members to complete Direct Debit forms which are now very safe and make collecting subs much easier for us.

4. Committee Changes David Waterstone is retiring due to other commitments but will continue to look after our interests in Abbey Cemetery. We desperately need new blood on the committee. Meetings are sociable, informal and relatively painless and Richard asked people to volunteer.

5. Treasurer's Report The Accounts were in the newsletter with a final copy on the back of the Agenda. Our money is used to fund activities, run the Association and make contributions to charity: particularly the Widcombe Wrobotiers and Widcombe Rising. £6,000 has been given to Widcombe in the last five years.

Our overall assets are around £7,000 including £900 for Abbey Cemetery.

6. Adoption of Accounts Angela Hathaway proposed the adoption of the accounts, seconded by Liz Doyle and the vote was unanimous.

7. Election of Examiner for Accounts Marilyn Phillips was re-elected. Jeremy Boss proposed the motion and it was seconded by Sarah Lewis and passed unanimously.

We then had a short presentation from Lorinda Coombes, Campaigns Manager for Waste Services in B&NES. There is to be a new, weekly, food based collection from October 4th this year. Everybody who has a green box will be eligible. Food in black bags creates methane and we are running out of landfill sites, which are very expensive to use. One third of what we throw away is food and it can be composted and spread on agricultural land. This is out to tender at present.

Each household will get two bins, a large lockable one for outside and a small bin for the kitchen. All food waste can be put in it, unlike with home composting. Each house will also be given fifty two compostable liners, and explanatory leaflets will be sent out before the collections begin. Businesses will have to pay for the service.

Adrienne Baptiste then asked our members to sign the Widcombe 20 on-line petition. She is a mother of two young children who has become involved with Safe Routes to School. Budgetary constraints make a 20 mph speed limit the best option. It will save lives; it is cheap, needing only signage and will be no harder to enforce than 30 mph. Slower traffic might also improve traffic flow and reduce congestion. Adrienne gave out slips with details of the petition and asked us to sign and tell others. We need to demonstrate a certain level of support before two trials can start, one in a village and one in Bath, possibly Widcombe.

Sam Holliday, Editor of the Bath Chronicle, informed and entertained us on the subject of newspapers in general and the Chronicle in particular.

He comes from the Midlands and has been in Bath for five years. He is also Editor of the Somerset Standard and Guardian.

He told us that the Newspaper Industry is still alive and vibrant. Only a big newspaper could do something like expose the MPs expenses scandal. The Chronicle letters page shows passion for our city. Sam has been impressed and tries to reflect the positive side of life and not just negative stories.

The Chronicle had to change to a weekly because Bath is only big enough to support a weekly paper. Cities like Bristol still have dailies. When circulation goes down so does advertising which is key to any paper – it provides 90p in every £1 of revenue. Over the last eighteen months the recession has caused advertising for property, cars, furniture etc to be reduced.

The Bath Chronicle was the first daily in the country to go weekly. It is now a good solid read. The internet web site is available to give daily news and the weekly paper brings it all together. The internet is now vital to newspapers. The media is changing very quickly. For example, a phone camera shot of the Tsunami wave in 2004 was on the web before the wave hit the beaches.

Sam finished by amusing us with some headlines.

The meeting concluded with wine, nibbles and much conversation.