MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT THE PAVILION, ALANS WAY, NEWBOLD VERDON ON 20TH MAY 1991

PRESENT

CHAIRMAN M. W. Preston
COUNCILLORS H. M. Francks, M. B. Mensley, A. Hurst, J. R. Watson, D. Colledge, G. Law, S. Spence
BOROUGH COUNCILLOR J. Crooks
CLERK E. A. Walsh
SECRETARY OF THE LORD CREWE TRUST M. C. Mould
PARISHIONERS 1

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. P. Casswell, C.C. and Mr. W. W. Goddard.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21st May 1990 were read by the Clerk, approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

MATTERS ARISING

Mrs. Spence asked what the correct procedure was in a situation where garden bonfires were creating a nuisance to adjoining owners. She was advised that contact should be made with the Borough Council's Environmental Health Inspectorate.

BEST KEPT ALLOTMENT AWARD

The Best Kept Allotment Award of a personalised shield and gift voucher was won by Mr. E. Kenney.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

First of all I would like to thank all the members of the Parish Council past and present for their continued support in the past year. My thanks also goes to our Clerk whose job becomes evermore complex and demanding. We have, however, hopefully given him some relief with the purchase of a computer. My thanks also go to Helen our Vice-Chairman for her support, especially for serving us coffee at every meeting, also to Nicholas for his help.

During the past year we have seen the Cemetery extension mature and it is becoming quite apparent that this acquisition will be a much needed asset to the village. The Garden of Remembrance is now in place and we can be looking forward to this facility maturing and I am quite sure everyone agrees that this also will be an attractive feature to the Cemetery. Thanks once again to Helen for the part she played in its design and conception.

The Pavilion has been extended and we can be justly proud of this building and this sports ground. As I mentioned in the past it would be nice to see some other sporting activity taking place at Alans Way such as tennis, bowls, etc. and I hope that we may be able to look at these other facilities in the not too distant future. There may also be a

role for us to play in providing some indoor facilities such as a sports hall, with badminton courts, indoor cricket and football features. We shall also need to complete the car park and provide some mowing equipment of our own.

If by some miracle the vandals can be stopped, we may be able to look more favourably at playground equipment in the Dragon Lane Playing Field and make this area a more pleasant spot.

I would now like to thank everyone in the village for their support of the "Best Kept Village Competition", the Verdon in Bloom Committee and all the volunteer litter pickers. By winning the large village section for the second time in three years is no mean feat and I appeal to everyone once again to make sure we keep the trophy for 1991.

Another feather in our cap this past year was the winning of the Radio Leicester County Quiz Competition and my thanks on behalf of the Parish Council go to the team for their splendid effort. Let us hope they can continue their progress and win through once again.

We have at last seen a great improvement at the corner of Arnold Crescent and Main Street and hopefully the Verdon in Bloom Committee will see the area finished off with some tubs full of bright coloured flowers to complement the background shrubs.

Looking to the future I can only dwell on the superb plans for the Hall Farm, 'The Newbold Verdon Country Park'. What a great asset this may prove to be to the village, although it still has to be fitted into the Leicestershire Rural Structure Plan and receive planning permission. We can only keep our fingers crossed and hope for a positive outcome.

PRECEPT

The Clerk gave a report on the precept for 1991/92 and highlighted the major items of expenditure. The total precept was £31,776 which was equal to £12.29 per community charge payer, compared to £23,025 in 90/9

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

As the Parish Council will be aware, because Leicestershire is a hung Council with no single party having an overall majority, any decisions made regarding the budget or any other matters have to have the support of at least two of the parties. This naturally leads to a number of difficulties relating to the overall direction of the Council as well as individual issues. The Budget Meeting in February of this year produced a similar result to last year in that a compromise budget agreed between the Labour and Liberal groups was eventually carried.

This was effectively a stand-still budget with approximately five million pounds of new growth and approximately the same level of savings. A sizeable part of the new growth was required as a result of new government legislation particularly in the fields of Education and Social Services. There was considerable concern expressed by a number of people in the village during the lead-up to the budget. One of the items on a provisional list of savings produced by the Director of Education late in 1990 was to cut grants to new community centres. As you will be aware the Newbold Verdon Community Association and a large number of children, governors, members of staff, parents and other residents had worked tremendously hard to raise money to build a community wing at the primary school. From the outset the project had been undertaken on the expectation of getting 50% of the cost of the wing from the County Council under this budget heading. Clearly if this item had been axed from the budget this would have caused severe disappointment and anger. Although this cut was part of the budget proposed by the Conservatives at County Hall, it was not included in either the Labour or Liberal proposals, and hence the budget remains and I understand that an application for a grant will shortly be going in. Malcolm Mould, the Headteacher of the primary school and a number of other residents of Newbold Verdon attended the Budget Meeting at County Hall - a clear sign of the commitment and enthusiasm of many people in the village towards this scheme. In fact Malcolm and his wife stayed right to the end of the meeting (which lasted from 2.30 till 10.30 at night) which must be over and above the call of duty!

There is growing concern that the amounts provided by Central Government under the Capital Programme are increasingly inadequate for the needs of the County. For example a number of schools requiring major works are being pushed further and further back in the programme, and this picture is repeated on a number of road schemes. Although this does not directly affect the situation in your own parish as yet, it is a concern for the County as a whole.

One of the most welcoming items of news this year has been the decision of the Countryside Commission to site the new Midlands Forest in the Staffordshire/ Derbyshire/Leicestershire area. Although Newbold Verdon will be on the fringe of this area, I know from discussions with residents of the village how important this initiative is felt to be. There is much work still to be done and only our grand-children will eventually see the final results but I am sure we all share the interest and positive commitment to this major scheme.

The County has put its new Structure Plan out for consultation. This provides an outline of permitted developments in a variety of fields up to the year 2006. The Borough Council will now put more detail on to the Structure Plan to provide local plans for the various parts of the Borough. Most crucially Structure Plan argues that the majority of development residential, commercial and industrial should be sited in the main urban area around Hinckley. In terms of additional housing in the rural part of the Borough, the plan argues that only 550 extra homes will be required. This is particularly good news for a number of villagers who have feared that major housing developments would be "tacked on" to existing village development. The Structure Plan argues for even this rural development to be along the lines of the transport corridors. There are two of these in the Borough: the first along the line of the M69 Leicester to Hinckley railway, the second to be along the line of the proposed Ivanhoe line running between Burton and Leicester. Although the Department of Transport did not approve a grant for the opening of this passenger railway line, I understand from the Director of Planning and Transportation that there is every likelihood that it will be approved next year. If this is the case and stations are built at Bagworth and Desford, then I would expect it to have some effect on Newbold Verdon which would not be far away from these passenger stations. I understand from Hinckley and Bosworth Planning Officers that a major proportion of the 550 homes planned in the rural area may well be built in Bagworth.

It is always difficult in an annual report to adequately summarise a number of major issues occurring in the County and particularly those which have local implications. If there is any further information that the Council requires or individual residents require, I will be happy to provide it.

The Chairman commented that it was a pity that the County Councillor for the Ward could not attend the Parish Council's Annual Meeting.

BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

I am proud to say that after four years serving as Borough Councillor for Newbold Verdon, I have missed only two meetings of full Council and two subcommittee meetings. One through a bereavement and the other through holidays. Throughout the four years I have served on the Planning and Housing Committees.

The sale of Council houses continued throughout the year. This has been slowed by the massive increases in mortgage interest rates and also the unhealthy situation in the job market. This in turn has caused a greater demand for rented properties. Families are not in a position to be able to affort to get on the bottom rung of the ladder for buying houses and Building Societies have been repossessing homes, a number of which are in our area.

The continued interference and prevention by the Government, stopping local authorities from building any new homes, even pensioners bungalows or starter homes for young couples, is becoming a very serious problem. The Government's idea that the private sector would take up the strain has been proved disastrously wrong. The waiting list in the Borough stands at over 1000 and for the first time ever the Council have had to use Bed and Breakfast accommodation - Council's are obliged by law to accommodate homeless families with young children. The installation of uPVC windows and central heating in Council properties has continued and is proving in the long run to be a money saver - not only for tenants in lower heating bills but also for the Council who have lower maintenance costs.

The proposal to build a crematorium on land between Elmsthorpe and Burbage Common was given approval, money has been set aside for a feasibility study with various firms invited to present completed models and concepts of the styles of buildings and also of running costs (although the Council will not be involved in the running of the facility - this will be left to a private company).

A public enquiry for the Cost a Lot/Cost a Bit itinerant sites was held. The Government inspector agreed with all the Council's objections but still over-ruled the Council and allowed the appeal for the site to continue with planning permission. This was because itinerants are classed as an ethnic minority.

A Bill going through Parliament on the tightening up of the erection of farm buildings without the need for planning permission was fully supported by all members. Also an amendment to another Bill to the effect that unauthorised development became 'an immediate punishable criminal offence', this was also fully supported by members.

The Establishment Committee has been struggling all year with the massive increase in staff. This has been necessary to implement the collection of the 'Community Charge' or Poll Tax. The amount of staff used to collect the old rates was 8 in number we now have 26 extra staff and the number is still rising. This figure is still lower than most of the other District Councils in Leicestershire and Rutland. Problems created by this increase in staff have meant placing two Porta Cabins adjacent to the offices on Argents Mead and also the complete re-designing of the whole of the permanent office accommodation. The hiring of a factory unit to house the computer main frame needed to cope with the Community Charge was also necessary. The cost of collection of the old Rates in 1989/90 was £337,000 which compares with the figure of £730,000 for the collection of the Community Charge.

Dustin collection - Despite very serious reservations on the privatising of our refuse collection service, it was finally agreed that the contract be awarded to FOCSA with a saving to the Borough of £150,000. After a short period of difficulties the service now seems to be running well - as does the litter picking service.

The Dog Warden is fully stretched now and the problems with stray dogs is on the increase. Provision in the estimates for an extra warden was removed because the Council had to cut £80K from the budgets to stop the Council being 'Poll Tax capped'. This also was the reason facilities for another ranger for Burbage Common was scrapped.

A motion put forward by the leader of the Labour group on the Borough Council was 'that the Urban Areas of the Borough cease to pay a special expense fund and that funding for the Urban Areas should be from the General Rate Fund. This would mean that because Hinckley, Barwell and Earl Shilton do not have Parish Councils they are levied by the Borough Council to pay for extra facilities. If this motion had been passed it would have meant parished areas would have not only been levied for their own facilities but also those of the urban areas. Fortunately this was not carried.

Finally I have enjoyed my four years serving this area and I look forward to representing the people of Newbold Verdon during the next four years.

QUESTIONS ARISING

Members expressed concern over the service and attitude of staff at the Borough Council's Community Charge Enquiry Desk and it was hoped that this would improve.

REPORT FROM THE MONTAGUE TRUST

The Trustees for the year 1990 decided to disburse £300 mainly to the three Sunday Schools in the village and the Verdon in Bloom Committee, each receiving £75. The Best Kept Allotment Award went to Mr. E. Kenney for 1990.

There are still several allotments available but there does appear to be more interest at the moment.

I will just mention the list of organisations in the village which have received donations from the Montague Charity over the past years. Since the Old People's Xmas Club (1968/78) was wound up, the Trustees have dispersed the Charity thus:-

Newbold Verdon Evergreen Club
Newbold Verdon Youth Club
Newbold Verdon County Junior School Mini Bus Fund
Market Bosworth High School - Science equipment
The thee churches and Sunday Schools
Guides, Brownies, Scouts, Cubs, etc.

REPORT FROM THE LORD CREWE TRUST

The Secretary of the Trust presented the report:-

No meetings have taken place since I last submitted a report to you in May 1990. Since no business has been transacted, the monies in both accounts have been allowed to accrue so that the amount now held at the bank is as follows:-

	£
Current Account	923.39
Deposit Account	29.65
TOTAL	953.04

It is expected that the Trustees will meet during the summer in order to decide what to do with the accumulated money now held at the bank.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS, THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.45 P.M.