**HIGHLEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** was held at the Severn Centre Highley, on Tuesday the 14th April 2015

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr. M.Brooks took the Chair. There were 6 Parish Councillors, 1 Shropshire Councillor and 3 members of the Public present.

**APOLOGIES**: Parish Councillors J.Law, S.Askey, R.Broome

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**: These were accepted on the proposal of Mr. Thakrar, seconded Mr. Honeybourne.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**: No comments.

**PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMANS REPORT**

Cllr.Brooks thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He firstly apologised for one of the guest speakers not being able to attend the meeting. He said that he had received apologies from the police who were unable to attend due to operational commitments.

Election of Councillor -Chair said that a new Councillor had been elected this year due to the death of Councillor Elizabeth Yeomans. Councillor Yeomans had been a valuable member of the Parish Council who whose contribution to council matters would be sadly missed. The Chair welcomed Councillor John Marshall to the Council.

Flooding – Bridgnorth Road - Work to solve the problem of the flooding on the Bridgnorth Road had now been carried out.

Road Safety Schemes - Chair reported that the Parish Council were still awaiting the start date for the improvement works on the crossing at Ashleigh Gardens and the crossing below the Severn Centre.

Highley pool Feasibility Study - A feasibility Study had been carried out on the pool and meeting held with the community. Mr. Chris Reeves would give further details of this later in the meeting.

Post Office – Cooperative Stores. - Chair, Martin Brooks reported that meetings had been held with the Post Office regarding the proposed changes to the service within the Co-operative Stores. He said that following the meetings most of the services were to be retained.

Castle Inn – Woodhill Road. - The Parish Council were actively pursuing the issue of the Castle Inn. They had asked Shropshire Council to look at the issue of the Walls surrounding the property because they were concerned about their condition...

World War Commemorations- It was proposed to hold an event to commemorate the World War I and II. This event is to be held in November. Coins will be given to all children’s 16 and under.

Calendars. - It was proposed to produce a Highley Calendar for 2015. A competition was being held for parishioners to submit their photographs. All proceeds from the sale of this calendar were to go towards the Highley Swimming Pool refurbishment fund.

Chair Martin Brooks thanked all the Councillors and Clerk for their support during his first year in office. He said that he had enjoyed working with the council.

**SHROPSHIRE COUNCILLORS REPORT**

Shropshire Councillor D.Tremellen said that the problem with the current wave of disillusionment felt by the public towards politicians and the political process is the apathy it rates apathy that allows the erosion of democracy without that process being noticed until its results are felt by which time it is too late to do anything about it. But does apathy really threaten our democracy? It does when you consider democracy in terms of local government because local government directly impacts upon your lives. You need to understand the two terms and get your head around the idea that apathy is actually dependant entirely upon ones interpretation of the tem democracy. Apathy is about the public’s disconnection and disenchantment with political parties, some of which can be tracked along social status, education, and peer pressure. They are arguably the main determinants of participation in the political process, in which voting is central. If I asked I anyone was happy with the way thing are managed by Shropshire Council I’d put money on n hands going up. And yet the turnout at the last local elections was 27%. Out of an electorate of 2,529 only 676 people voted. So apathy expressed through a lack of participation during lections, a failure to engage in discussion and failure to contribute to matters of local significance. That last one is something that all of us here are all too familiar with. I know there’s nothing new in all of this. Since the middle of the last century many liberal democracies have experienced declining electoral participation, but that does not make it right. During 2001 general election, the UK experienced its lowest level of turnout since universal suffrage was introduced here in the UK in 1928. Yet turnout of below 50% in an election raises questions about the health of a democracy and puts question marks over the legitimacy of whichever individual, or as a consequence of there being elected, whichever political party subsequently comes to power. But no one questions the situation thus created. That the way it is. We do not question the situation because we are told we still live in a democratic state, as witness access to free elections, freedom of speech and the independence of the judiciary, although even their minds are being amide up for them by the EU courts now.

**SUMMER PRIDE REPORT**

Firstly, on behalf of the Summer Pride Committee, I would like to thank the Parish Council for their much valued and continued support. Also for the additional sum, we desperately needed in order to secure payment for watering. Unfortunately this year, we have no choice but to pay double the amount to ensure that we have someone capable and reliable to carry out this very important job. We are hopeful that next year, we will have found someone to share the job with Jim Lilley, who is willing to do the job, as long as he can share it. We were pleased with the floral displays last year and the winter pansies have been better than last year. Of course we have our wonderful displays of daffodils. We are in the process of replacing some of the daffodils, as they are growing blind. Plants for this year were ordered last September from Paul Cook, a mixed colour scheme has been chosen, plants to be chosen by Paul, taking our preferences into consideration. The bedding plants for the gardens and tubs will be disease free Busy Lizzies. The flower boxes on the Severn Centre railings are to be moved nearer the entrance to the Centre. We have introduced permanent planting at the North Gateway sign and in the coal truck on the Country Park; this will save us the task of replanting every year and save money. The large raised bed; at the North side of the village has been removed. The benches were removed from the picnic table donated by the Ship (at the Churches request) and the table is now ideal to use for our flower display in the churchyard. We donated our concrete tubs from the bed at Silverdale, to the school and the metal flower baskets (originally shop baskets) to the Church Shop. The only vandalism we encountered was the winter pansies being pulled out of one off the tubs; this was caught on camera, and the bowser lid being stolen, which we have replaced. We will do our up most to continue to enhance our village with floral displays for as long as possible, we still enjoy what we do, (most of the time) but we do need new volunteers, who can take over from us eventually. We hope everyone will be happy with our displays this year.

**GUEST SPEAKERS**

**WEST MERCIA POLICE**

P.C. Ann O’Leary apologised for not being able to attend the meeting. She sent a report as follows:-

We as the police no longer give statistics in meetings and refer the public to ‘police.co.uk’. Here it is easy to look at the figures individually. It’s a Home Office site, so just be mindful that they include anti-social behaviour statistics in their figures, police do not. The reason for this is that anti-social behaviour can include a multitude of things which there is no specific crime for. The Home Office figures may therefore appear more inflated. Highley continues to be a low level crime area. The CCTV has been very useful and has assisted in recent investigation such as burglary and theft of a motorbike. Cleobury Parish Council are visiting the office to view the setup and quality of our system. Also the ease of obtaining the downloaded evidence straight away. We have over the past few months had a series of burglaries in Highley, but also more widespread including the Cleobury area. CID Shrewsbury were looking at all these offences which appeared to point to persons from other areas visiting to commit crime. No recent burglaries of the same MO. A motorbike was stolen and recovered, offenders look to be from the Telford area therefore we have some passing rime through our area.

**MR.C.REEVES – SEVERN CENTRE.**

Mr.Reeves gave a report on the activities at the Severn Centre.

He explained about the activities and events that take place at the Severn Centre

Mr.Reeves then gave a presentation on the recent consultations that had taken place regarding the Swimming Pool. These showed the costs to refurbish the pool and the forecasted running costs after the renovations had taken place. He explained that to refurbish the pool would be in the region of £120,000

Mr.Reeves said that over 3000 parishioners had voted and the overwhelming vote had been for the pool to remain open. There had only been 1 vote in favour of closing the pool. Since the consultation over £9,000 had already been raised towards the project.

Other major funders being looked at were Inspired Sport and the Leader Fund. For the project to succeed it would need the support and commitment of the community.

Chair Martin Brooks thanked Mr.Reeves for attending the meeting.

**PARISHIONERS TIME** – No comments

SIGNED......................................................................DATE: