

ASHMANSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council

Date: March 9th, 2010 **Time:** 7.30 pm
Place: Crux Easton Church
Present: Alan Cox (Chairman) Carol O'Shaughnessy (Vice-Chairman)
Mark Benzing Kieron Black
Johnnie Johnson Ruth Kent (Clerk)

Action

1. Apologies

None

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of February 5th 2010 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

It was agreed that in future, draft minutes should be published eg on our website as soon as members are content, rather than await formal approval at our next meeting. This is common practice with other councils.

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Planning Matters

We discussed the proposed "Certificate of Lawfulness for use as a dwelling without compliance with the agricultural occupancy tie" for Fieldway, Ashmansworth. After explanation and some discussion, we agreed that we had no comment to make.

We received notification regarding proposed work on trees in Ashmansworth:

New House – trim trees – no objection

Old Vicarage, Hallam – trim trees – some concern to avoid excessive trimming, which should be to preserve the trees, not to improve light. Ruth was actioned to discuss this with BDDB Trees department to consider various options, including a preservation order.

Ruth

Post meeting note: Ruth spoke to the Trees officer who said all trees within our conservation area were already protected and that he was satisfied that the work requested here was appropriate for their preservation.

Knights Cottage – fell tree – no objection.

We discussed the field in Cross Lane where large gates and post & rail fencing have appeared. We will keep an eye on it to check for any apparently illegal use.

5. Newbury Racecourse Call-in

We had supported efforts by our borough councillors to object to West Berks' award of planning consent for a very large development at Newbury Racecourse. We fear it may adversely affect all those of us who live in villages near Newbury. A request for a Call-in has been rejected, so we are now considering our options.

6. Tree Planting

We thank Cllr Tom Thacker of HCC for a grant of £200 received towards planting trees in our villages.

We previously agreed that we would plant Black Walnuts, one in the centre of Crux Easton, the other near the Ashmansworth phone box.

We had proposed planting two Silver Birches or a Field Maple to the rear of the village hall but on consultation with the Village Hall Committee and others, have decided that there is insufficient space for this. Funds will run to a further one or two trees, so we discussed possible locations for these. Alan was actioned to discuss these with potential neighbours to check acceptability.

Alan

We identified potential local experts who might plant the trees for us, hopefully with a ceremony attended by Cllr Thacker. Alan has already spoken to Tim Poole of Ashmansworth who was agreeable. Ruth will also enquire of interest from Terry Stokes of Crux Easton. He might plant the tree(s) in Crux Easton and Tim could plant those in Ashmansworth or in both villages.

Ruth

We discussed the best timing to plant the trees and agreed that, due to the late arrival of spring, this month would be ideal, so should proceed as soon as possible.

7. Neighbourhood Watch

Nothing to report this time.

8. Local Roads

We had been informed by Cllr Thacker that HCC were planning to make funds available for them to provide additional salt bins, so Alan wrote to Cllr Thornber requesting some. Alan received a reply that we would shortly receive instructions on how to apply.

We noted that a number of potholes had recently appeared as a result of the bad weather. Alan offered to make a list of these later, once the weather has improved, and to report this to HCC roads department. Councillors noting any particularly dangerous holes should report these immediately.

**Alan
ongoing**

We remain very concerned about the dangerous lack of visibility at the

Alan

Cross Lane/A343 junction and Alan was asked to chase HCC on this.

Further to our earlier discussions on traffic calming, we have received a proposal to change priorities of the Cross Lane junction by the Plough. Mark offered to discuss this with the nearest residents to seek their opinions.

Mark

If favourable, Alan would write to HCC with a proposal.

Alan

We noted that the signposts in central Ashmansworth were now all looking very smart as a result of recent painting. That pointing to East Woodhay lacks a circular top and it was suggested that we seek a replacement one, to match the others. Kieron offered to contact Clere school who might be able to make one in their workshop.

Kieron

Carol reported that the signpost to Crux Easton still rotated in the wind, despite their efforts to stop this. Alan offered to write to HCC seeking advice or assistance.

Alan

Johnnie reported his concerns at some hedge-cutting operations leaving dangerous debris in the road which might cause punctures. He has written to HCC for advice and was asked to circulate their reply to councillors.

Johnnie

9. Community Enhancement

Mark reported that he had obtained permission from BDBC to remove the major part of the willow tree growing in the East Woodhay Road pond and hopes to get assistance from a local farmer to do this work.

**Mark
ongoing**

There was continuing concern at the level of litter in the village and surrounding roads, mainly jettisoned from passing cars. Several members have already collected bags full! Mark will make any necessary arrangements to put this on a regular footing and try to co-ordinate statistics.

**Mark
ongoing**

A further topic for consideration was the condition of our war memorial. Mark will discuss a possible course of action with interested residents.

Mark

10. Phone Boxes

We are attempting to buy the Crux Eaton red phone box, non-operating, from BT for £1. We still await a reply. *Post meeting note:* Ruth has heard from the BDBC planning office that they have no objection, but would like to be informed of the result out of courtesy. This should allow us to proceed with purchase.

Johnnie and Mark reported that BT indicate that they would have no objection to us converting the present box in Ashmansworth to a red one on the present site or to having a **non-working** one elsewhere. A new site for a **working** box would be prohibitively expensive. The present one has not been used for over 18 weeks, so we could consider its removal. Before doing this, we felt we ought to consult the village, so asked Johnnie to draft a proposal for a note to place in the calendar.

Johnnie

11. HALC and BDAPTC

Ruth has proposed possible training courses to Kieron, who will make

Kieron

a decision after the forthcoming election.

12. Finance Matters

Ruth reported that our current bank balance was £1163, from which £400 was needed for outstanding commitments (see below).

Alan had invited submissions for our next meeting for charitable support to **local** causes. In order to keep an optimal balance at the year end, we agreed that we could disperse £500. Ruth told us that she had received a letter from Ashmansworth Village Hall requesting support for new tables and improvements to the Ladies' toilets. On discussion, we decided to award them £400 and to Crux Easton heating repair fund £100.

Invoices for Payment:

Ruth Kent £200 cheque no. 100446

Village Hall £400 cheque no. 100447

Crux Easton PCC £100 cheque no. 100448

13. Correspondence Received

We received a progress report from Cllr Tom Thacker covering primarily their finances and impact for the new year. Alan was asked to forward this to councillors.

Alan

We received an invitation to a meeting on the future of our National Health Service at Woolton Hill on 29 April. Alan agreed to attend.

Alan

14. New Topics for Next Meeting

It was noted that we expect an election for the parish council to be called for Thursday 6 May, but have received no formal information so far.

15. Dates of Next Meetings

Annual meeting and Parish Assembly – Tuesday 11 May, Village Hall at 7.30pm.

If planning applications arrive that need debate, we would have an additional meeting on an appropriate date.

The **Meeting** closed at 9.45 pm