

# ASHMANSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Parish Assembly and the Meeting of the Council incorporating the Annual Meeting

**Date:** May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011 **Time:** 7.30 pm

**Place:** Village Hall

**Present:** Alan Cox (Chairman) Carol O'Shaughnessy (Vice-Chairman)

Parish Councillors: Mark Benzing Kieron Black

Johnnie Johnson Ruth Kent (Clerk)

Borough Councillors: Horace Mitchell John Izett

County Councillor: Tom Thacker PCSO Dan Lines

### Parish Assembly

### Action

Alan welcomed these and about 15 local residents to our meeting

#### 1. Apologies

None

#### 2. Presentation

Alan gave a PowerPoint presentation where he summarised the role of the parish council and listed the achievements of the past year. He described our relationship with County and Borough and recently established links with neighbouring parishes.

We were pleased with how we coped with the winter snow, helped by Hampshire CC placing Cross Lane on the salting run. Signposts have been restored but concerns remain about sightlines at the junctions with the A343 and the likelihood of withdrawal of our bus service. We discussed concerns about speeding within Ashmansworth and the possibility of calming measures.

It had been reported that we would shortly lose our mobile library service but this seems unfounded, at least for the current year, but it is likely to be cut next year unless it is used more!

Alan and Ruth reported on our finances which are in good order. See the presentation for full details.

#### 3. Report from Borough and County Councillors

We welcomed a report from Cllr Horace Mitchell on what Basingstoke & Deane BC has been doing. He explained how at recent elections John Izett had been elected to replace James Lewin, who had managed to achieve one of the lowest district council tax rates in the country. He reported on the Local Development Framework and Localism agenda. For more details, see report. Horace explained that there was no limit in the

amount we could allocate to Community Facility grants, such as to the village hall.

Cllr John Izett then introduced himself and explained his motivation and aspirations for his new role.

Cllr Tom Thacker reported that Hampshire County Council was under strong financial pressure this year and that we may expect further cuts, eg to bus subsidies. We thanked him for their grant towards refurbishment of the village hall.

4. **Village Hall**

Alan briefly summarised the very apparent and welcome improvements which had recently been made to the village hall and thanked the committee for their achievement.

5. **Policing**

PCSO Dan Lines reported on police achievements and concerns. He explained that despite financial pressures they had avoided any cuts and welcomed provision of a small office on Highclere Estate.

6. **Public Discussion**

We had a fruitful discussion on a number of the above topics both during the meeting and, with some residents privately, before and afterwards.

In particular, there was considerable concern at the problem of speeding, but a reluctance at this stage to introduce a speed limit or other calming measures. It was felt that some culprits might be local, so should be identified and spoken to!

**The meeting closed at 9.30 pm**

## **Meeting of the Council incorporating the Annual Meeting**

Present: Parish Councillors and Clerk as above

1. **Apologies**

None

2. **Election of chairman and vice-chairman**

There being no other candidates, Alan Cox was re-elected chairman and Carol O'Shaughnessy vice-chairman for the next year.

3. **Minutes of Last Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting of March 29<sup>th</sup> 2011 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4. **Planning Matters**

**Cross Lane**

We were very concerned that the occupants of the site in Cross Lane are still present. We understand that the BDBC Enforcement team are working to get the site cleared but need to have somewhere to relocate

the occupants. Alan has chased BDBC and has written to Cllr Horace Mitchell expressing our concern.

**Fieldway** An application for removal of the condition on agricultural occupancy for Fieldway, Ashmansworth has been submitted. The PC had agreed by correspondence that we had no objection to this.

**Old Chicken Farm** We were advised that there was an application for a variation to the recently granted permission for access to the old chicken farm at Doyley Bottom. This lies within the St Mary Bourne parish but is very close to our parish so we were informed. We had no objection to this application.

## 5. Local Roads

**Cold Weather** The new salt bins at Three Legged Cross were in the wrong location but have now been correctly repositioned.

**Sign Posts** The Crux Easton sign post still swings in the wind despite several attempted repairs. Alan contacted HCC to seek a proper repair and awaits a reply. Ruth will check if it has been fixed and, if not, seek a local repair if possible or else chase HCC.

**Ruth**

**Speeding** We discussed our strong concerns at some vehicles speeding dangerously through Ashmansworth village. Alan has been in touch with HCC and their Andrew Kettlewell who has through Barry Ford of BDBC sent some examples of gated entrances. This was discussed at the Parish Assembly where there was some reluctance to this approach, especially as their effectiveness in non-speed limited areas was uncertain. We felt we should first try to identify and speak to those speeding to encourage responsible driving, if necessary with the assistance of the police.

It was agreed that Alan should request repainting the present SLOW sign and raise the possibility of moving the Ashmansworth entry sign in Cross Lane to just before Tree Tops.

**Alan**

**Trees** We were pleased with the trimming of the tree on the village green, for which approval has been received.

**Pot Holes** Alan reported that he was in correspondence with HCC who promise to tackle Ashmansworth's pot holes soon. They have already repaired those in Crux Easton.

**Access to A343** We expressed concern about poor visibility at the junctions with the A343 at Cross Lane and the Yew Tree and Alan reported discussions on this with HCC. We are not yet satisfied that we have reached a solution, but note a proposal to apply a 50mph speed limit on that stretch.

## 7. Chinese Lanterns

Johnnie reported his activity in lobbying for Chinese Lanterns to be banned since they could set fire to property and injure livestock.

## 9. Council Plans

**Parish Co-operation** Alan reported that he had attended two helpful meetings with the chairmen of Highclere and East Woodhay parish councils and our local borough councillors, seeking areas of mutual co-operation between us. We have already exchanged information and documents. We have set up a working group to create an Emergency Plan for the parishes, where

**Alan**

Alan will represent us.

**Local Transport** Strong concern was raised at the possibility of withdrawal of the local bus service between Andover and Newbury. Replies received have been forwarded to Cllr Horace Mitchell. It is clear that our bus is little used by most of our villagers although it provides a life line to those who do use it.

Alan has discussed alternatives with colleagues from Highclere and East Woodhay. He has consulted the Neighbourcare system but that may not offer exactly what we are looking for. It was thought that a system of registering interest in giving, receiving and sharing lifts might be appropriate. Funding may be available to assist, but it is not yet clear how to use this. We will discuss this further at our next meeting.

**Village Plans** It had been agreed that we might need to prepare village plans for each village which could identify policy towards further development. Many new houses are planned just across the border in West Berkshire so further building in our area should not be necessary. Discussion was held over due to lack of time, but hopefully some progress will be made before our next meeting.

**All, ongoing**

**Localism** Cllr Horace Mitchell explained that he plans to set up a committee from across local parishes to consider the proposed Localism bill. We agreed that **Kieron** should represent us on this.

**Gypsy Planning** The government has issued a consultative document on Gypsy issues and we have been invited to comment. It was agreed that Alan should prepare a draft response and show this to councillors before submitting it.

**Alan**

## 10. Finance Matters

Ruth and Alan presented a summary of our financial update for the last year to the Parish Assembly. Councillor Horace Mitchell advised us that donations such as to the Village Hall refurbishment fund which we had assumed were limited to about £6 per elector were indeed not so limited as they were classified as donations to a Community Facility, not gifts.

**Invoices for payment** - We approved 5 cheques:

EM Christian, for Grass Cutting, Cheque No. 100469, £240

Arbcare, for tree surgery, Cheque No. 100470, £150

CPRE, subscription and donation, Cheque No. 100471, £129

GLEAM, subscription, Cheque No. 100472, £15

Came & Co, Insurance, Cheque No. 100473, £262.50

## 12. Dates of Next Meetings

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July in the village hall at 7.30pm

The **Meeting** closed at 10.10pm