

ASHMANSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Assembly

Date:	May 29th, 2012	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 Councillor:	Cllr Tom Thacker	County Councillor: Cllr John Izett	
	Dan Fearnley (Hampshire CC Broadband programme manager)	PCSO Dan Lines	

Parish Assembly

Action

Alan welcomed these and about 14 local residents to our meeting

1. Apologies

Borough Cllr Horace Mitchell

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 links with neighbouring parishes.

We were pleased with recently improved sightlines at the Cross Lane junction with the A343, although several commented that the work that had been carried out had left a bank of chalk (with debris) which looked unstable and should be assessed. In addition it was felt that visibility could still be improved but we don't want the bank or trees to fall into the road. Concerns remain concerning the Yew Tree junction. Traffic on the A343 travels too fast, making the junctions dangerous so we would welcome speed limits there. Alan has raised the question of downgrading the road to B status with neighbouring parishes and is awaiting feedback.

We are very pleased with our newly cleaned War Memorial where the names have become visible again. Many thanks to those who made donations towards the cost of this.

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 James Lewin on what Basingstoke & Deane BC has been doing. He has now joined the cabinet, so will be in a position of influence! His portfolio includes finance and they are proud

to have avoided any increases in council tax.

Cllr Tom Thacker reported that Hampshire County Council was under strong financial pressure again this year, with a budget reduction of £100 million over two years, resulting in no increases in tax, one of the lowest counties in the country. We had been concerned about possible further cuts, eg to bus subsidies, but he felt that our route was now secure for the next few years. Similarly for our mobile library service though this is little used, so we should encourage its use if we are not to lose it! We thanked him for their splendid grants 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. We are about to turf the rear garden area and plan a refurbishment of the kitchen. The final item planned is to replace the chairs.

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. Our parish had been very quiet during the past year, which is good news!

6. **Broadband Upgrade**

Dan Fearnley explained his role being responsible for getting all of Hampshire to at least 2Mb/s broadband with an aim for as many as possible to get superfast service at more than 24 Mb/s. Government has granted Hampshire £5 million and this has been matched with local funds but this has to cover all the poorly served parts of the county. We are in the "red" area of poor service and he will do everything possible to improve this for us. He will be relaunching his website in about two weeks' time and we will then be able to see how many have registered their interest in receiving improved performance. The higher the proportion of locals registering, the earlier we can expect improvements, so we will lobby for this. His target is to appoint a contractor by the end of this year and for a new service to be available by 2015. We discussed various options of fibre or possibly microwave link.

7. **Public Discussion**

We had a fruitful discussion on a number of the above topics both during the meeting and afterwards. Residents were pleased to see some action at last on the Broadband issue and expressed interest in hearing what they might be able to do to improve it.

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm

Alan thanked attendees and especially our guests for providing such an informative evening.

Meeting of the Council incorporating the Annual Meeting – Draft minutes

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 27th 2012 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4. Planning Matters

Solar Panels at Porchester Estate Farm

This application is to install solar panels in a field beside the farm. They would be scarcely visible from public places but are overlooked from the row of cottages adjacent. After discussion, two councillors were strongly opposed in principle to such installations in an AoNB, two were strongly in favour and one considered that they should be relocated away from the immediate view of those houses, eg to beside the grain dryer. This overall objection will be reported to the case officer.

Alan

Red Roses

We discussed the Application for Certificate of Lawfulness for use of land as residential land. It seems that it was enclosed as a garden more than 25 years ago but we have been asked by Basingstoke to describe its use since then. We believe that the grass has been cut but we have not seen it being used, eg for children's games, barbeques, flower and vegetable cultivation, throughout at least ten years.

Alan

6 Highfield

We had no objection to the proposal to remove a tree in their garden

Ruth

5. Finance Matters

Ruth and Alan presented a summary of our financial update for the last year to the Parish Assembly. We had not received all the detailed bank statements requested, so some details are still awaited. Once available, they will be audited, this time via HALC. Alan will then update our financial report and budget for discussion and approval at our next meeting.

Ruth

Alan

We thanked various local residents who had made donations towards cleaning the war memorial, provision of Jubilee mugs to local children, purchase of a beacon burner and other expenses for celebrating the Jubilee

Invoices for payment - We approved 6 cheques:

Impact China Mugs, Cheque No. 100485, £333.90 – for Jubilee mugs

21cc Fireworks, Cheque No. 100486, £432.00 – for Jubilee Beacon burner

CPRE, subscription and donation, Cheque No. 100487, £129.00

GLEAM, subscription, Cheque No. 100488, £15.00

AF Jones, Cheque No. 100489, £588.00 – War memorial cleaning

Ruth Kent, Cheque No. 100490 £100.00 - Clerk

6. Dates of Next Meetings

Tuesday 17th July in the village hall at 7.30pm

The **Meeting** closed at 11pm