

ASHMANSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council

Date: September 25th, 2012 **Time:** 7.30 pm

Place: Village Hall

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

Councillors: Mark Benzing Kieron Black
Johnnie Johnson

Visitors: Maxta Thomas Clare Lynas (part time)

Action

1. Apologies

Ruth Kent (Clerk). We were sorry to learn that Ruth was again unwell with a bad cough and unable to attend the meeting.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of July 17th were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3. Planning Matters

a) Church Farm, Ashmansworth [BDB/76573](#)

Approved by BDBC

b) 6 Highfield, Ashmansworth [BDB/76643](#)

Approved by BDBC

c) Wood House, Crux Easton [BDB/76974](#)

Clare Lynas reported to us that this application is largely a resubmission of one previously submitted and withdrawn by the applicant, this time with an updated Bat Survey, as requested by BDBC. After discussion the council decided that we held no objection to this application and Alan was actioned to report this to BDBC.

Alan

d) Red Roses Garage, Ashmansworth [BDB/76963](#) [BDB/76964](#)

Mark Benzing declared an interest in this application through living next door.

This is a revised application on one to demolish and replace the house previously submitted and withdrawn by the applicants. Alan read out a message from the applicants which explained that they had aimed to respond to concerns expressed by BDBC regarding the roof line, north facing windows and had placed the garage to the east rather than west of the house, in order to improve the view for passers by.

We discussed this in some depth and felt that the new application was

Alan

an improvement over the previous one but concerns remained. We agreed that the present property is of low architectural merit and we held no objection to it being demolished and replaced (BDB/76964). We felt that this application (BDB/76963) was somewhat improved over the previous one but we still held a number of concerns. We felt that the overall size of the property was considerably larger than at present and was out of scale with the domestic curtilage. We also felt that there was too much glass in central A of the north face, causing it to lose the cottage style enjoyed by the majority of houses in the village. We also considered that the garage should be a single, not double story and not so close to the hedge as to cause it to die. Alan was therefore actioned to report our objections to BDBC.

4. Local Roads

a) A343

While we welcomed the improvements to sight lines at the Cross Lane junction, we felt that HCC need to cut the bank back further down the road, including some vegetation and bushes. Chalk debris remains at the site and could pose a hazard if it creeps into the carriageway. Concern was also repeated that the double white lines from Three Legged Cross stop about 100 metres from the junction which could encourage motorists to overtake dangerously at the junction. Alan was actioned at our last meeting to report all this to Steve Goodall (HCC) and was now requested to repeat the request. A speed limit on this section would also increase road safety.

Alan

We were very pleased that HCC resurfaced a dangerous stretch of the A343 very efficiently.

b) Signpost

Alan had earlier notified Steve Goodall of the poor condition of the finger sign at the entrance to Crux Easton. Steve Goodall had reported that a replacement sign was on order but this has not yet arrived. Alan will chase.

Alan

5. Broadband

Further to the presentation by Dan Fearnley at our last meeting, he has reported that there is a delay while government seeks permission from Europe for the subsidy for rural broadband. They hope to issue a Tender in March 2013.

6. War Memorial

We discussed whether to seek a Listing for our Memorial but decided that it was already well protected and we could not identify any threat that might be lessened by Listing. We therefore decided against taking any action on this.

7. Neighbourhood Watch. It was reported that PCSO Dan Lines has transferred and his place taken by PCSO Abbey Carpenter. We hope to meet her in due course.

8. Council Plans

a) Recruitment of Clerk

Alan reported that he had advertised the position locally and with all clerks in the BDBC area. He had received some responses and discussed the issue with several potential candidates who felt they were too busy to take on additional tasks. However, Maxta Thomas who is clerk to Silchester PC and also in charge of the Tadley CAB did respond positively and was invited to attend our meeting. The Council

Alan

decided that they would be very pleased to recruit her as clerk, subject to contractual negotiations which Alan was entrusted to undertake.

- b) Trees** We confirmed our appointment of Keith Draper as our Tree Warden and he will receive training in this role from BDBC.
- We discussed the condition of one of the beech trees near the village hall. Alan has discussed this with David Hill (Trees Officer) who advised that it appeared to be dying. We are trying to identify its ownership. **Alan**
- c) Website** BDBC plan to withdraw support for our website by the end of the year. With the assistance of BDAPTC, Alan has evaluated suitable ISPs to support us and proposes Vision ICT. BDBC have offered us a grant that will cover first year costs. **Decision** – Alan authorised to place a contract with Vision ICT.
- We have been given a choice keeping our present banner or selecting a new photo. **Decision** – stay with present banner.
- d) Parish co-operation** No meetings to report but we keep in touch by email. Alan had useful discussions with neighbouring clerks.
- e) Grass Cutting** Having received an invoice for grass cutting so far this year, we decided to remain with EM Christian at least for the rest of 2012. We will reconsider our policy for next year, possibly seeking a new tender and in any case with a new contract. Ruth to advise EM Christian. **Ruth**
- f) Planning Guidelines** Mark has circulated an excellent initial document summarising local planning policy as it affects us and listing guidelines to steer our decision making. We thanked him for this and decided that we will need a special drafting meeting to work on it in detail. We actioned him to redraft it to show clear summary statements followed by details. **Mark**
- g) Localism** We have still received no guidance on this topic and await input. If this becomes available, Kieron will take the lead. In the mean time, this topic will be closed.
- h) VDS** Alan previously reported that he had received information on preparing a **Village Design Statement**, but that this was very lengthy so he planned to prepare a summary for consideration at a future meeting. Held over. **Alan ongoing**
- 9. BDAPTC, HALC**
- As stated above, BDAPTC have provided a very helpful focus for progressing our website.
- 10. Finance Matters**
- a) Annual Audit** It was reported that our annual audit is currently with the External Auditor. VAT still needs to be reclaimed and councillors need to be added to the signatory list for cheques. **Clerk**
- b) Budget** Alan again updated our previously approved budget to include website costs and grant and an estimate of remuneration for our new clerk. **It was approved.**
- c) Cheques** We approved earlier by correspondence a cheque no. 100494

payable to HALC for our annual subscription.

We approved cheque no. 100495 payable to EM Christian £678.00 for grass cutting.

11. Correspondence received

Invitation to Mayor's Firework Fiesta, 5 November 2012

12. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 13th November 2012 in the village hall at 7.30pm

The **Meeting** closed at 9.45pm. Alan thanked the councillors for a productive, busy meeting.