

ASHMANSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Council

Date: 25th September 2013 **Time:** 7.30 pm
Place: Ashmansworth Village Hall
Present: Alan Cox (Chairman) Carol O'Shaughnessy (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors: Kieron Black Andrew Bays
Sarah Wheeler
In Attendance: Maxta Thomas (Clerk) One member of the public

Action

1. Apologies

None.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 24th July 2013. They were duly signed by Cllr Cox.

3. Planning

a) Update on previous applications

Red Roses – no progress. Updated plans were received, and reviewed by council via email, as agreed at the last meeting. There were no objections.

Steeles Farm – a site visit by the BDBC Development Control Committee is due on 27th September, with a decision being made at the Development Control Committee meeting on 2nd October. The planning department are advising a refusal. Cllr Cox plans to attend the site visit, and has written with the council's comments for presentation at the Committee meeting.

Plough Inn – change of use of land - granted

b) Telecommunications Station, Cross Lane – 13/01111/FUL – This application was received during the summer recess. As the plans were in line with what was proposed and discussed at previous council meetings, no objections were registered.

c) Hallam, Ashmansworth – T/000719/13/TCA – This application was received during the summer recess. The application to fell an ash tree near the new access to the property was in line with discussions held earlier in the year in open council. No objections.

It was noted that work on the lime trees has begun.

d) Flintwall Cottage, Ashmansworth – 13/01560/HSE – This application is for the construction of a hardwood 'orangery style' conservatory following the removal of the existing lean-to conservatory.

Cllr Bays said that he has met with the applicant and gone over the plans. He noted that there will be very little difference in total square footage. It was pointed out that the new conservatory will look much smarter than the existing, and cannot be seen from road in any case. No objections – unanimous. Clerk to report back to BDBC.

Clerk

e) Further applications – none received.

f) Update on Harwood Paddock – A public meeting was held over the summer, at which the plans were opposed by the public. Cllr Cox noted concerns about impact on roads, schools and doctors' surgery. He raised particular concern about potential traffic problems, and was informed that s.106 money may cover this. It seems that there will be little impact on the school. The doctors' surgery has plenty of space, apart from parking.

- g) Pre-Submission Local Plan Consultation** – There is no direct impact on Ashmansworth – the nearest development will be in Whitchurch. Cllr Horace Mitchell from BDBC has advised close study of various parts of the Local Plan. There was some discussion of Cllr Mitchell’s comments and proposed changes, but it was generally agreed that some clarification is required on the first section of his comments. Cllr Bays to approach Cllr Mitchell, with a view to responding to BDBC on behalf of the council by 8th October. The council was largely supportive of Cllr Mitchell’s comments on the business planning issues, and Cllr Bays will respond in kind to BDBC on our behalf. **Cllr Bays**
- 4. Local Roads**
- a) Access to A343**
Cllr Cox has put together a report on the issues affecting Ashmansworth and Crux Easton. He presented this for the council’s consideration (see appendix a). The council was supportive of Cllr Cox’s comments. Cllr Cox noted that it may be worth contacting our borough and county councillors – it was agreed that he should do this. Cllr Cox has also been in touch in the past with other parishes in the area, who have all been generally supportive. **Cllr Cox**
- b) Crux Easton Signpost**
This was chased by the clerk at the end of July. The signpost had been ordered, and Steve Goodall of HCC Highways hoped that the sign would be erected within a few weeks. This has not yet happened. Clerk to chase. **Clerk**
- c) Ditch Clearance at Crux Easton**
Cllr O’Shaughnessy has tried to get hold of people to help with this, without success. She will continue to follow this up. Cllr Cox noted that this will be a good time of year to do it, before the winter sets in. **Cllr O’
Shaughnessy**
- d) Potholes**
Cllr Cox has been in touch with Steve Goodall at HCC Highways about the bad state of the (north) side of the road to Ashmansworth from the Yew Tree (between the Yew Tree and Zell Farm House). A works team has been out to look at this, but Steve is not happy with their findings and has ordered a further investigation, which will hopefully happen very soon. The situation is to be monitored. Cllr Wheeler noted that it may be worth getting the Yew Tree people involved, as they also have problems with flooding. Cllr Black noted that the Yew Tree need to get the hedge cut back, since it is growing into the road which is narrow at that point. Cllr Cox pointed out that the management at the Yew Tree are aware of the problem, and are making enquiries about contractors.
- 5. Telephones/Broadband**
It appears that Daniel Fearnley has now left HCC, and his role has been taken over by Glenn Peacey. No further progress.
- 6. Neighbourhood Watch**
Nothing to report
- 7. Council Business**
- a) Clerk’s Report**
I have received the audit papers back from BDO, our external auditors. The council has passed the external audit, with a few highlighted issues, as follows.
- Risk assessment – there was no risk assessment for the previous year. This has now been carried out, and is to be considered later at this meeting.

- Fixed assets – at the time of the internal audit, the asses register was still under review, and BDO have stated that this needs to be completed. It was completed soon after the internal audit.
- Internal Auditor’s recommendations – it was noted by BDO that action should be taken by the Council to address the internal auditor’s comments and recommendations. Some of these have already been completed, whilst others are to be addressed in the next few months. All have been noted.
- Minuting approval of Annual Return – BDO noted that approval of sections 1 and 2 was not specifically minuted (approval was given for the annual return as a whole). This will need to be done properly in future years.

Given how many issues were raised at the audit for 2011/12, I believe that we have done well to reduce the issues to four most minor points. Hopefully, next year’s audit will go more smoothly still.

Cllr Cox thanked the clerk for her efforts in addressing the audit issues from the last couple of years.

b) Risk Assessment

The risk assessment has now been completed, and distributed to all councillors. It was proposed by Cllr Bays and seconded by Cllr Black to approve and adopt the risk assessment for 2013/14. Unanimously agreed.

c) Parish Co-operation

Cllr Cox is attempting to arrange a new meeting with neighbouring parishes, and trying to obtain regular minutes from Highclere.

Cllr Cox

d) Cllr Cox noted that the newly planted hedge at the recreation ground has survived the dry summer, and he has now made moves to get a sign erected – this is in progress. Clerk to check with council insurer’s re council public liability insurance, and wording for sign. Cllr Wheeler also to look up wording that other councils use.

*Clerk
Cllr Wheeler*

8. BDAPTC/HALC

There was a meeting of BDAPTC on 19th September, which Cllr Cox was unable to attend. The clerk has heard little back from this meeting so far, other than the fact that very few people attended.

The HALC AGM is to be held on Saturday 19th October at Sparsholt College. The clerk will be attending. If anyone else wishes to attend, please contact the clerk.

9. Finance

a) National Pay Award for local government staff

The clerk noted that a national pay award of 1% has finally been agreed for local government staff. This took effect in July, and is backdated until April 2013. The clerk observed that this will have very little impact on the council’s finances. Cllr Bays proposed and Cllr Wheeler seconded approval and adoption of the pay award for the clerk. Agreed unanimously.

b) To approve payments and note receipts

The clerk ran briefly through the financial statement (appendix b). The payments were unanimously approved.

Cllr Cox noted that one more advert spot on the website has been sold. The clerk noted that the second half of the precept is due in October.

10. Date of next meeting

The meeting closed at 8.55pm The next meeting is to be held on Tuesday 12th November at 7.30pm. Cllr Cox thanked councillors for a very productive meeting.

Appendix A – Report on A343

Andover Road Traffic Problems and Solutions, Ashmansworth Parish

Problems:

- a) Dangerous access at all junctions within Ashmansworth Parish
 - i. There have been frequent near misses and a few actual minor collisions at Cross Lane and Three Legged Cross. There have also been accidents through excessive speed in the “chicane”, even since the non-slip surface was applied.
 - ii. Visibility is poor at those junctions and also at the Yew Tree.
 - iii. Access for local HGVs to Ashmansworth is marked as “unsuitable for HGVs” at the Yew Tree, yet that road is often used since HGVs have difficulty turning at the Cross Lane junction due to the narrow road and poor visibility. Most of the Yew Tree lane is too narrow for an HGV to pass a car, let alone another HGV. HGVs for Faccombe often use this route rather than the wider (though further) route via Hurstbourne Tarrant.
- b) Narrow road with bends and hills, making it unsuitable for through HGVs, when the alternative route via A34/A303 is quicker, flatter and dual carriageway making for shorter journeys and using less fuel.

Considerations:

- Precedent of situation in other similar roads in the district.
- Proposed new [Traffic Management Policy Guidance](#).
- In the current financial climate, proposed solutions must be financially viable.
- The Cross Lane junction sight lines have been improved somewhat recently, but insufficiently. However, an exiting lorry or slow car could still easily drive into the path of a speeding car on the A343 (in either direction).

Proposed Solutions:

- On financial grounds, major re-engineering of junctions has not been proposed, but improved sight lines, signage and speed limits are recommended.
- Cross Lane needs to be widened just at the junction to allow HGVs to use it. This can be achieved by removing the bank and adding a small amount of new road surface. The bank of the north-west side of the A343 at that junction needs to be cut back over a further distance to provide visibility between vehicles exiting and those speeding on the A343. No land needs to be purchased and the operation need not be costly.
- There is a double white line on the A343 for a distance of over 1000 metres from the north but this stops just 200 metres north of the Cross Lane junction. This encourages cars to overtake slower vehicles straight into the path of those exiting Cross Lane. There are so few places where overtaking is permitted that drivers are likely to overtake without adequately checking the safety of such action. The double white line should be extended to just south of that junction. The Yew Tree junction is protected by double white lines, so why not this one?
- We need better warning signs at each of these junctions that there is an exit with limited visibility.
- We need clearer signs at the Yew Tree to prevent local HGVs using Yew Tree Lane, indicating the preferred route via Cross Lane (for Ashmansworth) and Hurstbourne Tarrant (for Faccombe).
- Just north of Three Legged Cross is a “recommended” speed limit of 40mph, though it is not clear where this ends. It is common for cars to travel round the steep bend far faster than this, potentially into the path of cars from the south turning right towards Crux Easton – many near misses have been experienced! Cars also speed up when approaching the Cross Lane junction (with its limited visibility). Throughout the UK, it is common for rural A roads with similar situations to be limited to 50mph over critical stretches – a good local example is the A339. A 50mph limit should be imposed from Highclere to south of Cross Lane.
- Many long distance HGVs use the A343 between Wash Water and Andover, presumably directed by their sat-navs or because the road appears shorter. In fact, the journey is slower

and uses more fuel than using the A34/A303. HGVs using the A343 inevitably travel slowly, especially on the hills and cause much frustration to car drivers who can be held up over long distances. Improved signage at each end should be used to discourage such inappropriate use. It should also be examined whether the A343 can be downgraded to B status, as has been done with other local roads, such as the old A34 changing to B4640. This is listed as a possibility in the proposed Traffic Management Policy Guidelines.

- In correspondence with Andrew Kettlewell early in 2013, he rejected our request for double white lines at the Cross Lane junction on the grounds that “The forward visibility for traffic on the A343 near Cross Lane is greater than the required minimum so double white line restrictions are not recommended.” He kindly copied the Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 5 to us and on inspection, we consider that this supports our case:
 - i. ‘5.1: Double white lines are used to prohibit overtaking where visibility is restricted’ (In our case the drivers on the A343 have limited visibility of drivers pulling out from the Ashmansworth turning- consequently, overtaking drivers could easily collide with a car coming out onto the A343 from Cross Lane. This seems a clear case for double white lines - or at least a continuous white line on the left hand carriageway (from Newbury direction).
 - ii. ‘5.4: Having regard to the road width required by buses and goods vehicles, particularly on bends, double line markings should not normally be used where the carriageway is less than 6.1 m wide; a warning line should be used instead. However, an exception may be made where the width of a road drops marginally below 6.1 m for a short distance, and the omission of double lines at places of restricted visibility within the narrow section might be misleading.’ Yet the road is narrower in the section with double white lines than in the section close to Cross Lane.
 - iii. ‘5.19: Improved visibility sometimes results in reversion to a broken line on the approach to a junction. In such cases, it is better to maintain the continuous line beyond the junction to avoid encouraging overtaking at an unsuitable point.’ This suggest that at junctions such as ours they can continue double lines so as ‘not to encourage overtaking at an unsuitable point’, as has been done at the Yew Tree.
 - iv. ‘5.20: The Regulations permit vehicles to cross the continuous line to enter any other road or private access (regulation 26(6)). A gap in the line is not therefore necessary’. Consequently, it is perfectly possible to allow the double white lines to continue across the junction with Cross Lane.
 - v. ‘5.22: Warning lines are laid where overtaking is potentially hazardous but visibility is not so restricted that overtaking needs to be prohibited’. If it is argued that visibility is not sufficiently restricted for double white lines, we can argue that there should at least be warning lines near Cross Lane, though this is less preferred.

Appendix B – Financial Statement

Financial statement : Ashmansworth Parish Council

Meeting date : 25/09/2013

Balances:

338	Balance after reconciliation -25/09/2013
1645.86	956.46

Payments since last meeting date

:

Cheque No	Payee	Details	TOTAL COST
100526	Wessex Woodland Management Ltd	Hedge plants - recreation ground	156.00
100527	AA Wolfenden	Grass Cutting - May	78.00
100528	HMRC	Tax/NICs	92.00
100529	A A Wolfenden	Grass Cutting - June/July	234.00
100530	Mrs M J Thomas	Clerk Salary - July	92.09
TOTAL			652.09

New Items for payment

Cheque No	Payee	Details	TOTAL COST
100532	Mrs M J Thomas	Clerk Salary - September	93.32
100534	Mrs M J Thomas	Clerk travel expenses	75.15
100535	Vision ICT	Website hosting - 2013/14	231.60
100536	Staples	Stationery	104.20
100537	Mrs M J Thomas	Clerk Salary - October	93.04
TOTAL			597.31

Receipts since last meeting date :

Receipt Date	Payer	Details	TOTAL AMOUNT
TOTAL			0.00

Payments not yet presented

Cheque No	Payee	Details	TOTAL COST
100531	Mrs M J Thomas	Clerk Salary - August	92.09
TOTAL			92.09