

## **ASHMANSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Council**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> June 2014</b>	<b>Time:</b>	<b>7.30 pm</b>
<b>Place:</b>	Ashmansworth Village Hall		
<b>Present:</b>	Alan Cox (Chairman)	Carol O'Shaughnessy (Vice-Chairman)	
<b>Councillors:</b>	Kieron Black	Andrew Bays	
	Sarah Wheeler		
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Maxta Thomas (Clerk)	Cllr Graham Falconer (Borough)	
	Cllr John Izett (Borough)	Cllr Tom Thacker (County)	
	Jonty Gethin (Village Hall Committee)		
<b>Visitors:</b>	10 members of the public		

#### **Action**

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

Cllr Cox welcomed everyone to the Annual General & Parish Meeting.

Apologies received from PCSO Abbey Carpenter.

#### **2. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman**

Cllr Cox formally stood down as Chairman. Cllr O'Shaughnessy presided as Vice Chair. Cllr Bays proposed and Cllr Wheeler seconded that Cllr Cox be re-elected as Chair. Unanimously carried. Cllr Cox resumed chairing the meeting

Cllr O'Shaughnessy stood down as Vice Chair, and announced her intention not to stand as Vice Chair in the future. Cllr Bays proposed and Cllr O'Shaughnessy seconded that Cllr Black be elected as Vice Chair. Unanimously agreed.

#### **3. Achievements and Financial report 2013/14**

See Appendix A.

Roads – the road from the Yew Tree scheduled for repair, although exact dates are not yet known. Cllr Cox noted that this road is actually part of Highclere Parish. Cllr Thacker to ensure that proper notice for any closure is sent to Ashmansworth Parish Council as well as Highclere Parish Council.

**Cllr Thacker**

Broadband – Highclere due to be in next tranche for upgrading; We hope that Ashmansworth will follow, though this is not certain to include Crux Easton.

Cllr Cox also noted that the local Vodafone base station now has 4G, which has dramatically increased the data service to the right kind of mobile phones locally.

Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr Cox highlighted the suggestion of Police open evenings, to be held in the Village Hall twice a year – it was generally agreed that this would be a useful idea.

Community Enhancement – Cllr O'Shaughnessy noted that the Crux Easton mobile library service will cease in December 2014. Cllr Cox highlighted the on-going heating oil co-operative.

Speeding – Cllr Cox highlighted the speeding problems in Ashmansworth. He emphasised that children who have been playing in the road should be encouraged to use the Recreation round.

Bus Services Survey – Cllr Cox highlighted that the parish only

has one service a day, which is a lifeline to those that use it. The Council have responded to the survey to that effect. It was further noted that Crux Easton has no bus service at all.

Wayfarers Walk – Cllr Cox noted that the Council maintains its membership of GLEAM, who campaign for changes in the law to stop off road drivers damaging green lanes. It was noted that 4 wheel drives are occasionally seen on the Wayfarers Walk. It was also noted that parts of the Wayfarers Walk path are currently in a very bad state.

4.

#### **Reports from Borough/County Councillors**

##### **Cllr John Izett gave a verbal report on the activities of the Borough Council.**

He introduced Cllr Graham Falconer, and noted that Cllr Falconer will have responsibility for Ashmansworth.

Borough elections – a third of councillors were up for re-election. The Tories got 29 seats, Labour 17 seats, Liberal Democrats 8 seats, UKIP 2 seats, and Independents 4 seats, leaving BDBC with no overall control Council. The meeting to elect the Leader of the Council will be held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June. Committee membership will also be decided at this meeting.

Cllr Izett passed on his congratulations to Cllr Falconer, and recorded a vote of thanks to the outgoing Councillor Horace Mitchell. He noted Horace's impact on planning matters in the Borough.

Local Plan – Cllr Izett the noted painful process for the Local Plan. It is hoped that the Local Plan will go through to the Inspector in September 2014, and then ratified and adopted by BDBC in April 2015. He observed that much development will be centred in and around Basingstoke itself. 748 new homes per annum are scheduled until 2029. The development will be mostly on the north side of Basingstoke – Manydown, Bramley, Chineham. Cllr Izett also noted that the government may insist on more homes than those currently planned.

Finances – Cllr Izett noted that cuts to grants etc have been made, as well as efficiency savings. BDBC have frozen Council Tax again for 2014/15. He observed that BDBC has the 9<sup>th</sup> highest spend per head in England, which has meant that services have been largely maintained. BDBC is reasonably wealthy due to a large property portfolio, which gives a large rental income to the Borough. Cllr Izett will have responsibility for managing for this portfolio in the coming year.

Basingstoke has had £55million of capital expenditure. A New Homes Bonus has been made available, which areas that have had new development can apply for aid to community projects.

There are plenty of renewal projects planned for Basingstoke in next few years. However, Cllr Izett also noted the interests of rural areas, and that BDBC are very conscious of the various issues that affect such areas (eg, travellers and the need to provide designated sites for them).

**Cllr Falconer gave a brief speech introducing himself to the Parish.** He has lived in Penwood for many years, and has served on Highclere Parish Council for the last 8 years, with responsibility for planning. He has been put forward for the Scrutiny Committee and Manydown Overview Committee.

**Cllr Tom Thacker gave the following verbal report on the activities of the County Council.**

Council Tax - HCC has frozen council tax for fifth year running. However, 50% cuts have already made and a further 12% are required. Local transport services are most likely to be affected by this.

Highways – £54 million has been earmarked for highway maintenance this year. A bid to central Government is planned help cover flood damage – a current conservative estimate of the cost of this year's flood damage is £34 million.

Cllr Thacker noted that he has passed on residents' concerns about local road problems.

Transport – the consultation has now been completed. A Transport Services plan will be drawn up in due course. Cllr Thacker highlight the Transport Self Help Workshop, run by the Department of Transport. This is aimed at helping local communities setting up their own local transport services.

Broadband – Cllr Thacker re-iterated Cllr Cox's points about Crux Easton.

A343 – Cllr Thacker noted that Highclere have also been lobbying for changes to the A343, especially in terms of speed limits and traffic controls. Cllr Thacker gave some background on how roads are designated, and noted that a full survey was completed last year on road designations. There are rules that state that the A343 must remain an A road, as it is the main road between Newbury and Andover. Cllr Falconer noted that Highclere Parish Council have been told that the A343 is the official bypass route for the A34, and must therefore stay as an A road. Cllr Thacker stated that HCC have not been able to persuade the traffic team that the A34 and A303 would be a better route. Cllr Thacker will continue to try to find ways of improving junctions from Ashmansworth to A343. He finally noted that the issue of white lines has been raised, and that the police are the ones obstructing it.

HALC/HCC – Cllr Thacker noted his support for the Parish Lengthsman scheme.

**5. Police Report**

See Appendix A.

Cllr Cox noted the rise in incidents in Ashmansworth and Crux Easton. A resident noted his concern that 999 was not called for one incident in particular. It was also noted that the proximity to the West Berkshire border can occasionally cause problems with policing.

Cllr Thacker noted that car thefts are now happening throughout the area, and not just on quiet roads. He emphasised the advice to hide all valuables out of sight if a vehicle is left unattended.

**6. Report from the Village Hall Committee**

Jonty Gethin gave a verbal report on behalf of the Village Hall Committee.

The Village Hall is the only community facility other than the Churches that serves Ashmansworth and Crux Easton. Race nights, quiz nights, and bingo are all regular events. There are also regular social events. Finances are used to maintain the building, and there are regular fundraising events. Jonty noted with thanks the grant from the Parish Council, which will go

towards work on the roof. A grant from the Big Lottery paid for new chairs in last year. New fencing was erected in the last year – Jonty thanked Kieron Black and Tim Poole for their time on this. The Committee are looking at putting in a small extension to increase storage at the Hall. Cllr Thacker noted that he may well have a budget for grants to local projects such as Village Hall improvements. Jonty closed by stating that the finances are looking stable, but fundraising for extras items is always necessary.

**7. Open Forum**

**Cllr Cox invited questions from the public.**

Alan Rowe noted that Thames Valley Police have given very strong warnings that all members of the public must be on the lookout for cyber-crime and phone scams.

Jakes Ferguson asked about the status of Steeles Farm, and the planned new cottage. Cllr Izett noted that there is an agricultural tie on the building. Cllr Cox gave background to the planning application, and noted that formal permission has still not been given, believed to be due to the s.106 agreement not being completed. Permission is to ensure that the farm remains a farm – Cllr Cox noted that any further planning application would come through BDBC and the Parish Council.

Alan Rowe noted that he tried repeatedly via the Highways website to report the disrepair of bollards in the centre of Highclere. However, no action appeared to be taken. Cllr Thacker responded by saying that he is not aware of any glitch on the website, although occasionally items get removed without being done. Particulars to be sent to Cllr Thacker to take further.

**Cllr Thacker**

Tony Leeson stated that there was very little at the recreation ground for younger children. Cllr Cox stated that the land belongs to the Facombe estate, and that it is meant for children to kick a football around. Cllr Cox further noted that the Council is looking at possibilities, but that putting in play equipment may prove to be very expensive. Suggestions were invited from the local community as to what is wanted/needed. It was also noted that the entrance to the recreation ground is in need of repair – Cllr Cox stated that this will need to be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

**Clerk / Full Council**

Alan Rowe asked if a replacement grit box for the hill above Zell Farm was going to be installed. Cllr Cox noted that this is part of Highclere Parish. However, Ashmansworth Parish Council can get in touch with Highways to investigate.

**Clerk**

Cllr Cox closed the meeting, thanking all the speakers for their contributions, and thanking members of the public for attending.

## ASHMANSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH ASSEMBLY 2014  
4<sup>th</sup> JUNE

1

## Agenda

- Welcome and Apologies
- Election of chair/vice-chair
- Presentation on Achievements and Financial Report for 2013/14
- Report from Borough / County Councillors
- Report from Police
- Report from the Village Hall committee
- Public discussion and questions

2

## Our Role

- Cover villages of Ashmansworth and Crux Easton
- Lowest level of Democracy
- Provide guidance on Planning Applications
- A link to Borough and County Councils on what is planned and what we want
- Focus of local interest eg: Neighbourhood Watch
- Non-political
- One of the smallest in the county, limited budget
- Thanks to all members for their hard work!

4

## What do we do?

- We meet roughly every 6-8 weeks, usually in the Village Hall
- 9 Planning Applications in last year
  - 7 were granted, 2 withdrawn/rejected
  - Considered several tree applications
- Lot of interest in Road Repair and Safety
- Grass cutting for Recreation Ground
- Village details on Website
- Budget to spend our Precept to benefit Parish

5

## Roads

- Ashmansworth Potholes repaired at last, though still waiting for Crux Easton
- Still bad near Zell Farmhouse (Highclere)
- Some new holes will need repair soon
- Crux Easton sign post replaced!
- Still seeking more improvements at A343/Cross Lane junction
- Seeking downgrading of A343 to B, but handed over to Highclere to pursue

6

## Broadband

- Growing concern in our villages at the poor performance of broadband services, due to the distance from the Highclere exchange
- Explored possible microwave or fibre link
- Highclere should get Superfast Broadband within the next 9 months
- We hope to be in next tranche but will not know until September
- Our base station now has 4G, almost as fast as Superfast BB! Can create phone hotspot.

7

## Communications

- Email List very useful for distributing information and seeking opinions & guidance
- Website – now launched Local Directory Listing. Offered free entry to local residents
- Parish Calendar written by Mike Sarson, distributed monthly to every house – many thanks to him and our distributors
- Great support from:
  - Borough Councillors Horace Mitchell, John Izett
  - Welcome to Graham Falconer replacing Horace
  - County Councillor Tom Thacker
  - Steven Lugg at Hampshire Association of Local Councils

8

## Neighbourhood Watch

- Established good contact with PCSO Abbey Carpenter
- Hope to meet PC Richard Baldwin
- Considering holding Police Open Evenings
- Generally quiet during past year
- Warn residents of local threats
- Thanks to co-ordinators:
  - Carol O'Shaughnessy and Sally Burch

9

## Website

- Full of local information and links to local databases
- Regularly updated with local news and announcements of events
- [www.ashmansworth-pc.gov.uk](http://www.ashmansworth-pc.gov.uk) – do use it!
- New website supported by Vision ICT much easier to maintain
- Annual cost reasonable

10

## Community Enhancement

- New Grass Cutting contract for rec ground
- Crux Easton has now lost its mobile library
- Removed/replaced damaged tree on green
- Planted new hedge at Recreation Ground
- Donation to Village Hall
- Litter – concern at litter in village and on approach roads. Locals collecting bagsful
- Joined Parish Lengthsman scheme
- Heating Oil Co-operative still popular

11

## Concerns

- Speeding though Ashmansworth village
- Children at risk from vehicles – much safer to play in recreation ground!
- Should we provide more facilities for children?
- Survey on subsidised bus routes
- Can arrange Police open evenings if there is sufficient interest
- Extra tasks for Lengthsman?

12

## Clerk's Report

- Parish Lengthsman scheme – live in April 2014
- Formal risk assessment and asset register in place
- Standing Orders to be reviewed, Finance regulations to be put in place
- Kept Councillors up to date on administrative details, particularly with regard to local elections and planning

13

## Financial Report

- Income as expected
- Income of £1100 Grant & £3000 Precept
- Extra grant from BDBC of £240 for grass cutting
- Expenditure roughly as expected
- Reserves built up to approximately £900 (roughly 3 – 6 months of expenditure)
- Opening balance £356, closing £912

14

## Budget Explanation

- 2013/14 Audited on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014
- 2014/15 Budgeted
- Grant is given by Basingstoke & Deane BC – no
- Precept is paid in our Council Tax, decided by us – no change for 2014/15
- Running Expenses are: auditors, clerk, hire of meeting room, training, books, stationery, insurance, HALC
- Useful Tasks are: Grass Cutting, Calendar, Trees
- Subscriptions to: CPRE, GLEAM
- Grants made – £500 grant made to Village Hall
- Reserves – built up to approximately £900. Aiming to maintain for 2014/15

17

<h3 style="text-align: center;">Budget Comments</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim for fair but not excessive balance</li> <li>• Precept for <b>2014/15</b> maintained at previous year's level</li> <li>• Council tax still lower than much of our Borough and far lower than Newbury area</li> <li>• Allows us to spend on worthy causes to benefit us all, such as Village Hall – otherwise all spent on bureaucracy!</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">18</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Conclusions</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanks to all for their hard work, turning out to meetings on cold dark evenings!</li> <li>• Welcome suggestions and assistance from everyone, especially for Community Enhancement</li> <li>• What more would you like us to do?</li> <li>• Especial thanks to Cllr Horace Mitchell for his advice, especially on planning matters</li> <li>• Next meeting 19 June, provisionally.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">19</p>
<h3 style="text-align: center;">Police Report</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From PCSO Abbey Carpenter, who assists</li> <li>• PC Richard Baldwin, in Safer Neighbourhoods Team</li> <li>• They send their apologies, but are not available tonight</li> <li>• Crime report for their area for past year</li> <li>• Security advice in Leaflets</li> <li>• Propose Police Open Evening here</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">20</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Crime Report 2013/14</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 719 Incidents (2012/13 – 732)</li> <li>• 218 Crimes (240) in the area, so better!</li> <li>• 8 incidents in Ashmansworth: 1 fraud (card details taken, tried to intercept replacement cards in post), 1 wallet taken from parked car</li> <li>• 3 incidents in Crux Easton: 1 driving complaint, 1 road accident, 1 catalytic converter stolen</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">21</p>
<h3 style="text-align: center;">Winter</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Busy winter due to weather (floods, wind)</li> <li>• This also triggered many alarms!</li> <li>• Public very helpful in removing trees etc.</li> <li>• As a team, extremely grateful for the fantastic community spirit we witnessed during this time and thank anyone who stopped to help officers, stranded motorists, or neighbours who were in need</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">22</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Recent months</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since the end of April we have had a large number of burglaries (sheds and garages).</li> <li>• Mostly these offences have been located in Ecchinswell and the surrounding areas.</li> <li>• Offenders seem to target sheds which are in a poor state of repair or unlocked.</li> <li>• Please take a leaflet for advice on how to avoid your shed/garage being a target.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">23</p>
<h3 style="text-align: center;">Summer</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We usually see an increase in thefts from vehicles at this time of year.</li> <li>• Offenders often target car parks such as Penwood, Beacon Hill and in the Thames Valley area Combe Gibbet. Stolen items (stripped of cash or other valuables) are often found in the lanes around these areas.</li> <li>• Advice about vehicle security is also available in a leaflet.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">24</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Ashmansworth</h3> <p>Our area is actually very vulnerable so it is surprising we have such a low crime rate in the area, given the easy access to the A343 and a network of country lanes to escape through.</p> <p>The area could become a target for thieves so it is important that locals are not complacent and that they should continue to be vigilant and look out for suspicious goings on!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">25</p>

Advice	Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please continue to look out for suspicious vehicles and people and report this to police as soon as possible to the non emergency number 101.</li> <li>• Always dial 999 in an emergency or if you believe a crime is in progress.</li> </ul>	<p><b>PCSO 15097 Abbey CARPENTER</b>  Hampshire Constabulary,  Whitchurch Police Station, Dances Lane,  Whitchurch, Hampshire, RG28 7EG  External: 101  Twitter: @HighclerePolice  Email: <a href="mailto:abbey.carpenter@hampshire.pnn.police.uk">abbey.carpenter@hampshire.pnn.police.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.hampshire.police.uk">www.hampshire.police.uk</a></p>
26	27

## Appendix B – Accounts & Budget

### Annual Return For the Year Ended 31st March 2014

#### Ashmansworth Parish Council

#### Section 1 - the Statement of Accounts - Analytical Review of Entries

Box No	Title	31/03/13 £	31/03/14 £	Comment
1	Balances brought forward	1,260	356	
2	(+) Annual Precept	1,500	3,000	<i>Precept increased to cover greater activity levels</i>
3	(+) Total Other Receipts	2,487	1,492	<i>Jubilee donations in 12/13</i>
4	(-) Staff Costs	1,090	1,530	<i>Clerk's hours and rate of pay increased: full year</i>
5	(-) Loan interest / capital repayments	0	0	
6	(-) Total other payments	3,801	2,405	<i>non-recurring expenditure last year on War Memorial and new website</i>
7	(=) Balances carried forward	356	912	<i>Building reserves up to a prudent level</i>
8	Total Cash & Investments	355	912	<i>see box 7</i>
9	Total fixed assets	1,761	9,921	<i>War Memorial valued in year at £8160</i>
10	Total borrowings	0	0	

### 2014-15 Budget

2013-14	2013/14		2014/15	
Budgeted	Actual (31/03)		Budgeted	
£	£	<u>Income</u>	£	
1,100.00	1,100.00	Grant	1,100.00	Likely to remain at 13/14 levels
0.00	15.00	Council Tax Grant	15.00	Likely to remain at 13/14 levels
3,000.00	3,000.00	Precept	3,000.00	
240.00	240.00	Grant from BDBC - Grass Cutting	240.00	Likely to remain at 13/14 levels
0.00	20.00	Sale of Website advertising space	0.00	
100.00	117.00	VAT recovery	160.00	
<b>4,440.00</b>	<b>4,492.00</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>4,515.00</b>	
		<u>Expenditure</u>		
260.00	155.00	Auditors	180.00	No fee from External Auditor for 13/14
1,400.00	1,530.00	Clerk's Salary	1,400.00	Slightly higher in 13/14 due to overtime payment in April
200.00	169.00	Clerk's Expenses	200.00	Mileage Expenses
144.00	35.00	Hire of meeting room	144.00	Paid in 2014/15 - £126
120.00	0.00	Training	120.00	
20.00	0.00	Books	20.00	
50.00	104.00	Stationery	100.00	
280.00	265.00	Insurance	280.00	
124.00	123.00	Subscriptions HALC	126.00	
25.00	29.00	SLCC Membership	30.00	
211.00	232.00	Website	240.00	
900.00	546.00	Grass Cutting etc	900.00	
35.00	57.00	Parish Calendar	35.00	
0.00	156.00	Trees/Hedging	0.00	
30.00	0.00	Subscriptions CPRE	30.00	
100.00	0.00	Donations CPRE (section 137)	100.00	
15.00	15.00	Subscription GLEAM	15.00	
0.00	520.00	Other Section 137 donations	550.00	Discretionary grants towards wellbeing of village
35.00	0.00	Information Commissioners Office Registration	35.00	
<b>3,949.00</b>	<b>3,936.00</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>4,505.00</b>	
		<u>Net result</u>		
<b>£491.00</b>	<b>£556.00</b>		<b>£10.00</b>	

Actual Balance at 31/3/14

£911.75

Target Balance for 31/03/2014

£992.13

This represents the council's reserve figure.