

ALTON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of meeting at the Coronation Hall, 7.30, July 17, 2014*

- Present:** Steve Hepworth, Peter Emery, Kate Fielden, Polly Carson, Ben Owen, Robert Carpenter Turner, Alex Oliver. Apologies: Cllr Paul Oatway, PC Richard Barratt. In attendance: Mr R Cosker (Consultant, Fernbank site)
- 052/14** **Minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed by the Chairman. Matters arising not on the agenda: none
- 053/14** **Co-opted Parish Council member:** Members welcomed Alex Oliver as a duly co-opted member of the Parish Council.
- 054/14** **Police report:** To be circulated by email.
- 055/14** **Development at Fernbank, Honeystreet:** Richard Cosker, planning consultant for the site, was invited to speak. He said the developers were keen to discuss, informally, ways forward and to get feedback. The previous application, for three dwellings in place of the existing bungalow and annexe, had been rejected on grounds of scale, design, character and massing. They now proposed a single dwelling of two floors in place of the annexe, leaving the bungalow untouched. He envisaged slate and redbrick in keeping with the industrial building alongside to conform with the recommendations of the Honeystreet Village Design Statement. PC members broadly welcomed the more limited proposal but stressed that they would need to see at least outline drawings and plans before reaching a firm view. It was suggested that a domestic/residential design approach might fit in better with other buildings nearby. Two Honeystreet residents, invited to speak, stressed concerns about traffic down the extremely narrow lane, the need for large construction vehicles, and possible vibration from piledriving. Steve Hepworth, chair, requested outline drawings if possible in time for the next pc meeting on September 25.
- 056/14** **Planning application 13/03451/FUL (The Old Smithy) – appeal:** Kate Fielden declared an interest as the appellant and asked consent to explain her grounds for appeal. She stressed that the proposal for a new dwelling outside the built area of the village was not, in fact, a precedent; it was an exception. Current planning policies were either out of date or still in draft and so carried less weight and new government policy allowed more discretion. She was humbled by the strength of local support, with 19 letters in favour and only six objections. KF then left the meeting. In discussion members noted examples of previous developments outside the village built area as evidence that this proposal would not be seen as setting a precedent.

They supported the provision of dwellings designed for old people. In view of this, the following comment was proposed: "The Parish Council is not against the design *per se*. If it does not set a precedent we do not object." Agreed unanimously.

- 057/14 Planning application E/2013/0221/FUL (The Bank) – parking:** SH confirmed that there was no plan to create a parking space. The problem of a broken drain was being addressed. Agreed that SH ask Wilts Council to look with some concern at an amendment to provide two flights of steps at the front of the building since just one would be more in keeping with other properties in the terrace.
- 058/14 Responsible Finance Officer:** No candidate for this post had so far been found. Agreed that an advertisement be placed in the Messenger and on the pc website. Robert Carpenter Turner to coordinate, and also in future to coordinate Altons and Honeystreet news for the website and for the Messenger. PC and village hall news from Steve and Ruth Hepworth to be sent via Mary Smith to the Messenger each month.
- 059/14 Bus services:** KF reported that the latest proposals were an improvement but still fell short, worst of all the ending of any night service. Consultation was scheduled for August when many people would be away. There was concern that the franchise for the service is being negotiated at the same time, and over the priorities for scarce resources. Claire Perry MP is holding a surgery on rail matters on July 23 at which these issues could be raised. Agreed that KF draft a letter voicing pc concerns to Wiltshire Council, and raise them at the surgery. PC members thanked KF for her work.
- 060/14 Conservation area status, Honeystreet:** KF and AO both felt that, despite an initial negative reaction from Wiltshire Council, this was worth pursuing. There were plenty of good arguments in favour and it would give the village greater protection. Agreed unanimously.
- 061/14 Honeystreet canal bank:** Charles Reiss (Clerk) reported that the Canal & River Trust had proposed that the parish "adopt" a mile-long stretch of the canal in recognition of the voluntary maintenance work already done by Honeystreet residents. They were told that unfortunately the village does not have the manpower or resources. The CRT now proposed a "reptile home" at the existing green waste site (see minutes 050/14) to be maintained and managed "by the community" filled with garden waste, with no waste permitted outside the structure and subject to monthly inspections. PC members strongly criticised this approach. They pointed out that the site had been used for small-scale garden waste by a small number of local residents for 30 years or more with no complaint at all. It was only after the CRT had deposited a vastly

greater amount of waste, from tree felling, at the same spot that the CRT then declared there was a problem! Their approach said the Chairman was “unnecessarily heavy-handed and ridiculous.”

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 9.05 pm.
