

ALTON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of meeting at the Coronation Hall, 7.30, June 16, 2014*

Present: Steve Hepworth, Peter Emery, Kate Fielden, Polly Carson
Apologies: Ben Owen, Robert Carpenter Turner, Paul Oatway. In attendance: Bobbin

042/14 Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed (proposed Polly Carson, seconded Peter Emery) and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising not on the agenda:

043/14 Parish Council vacancy: The vacancy having been advertised with no application for a by-election, it was open to the pc to co-opt. Steve Hepworth reported that Mr Alex Oliver, a resident of Honeystreet, had been approached and indicated he is willing to join. Members agreed that he should be asked to confirm this and, if so, be co-opted.

044/14 Parking etc, The Bank: SH reported that Wiltshire Council had checked and established that no new parking bay is being created. Flooding appeared to be caused by a blocked culvert, which would be a services issue for Wilts Council to resolve.

045/14 Conservation Area status, Honeystreet: SH reported a negative initial response from Wiltshire Council. Kate Fielden said that should not deter the pc from pursuing the matter. The fact that the village includes some modern buildings did not rule out conservation status. Agreed KF to discuss with Alex Oliver and pursue.

046/14 Pewsey Vale bus services: KF was at a very well-attended public meeting on June 12 at which a consultant stressed that two direct runs, at the north and south of the Vale, were needed for travel to and from work, though a slower service, including off-main route villages, might operate during the day. The Area Board had given full support against the severe cutbacks currently proposed.

047/14 Annual audit: Charles Reiss (Clerk) reported that the annual audit had been carried out by Arthur Johnson. As required, CR put a series of questions regarding the audit to pc members. Each was answered satisfactorily. Having been approved by the Parish Council as a body, the audit was signed by the Chairman and by the Clerk.

048/14 Funds in savings and current accounts: In the absence of a Responsible Finance Officer this item was deferred.

Any other business

049/14 Responsible Finance Officer: SH reported that, sadly, Jenni Bickerdyke had found it necessary to resign. All pc members voiced regret, and thanked Jenni for all the good work she had put in. Members reluctantly agreed that if no suitably qualified volunteer could be found, the pc might have no choice but to pay an officer for this crucial and legally essential role. Agreed that as a first step the vacancy should be advertised on the village noticeboards and the pc website and that possible volunteers should be approached.

050/14 Honeystreet garden waste: CR reported that the Canal and River Trust (CRT) had recently voiced concern at garden waste disposed of beyond the far end of Chimney Lane off the north bank of the canal. The site had been used for this purpose for more than 30 years for very small quantities of garden waste, plus some arising from voluntary care and maintenance of the canal bank. On a site visit, the CRT had pointed out that the quantity had increased and also appeared to include more substantial material such as logs. It had now been pointed out to the CRT that the extra material, including the logs, resulted from their own tree-clearing work at the spot. In the light of this, it was hoped the matter could now be left to rest.

051/14 Church roof, funding: Members welcomed the news that the Heritage Lottery is prepared to fund repairs to St Mary's church, subject to contributions from the community. They acknowledged the request from the Parochial Church Council for pc support wherever possible.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 7.59 pm.

* minutes subject to confirmation at the next pc