

## ALTON PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Annual General Meeting and Parish Meeting, St Mary's Church, Alton Barnes, 7.00, 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2012

- Present:** Steve Hepworth, Peter Emery, Charles Fletcher, Ben Owen, Jayne Drew, Robert Carpenter Turner, Kate Fielden, Jenni Frost  
Apologies: Polly Carson. In attendance: Councillor Robert Hall
- 031/12**      **Election of Chairman:** Steve Hepworth, having indicated that he was prepared to continue as Chairman, was proposed by Kate Fielden, seconded Robert Carpenter Turner. Agreed nem. con. Steve Hepworth then took the chair.
- 032/12**      **Election of vice-Chairman:** Peter Emery agreed to serve for a further year. Proposed RCT, seconded Jayne Drew, agreed nem. con.
- 033/12**      **Minutes:** The minutes of the previous AGM on May 12, 2011, were agreed and signed by the Chairman. Matters arising: none.
- 034/12**      **Chairman's report:** SH thanked fellow council members for their work and support in a busy year. Issues included the late approach by Salisbury International Arts Festival asking the pc to host the White Horse illumination on June 30; major concerns over the proposed Great Stones Way; nuisance problems from a minority of boats on the canal; and the handover to the pc of the Alton Barnes playing field, (see next item). The full text of the report is attached as an annexe
- 035/12**      **Community Asset Transfer:** SH asked Charles Reiss (Clerk) to update. CR recalled that, after gaining quotes from two firms, the Parish Council had agreed Wansboroughs of Devizes should act as solicitors, with costs quoted at between £500 and £1,000 but expected to be near the lower end of that scale. Wansboroughs had been informed by Wiltshire Council that the transfer of the playing field would need to be advertised in the *Gazette and Herald* for two weeks at a total cost of £735.36, to be paid by the pc. Wilts had earlier said that the "worst case scenario" cost would be £500. CR said he had secured agreement to spread the cost over four years at £200 a year. There would also be a saving of £80 a year in rent no longer due to Wilts, and a payment of some £125 a year for an access licence from a property in Rectory Close. Pc members agreed to continue but asked whether the cost might be reduced either through smaller advertisements or by an alternative publication. SH and CR to pursue; SH to investigate possible grant from Pewsey Area Board. Pc members examined the plans of the site in view of a small discrepancy, queried by Wansboroughs, between the site boundary and the old field boundary. Members agreed that it was not significant.

**036/12**      **Treasurer's report:** Jenni Frost reported that the pc precept had increased from £2,000 to £2,250. Funds at the start of the year to March 31, 2012 were £3,530 and at the end were £2,839. Consolidated Funds assets remained at £214. Total income for the year was £2,356; total expenditure £3,047. Excluding the cost of work on the Workway Drove car park, less had been spent than in the previous year. The question of the external audit was raised. SH to email JF with details. JF thanked members for their support in her first year as Responsible Financial Officer. Kate Fielden proposed, Jayne Drew seconded, to accept the financial report. Agreed nem. con. Charles Fletcher proposed, SH seconded, that Jenni Frost continue as Responsible Financial Officer. Agreed nem. con. Members thanked JF for her work.

**037/12**      **Village Hall report:** SH said that work on the roof was just about complete and redecoration due to begin. An expected grant had not materialised, leaving the Village Hall Committee with a £9,000 shortfall. A fund-raising effort was needed.

**038/12**      **Dates of next AGM and Parish Council meetings for the year:** The Chairman proposed the next AGM should be on May 9, 2013, following local elections. Scheduled pc meetings on June 27, July 19, September 13, November 15 and, next year, January 17 and March 14. These dates were to tie in with meetings of the Pewsey Area Board usually on the previous Monday. All meetings at the Coronation Hall at 7.30pm, except the AGM at 7pm. Agreed nem. con.

**Any other business:**

**039/12**      **Street maintenance:** SH said requests had been received for roadside maintenance at Priory Cottages and Kate's Cottage. Cllr Hall advised taking up the matter with Wilts Highways department. SH to pursue.

**040/12**      **Great Stones Way:** Cllr Hall said the report and analysis of the footpath plan from the pc was a valuable piece of work which everyone had supported and built on. At a recent meeting all except one speaker had been against the project. Two consultants undertaking an impact study will walk the route; at least two pc members should be there to point out difficulties with animals in fields, lack of parking spaces etc. Members thanked Cllr Hall for his attendance and support.

**041/12**      **Playground insurance:** JF reported that the quote for playground insurance for this year was £785.03, some £80 less than the previous year, and recommended acceptance. Robert Carpenter Turner questioned the extent of cover and suggested a lower quote could be negotiated. It was agreed that Ben Owen approach the insurers. SH

proposed that if the premium could not be lowered the current offer should be accepted. Peter Emery seconded. Agreed nem. con.

**042/12**      **Payments:** Following earlier pc decisions, two cheques were signed: £500 to the Coronation Hall roof fund; and £57.20 to Chairman's expenses, as minuted at the previous meeting (item 030/12).

There being no other business the meeting ended at 7.44pm

#### ANNEXE 1 – CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Thanks to fellow councillors for their work, support and advice in helping the Parish Council function as well as it has and also their involvement in the community at large. It has been an interesting first term since being elected as Chairman in 2011. The wish for a quiet introductory year did not get granted with several external issues adding to the workload.

These have included:

The late approach by Salisbury International Arts Festival requesting that the parish should host the potential visitors to the illumination of the White Horse on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012. Despite working with other villages, and linking the illumination to the Bicentenary of the White Horse, the hosting had to be scaled back to a parish BBQ due to financial and other logistical worries. The illumination will still happen and a joint working party from the council and the village hall committee has been established to organise the BBQ. We are still liaising with the SIAF organisation and David Carson about the event. Charles Fletcher has applied to the area board for a grant to help cover some of the costs of this event which goes before the Area Board next week..

The proposed Great Stones Way has been a major concern throughout the year. Councillors have attended 4 meetings in the vale and thanks to pressure have succeeded in getting an Environmental Impact Survey started into the routes potential impact. In particular I would like to thank Kate Fielden for her work on this matter. I have volunteered to walk through the route with the EIS consultants on 20<sup>th</sup> May to voice our concerns directly to them in the field.

The Village Playground has been maintained to usual standards thanks to Ben and the equipment has been maintained in line with the latest ROSPA report. Thanks to Jayne for organising. The Community Asset Transfer for the Alton Barnes playing field from Wiltshire Council is underway. I would like to thank Charles Reiss for his work on this and the help in finding a suitable solicitor to deal with the process. It is hoped that the cost for this process will be at the lower end of the £500-£1000 estimated during the conversations with solicitors.

Ongoing problems with noise, lack of enforcement of regulations on overstaying boats came to a head early in the New Year following our complaints to British Waterways and the Parish Council putting forward a resolution to change the mooring conditions between the Honeystreet Bridge and the West of the Barge Inn. The subsequent Parish Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March was the best attended meeting in my time on the Council. The outcome has been better communication with the boating community of the parish, the design of a sign designating the area a quiet zone and British Waterways investigating resurfacing of the towpath to the west of the Barge Inn to improve mooring conditions and funding the signs. I would like to thank Richard Burchell of the Residential Boat Owners Association for his work on this matter and hope that the promises by British Waterways materialise.

On more routine work, although Charles Fletcher stepped down as Chairman at the last AGM he has continued to work hard for the Parish. The Speedwatch campaign is now up and running and a significant number of motorists will have had letters through the post after exceeding the speed limit through Alton Barnes and Alton Priors. Charles has also written to Wiltshire requesting that the Honeystreet Bridge area needs to be restricted to 30MPH.

A number of planning applications have been processed by the Parish Council with only one surprise when the application for Monks Hollow was rejected by Wiltshire Council. This has gone to appeal.

Other successful work included raising money for footpath repairs, the launching of the Parish website and ongoing repairs and maintenance to the playground and white horse.

I would like to thank our RFO, Jenni Frost in her first year in the role keeping tabs on our finances.

Special thanks from me go to Charles Reiss, our Clerk, who has put numerous hours of work into the role. Without him the Council would not have functioned anywhere near as efficiently.

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