

ALTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting at the Coronation Hall, 7.25 pm, May 11, 2017

Present: Ben Owen (Chair), Peter Emery, Steve Hepworth, Robert Carpenter Turner, Mike Golden, Alex Oliver, Debby Lester (RFO), Charles Reiss (Clerk). Apologies: Polly Carson. In attendance: Cllr Paul Oatway.

056/17 Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising not on the agenda: none

057/17 Acceptance of office and register of interests: Charles Reiss confirmed that seven members, the maximum allocation, had signed declarations of acceptance and were now in office. Declarations of interest must now be completed.

058/17 Annual audit: DL reported that the annual audit had been completed, and checked independently by Arthur Johnson. As required, she 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. Cheques approved and signed: to Community First (playground insurance) £664.59; Wiltshire Association of Local Councils annual membership £96.29.

059/17 Precept: DL reported a warning from the National Association of Local Councils of government threats to limit precepts (the amount a council can charge its residents). She pointed out that Alton's precept of £5000 was lower than several neighbouring parishes and was held unchanged last year. However the NALC had urged parish councils to demonstrate they were showing restraint. With this in mind, the following resolution was proposed by Peter Emery, seconded Robert Carpenter Turner:

That the Parish Council accepts the need for restraint in setting the precept. With this in mind the aim will be to raise the precept only if compelled by a material increase in costs or decrease in income.
Agreed unanimously

060/17 Highways update: Steve Hepworth warned of increased maintenance costs falling on parishes. Wiltshire Council intended further to reduce care of roadside verges from an annual cut to dealing only with points where growth was a visibility hazard. He listed work done by the Parish Steward. Pewsey Community Area Partnership (PCAP) was conducting a road quality survey; that should include the hill above

Alton Barnes given the recent accident record. Wiltshire highways meeting on May 24. Peter Emery and Ben Owen to attend.

- 061/17** **Broadband:** SH reported that a substantive reply from Wiltshire Council was still awaited. A meeting with Claire Perry MP had been cancelled because of the General Election.
- 062/17** **Flytipping:** PCAP had asked for incidents to be reported. Members voiced concern that Wilts Council declined to be involved with fly tipping on farmland or other private land, only accepting liability for incidents on the highway or on council property. All incidents should at least be logged so the Council could take an overview. Paul Oatway said he would discuss this with the appropriate Council cabinet member.
- 063/17** **Planning application:** 17/03667/LBC, Mill House, Honeystreet, new external soil vent. Alex Oliver as the applicant declared an interest. With consent of the chairman he explained that the vent, intended for a new bathroom, would not be visible from the road or from the field. He then left the meeting. After examining the plans members agreed unanimously to support the application.
- 064/17** **Parish Council records:** CR asked whether PC members might wish to have old records, including past minutes, scanned and backed up online. Agreed that he should investigate practicality and cost.

Any other business:

- 065/17** **Barge Inn:** Members considered an application to register the pub as a Community Asset, notified by Wiltshire Council the day before. They recalled that when a previous application was made the PC was reluctant to get involved unless there was a clear and real threat that the pub might close. More information was needed. Paul Oatway, who stressed he was not taking a view, said he would consult with Council officers, the owner of the pub and the applicants and report back. Given the deadline for comment of June 4, members agreed that they should decide then whether a meeting was required or whether the PC response could be agreed by email, given that the substantive decision would be taken by Wiltshire Council.
- 066/17** **Canal and River Trust meeting:** PO said that the CRT's continued failure to reply to requests for a meeting with the PC could be raised at the Trust's next regular meeting.
- 067/17** **New farm building, Honeystreet:** Members again voiced dismay over the very large shed erected in a field next to the village. Although it

was permitted development, they questioned the very obtrusive siting in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and next to an RAF war memorial. PO said he would raise the issue with Mike Wilmott of Wilts Planning.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 8.30pm.