

ALTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting at the Coronation Hall, 7.30 pm, July 14, 2016

Present: Steve Hepworth (Chair), Peter Emery, Ben Owen, Robert Carpenter Turner, Alex Oliver, Polly Carson. In attendance: Councillor Paul Oatway. Apologies: Mike Golden.

069/16 **Minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising not on the agenda:

070/16 **Planning application. 16/04718/FUL Fernbank, Honeystreet:** Cllr Oatway, with the consent of the Chair, made a statement regarding the fact that he had "called in" this application for consideration by the Planning Committee even though a majority of the Parish Council had voted to support it. He was aware that some PC members were not happy with this. However, while he had a mandate to support the Parish Council's valuable role, he also had a mandate to support the people of the Vale. The decisive factor was the large number of local residents who had written to Wiltshire Council to oppose the application. The Parish Council was entitled to its view but he also had to consider broader views, particularly those living in the village. Steve Hepworth said that all members appreciated Cllr Oatway's position. He had done much to support the Parish Council and the community over the years.

071/16 **Procedure:** Charles Reiss (Clerk) at the request of a PC member reported on the procedure at the previous meeting. Before the substantive discussion on Fernbank the meeting was briefly adjourned to allow an absent PC member to attend. CR said that having checked, he was able to confirm that neither the adjournment nor the reminder to the PC member to attend were irregular. He explained the rules involved. They showed that there had been no breach of procedure either in letter or in spirit. Cllr Oatway intervened to say that, as vice-Chair of Wiltshire Council's Standards Committee, he fully agreed.

072/16 **Police report:** None

073/16 **Browns Lane light:** Steve Hepworth reported that he and Mike Golden had gone to Devizes to look at the LED lights recommended in place of the existing sodium light in the lane. They had been very impressed by the quality, and the lack of glare above and around. They felt the best solution would be an eight-unit LED with a shield and minimum projection, dimmed to 20% output for part of the night and turned off at around midnight. The cost would be approximately £300.

He invited Jo Bedford, a resident of Browns Lane, to speak. She questioned whether a light was necessary at all. PC members replied that they had had many requests for the light, which had been turned off for a trial period, to be reinstated. SH said a public safety issue was involved. Replacing the sodium light with a much less obtrusive LED should go a long way to meeting residents' concerns. Jo Bedford confirmed that local residents were prepared to meet the costs. Proposed Steve Hepworth, seconded Peter Emery, that the Parish Council proceed with an LED light as discussed. Agreed unanimously. Further proposed Ben Owen, seconded Peter Emery, that the existing sodium light be switched on in the interim, until 11 PM each night. Three in favour, three abstentions: carried.

074/16 **Footpath, St John's cottage:** PC members voiced concern that the hedge at that point was blocking the footway. It appeared to be within the boundary of the property so was not an issue for Wiltshire Highways. Agreed Ben Owen draft a letter for the Clerk to send on behalf of the PC. Also that a warning about overgrown hedges blocking footways or sightlines be included in the Autumn Newsletter and on the PC website.

075/16 **Barge Inn, parking:** BO said that overflow from the car park was causing "horrendous" problems for the surrounding area. Robert Carpenter Turner pointed out that the Honeystreet Café, with similar problems was acquiring extra parking space and the issue there should be resolved within the next few weeks. PC members welcomed this and agreed that RCT should write to the cafe owners to thank them. Agreed that a letter be sent to the pub tenants asking them to enforce limits, particularly on very large vehicles parked overnight, and appealing to them to follow the example of the café.

076/16 **Internet:** Members complained at the continuing failure to achieve anything like the promised high-speed broadband. Residents were not prepared to pay extra money to achieve higher speeds which were still poor, just over 10mbps compared to the 18-plus mbps set as the basic Wiltshire rate. Agreed that Ben Owen write to our MP, Claire Perry.

077/16 **Website and parish email:** RCT had invited all members to join the new Alton Parish Council email network to test the system. It was necessary for each participant to register with Google. Once up and running it should be possible to circulate an email to everyone in the villages. It would not include a facility for replies. Over the past 18 months 5163 people had accessed the PC website.

078/16 **Defibrillator:** SH reported that a cheque for £1,532 had been received. Together with finance from the Pewsey Area Board it meant the order

could go ahead. Members agreed arrangements with the Community Heartbeat Trust who would run and maintain the equipment. After discussion, they agreed not to take up the option of a Village Emergency Telephone system for the time being.

Any Other Business

- 079/16** **Chimney Lane:** RCT reported that the very large pothole at the entrance to the lane had been filled in.
- 080/16** **All Saints' Church:** BO reported that the grant expected from the Churches Conservation Trust to replace the lead stolen from the church roof would not now be forthcoming. The money required was between £75,000 and £100,000. SH said the news was a real disappointment. After the effort to raise money to repair the roof of St Mary's, as well as the Coronation Hall, the community was suffering roof-fatigue. Any fund-raising ideas should be passed on.
- 081/16** **Loose dogs, Alton Priors:** A complaint had been made about alleged antisocial behaviour by a resident. The person concerned was said to have four dilapidated vehicles stationed outside his house, and three dogs which were often locked inside the vehicles and barking for hours at a time but then freed to roam around the village. As well as fouling gardens nearby they were also said to have attacked another dog. The residents appeared to be in breach of their tenancy agreement but letters to the landlords, Aster Group, had gone unanswered. Members voiced concern at the potential danger to livestock in nearby fields. After discussion it was agreed that BO contact the police to check whether the vehicles are insured; and that CR contact Wansbroughs, solicitors, to investigate the possibility of a solicitors' letter to the landlord.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.56pm.

pc minutes 14.7.16

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