

ALTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting at the Coronation Hall, 7.30 pm, Jan 12, 2017

- Present:** Peter Emery (Chair), Ben Owen, Robert Carpenter Turner, Alex Oliver, Polly Carson, Debby Lester (RFO), Charles Reiss (Clerk). In attendance: Councillor Paul Oatway. Apologies: S. Hepworth, M. Golden.
- 001/17** **Minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting, and of site visit attached as an annexe, were agreed and signed by the Chairman.
- Matters arising not on the agenda:
- 002/17** **Wiltshire White Horses, arts project:** Charles Reiss reported that, as requested, he had contacted the organisers to stress that the parish council and local community must be consulted over any event planned for the Alton White Horse. However it appeared the project was not being planned under the umbrella of Wiltshire Council but by a lone individual. The PC had been invited to join a discussion on February 22. It was agreed not to send a representative at this stage.
- 003/17** **Internet update:** Paul Oatway said he shared concern that Alton Priors still lacks adequate broadband. He had raised the matter with John Thompson, deputy leader of Wiltshire Council and lead on broadband. The issue was on the agenda for the next meeting of the Area Board and he would attend.
- 004/17** **Highways, & street light outside White Horse Cottage:** PO reported that he and Steve Hepworth had visited the road near Honeystreet subject to flooding, and the hill-descent from Lockeridge which had seen a number of accidents. Drains at the first site needed digging out and, if necessary, additional work. On the hillside, the only realistic option was to paint "Slow" signs on the road surface. He was seeking a site meeting with the Wiltshire highways engineer, and would ask about a possible non-slip surface, suggested by one PC member.
- Debby Lester, as owner of White Horse Cottage, said there had been complaints that the streetlight outside was not working. Wiltshire Council alleged reinstatement would be expensive and charged to the landowner. DL stressed she did not own the land, nor the verge, which had become seriously eroded, nor the hedge, which was a hazard to road users. PO asked to see the correspondence so he could investigate.
- 005/17** **Browns Lane ditch & LED light:** Wilts Council stated that while they were responsible for gullies along the lane the ditch was the responsibility of residents. Members confirmed that this had long been the case although no action had been taken by the current residents. It was noted that one of the properties on the lane had been sold, and suggested the new owners should be made aware. DL presented an invoice for £315.89 for the installation of a new streetlight. Proposed Peter Emery, seconded Robert Carpenter Turner that a cheque for that amount be paid, DL to reclaim from the residents as agreed.
- 006/17** **Parking, 1 The Bank:** Although members considered parking at that spot very dangerous, Wilts planning department said nothing could be done because the matter was not in the conditions of the original planning permission. It was also claimed that enforcement action could not be taken because the parking spot was on private land. PO to be copied into correspondence and to raise with the enforcement officer.

- 007/17** **Priory Cottages issues:** A resident had raised concern over long-term parking of a truck full of branches. The vehicle was not taxed and possibly not insured. There had been previous problems with the residents responsible, including parked vehicles removed following enforcement notices. PO is in touch with the enforcement officer.
- 008/17** **Barge Inn community asset/Canal noise:** CR reported that he had been approached by Bedwyn PC over the Cross Keys pub, under the same ownership as the Barge. There were suggestions there could be an attempt to convert it to residential use. The PC was moving to declare it a community asset. RCT said there had been little recent noise from the canal. A boat moored for around nine weeks had now moved. The Canal and River Trust, asked why the long and apparently illegal stay had replied that there was a reason but it could not be revealed "on data protection grounds."!
- 009/17** **Honeystreet Wharf site:** Although the sign on the site now said "Sold" it appeared no contract had been signed and the owners were not prepared to divulge the buyer at this stage.
- 010/17** **WALC membership:** Proposed RCT, seconded Polly Carson that membership of the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils be renewed and continued unless terminated by the PC. Agreed unanimously.
- 011/17** **Coffee morning dates:** Members agreed that the coffee mornings, which were very successful, should be held on the first Saturday of each month unless change was unavoidable.
- 012/17** **White Horse spraying:** Cheque £150 to E and A G Stratton to cover three sprayings in the past year, proposed RCT, seconded Alex Oliver. Agreed.
- 013/17** **Additional Parish Council meeting:** In view of the long gap before the next scheduled meeting on May 11, members agreed that a further meeting be held at 7:30 PM on Thursday, March 2.
- 014/17** **Invoices & finance:** DL reported that Wiltshire Council's finance officer had raised concerns over precept increases among parish councils. She had therefore submitted minutes showing why the PC had raised its precept last year, and held it unchanged for the year ahead. PO stressed that Wilts Council had voted unanimously to leave parish councils free to set precept as they wished. PCs were likely to have increasing costs shifted onto them from the county council. Several PCs had raised their precept by far more than Alton. Others were running on a budget not fit for purpose.

Any other business:

- 015/17** **All Saints church roof:** CR reported an appeal launched to replace the lead stolen from the roof. Agreed that a motion of support be tabled at the next PC.
- 016/17** **Parish council elections:** CR reminded members that those wishing to stand for re-election must submit nominations no later than April 4.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 8.33pm.

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