

DRAFT MINUTES

2024/005



ASHENDON PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall.

Monday 4th March 2024 at 7.30pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Fiona Jacobs (**FJ**), Luke Jamieson (**LJ**), Sian Miller (**SM, Vice Chair**), Chris Rand (**CR, Chair**), Venetia Davies (**Clerk and RFO**) including Paul Irwin (**PI**) and Ashley Waite (**AW**).

Parishioners: There were nine Parishioners present.

Parishioners Question Time (PQT).

A Parishioner, on behalf of all residents present, directed a question concerning the state of roads to Paul Irwin and Ashley Waite, Buckingham Councillors. They were asked when the roads will be fixed, particularly the areas up from Cannons Hill which is considered to be extremely dangerous. The white paint recently sprayed around bad areas (and through potholes!) had disappeared with the rain and was considered a waste of resource and time. Paul Irwin assured the meeting that much needed repairs from Ashendon to Nether Winchendon crossroads would be *planed and patched* on 7th March. He said that roads that are *planed and patched* are more likely to be accelerated for resurfacing. In recognition of the impact of the recent terrible wet weather, Buckinghamshire Council has allocated an extra £5 million to help fund repairs. Chris Rand thanked Councillors for the work to Westcott and appreciated the likely cost of repairs. He said Ashendon had become a 'rat run' with transport through the village 'on another level' as a result of online deliveries and the use of Ashendon village as a 'through road' to Wotton and Westcott. British Cycling, who has recently conducted a recce of Buckinghamshire, has 'written off' the country for road cycling races. It is thought the Tour de Vale on 6th June is unlikely go ahead.

1. Apologies

Les Curtis (**LC**).

2. Approval of Minutes – Monday 15th January 2024

The Draft Minutes of the January meeting were accepted as a true record and signed by Chair, Chris Rand.

3. Matters Arising

- **Platinum Jubilee Commemorative Elm.** Position agreed with APFA. **ACTION: CR to clear a patch of briars and plant.**
- **Watbridge Defibrillator.** A match funded grant for a third defibrillator had become available for Watbridge but a suitable location (with electricity) hasn't come forward. Paul Irwin confirmed that there was a defibrillator installed at Westcott. The Parish Council has discussed the possibility of another defibrillator at Lower End (as part of the pub reopening) and White City. This will be investigated at an appropriate time.
- **Ultrafast Broadband.** Ongoing.

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4. Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

5. Ashendon Village Community Pub Initiative

LJ updated the meeting. A purchase price has been negotiated with the current owners but remains confidential. The grant application has been submitted to the Community Ownership Fund for £300k (£250k grant plus £50k revenue grant) and the Steering Group will hear if this has been successful within 8-12 weeks. Recognising Ashendon as a poorly connected village and one that stood out as a place that needed support, the Department of Levelling Up has awarded the Steering Group (SG) a grant of £10k to survey the pub. LJ stressed that the SG is being very responsible and is not taking money that cannot be given back. Pledges totally £165k have been received. PI commended the group on its professionalism and communication. LJ said that a big proportion of the village, approximately 30 people, have taken on significant jobs. The Plunkett Foundation has said that the COF application was the best it's seen. The SG has had huge support from Michael and Sue Rand.

6. Contributions from Buckinghamshire Councillor

AW updated the meeting. Buckinghamshire Council's budget has now been finalised and balanced. Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Home to School Transport for vulnerable children and providing Temporary Accommodation for residents who are homeless account for about 71% of expenditure and are statutory. An extra £5 million has been made available for roads to help fund badly needed repairs. In total, £110 million is committed to road repairs and improvements over the next four years. The Haddenham and Waddesdon Community Board Green Living Event took place on 29th February 2024 at the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre and included the grand opening of the Lending Library. 30 bikes are 'ready to go' with more donations needed. Bernie Bus continues to be available for groups. The food appeal is ongoing but has become more difficult with the cost-of-living crisis. Paul Irwin informed the meeting of the Buckinghamshire Council Mental Health awareness campaign which is aimed particularly at men (the biggest killer amongst men below the age of 40 and preventable). There will be a two-hour taster course that is designed to raise awareness and train people to be able to signpost anyone in need to the right person and the right place.

7. Reports from Councillors attending meetings and outside organisations.

There were none.

8. Correspondence

- Email from Parishioner concerning a faulty light opposite the Bakehouse. Diagnose as a Low Voltage & cut out fault. Reported to UKPN. Incident number INCD-16841-O. Street light fault should be rectified up to a max of 25 working days (from 1st March 2024).
- Email from Parishioner concerning the state of the roads. Discussed under PQT.

9. Speed Safety Projects

- **Wotton Road footpath and HS2 Road Safety Fund.** Funding from HS2 funding for the Wotton Road footpath has been unsuccessful due to estimated costs for the proposed scheme increasing by 78% based on original cost estimate to £194k. The two quotations

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sought from contractors by the Parish Council had valued the works at £50k. **ACTION: AW/PI to press for meeting with Judith Wainwright, HS2 Community Engagement Officer, Communities Directorate Buckinghamshire Council for breakdown of costs.** The Wotton Path has been an aspiration of the PC for several years and it was agreed to 'keep pushing' with the project and obtain updated costs and feasibility from alternative suppliers.

ACTION: CR to arrange site visit with two or three contractors and apply to Community Fund for match funding in new Financial Year.

- **Speed Awareness Update.** Richard Phillips updated the meeting. Paul Horwood has kindly joined the Speedwatch team. The team have been concentrating on preventing "sign fatigue" as well as dealing with some long-term SID maintenance. New equipment has been carefully sourced and purchased resulting in savings close to £400. The Group are now preparing some campaigns involving "pop-up" SID sightings around the village. This program has been held back by both weather and road works but the group look forward to fielding a much more visible, varied and hopefully productive presence around the village. Possible collaboration with Fiona Jacob's "20 is plenty" campaign is under discussion. The outcome of attending the meeting held here last month on the HGV corridor restrictions proposed locally gave bonus benefits on insights into obtaining neighbourhood police team assistance using SID rather than relying on the somewhat toothless Speedwatch. SM thanked the group for the amount of effort Richard and the team puts in.
- **Ashendon '20 is Plenty' campaign.** Fiona Jacob, with the Speed Watch team, is inviting young people in the village to join in helping to keep Ashendon safe from speeding vehicles. A short briefing session will be hold on **Saturday 6th April at 2.30pm in the Village Hall.** Young people aged from 8 to 18 will be asked to design a poster and enter it into a competition. Prizes will be awarded to the best entries and the group will try to display as many, on a rotational basis, through the village. Members of the Speedwatch team will be available to talk about the best ways to make people aware of their speed, and the reasons why this is so important. Richard Phillips, who leads the team, will be on hand to introduce the SID. New young drivers (or soon-to-be drivers) are encouraged to attend. There will be an opportunity to brainstorm ideas for posters, which will be professionally enlarged and laminated so they are eye catching and communicate to drivers that speeding is not acceptable. **ACTION: FP to circulate details around the village and seek funding from the Community Board for the production of posters.**

10. Grass Cutting 2024/2025 Season

Four quotations have been sought for the 2024/25 grass cutting season. Quotes include Boughton's Peace. Councillors **agreed** to appoint Matthew Audley (proposed SM, seconded FJ). The costs are £210.00 per cut (verges) and £60.00 per cut (Boughton's Peace). **ACTION: CLERK to instruct Matthew Audley and thank other contractors for quotations.**

11. Trees on Parish Land

ACTION: CR to produce a tree register of trees on Parish land and inform any associated works. To also inspect trees XX and contact land agent for Thames Water if necessary. The sycamore trees have been reduced. **ACTION: CR to liaise with landowner for agreed contribution towards the cost of the fallen hedge on Parish Council land.**

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12. Parish Council Governance

- **Biodiversity Policy.** Parish Councils have a duty to consider a PC policy to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Ashendon. **ACTION: LJ/SM** agreed to form a Biodiversity Working Group and draft a policy for discussion at the Annual Village Meeting for adoption at the AGM (May) meeting of the Parish Council.
- **Grants Policy.** A grants policy permits power to the PC to make more substantial donations to community organisations. **ACTION: SM** to draft a policy for adoption at the AGM (May) meeting.
- **PC Governance.** A review of PC governance is required for the AGM. **ACTION: SM/CLERK** to review Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Financial Regulations, Risk Assessment and Complaints Procedure.

13. Highways Devolved Services Agreement 2024/25

The Highways Devolution Agreement for the commencement of Highways Devolved activities from 1st April 2024 has been received. The Highways Devolution payment for 24/25 will be £625.10. **ACTION: FJ/LJ/CLERK** to review and sign (utilising a handwritten digital signature) and return by email to devolution@buckinghamshire.gov.uk with the completed Bank Details form. On receipt, BC authorised signatory's countersignature will be arranged and a copy return. A new grass cutting map has been received and kindly reviewed by Kevin Nash (who has agreed to monitor grass cutting with FJ). There is an alteration to the square meterage of urban grass that is included in these maps. **ACTION: CLERK** has reported the following changes to Highways Devolution Officer as follows:

- Slight changes around Lower End; omitted are the bank from above and below the car park (of the houses) down to the entrance to the Red House and included is a portion of the footpath to the church.
- At Upper Pollicott a section on the Main Road has been added.
- The most significant change is in Wotton Road, stopped at the 30mph signs and the verges down to Hill Farm omitted. The main road at Upper Pollicott is also outside the limit but has been included. To enquire as to the reason for the Wotton Road change.

14. Annual Village Meeting – Monday 15th April 2024 at 7.00pm

Village Clubs and Societies have been invited to participate in the AVM on 15th April.

ACTION: CR to organise drink and nibbles.

15. Finance

- a. **Balance from Minutes of previous meeting (15th January 2024): £43,938.80**
 - **Receipts: £0.00**
 - **Debits: £73.70** (Npower £61.71) (Hugo Fox £11.99)
 - **Plus unrepresented BACS: £1,692.40** (£40.00 ICO Payment, £1,652.40 Orders for Payment – January)
 - **Less standing orders: £299.00** (Clerk Salary)
 - **Balance of Bank Account: £45,258.50** (as at 23rd January)
 - **Available Funds: £43,566.10** (balance of bank account less unrepresented BACS)

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b. **Orders for Payment: £189.45**

- **Venetia Davies - £9.45** (Clerk travel)
- **Venetia Davies - £180.00** (Annual Use of Home)

Also agreed: £1,381.89

- **SparkX Limited - £222.00** (£185.00 + £37.00 VAT) (Call out to faulty light opposite the Bakehouse and diagnose Low Voltage & cut out fault reported to UKPN).
- **Richard Philips - £111.89** (SID equipment)
- **Lloyd Tree Services - £1,050.00** (£875.00 + £175.00 VAT)
- **BALANCE: £41,922.76** (Available Funds less Orders for Payment)

c. **Management Report.** The March report was 2024 circulated.

16. Planning

- **24/00426/AGN - Valley Farm, Upper Pollicott, Ashendon, Buckinghamshire, HP18 0HH**
Erection of portal steel frame clear span agricultural shed. Comments by: 21 February 2024. The PC did not comment.
- **24/00290/VRC - Land At Upper Pollicott, Ashendon, Buckinghamshire**
Variation of condition 19 (approved plans) relating to application 21/03165/APP (Conversion and minor extension/rebuild of a range of agricultural barns to create five dwellings with access arrangements, vehicle parking, landscaping and all associated works). Comments by: 23 February 2024. No Objections returned to Buckinghamshire Council on 08.02.24.

17. Items for Information including Diary Dates:

- **Litter Pick** – Sunday 7th April at 9.30am. **ACTION: FJ** to arrange leaflet door drop. **AW/CR** to liaise re the supply of bags, litter pickers and hoops. Litter arranged to be collected by Street Scene, Buckinghamshire Council from the playing fields carpark.
- **Community Board Boundary Review Survey**, closes 28 March 2024

18. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Monday 15th April 2024 at 7pm – Annual Village Meeting

Monday 20th May 2024 at 7.30pm – Annual General Meeting