

**Minutes of the 37<sup>th</sup> Awbridge Annual Parish  
Assembly held in Awbridge Village Hall, Romsey  
Road SO51 0HG on Thursday, 28th April 2022 at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Ten parishioners

**In attendance:** Parish Councillors Nick Adams-King,  
Peter Allen, Grahame Jackson,  
Angela Shepherd

**Apologies:** Parish Councillors Kelly Seymour,  
David Coggon, TVBC Councillor  
Gordon Bailey

Minute taker: Ian Milsom, Parish Council Clerk

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence**
2. **News from your Romsey Rural Neighbourhood Policing Team**  
PCSO Marie Stubbington provided an overview of her role, her areas of responsibility, how the policing team engages with and informs local communities of crime trends, and how members of the public can report crimes or suspected criminal activity.
3. **Minutes of the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly 2021**  
The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of proceedings
4. **Parish Council report, including progress on Neighbourhood Development Plan**  
Parish Council Chairman, Councillor Grahame Jackson provided an overview of what the parish council does, and how it works with statutory partners and voluntary organisations to maintaining and improving local services and facilities.

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted the work of the Council. Things are gradually improving, enabling the Council to look at progressing projects it was forced to place on hold. These include additional traffic calming measures in Romsey Road and around the main access routes to the village. Plans are being put in place to transform the area of Highway land at the site of the old village pond into an environmental amenity. The undergrowth will be stripped back, and the ground levelled in preparation for planting daffodils and other flowers.

Councillor Nick Adams-King, deputising for Councillor David Coggon, highlighted the role of the Parish Council in supporting the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan (NDP) for Awbridge.

NDPs enable communities to influence the size, type, and location of housing in their neighbourhood, and to protect treasured areas and features. A work in progress for over 3 years, the Awbridge NDP has been held up by changes in personnel, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The NDP working group has recently relaunched and is working to carry forward progress already made. It is hoped that Awbridge can catch up with Wellow and Sherfield English who are ahead in the NDP process. Once agreed, the Awbridge NDP will carry the same weight as the Test Valley Borough Council Local Plan.

Previously collected data on residents' views of how the village should look in future years, and the results of the 2021 housing needs survey commissioned by the parish council, will be used to help decide what will be in the finished plan.

Funding from the Parish Council will allow the working group to engage a planning consultant, who will provide support with some of the more specialist issues, such as a character appraisal and design guide for different parts of the village; open spaces and wildlife corridors (including particularly valued views); heritage assessment; and longer-term aspirations relating to land-use (e.g., for new permissive footpaths).

Parishioners who are interested in assisting with the Awbridge NDP should contact Councillor David Coggon [dcoggon@awbridgepc.org.uk](mailto:dcoggon@awbridgepc.org.uk)

## **5. Local issues**

A parishioner, a new resident in Kents Oak, raised the issue of fibre broadband and when this would be available to households.

A discussion followed, during which it was revealed that whilst fibre is routed to the school cabinet – currently full with no available sockets - there are no immediate plans to take this to properties.

The Government's Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme, providing vouchers worth up to £1,500 for homes to cover the costs of installing gigabit broadband to people's doorsteps, has been used by a group of resident in the Parish, and a residents group is forming in Kents Oak.

## **6. Working quietly in the background**

Fred Tucker, church warden at All Saints Church provided a brief overview of how local volunteer groups, with funding from Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC), support residents. Support was crucially important during the Covid-19 Pandemic, when volunteers performed magnificently in coming to the aid of Awbridge residents.

Fred also described how the Church, Awbridge District Village Association, and the Village Hall Trust work in partnership to provide a calendar of events that contribute to the social cohesion of the village

Sandra Tebbit, volunteer co-ordinator, explained how Awbridge Neighbourcare aims to provide transport to medical or medically related appointments for residents in Awbridge and neighbouring areas. Other small tasks, such as shopping, collecting prescriptions, and help with information are also offered. Where transport is provided, a valid TVBC Farepass can be used but a donation is also requested to help cover running costs.

There are over 100 voluntary Neighbourcare groups in Hampshire. Each is an independent entity but are supported by advisers from the Good Neighbours Support Service.

## 7. **News from Borough and County Level**

Nick Adams-King also serves as a councillor with Test Valley Borough Council and Hampshire County Council. Nick gave a PowerPoint supported presentation covering the discrete responsibilities of councils at borough and county level.

### **TVBC**

One of the main responsibilities at this tier of local government is planning which, fundamentally, is about sustainable development. This involves balancing the economic, environmental, and social impacts of new development. TVBC is looking at sites for new housing in line with targets set by local government. Several sites in Andover have been identified, however, most development will be around Andover.

Refuse collection and waste recycling is another major part of TVBC's role. Changes to household recycling are in the pipeline and a feature of this will be the introduction of food waste disposal, with households being supplied with additional receptacles for this purpose.

### **Hampshire County Council (HCC)**

Hampshire is the third-largest county in England, with 1.4 million inhabitants. HCC's responsibilities cover children's services (including education), adult services (including care homes and extra care facilities), and Highways (including street lighting and footpaths). HCC has one of the lowest council tax rates in England.

Nick focused on the HCC budget and provided information on how this is spent.

By means of a fund allocated annually, HCC councillors can offer some direct financial support to voluntary and community groups in their constituencies.

After a brief question and answer session with Nick, the Assembly business was concluded and followed by refreshments and networking