

Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly of the Parish of Ampfield held in the Village Hall, Ampfield on Monday, 25th April 2016 commencing at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Mr Bryan Nanson (Chairman of the Parish Council)–Presiding

Parish Councillors Mr A. Clark
Mr P. Edwards
Mr M. D. Hatley (Borough Councillor)
Mr J. A. Jones
Mr G. C. A. Roads
Dr. Margaret Rothwell
Mr D. Stevens
Mrs J. Trotter

County Councillor Mr A. G. Dowden (County Councillor)

Approx. 15 parishioners

Clerk to the Council Mrs Doreen Matthews

1/16 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr & Mrs Greenham of Flexford Close and Steve White of Knapp Lane.

2/16 Minutes

The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Assembly held on 27th April, 2015 having been circulated, were confirmed by the Meeting and signed by the Chairman.

3/16 Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising not covered by items on the agenda.

4/16 Chairman's Review of the Year

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He summarised what had been a busy and often challenging year. Ampfield Parish Council (APC) had bought the freehold of the newly extended Village Hall to ensure its future as community

asset. The car park had been extended to the side and had been leased to APC for 999 years. The open and green spaces at Morleys Green would also soon be leased to APC to manage. The new allotments were now ready for cultivation. A review of our Village Design Statement was underway with the help of residents. Volunteers had also made the “Clean for the Queen” initiative a success with rubbish being collected by gangs across the parish. As always the Burial Ground and Chapel Wood were in good condition thanks to the Friends of Chapel Wood. The Chairman thanked Councillors and others in the community, for their support which had been much appreciated.

5/16 County Councillor’s and Borough Councillor’s Reports

The Chairman welcomed Alan Dowden and Martin Hatley to the meeting and invited them to add to, or expand on, items in their reports which had been included in the spring newsletter.

Cllr Dowden emphasised that the condition of the County’s roads was very poor and, although additional money had been allocated by Government for repair, it wasn’t going to be enough. It was thought that in excess of £10 million would need to be spent on Hampshire’s road network to make a significant improvement. It was good news that the Revised Local Plan had finally been approved by Government and adopted by Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) but Cllr Hatley advised that the judicial review brought about by the Barker Mills Estate had been unhelpful and would be costly. On devolution, TVBC saw no benefit joining Portsmouth, Southampton & Isle of Wight in the Solent bid. The “Heart of Hampshire” grouping of New Forest, Winchester and Basingstoke might be more appropriate. This was a complex and ever-changing situation which was far from settled.

TVBC had been purchasing property for investment purposes to help increase income to make-up for shortfalls in support from other sources. This approach had been doing well. In response to a question about the Boundary Review Cllr Hatley thought it would be sensible to have Crampmoor and the remaining part of the Straight Mile in Ampfield Parish rather than Romsey Town. Romsey Extra, in which these areas currently sat, was a “doughnut” shape surrounding Romsey. This arrangement was not acceptable to the Boundary Commission and it would be changed.

6/16 Planning

On the planning front, the year had been a bit quieter than the previous couple of years with more individual applications, and fewer contentious developments, being proposed. Cllr Clark encouraged everyone to come along to planning meetings, whether as an applicant or objector, as their input was very helpful to Ampfield Parish Planning Committee in making their decisions.

Concern was expressed about the appearance of portakabins on the site opposite the Potters Heron and queries raised about what would happen if the applicant did not adhere to the agreed planning proposal. Cllr Clark explained about the work of the TVBC Enforcement Team and how it was a time consuming and difficult task. Cllr Hatley pointed out that, as the site was still being developed, it was not easy to know how it was going to turn out until it was finished. The Enforcement Team could only invite additional applications from owners to cover any unplanned development. If they did not comply with that requirement then enforcement action could be taken. A resident encouraged people to write to TVBC individually about any objections or concerns with planning applications as it added more weight to the Parish Council's comments.

A query was raised about the additional entrance that had appeared at Sheep Field after the division of the land into 2 separate halves. Cllr Hatley explained that the land was now owned by 2 different people; they had a right to make an entrance and no permission was required. It was thought that, in any case, there might have been 2 entrances to that field many years ago. Work was underway at the gate at South Holmes and some trees had been removed. Cllr Hatley advised that if the gate was over a metre in height then planning permission would be required. In response to a query Cllr Clark explained that APC had looked very carefully at Neighbourhood Plans but decided it was not the best planning tool for Ampfield parish. Although some grants and support were available the process was very costly and time-consuming. In addition it required identification of where development might take place; it was not a process for avoiding housing developments. (See para 7/16 below.)

7/16 Village Design Statement

Cllr Roads gave the background to the review of the Village Design Statement (VDS). It was nearly 15 years old and needed to be updated to keep it relevant and to help ensure that it continued to reflect the views and aspiration of residents. It was important that it retained its legal status as a supplementary planning document to be referred to by TVBC in the planning process. This was a critical project for the parish. Stage 1 of the task was to set up a steering committee of 7 people. The involvement of residents from all parts of the parish was important; anyone interested in volunteering to help with the project was invited to come forward.

8/16 Allotments

Cllr Stevens explained about the process used to allocate allotment plots which had been oversubscribed. 16 plots had been allocated to parishioners and 10 people had been placed on the waiting list. It was noted that land for additional allotments could no longer be taken from the northern side due to drainage works but that extension to the western side might be possible in the future. Robert Hillier had formally opened the allotments the previous day. Included in the

annual rental were electricity and water costs and, for the first year at least, the cost of cleaning the kitchen and toilet buildings. Questions were raised about the poor quality of much of the soil and the stoney ground. It was recognised that there was a stone strata running through the allotment area and that some plots would be more of a challenge to develop than others. APC would work with allotment holders to help improve the situation. The Village Green at Morleys was a great parish amenity; residents were asked to think about the facility and let Council know about any ideas for usage. It was noted that the Perbury Group would donate 3 benches for use on the Village Green. APC would consider how a play area might be introduced; it was not a straightforward proposal.

9/16 Council Finances & Administration

The Chairman presented the following to the Meeting:-

- (a) the Audited Accounts of the Parish Council for the year ended 31st March 2015 together with the schedules and assurances required by the External Auditors
- (b) expenditure details to March 2016 (provisional)
- (c) the budget and build-up of figures for the Parish Precept for 2016/2017

Details of the financial information presented were included in the packs made available at the meeting and on the parish website. The biggest single item of expenditure in the year had been the purchase of the freehold of the Village Hall. It had been paid for out of reserves but a grant towards the cost from TVBC's Community Asset Fund had been applied for. The setting up costs of the new allotments had been over £3,200 but this would be recovered from the \$106 monies due for maintenance of the green spaces at the Morleys Green development. There had been some underspend mostly due to maintenance items being deferred on the Recreation Ground and in Chapel Wood, and to there being no need for technical studies in connection with planning applications.

The Precept for the new financial year had been increased by £1,600 which was 4.9% more than the previous year. This was the first increase in 7 years. The Chairman advised that this would mean an increase per household of approx. 3.25%. At 1st April 2016 working capital stood at £4,605 and reserves at £14,418. In response to a query it was explained that those assets listed with a value of £1 were classed as community assets and not, therefore, subject to sale.

The meeting agreed to receive the finance report.

10/16 Transport and Road Safety

Cllr Edwards reported that most bus services across the parish had been retained from the previous year. There were links on the parish website to bus timetables and services. 2 new bus shelters would be purchased with

S106 monies from the Morleys development. The locations hadn't yet been decided. The bus shelter at the junction of Pound Lane and the A3090 was in poor condition and needed some renovation work done. Residents were encouraged to report pot holes; there was a facility to do so on the TVBC website. Resurfacing of some roads around the Hook area was due to start shortly. Residents should contact Cllr Edwards if there were any problems with that job. Some visitors and delivery drivers had experienced difficulties in finding their way into and around the Morleys Green site. New roads signs would be erected to make things clearer.

Later in the year work would start on revisions to the junction of Jermyns Lane and the A3090. This would be funded from the Abbotswood development. Detailed work on changes to the section of the A3090 through the village had not yet started but it was likely to include improvements to the structure and lay-out of the road, to the cycle way and to pedestrian access on the north side of the road. This would be funded mostly from S106 monies. The parish Lengthsman scheme would be funded by Hampshire County Council for another year. Tasks included clearing vegetation, litter picking, cleaning road signs and clearing footpaths. These were small works but helped make the parish a neater and tidier place.

11/16 Friends of Chapel Wood

Using slides, Cllr Roads showed the progress that had been made in reclaiming views and improving the condition of the pond by removing unwanted Rhododendron and other vegetation. Increased sunlight, borrowed views and more open spaces had improved the experience of those visiting the Burial Ground. The cruciform hedge was developing nicely and some specimen trees had been freed from encroaching undergrowth. Cllr Roads thanked the Friends of Chapel Wood for the time and effort they spent on maintaining and improving the community Woodland and the Burial Ground. Everyone was encouraged to come along and enjoy the amenity.

12/16 Ampfield Countryside Heritage Area

The ACHA had been active during the year and Cllr. Roads and other members were planning events which would help everyone be more aware of nature and of the countryside in which they lived. A Spring Talk had been given by Wolfgang Bopp of the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens on 7th March 2016. It had been very well attended by over 50 people. Plans were being made for a guided tour of the Jubilee garden at Hillier's by Wolfgang Bopp later in the year. The Boxing Day walks continued as usual and a late summer walk, possibly along the Itchen Navigation Canal, was being considered. Everyone was encouraged to come forward with other events or ideas.

13/16 Other Reports

There were no comments on other reports.

14/16 Open Forum

A resident at Ratlake was concerned about flooding in the verges between the curtilage of their property and the road and asked about responsibility for the ditches. It was explained that the first point of contact to do with the roadside would normally be Highways. This would also apply to trees on the verges. If the resident would take a photo and send it with details to Cllr Dowden he would ask Highways to have a look at the problem. The situation with dog walkers not clearing up after their animals was thought to be getting worse, especially in Ampfield Woods and at the end of Knapp Lane. The Chairman agreed to look at the provision of suitable bins. There was concern that fly-tipping was getting worse again. This was unfortunate but Cllr Clark advised that TVBC were very quick to respond to requests to clear away such rubbish.

There were no further questions or comments. The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05pm and invited everyone to stay for refreshments.

Chairman.....

Date.....