

Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly of the Parish of Ampfield held in the Village Hall, Ampfield on Monday, 20th May 2019 commencing at 7.30pm.

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

Parish Councillors

Mr Martin. D. Hatley (Borough Councillor)

Mr Julian A. Jones

Mr Chris Ling

Mr Graham C. A. Roads

Mr David Stevens

Mrs Julie Trotter

County Councillor

Mr Alan G. Dowden (County Councillor)

Approx. 20 parishioners

Clerk to the Council

Mrs Doreen Matthews

1/19 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Allan Clark, Mr & Mrs Greenham, Sally Kerson of St Mark's ministry team and Clair Ludwell.

2/19 Minutes

The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Assembly held on 30th April, 2018 having been circulated, were confirmed by the Meeting and signed by the Chairman.

3/19 Matters arising from the Minutes

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

4/19 Chairman's Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting especially those attending for the first time. He introduced Chris Ling who had been elected as Councillor to Ampfield Parish Council (APC) in the recent elections. It had been another busy year with council activities and responsibilities having increased significantly

over recent years. Finances were generally in good shape. Capital expenditure was supported by grants and not included in the budget; much time was therefore spent securing funds for major projects. The war memorials were being cleaned for the first time in many years. The Chairman thanked Graham and Sue Roads for maintaining so well the garden around the memorials. Graham Roads would let everyone know later about a memorial event planned in July for the American Airmen.

The review of the Village Design Statement (VDS) had taken a very frustrating turn and was not yet published. The Chairman thanked the team working on that project and also Graham Roads for his patience and determination to get the task finished. School parking remained an issue but measures had been put in place to limit the problem. The Friends of Chapel Wood were thanked for their efforts without whom the Parish would struggle to maintain Chapel Wood and the Burial Ground. Dr Margaret Rothwell had retired from APC and the Village Hall Committee after many years' service. APC had also said goodbye to Pete Edwards who had not stood for re-election. The Chairman thanked them both for their contribution and wished them well for the future.

5/19 Borough Councillor's Report

The Chairman introduced Martin Hatley. He had nothing further to add to his report which had been included in the spring newsletter. He was pleased to retain his Borough Councillor position in the recent election. There had been a very high number of spoilt papers as people showed their feelings about the Brexit situation. He had enjoyed his year as Deputy Mayor of Test Valley as it had allowed him to meet many people working for the community who didn't want praise or attention. He was looking forward to being Mayor for the next 12 months.

6/19 County Councillor's Report

The Chairman then introduced Alan Dowden and invited him to add to, or expand on, items in his report. He reported that there had been a number of changes following the recent elections. The Leader of the County Council- Cllr Perry- had stood down and moved to the back benches and Cllr Keith Mans was now leader.

7/19 Council Finances & Administration

The Chairman advised that copies of the audited accounts for year ended 2018, the budget and actual figures (provisional) to 31st March 2019, and the precept calculation for 2019/20, were available at the back of the hall. The information would also be available on the parish website.

Using slides, the Chairman showed the major variances between budget and actual costs for 2018/2019. The figures reflected the use of reserves to help fund the pavilion and their subsequent re-instatement in the new budget. The major

variances included expenditure on the fitting out of the pavilion, the construction of a new sewerage plant and overspend on the allotments and parking signs for Morleys Green. Items which were underspent included maintenance at the Recreation Ground and in Chapel Wood, and legal fees. Capital spend was not budgeted for and hence not included in the Precept but was covered by grants. Money spent on the allotments and Morleys Green would be refunded through the commuted sum provided by the developer. The Chairman explained the problems with accounting for the Public Works Loan Board payment due on 31st March which, because of Easter, was not taken until 1st April of the next financial year.

The Precept for the new financial year had been set at £38,031 which, compared with the previous year, was an increase of £2,276. However, taking account of the additional properties in the Parish, as a result of the recent parish boundary changes, the overall impact on a household was nil.

Finances were fairly healthy. At 1st April 2019 the overall cash situation was £113,758. This was represented by £46,570 at bank (including £1,200 allotment refundable deposits and £1,286 grant for a new dipping platform) and £67,188 intended for the maintenance of green spaces at Morleys Green.

8/19 Planning

Allan Clark was not in attendance. The Chairman advised that it had been a fairly quiet year for planning with no especially contentious applications. News was awaited about the proposed Ampfield Care Village; the next stage in the process would be the issue of the detailed plans.

9/19 Village Design Statement (VDS)

As referred to earlier, there had been an unexpected delay in getting the draft VDS agreed by one particular department at Test Valley Borough Council. It was understood that the issues had been broadly resolved and that the document should be put forward for adoption by TVBC at its Cabinet meeting in July 2019. Work would then be needed to improve the presentation of some of the graphics, following which it would be printed and a copy supplied to all households. Graham Roads thanked the VDS team for their hard work on the project.

10/19 The Recreation Ground

Use of the new pavilion was in its second season. The Cricket Club and their visitors and supporters were making good use of it. A youth cricket programme had started on Friday evenings. It was hoped that grant funds would be released shortly by TVBC to start off the next major phase of demolishing the old wooden pavilion, moving the playground and creating a new car park. The contract for creating the new playground had recently been awarded; the intention was to have the playground installed by the year end and then efforts would turn towards

installation of the car park. In response to questions the Chairman explained that the new location would be on the eastern side of the Recreation Ground, using the site of the old pavilion. Considerations of child safety limited the number of places that a playground could be sited.

11/19 Transport and Road Safety.

There had been no real solution to the problems with School parking at the bottom of Knapp Lane. A “park & stride” system had been introduced to help reduce the pressure and lines had been painted at the bottom of the Lane to limit parking. There had been some success but it was not the solution. APC had corresponded with Cllr Perry, Leader of HCC to seek his help. A meeting had taken place with Highways staff. APC had requested that additional land be made available for staff parking. A response was awaited.

The introduction of traffic calming measures on the A3090 through the village had been discussed at length with Highways staff. Money from Morleys’ developer funds was available to pay for such measures but the process had been delayed as highways matters had been transferred from TVBC back to HCC. However, the Community Initiative Fund team at HCC had taken up the project and had just produced a first draft for consultation. It was hoped that any agreed actions would be included in their development programme for 2020. Chris Ling would take this forward on behalf of APC.

The reduction of speed limits on the A3090 around the Ratlake area remained a difficult goal. There had been meetings with Highways, who were sympathetic to the request but, as the accident rate was considered low, no action would be taken. Bruce Robinson, who at the last Parish Assembly believed the accident rate was under-recorded and that the number of deer deaths had increased, had been keeping records. Martin Hatley was organising an informal meeting of Ratlake residents and Highways staff. It was generally agreed that a 60mph limit at Yellow Dot Nursey and Ratlake was not appropriate. It was thought that drivers were not paying enough attention to the “deer signs”. Alan Dowden had written to Stuart Jarvis at Highways who confirmed that they would not use their capital programme for such changes unless there had been fatalities. It was accepted that this would be a long process but the Chairman confirmed that APC would continue to pursue it.

12/19 Friends of Chapel Wood

Using slides Graham Roads showed the changes that had been made in the woodland and the vistas that had been opened up after many years of encroaching vegetation. Work would continue on removing Rhododendron ponticum roots. Experience had shown that simply cutting the top growth held things in check for a few years but it was a vigorous shrub and quickly re-established itself. As well as creating views the Friends of Chapel Wood (FOCW) were helping to create a

peaceful and serene place where nature could be observed and enjoyed. Every 4 or 5 years a full inspection of every tree was undertaken by professional arboriculturists to help keep the woodland a safe place to visit. An inspection had just been completed and any necessary work was being undertaken. The dipping platform had been out of action for some time but it was hoped to have a new one installed by the end of the year. Consideration would be given this year to providing additional seats around the woodland. Graham Roads thanked the FOCW for their continued support in the maintenance of the woodland.

American Airmen

Graham Roads reminded everyone of the memorial event planned for 2nd July in honour of the 5 American Airmen who died when their Cessna Bobcat plane crashed in the woodland on that date in 1944. Details of the incident were on the parish website. The Revd Ashdown would lead the service. Representatives of the US Embassy would be there. Everyone was welcome to attend. Refreshments would be served afterwards and presentations made in St Mark's room.

13/19 Ampfield Countryside Heritage Area

The Ampfield Countryside Heritage Area (ACHA) was set up about 20 years ago. Its purpose was to improve people's knowledge and experience of nature. The talk given by John Hanks, Master Beekeeper about bees and their importance in nature had been very interesting. More talks were planned for later in the year. The Boxing Day Walk, which had never been cancelled despite the weather, was planned again for this year. Graham Roads thanked the 3 Footpath Wardens- Ruth Holzer, Jon Milliken and Tommy Rickard who walked the path network and identified and reported any problems to HCC. Their work in keeping the paths clear and open was much appreciated.

14/19 Other Reports

There were no comments on other reports.

15/19 Open Forum

The closure of a parking area at the top end of Knapp Lane had caused problems for dog walkers who had used it for entry into Ampfield Woods for many years. It was confirmed that this action had been taken by the Forestry Commission as they could no longer get their heavy working vehicles into the woods because of the parked cars. Emergency service vehicles would also struggle to get passed. Martin Hatley and Graham Roads had met with TVBC officers to look at the possibility of increasing the parking for the woods at Jermyns Lane. The need for dog bins was understood but it was not a straightforward action when dealing with private owners. The Forestry Commission was aware of all the problems involved but

they needed to get on with their business; if the situation at Jermyns Lane worsened they were likely to take the same action.

The development opposite the Potters Heron continued to cause concern and frustration. APC was in frequent contact with TVBC Enforcement Team but they appeared to have no real “teeth” to take appropriate action. Martin Hatley explained that going beyond planning consent was not illegal but was unlawful. It was also noted that taking action was slow and often without satisfactory outcome. Similarly the persistent cutting of the verge, which was an SSSI, continued despite attempts to have it stopped.

There were no further questions or comments. The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.30pm and invited everyone to stay for refreshments.

Chairman.....

Date.....