

Ashton Keynes Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 9th September 2009

Present: Cllrs G Bridge (Chairman), J Freeth, M Jackson, S Jefferson, Y Jordan, R Thomas, E Tidmarsh, D Wain, and I Woods
County Cllr C Soden
Mr James Gray MP
Seven members of the public

The Chairman began by welcoming Mr James Gray MP, who had agreed to answer public questions of a non-political nature. He also welcomed the young people of the village who were there to present a petition to the Parish Council for a Skate Park.

The questions put to Mr Gray and his answers are recorded at Appendix 1.

2009/113 Skate Park

In view of the number of young people present, the Chairman decided to bring forward this Agenda item and deal with it first. The young people were represented by Sam Finnie and Zac Riddington, who presented a petition with 203 signatures and a hand-out proposing a permanent Skate Park be built in the village. A copy of the hand-out was then given to the Parish Council for retention.

After the presentation, which the members agreed had been well thought out and articulated, there was a lively discussion on a number of issues, such as Policing and maintenance of the facility. There was a suggestion that someone should contact the Chairman of Cherston Parish Council to ascertain what problems, if any, they had experienced with their Skate Park.

The Chairman proposed that a committee be formed to decide the way ahead, which Cllr I Woods agreed to be involved with, particularly helping with the funding applications. The Chairman thanked the young people for their presentation and said the Skate Park would appear on next month's Parish Council meeting Agenda.

Action: the Clerk

2009/114 To accept apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Seymour.

2009/115 Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda

The Declarations of Interest book was signed by Cllr D Wain in respect of Agenda Item 6, the letter from North Wilts CAB (Minute **2009/119**).

2009/116 To confirm the Minutes of Council Meeting held on 8th July 2009

The Minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

2009/117 Matters arising from the Minutes

The Clerk said he had no matters arising from the Minutes of the last meeting. The Chairman ascertained that the members had no matters arising either.

2009/118 Vacancy on the Council

The Clerk said that he had been approached by Mr Malcolm Carter with a view to him applying to fill the vacancy on the Parish Council. Mr Carter had sent the Clerk his CV, which the Clerk had circulated to all the members. The Clerk introduced Mr Carter, who was sitting in the public area.

After a short discussion between the members and Mr Carter, the Chairman proposed the co-option of Mr Malcolm Carter onto the Parish Council, which was seconded by Cllr I Woods and approved unanimously.

2009/119 Clerk's Report

The Clerk gave the following report:

- The Clerk began by thanking the Council for supporting the purchase of a new desktop PC, which Dave Sheppard had installed in his office, and said he was very pleased with it.
- He went on to say that he had received the result of the Audit back from Mazars, our external Auditors. Their only comment was to request that additions to assets are recorded in the Asset Register, which they always are.
- He informed the members that he had recently sent a claim for a VAT refund to Customs and Excise, which amounted to £7,911-52p. This figure was much higher than usual due to the relatively high cost of items the Council had to pay for over the past year.
- The Clerk said that he had received an appeal from the Wiltshire Air Ambulance to place a bin in the village in support of their Recycling Clothing and Shoe Bank Scheme, to which many other towns and villages have become involved. Dave Sheppard had agreed to the bin being installed at the entrance to the Village Hall Car Park, behind the big red Parish Council Notice Boards, which will make it accessible to everyone.
- The Leader of Wiltshire Council has requested the pleasure of the company of up to four Parish Council representatives at a service of dedication for the new Wiltshire Council and local communities in Salisbury Cathedral on Sunday 11th October at 3 pm. Names have to be submitted by Friday 25th September, so he asked the members to let him know before that date if they wish to attend.
- Wiltshire Council had sent him a letter on "Working with Town, Parish and City Councils" that was all about promoting good governance and the Code of Conduct. The Council is expecting a higher incidence of Code of Conduct complaints and has sent a DVD, produced by the Standards for England, to help Council members understand both the application of the Code and the principles that underpin it. Any member wishing to borrow the DVD, please contact the Clerk.
- North Wilts Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Chippenham had sent a letter requesting a grant towards their running costs. Cllr D Wain informed the Council that CAB Cirencester would not deal with residents of Wiltshire and would refer them to CAB Chippenham. After a short discussion, the Chairman proposed a donation of £100 be sent to the CAB, which was seconded by Cllr R Thomas and unanimously agreed by the Council. Cllr D Wain asked the Clerk to place the Telephone Number of the Chippenham CAB in the next issue of the Parish Newsletter.

Action: The Clerk

- The Community First AGM will be taking place in Devizes Corn Exchange on Wednesday 7th October commencing at 5pm, and asked the members to let him know if they would like to attend. He also had a copy of the "First News" magazine if anyone would like to borrow it.
- His last item was to ask for the members' wish list of work for the Parish Steward to undertake this month, which would be recorded and passed on to Wiltshire

Highways Partnership. No item was forthcoming. He then relayed to the Council what the Parish Steward had been doing over the summer months. He said there had been an exchange of e-mails with Wiltshire Highways Partnership over the cleaning of the ditch between Eastfield and Four Acre Close and the pond at North End Crossroads, but the ownership of both pieces of land remained in question. Cllr I Woods suggested that the Clerk ask the Area Engineer, Sally Barnett, for a map of the village with the Highway Rights marked on it. The Chairman asked the Clerk to contact the Land Registry.

Action: The Clerk

2009/120 Financial Transactions

a. Payments Received:

The Council noted that the following payments had been received:

▪ AK Playing Fields Committee (Play Equipment Parts)	£ 534.25
▪ AK Playing Fields Committee (Traffic Signs)	£ 75.15
▪ Wiltshire Council (Section 106 Money)	£ 5,718.08

b. Payments Made:

The Council noted that the following payments had been made:

▪ David Clover (Grasscutting in July)	£ 800.00
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▪ Village Hall (July Room Rental)	£ 16.00
▪ Ramtech (Village Hall Heating)	£ 9,614.81
▪ Wicksteed Leisure (Play Equipment Parts)	£ 614.39
▪ Calves Hill Ltd (VH Oil Tank)	£ 2,072.30
▪ Clerk's Salary (July plus back pay to 1 Apr 2009)	£ 642.05
▪ Clerk's Expenses (July)	£ 171.82
▪ Ian Woods (Traffic Signs)	£ 86.42
▪ Mazars (External Audit)	£ 460.00
▪ SLCC (Conference)	£ 379.50
▪ Steve Mutlow (Village Hall Oil Tank Building Work)	£ 1,308.70
▪ Thames Tree Services (Tree Surgery)	£ 1,759.50
▪ A1 Maintenance (Village Hall Ceiling Insulation)	£18,457.50
▪ Clerk's Salary (August)	£ 577.49

c. Accounts for Payment:

The Council approved the following item for payment:

▪ HM Revenue & Customs (3 months Tax & NI)	£ 693.07
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2009/121 Standing Orders

The Chairman asked the members for their suggested changes to the Standing Orders that had been circulated during the summer break with yellow highlighted amendments. In view of the number of forthcoming suggested changes, the Chairman asked the members to e-mail their suggestions to the Clerk in the next 10 days.

Action: Councillors

2008/122 Motion: Does the Parish Council wish to assist the Link Scheme in Ashton Keynes and, if so, how?

Cllrs D Wain and M Jackson both spoke in support of the Link Good Neighbour Scheme and pointed out that it would be an expansion of the current Help Line. They said every household in the village would be receiving a leaflet inviting everyone to an open public meeting in the Village Hall on Tuesday 22nd September at 7pm. The motion was carried and the members agreed that the Parish Council would assist the Link Scheme in principle.

2009/123 Committees, Working Groups and Representatives' Reports

The Chairman said there had been a meeting of the Footpaths and Roads Working Group, following which the members had been sent the Minutes. Cllr D Wain asked if a form could be sent to the secretary of the Malmesbury Area Board raising the issue of safety at North End Crossroads.

Action: The Clerk

Cllr Y Jordan reported on the meetings she had with Somerford Keynes at which the discussion centred on the application for the creation of Public Rights of Way into and around Keynes Country Park. She mentioned the fact that Somerford Keynes, South Cerney, Minety and Oaksey are all agreed in principle to raising about £1,000 to cover the cost of legal advice, while Siddington is still thinking about it. Cllr Jordan said the money was not required immediately because, so far, they had received free advice. She said that South Cerney had offered up to £400 as their contribution towards the legal costs and she asked if the Parish Council were prepared, in principle, to make a contribution? County Cllr C Soden offered a word of caution before committing any money, she said we could ask Wiltshire Council legal department to offer free advice. After a short discussion, Cllr I Woods proposed that £300 be set aside for legal advice, if needed. Cllr Y Jordan seconded the proposal and all the members were in favour.

County Cllr C Soden asked whether or not the Parish Council was satisfied with the work that had been carried out on the B4696, to which the general consensus was in the affirmative. County Cllr Soden then asked that she be put back on the future Parish Council Agendas.

Action: The Clerk

2009/124 Youth Liaison

The Chairman said that Cllr S Jefferson had offered to be the Youth Liaison representative on the Parish Council and would be obtaining the necessary clearance from the Criminal Records Board. The Chairman asked Cllr D Wain to assist Cllr Jefferson with advice on obtaining the clearance.

2009/125 Tractor Repair

The Chairman said that the gear selector on the tractor had jammed in top gear and David Clover was unable to free it himself, which had rendered the tractor unusable. The cost of fitting a new selector would be about £600. The Chairman also said that while carrying out the work on replacing the selector, Patrick Edwards should be asked to replace the worn out brake shoes for £150. Cllr I Woods said there was £1,000 Precepted in Contingencies for this sort of work. The members were all in agreement that £750 should be spent on the work being carried out on the tractor.

Cllr R Thomas said he had two items to bring up on Planning. Firstly, after reading one of the circulars from Wiltshire Council, he said he noticed that all Planning was dedicated to their Officers. County Cllr C Soden said that if the Parish Council wanted to call an item in to Committee, they should speak or e-mail her because she gets a weekly list of Planning items 21 days ahead of the event. County Cllr Soden said she would e-mail the Chairman if Ashton Keynes featured on the list. Secondly, Cllr Thomas said that since the public meeting on Cullimore's Planning Application for an inert waste facility at Dairy Farm, he noticed that the answer was delegated to a single Officer on Wiltshire Council and said that this could not be right after there had been 26 letters of complaint submitted. County Cllr Soden said she would get chapter and verse on the situation and let him know.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 9.50pm.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 14th October 2009 at 7.45pm

Appendix 1 to the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 9th September 2009

Public Questions with Mr James Gray MP

The Chairman opened the dialogue with Mr Gray by asking a series of questions, beginning with:

1. What do you propose to do about the encroachment of large commercial interests into the rural villages in your constituency, eroding the very things that make these villages an essential part of British life? Would you be so good as to address your comments to recent events that have had or will have, an impact on Ashton Keynes, and which we know are mirrored across your constituency, namely:

- Granting of planning permission to dump 140,000 Cu.M of waste into Lake 81
- The attempted closure of a footpath bordering the Keynes Country Park by Watermark
- The proposal to build a heavy lorry route for the Chelworth Industrial Estate in close proximity to the village

Mr Gray's reply was centered around his belief that five things make a village, namely a School, a Pub, a Church, a Village Hall and a Shop/Post Office, all of which were part of Ashton Keynes. He felt that Ashton Keynes was a vibrant, living village and he did not wish to see any general erosion of our village life. He said that as far as he was concerned, he wanted to see strategic planning to prevent the expansion of Swindon northwards, against which he had been fighting for 15years; it has worried him that 5,000 houses could be built close to Cricklade.

2. Why did you form an opinion on the Cricklade by-pass without first finding out how it would affect other Parishes?

Mr Gray replied that he hadn't formed an opinion on the by-pass and, referring to the southerly route that he said he had wrongly been accused of supporting, he knew that it would cost a massive amount of money and take a lot of exploration. He said that whatever was on his Website was written from a misguided understanding of the situation. He concluded that the whole subject of a Cricklade by-pass needed further examination and he felt that the southerly was unlikely to happen for a variety of reasons, especially cost.

3. Do you have any views on the developments planned and in progress in the Cotswold Water Park - particularly as some of the next phases are most definitely in Wiltshire not in Gloucestershire?

Mr Gray replied that he knew nothing about the developments planned in the Cotswold Water Park, so he was unable to make an informed comment.

4. What is the Government strategy for dealing with travellers - particularly as Wiltshire Council appears to be in disarray on this subject?

Mr Gray began by mentioning that in the early 60's 3,000 Gypsies were parked illegally around England and the Government made a law that sufficient pitches were to be built on which they could park their caravans; some time later, the law was repealed. In 2006, Government Planning changed again and they became more sympathetic to the travellers, hence the decision by North Wiltshire District Council to allow the travellers to stay in Minety. The South West Regional Assembly said that Wiltshire had to provide more pitches, which is why there are so many travellers coming from Romania and Ireland. To protect people and property, Wiltshire Council is now issuing 'Stop' notices when the first caravan arrives on a field, so the travellers are now trying to buy the land, which landowners should avoid selling to them at all costs. The Council now has a team in place 24/7 to deal with these matters that was formed as a result of the experience in Minety.

5. Is it your intention, whilst our representative MP, to hold Constituency Surgeries in Ashton Keynes and also, do you wish to attend the meetings of Ashton Keynes Parish Council on a regular/annual basis?

Mr Gray replied by saying that he used to bring his caravan and have Surgeries in Ashton Keynes a few years ago and would be prepared to do so again if asked. He said he could hold the Surgeries on a Saturday, perhaps jointly with County Cllr Carole Soden. He said he liked to visit all the Parish Councils in his Constituency at least once per five-year parliament, and this was the 3rd or 4th time he had visited Ashton Keynes, which Cllr D Wain said she could not remember in her 20 years as a Councillor. He suggested that she must have been absent on those occasions. He said that he had visited 30 Parish Councils since last summer and would welcome a visit to Ashton Keynes Parish Council again if invited.