

Ashton Keynes Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 14th April 2010

Present: Cllrs G Bridge (Chairman), M Carter, J Freeth, S Jefferson, M Seymour, A Stephanovic, R Thomas, E Tidmarsh and I Woods

2010/28 To accept apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from and Cllr M Jackson and County Cllr C Soden.

2010/29 Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda

There were no declarations of interest.

2010/30 To confirm the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10th March 2010

The Minutes of the meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman.

2010/31 Matters arising from the Minutes

The Clerk said there were two matters arising, as follows:

1. In conjunction with Cllr I Woods, he was putting together a compendium letter to obtain Section 106 money that will cover all the Open Space Projects for which we are seeking.
2. CPRE had been in contact to inform us that Ashton Keynes has been entered into the Wiltshire Best Kept Large Village Competition, 2010. The Clerk said that Cllr Thomas had written an article for the Parish Newsletter asking the Parishioners to help win the competition by keeping Ashton Keynes litter-free during the spring/summer, front gardens tidy and by removing fly posting and out of date notices.

2010/32 Vacancy on the Parish Council

The Chairman said that in view of Yvonne Jordan's resignation there was once again a vacancy on the Parish Council. As Yvonne had been the Vice Chairman, there was a need for one of the members to fill the position of Acting Vice Chairman; the Chairman said that Cllr I Woods had offered and been accepted to fill that post for the month before the Annual Meeting in May.

The Clerk reported that the Returning Officer in Wiltshire Council had agreed to send a "Notice of Vacancy" dated Friday 16th April 2010. He said that if ten letters asking the Returning Officer for an election had not been received by Friday 7th May 2010, the Parish Council would be at liberty to co-opt the eleventh Councillor. The Clerk said he had placed a half page advert in the May Parish Newsletter inviting Parishioners to apply for the position of Councillor.

2010/33 Elect a Cotswold Water Park Representative

The Chairman said that the resignation of Yvonne Jordan also meant that the Parish Council did not have a representative on the Cotswold Water Park Joint Committee. He said that the rules allowed for a member to be appointed to the position for 13 months, which would negate the requirement for the incumbent to be re-appointed at the Annual Meeting. Following a short discussion, Cllr A Stephanovic agreed to become the CWP Representative for the next 13 months. The Clerk will inform Stephen Holley, the Administrator to the Cotswold Water Park Joint Committee in Cotswold District Council, accordingly.

Action: The Clerk

2010/34 Clerk's Report

The Clerk gave the following report:

- He said he would like to begin by giving his end of financial year, unaudited, report on the financial position of the Parish Council as of 31st March 2010; the figures had been rounded up or down to the nearest pound. At the beginning of the financial year, there was £46,925 in the three Bank Accounts and during the year the Precept allocation of £32,685 was received, giving a total of £79,610. Over the past twelve months, £74,650 was spent and the current total in Reserves in the three Bank Accounts amounts to £23,461, which is £23,464 less than at the start of the financial year. The main reason for this apparent large drop in Reserves is that the Parish Council paid for much of the cost of the replacement heating system and the roof insulation undertaken in the Village Hall. However, if the Village Hall grant of £24,411 is deducted from the opening balance, the current Reserves would have amounted to £22,515 so, at the end of the Financial Year, the Reserves have increased by about £1,000 in real terms. What has to be remembered is that the Reserves include £5,400 ring-fenced for other purposes.
- He had received this year's quotation for the Parish Council and Playing Field Committee's Insurance from Community First. He said that it was strange that the quote is about £40 lower than last year's – doubly strange because a claim for £177 was submitted last year. However, a Cane and Company representative said they would be able to provide a better Policy Schedule for a lower quotation. He said he would let the members know the outcome at the next Parish Council meeting.
- He had distributed a letter from Wiltshire Council about their Consultation on Gypsy and Traveller sites. He said he had more information with him, such as dates and times of Wiltshire Council drop-in events, designed to pass on further information. He reminded the members that the Consultation comments have to be in to Wiltshire Council by 5pm on 4th June. The Chairman asked that the comments be forwarded to the Clerk by the date of the May meeting.
- Two requests for donations had been received from Age Concern and Youth Action Wiltshire. It was proposed by Cllr E Tidmarsh and seconded by Cllr J Freeth that £60 should, for a second year, be donated to Age Concern, which was unanimously agreed. It was further agreed by the members not to send a donation to Youth Action Wiltshire.

Action: The Clerk

- The Clerk said that the Guaranteed Investment Deposit Account is maturing on 12th May and he recommended that the Parish Council reinvests the money in the Account for a further 12 months. The members agreed unanimously to reinvest the money and the Clerk asked for three signatories to sign the document.

Action: The Clerk

- He said his last item was, as usual, to ask for the members' wish list of work for the Parish Steward to undertake next month, which would be recorded and passed on to Wiltshire Highways Partnership. There were several items reported to him, which will be forwarded for action.

2010/35 Financial Transactions

Payments Made:

The Council noted that the following payments had been made:

▪ Aeshton Services (Grasscutting)	£ 800.00
▪ Village Hall (March Room Rental)	£ 17.00
▪ Clerk's Salary (March)	£ 583.20
▪ Clerk's Expenses (March)	£ 10.93
▪ Land Registry (Village Hall Deeds)	£ 410.00

2010/36 Committees, Working Groups and Representatives' Reports

Cllr R Thomas reported that Wiltshire Council had sent copies of two new Planning Applications by North End Farm requesting an extension beyond five years for their two Planning Applications previously granted planning permission in 2005. The first Planning Application was to convert the Farm to six residential units and the second was to move the Farm complex to a site in South Moor. The Chairman read out the Parish Council's objections to the first Planning Application in 2005, which the members continued to endorse: Cllr S Jefferson asked that an objection of pedestrian access to and from the site be added. Cllr Thomas said a response had to be in to Wiltshire Council by 6th May. The Chairman said he would speak to County Cllr C Soden and ask that the Planning Application be called in.

Cllr I Woods reported that the Playbuilder equipment had been installed on the High Road Playing Field. He said he was pleased with the installation and that grass was already growing through the grass mat. Cllr M Carter said his grandchildren had played on the equipment and they were very pleased with it.

2010/37 Communications Working Group Progress Report

Cllr M Carter set-up a laptop and screen and demonstrated the embryonic website that he had developed to improve the Parish Council communications with the community. He said the costs for hosting the website would be minimal. The individual Committees would be asked to keep the website updated, because it will only be used by the community at large if they get value from it. Cllr I Woods suggested that the website should adopt a Portal approach and build on the village website. Cllr Carter said that the focus of the website should be to support the Parish Council, but pointed out that integration to and from the village website and other village groups could be achieved by links as required. Cllr E Tidmarsh asked what provisions had been thought of for improving communications to the two Councillors who do not have computers. Cllr Woods suggested it may be possible to selectively mail from the Electoral Register and the Clerk was asked to confirm the situation with the Electoral Services Officer in Wiltshire Council.

Action: The Clerk

There was unanimous agreement that the Communications Working Group should proceed with the development of the Website and that a sum of money be set aside for that purpose. The Chairman proposed £100 should be allotted for the use of the Working Group, which was seconded by Cllr S Jefferson and agreed unanimously.

Action: The Clerk

The Clerk said he had received an e-mail from Doctor Martin in Gosditch asking whether it would be worth the Communications Working Party investigating how the villagers of Lyddington in Rutland had achieved a faster broadband. He further asked if there was sufficient interest in a faster broadband in the village, will the Working Group be applying pressure to BT in the first instance to provide it. The Chairman said that the Area Partnership was currently trailing at a faster broadband service in Corsham and, if it is successful, to have it rolled out to the rest of the area.

2010/38 Clerk's Appraisal

The Chairman said that he had carried out the annual Appraisal of the Clerk, with Cllr M Carter as a witness, and said he had no problems with the Clerk's performance on behalf of the Council. He recommended that his salary be raised as of 1st April by one Spinal Column Point, on the scale set by the NALC National Joint Council, which was in accordance with the Clerk's Contract. Cllr A Stephanovic seconded the recommendation, which was carried unanimously. In reply to a question of how much his salary had increased, the Clerk said 20p an hour, before Tax.

2010/39 Community Payback Scheme

The Chairman said no member had contacted him with regard to using the Community Payback Scheme. He was aware that the Village Hall Management Committee had a requirement to use the Scheme and he was going with David Sheppard to see the Young Offenders officer in June.

2010/40 Shop Closure

The Chairman asked if anyone had any ideas on how to save the village shop from closing in August and asked if they had approached anyone about it, to which there was a negative response. After a very short discussion, the Chairman said the subject would be discussed again at the next Parish Council meeting, at which he would welcome their thoughts on it.

2010/41 CWP Trust Grant Application

The Chairman said a copy of a letter had been received from the Cotswold Water Park Trust together with a copy of their Application for a grant from the Thames Grant Programme. The Parish Council was asked to write a letter to The Waterways Trust in support of their project to improve the footpath from Waterhay car park to the Waterhay bird hide. Following a short discussion, the members endorsed the requirement for the Clerk to write a supporting letter to The Waterways Trust.

2010/42 Parish Council Dinner

The Chairman said that the Parish Council Dinner places have been booked with the Horse and Jockey and the cost would be £25 a head. He asked the members who would be attending the Dinner to give the money for their meals ahead of time to the Clerk.

The Chairman reminded the members that the Annual Parish Meeting will take place in the Village Hall the following Wednesday, the 21st April.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 9.35pm.

The next Parish Council meeting, which will be combined with the Annual Meeting, will be held on Wednesday 12th May 2010 at 7.45pm