

Ashton Keynes Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 12th May 2010

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

2010/52 To accept apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Cllr C Soden and Cllr I Woods, who was absent on duty attending the Community Area Board meeting.

2010/53 Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda

There were no declarations of interest.

2010/54 To confirm the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 14th April 2010

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

2010/55 Matters arising from the Minutes

The Clerk said the following matters are arising, as follows:

1. He had received a letter from the Information Commissioners Office confirming receipt of his letter concerning the use of the Electoral Register to communicate Parish Council matters to the community. The letter said they would contact him again with a response to the matter raised.
2. Wiltshire Council has advised us that we shall be contacted shortly to inform us what the next steps will be on the subject of the Grit Bins. The Clerk said he had written to Wiltshire Council in February and asked for a further three Grit Bins to be provided.

Cllr M Seymour asked whether the Gang Mowers were insured against the damage they had sustained that required them to be reground. The Clerk said he did not know, but would ask the Insurance Company if they were covered.

Action: The Clerk

2010/56 Vacancy on the Parish Council

The Clerk reported that the Returning Officer in Wiltshire Council had not received ten letters asking for an election by Friday 7th May 2010, the Parish Council were now at liberty to co-opt the replacement Councillor. The Clerk said he had been contacted by Jonathan Hughes of Garden House, High Road stating that if no one else applied for the position by the 1st June, then he would do so himself.

2010/57 Clerk's Report

The Clerk gave the following report:

- He said the internal audit of the Parish Council accounts was completed on the 25th April by Trevor Heath and, as expected, there were no inaccuracies. He had given Trevor his usual auditor's gift. The Clerk then gave the members an explanation of the 2009-2010 accounts. Approval for the Chairman and the Clerk (Responsible Finance Officer) to sign the Audit document was proposed by Cllr J Freeth seconded by Cllr E Tidmarsh and unanimously agreed by the members. .
- Regarding the Parish Council and Playing Fields Committee insurance Schedules, he said there were a number of changes to those of previous years. Firstly, the Bradstone Pavilion value was more than doubled to £300,000; secondly the value of the Play Equipment has quadrupled to over £100,000.

At a recent meeting held between the Chairman, Cllr I Woods and himself, it was agreed that the Play Equipment should become self-insured, which would save about £1,000 a year on the insurance premium. It was further agreed that the Armillary Sphere and Bus Shelters were not worth insuring. On which basis, he had obtained a lower quote from Came & Company of £1,630.81, reduced to £1,548.27, if a three year deal was approved: Community First had not yet come back to him with a quote. The Chairman proposed that the new Schedule be accepted, which was seconded by Cllr M Carter and unanimously agreed. The Clerk was asked to insure with the company with the lowest quoted premium.

Action: The Clerk

- The Clerk said he had received a request to renew the subscription to WALC and NALC for £418.91 (increased by £8 on last year's subs) and asked for agreement to pay the sum. The Chairman proposed and Cllr J Freeth seconded the payment of the subscription, which was unanimously approved. The members also agreed that the Clerk should renew the subscription each year for the life of this Council without the need for prior approval.

Action: The Clerk

- The Chairman, the Area Board Representative and the Clerk had been invited to attend a "Tea and Talk" to discuss the needs of Parishes, which had arisen from the review of the Area Boards. The Chairman said he could not get there, the Clerk agreed to attend and Cllr M Carter said he would agree to go if the date/time were suitable; the Clerk said he would let him know.

Action: The Clerk

- He said the SLCC Annual Conference and AGM 2010 are scheduled to take place at Durham from Friday 15th to Sunday 17th October 2010. If booked by the 1st June, (Super early bird) the cost for an SLCC member is £320 plus VAT for full board and entrance to all Conference sessions; otherwise it would cost £380 plus VAT. He said it is in the Clerk's Job Description to attend the Annual Conference, and he asked the members to agree to his attendance. The Chairman proposed and Cllr R Thomas seconded the Clerk's attendance, which the members unanimously approved. The Chairman said that the Clerk should automatically attend the SLCC Annual Conference during the life of this Council, without the need for prior approval, to which the members unanimously agreed.
- CPRE had sent a letter inviting someone on the Parish Council to attend their AGM on 11th June at 6.30pm in Yatton Keynell Village Hall Cllr E Tidmarsh took the letter and said he would give it some consideration.
- 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 would be forwarded for action.

2010/58 Financial Transactions

a. Payments Made:

The Council noted that the following payments had been made:

▪ Aeshton Services (Grasscutting)	£ 800.00
▪ Village Hall (April Room Rental)	£ 39.00
▪ Donation (Age Concern)	£ 60.00
▪ Kompan	£ 5957.25
▪ Clerk's Salary (April)	£ 599.24
▪ Clerk's Expenses (April)	£ 18.76

b. Accounts for Payment

The Council approved the following items for payment:

▪ WALC & NALC (Annual Subscription)	£ 418.91
▪ Ratcliffe & Son (Regrind Gang Mower)	£ 763.75

2010/59 Committees, Working Groups and Representatives' Reports

Cllr M Carter reported on the feedback he had received from the questionnaires he had handed out at the Annual Parish Meeting, among which was a suggestion that the Parish Council should install a Post Box on the Village Hall wall. The Clerk said that the Parish Council owned the Post Box on the wall of the High Road Playing Field pavilion, which could easily be moved. Cllr Carter mentioned the electronic and printed Parish Council newsletter, which could look like that of the Area Board. He went on to say that the new domain name, www.akpc.org.uk, is now active, but is only accessible by a password, because this is a prototype under rebuild, which will take about three weeks to complete. Cllr Carter said the Communications Working Group would be having a meeting with the Village Website Steering Committee the following evening. He concluded by outlining the next steps of the CWG that would take an estimated 2 to 3 months to complete.

2010/60 Motion in Support of Cllr C Soden

The Chairman gave the background to the Agenda item and spoke about the Chairman of Crudwell Parish Council reporting County Cllr Carole Soden to the Standards Board for England. The Chairman neither knew the substance of the complaint nor when it would be brought before the Board. However, he said, that Ashton Keynes Parish Council, like the other Parish Councils in Area 1, should support our County Cllr. The Chairman proposed that the Clerk write a letter to Wiltshire Council in support of County Council Soden, which was seconded by Cllr S Jefferson and unanimously agreed by the members. It was further agreed that the letter should be signed by all the Council members and the Clerk.

Action: The Clerk

2010/61 Purchase of Road Salt Spreader

The Chairman reminded the members that he had mentioned the purchase of a Grit/Salt Spreader at the February Council meeting, at which the members had given their agreement in principle, depending upon the cost. The Chairman said that the Engineering Company, Patrick Edwards, had quoted £545 plus VAT for the cost of a Spreader. The Chairman quoted a trade price of about £98 a ton last October for grit, which AI would sell to the Parish Council in 25Kg bags. The Chairman said the Council should approach the Area Board for a 50% grant, which the Parish Council should match. The Chairman proposed that 50% of the purchase cost for a Spreader be allocated from Reserves (roughly £275), which was seconded by Cllr E Tidmarsh and agreed unanimously.

2010/62 Wiltshire LDF: Gypsy and Traveller Issues and General Approach Consultation

The Chairman and Clerk said none of the members had contacted them with any comments on the Consultation. Cllr M Carter said the maps that were sent out with the covering letter spoke volumes about the paucity of sites in the East of the County. The Chairman said that we would be sending a comment on the Consultation and will mention the lack of sites in East Wiltshire

Action: The Clerk.

2010/63 Shop Closure

The Chairman gave an update on the situation surrounding the closure of the Village Shop at the end of August. He said the Supermarkets had shown no interest in buying the Shop, but Dave Sheppard was speaking to Sheila and Richard about it. The Chairman said there have been suggestions that the Shop be reopened in the Skittle Alley of the White Hart pub, with a fall-back position being a Portacabin in the Village Hall Car Park. The Chairman said the general feeling among the villagers was that they don't want to lose the Shop. To open the shop as a Community Shop would cost in the region of £200,000.

Cllr R Thomas said that if all else failed, Graham would provide milk and bread in the Post Office, but his suggestion was that the Portacabin would be better placed on the Playing Field rather than the Car Park. The Chairman said he would look at the High Road Playing Field Deeds.

The Chairman agreed to the following two subjects being raised:

Cllr S Jefferson reported that rats had been seen on the High Road and asked what the Parish Council could do in terms of pest control. The Clerk was asked to contact the Environmental Health section of Wiltshire Council and report the problem.

Action: The Clerk

Cllr M Seymour reported that the River Thames has got a build up of green algal on the bottom of the river. He thought this could be the result of Nitrates being washed into the river from the surrounding land. The Clerk was asked to contact the Environment Agency (EA) at Wallingford and request they send someone to inspect the situation. Cllr E Tidmarsh suggested that the EA should check to see whether the river is suffering with the Australian River Reed that has spread in this country. It was suggested that the Clerk should also speak to the CWP Society Ltd about the problem.

Action: The Clerk

The business of the meeting was concluded at 9.35pm.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 9th June 2010 at 7.45pm