

Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly of the Parish of Ampfield held in the Village Hall, Ampfield on Monday, 16th April 2012 commencing at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Miss M.I.Rothwell (Chairman of the Parish Council)–Presiding

Parish Councillors	Mr E.H. Butcher Mr A. Clark Mr P. Edwards Mr M. D. Hatley (Borough Councillor) Mr J. A. Jones Mr B. W. Nanson Mr G. C. A. Roads Mr D. Stevens
County Councillor	Mr A. G. Dowden (from 8.35pm)

Approx. 32 parishioners

Clerk to the Council Mrs D. A. Matthews

1/12 Opening remarks

The Chairman welcomed everyone and noted that this was Mr Pete Edwards' first Parish Assembly since becoming a Councillor in February. She expressed her gratitude to Councillors and Parishioners for their help and support throughout the year. Papers for the meeting, including agenda, minutes and finance documents were available in the Hall.

2/12 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Revd. Peter Gilks and from Mrs Atlee. Cllr. Alan Dowden had other commitments and would join the meeting later.

3/12 Minutes

The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Assembly held on 9th May 2011, having been circulated, were confirmed by the Meeting and signed by the Chairman.

4/12 Matters arising from the Minutes

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

5/12 Chairman's Review of the Year

Miss Rothwell drew attention to some of the items highlighted in her review of the year in the Parish Council Newsletter. She thanked Watermark for once again printing the newsletter within tight time constraints. Everyone was encouraged to take part and ask questions about any of the items on the agenda or raise any new issues in the Open Forum. Refreshments would be available at the end of the meeting and everyone was invited to stay.

6/12 The Queen's Diamond Jubilee

Various events in the Parish were being arranged to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee. The June Village Market would have a Jubilee theme with prizes for the best crown; parties were being held in some streets; 2 young Oak trees had been offered by Hampshire County Council for planting in the Parish; ideas for suitable locations for the trees were invited. Everyone was encouraged to let the community know about events and have them published on the Parish website.

7/12 Community Policing

Mr Stevens welcome PS Christine Plascott and PC Vernon Gook who, along with PCSA Jo Cole, made up the Romsey rural policing team. Mr Stevens gave a short presentation outlining the purpose of the Local Action Groups, how they worked with the Police in reducing crime and the types of crime most prevalent in the rural areas. PS Plascott talked about the problem solving approach taken to rural crime and working with communities. Romsey Police Station had closed except for enquiries but the beat surgeries in the villages continued. The Country Watch team had made a significant difference to poaching; anyone could register to receive e-mails about progress with local crime issues. She informed everyone about the 3 recent crimes in Ampfield and the progress being made in dealing with them. PC Gook advised that diesel theft, both commercial and domestic, remained a significant problem; farmers were encouraged to join Farm Watch to help secure their premises, equipment and animals.

8/12 St Mark's Church and Fete

Mr Allen, Churchwarden reported that the church building itself was in good shape; issues from the quinquennial review had been addressed. Reserves had been used up and now money had to be raised for repairs to the boiler house. More use was being made of in-house labour rather than routinely using contractors. After many years of being in Birch House gardens, the summer fete was going to take place in Chapel Wood glade and in St Mark's room on 16th

June. The Church itself would be open on the day and there would be plenty of room for stalls, the band and other attractions. Entrance would be free. There was no adjacent parking but visitors could use the Village Hall and the roads near and outside St Mark's.

9/12 Ampfield School

Mr Kitsell, community governor of Ampfield School, introduced Mark McCadden Head Teacher. Mr McCadden and his team had worked very hard to retain education standards and maintain stability. Standards for maths were good and those for English were improving all the time. Unfortunately, due to falling numbers, the School could no longer attract or afford a Head Teacher and, reluctantly, Mr McCadden would have to leave at the end of the academic year. The Local Education Area was very supportive and there was no intention to close the School. Talks were in progress with several schools to see if resources and teaching staff could be shared. A vigorous marketing campaign had been launched to promote the School and its Open Day, and leaflets had been included about it in the Parish Newsletter. Mr Kitsell encouraged anyone with skills in music, drama, dance or art to come forward as volunteers to help the School. Also, anyone who could design a professional website would be very welcome. The Chairman thanked Mr McCadden for his work with the School which had been much appreciated.

10/12 Borough Councillor's Report

Cllr. Hatley reported that over a 1000 comments and letters had been received in the consultation process about the Core Strategy. The number of houses required over the 25 years of the plan from 2006-2031 was now put at 4,300 in Southern Test Valley. An attempt to get between 7 and 9 thousand houses built in the Romsey/Nursling area had been overcome. Both political parties had agreed that the current number was as low as was feasible in the current climate. The National Planning Policy Framework had replaced earlier planning guidance and policies, and was pre-disposed towards sustainable development. The Council Offices at Duttons Road, Romsey were due to close; no decision had been taken yet about new premises. Existing services would still be available at the new location. Parking remained free in Romsey after 4pm; this had been welcomed by both shoppers and businesses who appreciated the service. The Free Insulate Hampshire Scheme, which was set up to help many people get free wall and loft insulation, had been extended from March to December 2012.

11/12 Council Finances and Administration

Cllr Nanson, in his capacity as Chairman of the Finance Committee, presented the following to the Meeting:-

- (a) the Audited Accounts of the Parish Council for the year ended 31st March 2011 together with the schedules and assurances required by the External Auditors
- (b) expenditure details to February 2012, and outturn for the full year, comparing budget with actual figures
- (c) the budget and build-up of figures for the Parish Precept for 2012/2013

Details of the financial information presented were included in the packs made available at the meeting. Cllr. Nanson advised that finances were reasonably healthy given the current situation. Reserves were at £30,250 of which 60% was monies set aside for the Recreation Ground which was in need of new facilities. The large amount of “other income” was due to a significant grant from Viridor which went towards the installation of drainage over part of the Recreation Ground. The precept remained Council’s biggest and most regular source of income which, at £33,000 in 2011/12 and £32,615 for 2012/13, continued the trend for modest decreases year on year. Key elements of expenditure continued to be payment of the loans on the Burial and Recreation Grounds, maintenance of community assets, and insurances and admin expenses, including the Clerk’s salary.

In response to a query about the remarks made by the External Auditor that the outstanding capital balance on the loans should be £105,320 and not £107, 868 as shown, the Clerk explained that it was due to a transcription error which had been subsequently corrected. There being no further questions, the Report was accepted by the Meeting.

Cllr. Jones told the meeting that Ampfield’s new website was nearing completion and would be ready to go live in the next few months. The new site had a cleaner look than before and would be easier to navigate. People would be able to register to get certain types of information automatically.

12/12 Transport and Highways

Cllr Clark pointed out the cover of the Newsletter which showed a red London bus passing the new bus shelter outside Wheel House Park in Baddesley Road. The new bus shelter had been well-received but, unfortunately, bus services overall continued to decline with the recent loss of the No. 46 down Hook Road. Traffic management and speeding continued to occupy much of Council’s time. Speeding on the A3090 remained a major issue; the 800 new homes at Abbotswood would increase traffic movements and bring changes to the road-layout at Jermyns Lane junction. Speeding in Knapp Lane had caused some concern as it posed a particular threat to children and horse riders and careless drivers had taken out some of the bollards at the War Memorial; Miss Rothwell would canvass the views of residents. Cllr Clark congratulated Hampshire County Council on the provision of grit bins to help deal with the winter weather.

13/12 County Councillor's Report

In adding to his Newsletter report, Cllr Dowden advised that Eastleigh and Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) would be seeking an extension to the Flexford Bridge cycle route to the cross road at the junction with Hiltingbury Road. This would be made possible with the allocation of £75,000 of developer contributions.

14/12 Ampfield Recreation Ground

The problem of rabbits digging holes in the Recreation Ground had persisted for most of the playing season. Much effort had gone into repairing the pitch and dealing with the animals. The playground had been extended to make room for a new rope swing intended for slightly older children. Modest improvements had been made around the area of the concrete base with a new footpath and a roped off spectator section. Facilities for players remained poor as the existing pavilion was very old and the portakabins, whilst welcome, were very basic. Recent efforts by the Cricket Club to paint the portakabins and generally spruce up the area were hampered by wet weather.

Cllr Nanson introduced John Sorrell, Chairman of Ampfield Crusaders Cricket Club (ACCC) who gave a short presentation on the club's background, its recent achievements and aims for the future. ACCC had played on the Recreation Ground for over 100 years and found it a lovely site to play on. The club was grateful for the support given by Ampfield Parish Council (APC) and the provision of teas by the White Horse. Their president, Mr Alan Wilson had donated a new boundary rope which had been a very welcome addition to the ground. Competition for good players from nearby Hursley Cricket Club meant they had to work hard at recruiting and retaining players. Efforts to get a youth team started had not yet been successful but would be pursued when interest was greater and more volunteers were available to take it forward. Everyone was encouraged to come along, watch the cricket and support the team.

15/12 Friends of Chapel Wood

Cllr Roads thanked the Friends of Chapel Wood for their continued work in maintaining the Woodland and the Burial Ground. These were great community assets for everyone to enjoy and were peaceful and attractive places to visit. The cruciform hedge had been planted up with bare-rooted box plants and the new border of yew trees appeared to be thriving. The protective wire frames seemed to be doing their job in keeping the wildlife away from the plants. Clearance of rhododendron behind St Mark's room at the glade had continued and had helped to open up vistas and make the large Oak and Beech trees of the lower woodland

visible from the Church. Work was underway to get the glade area ready for the summer fête which was to be held in the Woodland for the first time.

16/12 Planning

Cllr. Clark explained that the Planning Committee met regularly and its agendas were published on notice boards and the website. Everyone was welcome to attend and, if they wished to address the Committee about an application, the meeting would be suspended to accommodate them. He talked about the draft Core Strategy for Test Valley, explained about the settlement boundaries and about the concerns raised by the Parish Council about how to define and retain the “local gaps” between Ampfield and Chandlers Ford, and the area around Green Lane.

He mentioned the application to build a dwelling on the carpark at the back of the Potters Heron and the discussions that had taken place with the residents, TVBC and the land owners to help get an outcome that was satisfactory to all parties. It had been over 2 years since a development on Morleys Lane was first proposed. An outline planning application was expected in the next few weeks. A special meeting would be called where residents’ views could be expressed about the proposal and those wishing to speak, or who wanted to use slides, were asked to let the Clerk know. The Planning Committee would then convene at a subsequent meeting and decide on the application.

Cllr. Hatley explained that he had declared a prejudicial interest in the Morleys proposal but that Cllr. Ward from Michelmersh & Timsbury was looking after the application; his details were on the TVBC website should anyone wish to contact him. Cllr. Clark thanked Cllr Dowden and Cllr. Hatley for their support at a recent Southern Area Planning Committee meeting at which APC had spoken. Cllr Hatley explained why sometimes TVBC couldn’t refuse an application even though they might not think it a desirable proposal. Mr Robinson, Lower Ratlake had been disappointed that he had missed a meeting about an application about the field near his property in which he was particularly interested. It was recognised that communications could be improved; Cllr. Clark advised that this was being addressed and more use would be made of the website to keep people informed. Mr Case, Old Vicarage noted the intent to improve communication but he queried the decision that was taken on the application about the field, at the second meeting, when the opposition to it had been strong. Cllr. Clark explained that the Planning Committee could only make a decision on what was written in the application; they could not make character judgements about the future intent of applicants.

17/12 Other Reports

It was noted that the phone number for the “Drop in Surgery” of Caroline Nokes, MP was incorrect and should show “01794” and not “01974”.

There were no updates or questions about the Village Hall, Footpaths, Pre-school and Ampfield Countryside Heritage Area reports contained in the Parish Newsletter, nor any other reports put forward.

18/12 Open Forum

The Chairman asked that speakers keep to 3 minutes a person to help ensure everyone got an opportunity to contribute.

The following matters were discussed:-

- Barkers-Mills Estate

Mr Case, Old Vicarage asked about the recent communication received from the Barker-Mills Estate. Cllr Hatley thought it likely that it was simply a PR exercise and that there was no threat to Ampfield. As trustees they had to maximise the potential of the estate and were active in housing and other developments.

- Field Opposite Potters Heron

Mrs Robinson, Lower Ratlake expressed concern that the verge in front of the field would be damaged once the vehicles started to arrive. She believed that an application for lighting would be submitted soon as it would be difficult to see easily in the winter months. This would not be acceptable; she had already experienced this with the Yellow Dot Nursery situated next to her property. Mrs Benson, Upper Ratlake referred to planning minutes about the field opposite the Potters Heron in which it said we needed to be vigilant about any proposals involving the field. She and other concerned residents had missed the relevant meeting but had written about their concerns and yet the decision had still gone in favour of the applicant and permission had been granted. She felt powerless in the planning process.

- Retrospective Planning Applications

Mrs Ludwell, Rowans expressed regret about the number of retrospective planning applications which appeared; there seemed to be more and more of them in recent times. She was concerned that this was being used to get round planning rules. Cllr. Hatley explained TVBC Planning Department's view of retrospective applications. Cllr. Clark added that retrospective applications were treated as starting from new; there were no penalties attached to a late application. This could be very galling but most retrospective applications were not done deliberately but through ignorance of requirements. Mrs Benson felt that retrospective applications and general "planning creep" were on the increase and thought that APC

should be worried about it. Cllr. Clark agreed that it needed to be watched carefully; he would talk to Mrs Benson further when the meeting closed.

- Other Items

Mrs Lucas, Knapp Lane said that the 30mph limit on Knapp Lane was appropriate but that it was not adhered to. Both delivery vehicles and local residents routinely broke the speed limit. The Chairman would write to residents about the situation and explore ways of tackling the problem (see also para 12). Cllr Hatley explained that some proposals did not need planning approval e.g. the placement of containers, and certain numbers of caravans which only needed agreement from the Caravan Club. Cllr Clark talked about the benefits of new housing developments having no permitted development rights, as was the case in Valley Park.

19/12 Closure

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.40 pm having thanked everyone for attending.

Chairman.....

Date.....