

Ashton Keynes Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Village Hall from 7:00pm on Monday 25 April 2018

Present: Cllrs D Wingrove (Chairman); S Crawford; A Tindall; E Tidmarsh; M Carter; A Levens; V Hourihane
(Clerk to the Parish Council) and 4 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 7:00pm

Apologies received

Apologies had been received from Cllrs B Ellison; M Smith and C Berry

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16 May 2017

The Minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

The report from the Ashton Keynes Playing Fields Committee was brought forward to enable Mr Young to get to the AGM later in the evening.

Ashton Keynes Playing Fields Committee

The report from the Ashton Keynes Playing Fields Committee highlighted the many activities that have been undertaken and planned for the coming year: financially, the Playing Fields have broken even for the year with assistance from grants, volunteer help and the Parish Council. The upgrade of the electrics at the Bradstone pavilion has been completed, several trees have been planted at both the Bradstone and the High Road Playing Fields as part of the Memorial Scheme. For the future painting and repairs to play equipment at both the Lotts and the High Road, repairs to the patio and path areas at the Bradstone and improvements to the entrance and driveway. The Committee is hoping to hold a community/ village sports day shortly after the School Sports week, for all the family. Thanks were given to all the volunteers as the facilities are only available due to the voluntary work and support from the Parish Council

The Chairman thanked Mr Young for his report and work throughout the year, together with the rest of the Committee.

Unitary Councillor's Report

Unfortunately, Cllr Berry had been unable to attend the meeting.

Annual Report of the Parish Council

The Chairman presented the Annual Report of the Parish Council. It was noted that the Parish Council had met every month except August. The Planning Sub-Committee has met regularly to consider smaller planning applications and to feedback comments to Wiltshire Council. (Larger proposals are considered by the full Council). The work of the full Council is supplemented by various working parties that meet on an ad hoc basis. At the start of May 2017, the Parish Council came to the end of its four-year cycle. However, there was no election on 4 May 2017. Three of the existing Councillors had stood down and there were no other nominees other than the other eight existing Councillors. The Parish Council therefore started the year with three vacancies, but two of these were filled when Cllrs Andrew Levens and Mike Smith were co-opted onto the Council. For the rest of the year, the Council has operated with one Councillor position unfilled, despite a concerted campaign to fill the vacancy. In May, Chuck Berry was re-elected as our Unitary Councillor on Wiltshire Council. The Parish Council is a very appreciative of the work that he undertakes on its behalf of the Parish. At the end of this month, Cllrs Tidmarsh and Wheatley are standing down from the Council, due to pressures of work. This will mean that there will again be three vacancies on the Council. The Council would like to thank them both for their service, particularly Cllr Tidmarsh who has been a Councillor for many years.

The Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan was the dominant feature of the start of the year. The Plan had been the culmination of nearly 4 years work and, following an Independent Examination, a Referendum on the Plan was held on the 25th May 2017. The support for the Plan was overwhelming, with 91% Yes votes, and 8% No votes. The turnout was 38% of the electorate of the Parish. Following the positive referendum result, Wiltshire Council decided on 31st May 2017, pursuant to section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to 'make' the Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan (the 'Plan'). The Parish Council led the process of preparing the Plan, but it would not have been possible without the support and contribution from the community in the consultations and surveys. A big thank you must particularly go to all the volunteers who formed the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Focus Groups, notably Cllr Carter who co-ordinated the project.. Their teamwork and dedication were vital in achieving this successful outcome.

As the Neighbourhood Plan was being produced, a number of village projects were identified and listed at the back of the final Plan. Following the adoption of the Plan, the Parish Council has started to implement some of these projects. The initial projects have been the formation of the Historic Conservation and Environments Groups which were natural successors to two of the Plans Focus Groups. These are now up and running, largely independent of the Parish Council, but thanks must go to Cllr Levens for his work in getting them started.

The Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan now forms part of the Wiltshire Council Development Plan. Therefore, there is an onus on Wiltshire Council to ensure that its policies are given full weight when assessing planning applications that affect land covered by the Plan. It has therefore been pleasing to note that the Officers of Wiltshire Council have explicitly made reference to the Plan in their Decision Notices relating to recent planning applications.

Major planning issues during the year:

- An application to build 27 houses at the Dairy Farm Bungalow and Fields site. There had been widespread local opposition to this proposal and it was clearly contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council opposed it and the application was refused by Wiltshire Council.
- Wiltshire Council has agreed to an application to build a cable-ski facility at the former Kent End gravel pit. However, to date, no significant work has started at the site.
- An application by Ellisons can to create a coach parking depot on land at the western side of the village, immediately adjacent to the B4696. There was significant support for this within the village, although a group of parishioners who live close to the site opposed it. The Parish Council supported the application which was passed by Wiltshire Council. Again, to date, no significant work has started at the site.
- There has been local concern about proposed new gravel extraction around Wheatleys Farm. A public meeting was strongly against this and the Parish Council put in an objection to the planning application. The matter is still under consideration by Wiltshire Council.
- There has also been local concern about a proposed dog exercise area in the Derry. The Parish Council put in an objection to the planning application and this matter, too, is still under consideration by Wiltshire Council
- There has been no decision, so far, by Wiltshire Council on the application by Amita Ltd, to extract gravel and build houses at the former Cotswold Community site.

As reported last year, the state of the roads in and around Ashton Keynes has been a cause of concern, although, at the start of the year, Wiltshire Council carried out repairs to some of the roads in the village. The Parish Council, through one of the projects identified in the Neighbourhood Plan, intends to instigate an on-going road monitoring and reporting procedure.

Crime levels continue to be generally low in the village. Although there appears to be less coverage by Police Officers, the local PCSO, John Bordiss continues to be very active in the village, and his high visibility has been warmly welcomed.

The level of the bus service in the village continues to be very low, following the severe reductions made in the previous year, and there does not seem to be any likelihood of this improving in the foreseeable future.

The Parish Council has continued to press for the re-opening of the northern route of Footpath 20, but Wiltshire Council is taking an inordinately long time in reviewing the case.

The general and financial administration of the Council has, over the past year, been conducted very ably by the Clerk, Veronica Hourihane, and the Council wishes to express its thanks to her. The Council has worked within its budget, making a small operating surplus. The Parish Council is pleased to report that Parishioners will again see no increase in their Parish Precept in the coming year

The Council is pleased that Ashton Keynes continues to be a thriving village. It is grateful for the work of the various organisations that it has supported during the year, reports of which will be presented later this evening.

Reports from the following organisations were placed for attendees to review.

Ashton Keynes Charity

It was noted that the Charity has been established for many years with endowments to assist apprentices and the investment income upon which the Charity relies, has held up well throughout the continued period of low interest rates. There had donations made to 60 pensioners and one payments to apprentices/students. Disappointment was expressed for the disappointing number of apprentice/student applications for grants.

Millennium Green Trust

The report from the Millennium Green Trust gave a brief history of the site with a static display to highlight areas of achievement. In its report there was a summary of how the Green had developed over the previous 18 years where amongst others the copse, pond, hedge and wildflower meadow had created a diverse ecosystem. The large number of vertebrates and invertebrates subsequently recorded on the Green was a testimony to the varied environments created. This year the major development further extended this rich environment through the planting of a village orchard named in memory of Ron Thomas, comprising a mix of cider apple, dessert apple and pear trees, sponsorship has been obtained from Ellisons for a special tree, the Ellisons Orange. The Parish Council was thanked for the grant to assist in the maintenance of the local facility

Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The past year has kept the PCC busy and continuing in its engagement with the Church and the wider community. The committee has met 5 times during the year with various additional subcommittees meetings.

The PCC has continued in its support for a variety of charities through collections at Harvest Festival, Christian Aid, The Children's Society (Christingle Service), The Royal British Legion, Christmas and Summer Fetes – good for connections with the community as well as fundraising for the church. A major fundraising initiative is underway for critical maintenance work on the water ingress on the bell tower.

The PCC is very grateful to the Parish Council for its generous donation toward the upkeep of the graveyard and also to the School for the use of the Anne Raines Hall for our church-based functions including Messy Church.

The PCC wishes to thank those who serve on the PCC committees as well as the numerous volunteers who have worked so hard and given generously of their time to support our church in a whole host of activities throughout the past year, special mention made to the Church Warden, Mrs Tidmarsh for her years of service.

The following organisations addressed the meeting:

Village Hall Management Committee

It was reported that the Village Hall has made a surplus of £3,500 for the financial year 2017-18, full details can
Ashton Keynes Annual Parish Meeting April 2018

be found on line. Last year refurbishments had continued, most notable the donation of Velux windows for the Ashton and Keynes Room by the Parish Council worth £4,500. The Outreach Post Office works well. The Rural Cinema provides a useful service and raises funds between £1,500 - £2,000 per annum. Regular lettings raised over £16,000, unfortunately the Yoga classes have been lost, but there have been gains with the Senior Table Tennis Club and the Big Brunch Band rehearsals. Looking forward, major refurbishment projects have been identified, including the replacement of the Main Hall floor, all kitchen units and replacing the main entrance doors.

School Governors

The was no report received from the School Governors.

In response to a question from the floor regarding the update of footpath 20, the Chairman stated that should the re-instatement of the northern part of footpath 20 not be successful, then the Parish Council would try to ensure the landowner made the state of the southern track safe and usable.

The Chairman, once again, thanked all those attending for their commitment to the organisations in which they are involved.

There were no further questions

The meeting closed at 7:42pm.

Signed:.....
Chairman, Ashton Keynes Parish Council

Date:.....