



ASHCHURCH RURAL PARISH

MINUTES OF ANNUAL COMMUNITY MEETING OF TUESDAY 18 APRIL 2017 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Cllrs G Shurmer, D Street, A Brown, D Garnett, 24 parishioners, and Sophie Tartaglia, Constituency Assistant to Laurence Robertson MP. Minute Secretary: Robert Stone, Parish Clerk.

ITEMS

1. Welcome & Apologies for absence – Cllr Shurmer welcomed everyone.

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Hargreave (Vice Chairman of ARPC) and B Cook; Laurence Robertson MP; Cllr V Smith (GCC); and Cllr H McLain (TBC); and M Pollock, Secretary of the Pamington Residents Association.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 23rd May 2016 – Approved by the meeting.

3. Keynote Speaker – Laurence Robertson MP was unable to attend but sent a report which was read by Cllr Street who invited questions to be noted down by Laurence's assistant Sophie Tartaglia for action/reply. In the event no questions were asked.

Mr Robertson's report detailed his actions for the local community during the year and covered the A46, local roads, the Ashchurch Army Camp, the Joint Core Strategy, Education, the missing link to the A417, flood prevention, policing, the Fiddington plant, and the Ashchurch Station Railway Development Plan as fully described at Annex A.

4. Ashchurch's Community Reports:

4.1. Parish Council Chairman - Cllr Gordon Shurmer thanked the former Clerk, Cathy Reid, and welcomed her replacement, Robert Stone; and then focused on the issues faced by the Parish during the previous 12 months. The Neighbourhood Development Plan had continued to be taken forward. Once adopted this would become part of statutory planning process. The latest version of the Joint Core Strategy had removed the MOD site but it was likely that this would be revisited later during the JCS process. The Council had supported outline planning applications for: 261 dwellings at the edge of Wheatpieces and helped negotiate a £330k extension for the Wheatpieces Community Centre.

The Council had successfully opposed the Ecotricity proposal at Fiddington. Its opposition to proposal to build 45 houses on land east of the railway, and the erection of a mobile communication mast and base station had been overturned by Tewkesbury BC. At the request of local residents the Parish Council had continued to extend grass cutting in the village, and had funded the planting of shrubs to improve the landscaping opposite the Village Hall. The Parish Council had set a 7.6% increase in the parish rate which equated to £0.23/month (£2.79/year); and worked through the difficulties of the

Government's auto enrolment pension scheme. The new parish website was at an early stage and would be developed during the summer.

He concluded by thanking his fellow Councillors, the Clerk, and long standing former Cllr John Ward who had retired after many years of excellent service.

4.2 Draft Accounts for 2016/17 - Robert Stone Ashchurch Rural PC's Clerk/RFO reported on the parish's expenditure and receipts. The previous financial year had seen a significant increase of some £6k in expenditure with higher expenditure on staff costs, grass cutting, the Neighbourhood Development Plan, the taxi voucher scheme, and sundry items like verge planting, a new litter bin, and new IT hardware and software. Income came from the parish precept of £16.3k, VAT recovery of £0.9k, the NDP grant of £3k, and a Transparency fund payment of £0.9k. The current bank account was £13,137 at 31st March 2017; and the savings account £31,252.15 at the end of the financial year.

4.3 Ashchurch School Report – Not received.

4.4 Ashchurch Playgroup Report – Not received.

4.5 St Nicholas Church Report – Revd Suzanne Grindod has been Priest in Charge for 18 months. Services are the weekly 8am service, and a 11am Holy Communion Service on the first 3 Sundays of the month, and a 11am All Age Service on the fourth service. Highlights of the year were a special Songs of Praise Service to celebrate the Queen 's 9th Birthday ; the Annual Church Fete on 25th June, and the Northway Fete on 4th August. On Thursday mornings in August members of the church ran « Kidzway » four mornings of craft and fun at Norway Infants School. The Harvest Festival service was held at Ashchurch Village Church on 2nd October. The Annual All Souls Service on 6th November was an afternoon reflective service. The Christingle Service on 24th December was well attended as always. Regular church groups included Little Fishes, Hand Bells, Bell ringers, Choir, Craft Club, Flower Guild, Home Group, and Mothers Union.

Revd Suzanne Grindod went regularly to Carrant Brook Junior School, Northway Infant School, and Ashchurch Primary School. The children from all three schools participated in Experience Christmas and Easter. Members of the worship team visited The Grange and Ashchurch View Care Homes once a month to lead a service. Thanks were due to Ashchurch Rural Parish Council for the regular grass cutting of the churchyard and church grounds.

4.6 Village Hall Report – Michael Hill was pleased to report another successful year, with a fully booked hall. With so many regular customers, it was difficult to get a week day booking. He thanked the Rural Parish Council for their continued support , and Jeremy Brookes for the way he maintained the grass and shrubs in the front of the hall. One of the successes of the year was in registering the hall with the Land Registry. It was hoped to resurface the rest of the car park in the summer and consider the possibility of adding an additional meeting room for small groups, which would release the booking pressure on the

main halls. Thanks were due to Village Hall committee and caretaker for their ongoing support for the hall.

4.7 Save our Lanes Report – Not received.

4.8 Pamington Residents Association Report – Graham Walker reported on traffic signage, speed monitoring, the Linden Homes development, ditches, & Starveall Farm. .

Traffic signage - The Association had been working closely with the Glos Road Safety Partnership to procure speed & restricted signage at both ends of Pamington together with two unsighted bends. Quotes had been received from two companies. The physical siting and operational details remained to be agreed with Glos Highways.

Speed monitoring – Vehicles continued to use Pamington Lane as a cut through. Up to 35 cars per hour at peak periods at speeds of up to 48mph along a lane which closely resembles a single track in that it is unlit, without kerbs, and road markings. This is dangerous for local residents, the elderly, and dog walkers. Regular reports are submitted to the police who follow up the worst offenders.

Linden Homes – 150 new homes are to be built along the A46 at Pamington. This will add to local traffic.

Ditches – Representations had been made to Glos Highways about the condition of the ditches and culverts in the village. Permission was granted to local residents to form a working party to clear them out.

Starveall Farm – The Association was concerned about the current environmental variation permit application.

5. Gloucestershire CC, and Tewkesbury Borough, Council Reports

i County Council (Cllr Vernon Smith) – Not received.

ii Borough Council (Cllrs Heather McClain & John Hesketh) – Not received.

6. Ideas for schemes/funding that will benefit the local community (S137 Local Government Act 1972) – A number of ideas were suggested by residents, including a tennis court, football pitch, play area and a community hub. There was a lack of suitable meeting rooms and an additional hall was needed.

7. To receive questions from members of the public on the evening – The Chairman was asked about the A46 traffic problems, and advised that the parish council had met with Highways England. A number of options were being considered including constructing roads behind the army depot, and south of Pamington. The issues were complex and it was unlikely that they would be resolved until 2025.

The meeting was formally closed by the Chairman at 9pm, and residents invited to join parish councillors for drinks and a buffet.

Robert Stone

Parish Clerk, Ashchurch Rural Parish Council

Annex A

Laurence Robertson MP's Report

A46 - I have held a number of meetings with Highways England and Tewkesbury Borough Council regarding the A46 and its complex issues. I am pressing them to find immediate projects to carry out to help with the current situation, and also to come up with a longer term solution to help deal with the extra development which is planned for the area. I've made various suggestions and I'll continue to meet the relevant agencies to try to secure improvements.

Local roads - I have held meetings to discuss the use of the minor country lanes by vehicles which are unsuitable for the road network or don't need to use the lanes, and also the speed along those roads. No specific proposals have been agreed at the moment, but the discussions are continuing.

Ashchurch Army Camp - I have held meetings with the MoD Ministers about the release of the site. The plan now is to retain quite a bit of the camp and only release the Eastern part of the site for development, probably amounting to around 500 houses.

Joint Core Strategy - I am continuing to meet the borough council to discuss this matter. I have fought to protect the Green Belt against inappropriate development and will continue to do so, but I do not have a say on planning matters.

Education - I am pressing for better funding for Gloucestershire schools. I have pressed for an improved national funding formula for schools. The government has agreed this, but we are now disputing the details as it still doesn't improve funding for schools in this area sufficiently, and some will lose out. This is a historic problem, with local schools having lost out for years.

Missing Link, A417 - After years of campaigning, we have secured the agreement of the Transport Secretary that a solution will be found and a project implemented by 2020, though probably at the end of that year or 2021 to be realistic. This is a major step forward.

Flood prevention - I continue to hold meetings with the Environment Agency and others to discuss the issue and to try to find further projects which will improve the area. I'm not aware of any proposals at the moment, but discussions will go on. I also held many meetings with the insurance industry and government to encourage the introduction of Flood Re Insurance, which provides guarantees against flooding to people in all houses built before 2009.

Policing - I hold regular meetings with the Police to discuss local and community policing matters. I am going out on a night shift with the police on Friday.

Fiddington Plant - I have twice submitted objections to the proposals. I don't object to the concept of the process, but believe this to be the wrong site for it so I was pleased to hear of the most recent outcome.

Ashchurch Railway Station Development Plan - I have been updated regarding the proposals to develop and expand Ashchurch Railway Station. I think this is a great resource for the area and isn't

used to its full potential so I have been happy to add my support to the project and will assist in any way that I am able.