

ASTON ROWANT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the above Council held on Wednesday, 9th May 2018 in Kingston Blount Village Hall.

PRESENT: Cllrs. M. Day, T. Hill, L. French, P. Hetherington, S. Sowerby, P. Tinson (Chair) and M. Wodzynski.

D/Cllrs. Lynn Lloyd and Ian White

- 1) **APOLOGIES** - None
- 2) **DECLARATION OF INTEREST** – None.
- 3) **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN & VICE-CHAIRMAN** - *In view of events in recent weeks, there has been no time to consider future roles and responsibilities, so the Chairman proposed deferring all elections and allocation of duties until the June meeting, except for the role of Chairman. Cllr. Tinson indicated he was prepared to continue in that role and this was formally proposed by Cllr. Hetherington, seconded by Cllr. French and passed unanimously. Cllr. Hetherington has agreed to continue as Vice-Chairman for one month more.*
- 4) **MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11th April 2018, were approved and signed.**
- 5) **MATTERS ARISING.** *Cllr. Sowerby raised a question regarding the redundant phone box in Kingston Blount as a new defibrillator point. This was covered in previous minutes when the PC received correspondence from BT regarding its removal and no action opposing this was suggested. However, as the box is still in-situ, the Clerk undertook to revisit this.*
- 6) **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS** – *The District Councillors report was only received on the day of the meeting, so no-one has had the chance to digest the contents. Still no communication from our County Councillor.*
- 7) **OPEN FORUM** –
 - i. *7 members of the public attended and following sight of the approved April minutes, a query was raised re: the phrase “exclusively Aston Rowant Residents” in point 5. It was also pointed out that the Parish Poll request was not purely about the St John Homes planning application. It was agreed to amend the phrase to “mainly Aston Rowant residents” and amend to “recent planning issues”.*
 - ii. *A member of the NP Steering Group spoke regarding a new planning application in Kingston Blount which is likely to prove contentious (being on a high-profile green-field site in the emerging NP) but will need a response before the next scheduled PC meeting on 13th June and wanted to ensure that an extension would be requested so the issue could be properly considered. The application in question has not yet been received or circulated to councillors, the Chairman agreed to this if appropriate. Cllr. Sowerby advised he would be declaring an interest at that time.*
 - iii. *A resident of Aston Hill attended to seek the PCs assistance regarding a solicitor’s letter received following a neighbour trespassing onto his property and felling 10 mature beech trees, without his permission, and seeking payment from him. The matter has been reported to the TV Police, but he was seeking our advice as to any other action possible. The Chairman suggested we could write to the Police and SODC Forestry Dept. on his behalf, and he is to provide a copy of the letter and police crime number to this end, although it should be noted that the trees are not part of the Chilterns AONB, being in a private garden.*
- 8) **APPOINTMENTS TO PARISH AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS:** - See point 3.
- 9) **PLANNING**
 - i. **Applications** as follows were confirmed/discussed:
P18/S1355/T28 – application for installation of 1 x DSLAM equipment cabinet in olive green on the junction of Stert Road and B4009 in Kingston Blount (south of the boundary to the property Apsley Cottage, but not connected to that property) – **NOTED.**
NOT ON THE AGENDA:
P187/S1357/FUL – Erection of three dwellings in paddock behind Orchard House, High Street, Kingston Blount OX39 4SJ (with vehicular access through Old Croft Close. See point 7, para 2. Emailed notification only at this stage – **NOTED** (to be discussed more fully when full details known).
 - ii. **Decisions** of S.O.D.C. as follows were noted:
P18/SS0001/FUL - Erection of six detached dwellings and four apartments, together with access, highway alterations, parking, landscaping, drainage and amenity space by St John Homes (Thames Valley) Ltd at: Land at the junction of Aston Rowant Road and Chinnor Road Aston Rowant. **REFUSED.**

10) FINANCE

- i. *The following payments were noted (Costs include VAT):*
- | | £ | p |
|---|---|-------|
| Clerk March Salary | | |
| HMRC/P.A.Y.E re: clerk March salary | | |
| Hillwerke Trust | | 68.00 |
| Robin Leinster (February Litter) | | 25.32 |
| OPFA (2018/9 Subscription) | | 42.00 |
| T. Lambourne (Mileage & Expenses to 31/Mar) | | 61.61 |
| Robin Leinster (March Litter) | | 25.32 |
| SODC (Dog-Bin emptying) | | 87.91 |
| Parish Online (Get Mapping) | | 18.00 |
- ii. *Receipts as follows to be noted:*
- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|----------|
| SODC (Precept Part 1) | | 11587.50 |
| SSE (Annual Wayleaves payment) | | 10.00 |
- iii. *The following payments were approved (Costs include VAT):*
- | | | |
|---|---------------|--------|
| Clerk April Salary | | |
| HMRC/P.A.Y.E re: clerk April salary | | |
| T. Lambourne (Clerks Annual Home Working Allowance) | | 200.00 |
| P. Tinson (Chairman's Annual Allowance) | | 95.00 |
| Robyn Leinster (Litter April) | | 31.65 |
| Hillwerke Trust (N/Plan meetings Feb/May/Apr) | | 42.50 |
| George Stevens | | 420.00 |
| George Stevens – cheque 101654 (never received) | NOT ON AGENDA | 290.00 |
| M K Watts Ground Maintenance Ltd | NOT ON AGENDA | 308.56 |
| Oxford Sound Hire (PA for Parish Meeting 1/May) | NOT ON AGENDA | 164.00 |
| Chinnor Village Centre (2018 Grant) | | 555.00 |
| Chinnor United Benefice (2018 Grant) | | 896.00 |
| Thames Valley/Chilterns Air Ambulance (2018 Grant) | | 110.00 |
- iv. *The current financial situation as at 30th April 2018:*
- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Barclays Bank – Community Account | 37447.80 |
| Barclays Bank – Business Saver Account | 1091.20 |
| National Savings | 11345.27 |
| Village Hall Reserve fund | (690) |
| Play Area Reserve Fund | (56) |
| Parish Notes Reserve Fund | (1000) |
| Neighbourhood Plan Reserve | (4617) |
| Traffic Calming | (3840) + 2000 for 2018/9 |
| Trees, Footpaths & Environment Reserve Fund | (5640) + 3500 for 2018/9 |
- v. *Budget 2018/9 v1 (not yet produced as books with auditor) - Noted.*
- vi. *Parish Poll – financial implications. The ARKB Action Group said they had been quoted £1000, but it could be anywhere between £1000 - £2000, including £105 for Hall Hire and £300 staffing costs. Various options for covering the worst-case scenario included a percentage reduction across the board against all budgeted items, not paying out any grants to local organisations (exactly £2000), cutting all grants other than the three main ones, increasing Council tax precept in 2019/20, cutting traffic calming or a pro-rata drawn on all reserves. There are certain reserves we cannot draw on as these are funds held on behalf of others (N/Plan, Parish Notes, Village Hall) and it was felt that cutting traffic calming would be very unpopular. Neither can there be a fund-raising event for this purpose. The last local elections in 2015 were not budgeted for, and an instalment repayment plan was agreed with SODC, but D/Cllr Lloyd advised SODC would be unlikely to agree to this again. It was decided to make a draw on reserves and only increase the precept next year if necessary to replenish. Proposed by Cllr. Hetherington, seconded by Cllr. Sowerby and passed unanimously.*

- 11) HIGHWAYS:** - Cllr. Day reported that progress on traffic calming has stalled with OCC Highways implying all was good following the trial double-chicane in January, but now having second thoughts on the design (which they produced) and preferring to revert to a single chicane. After 3 phone calls and several emails another on-site review is agreed for Tuesday 15th or Wednesday 16th May, with a progress report to follow.
- 12) HILLWERKE TRUST** – Cllr. Sowerby advised that there were still no volunteers for key positions as advertised extensively, but the AGM is on 21st May and a full report will follow next month.
- 13) NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN** – Cllr Sowerby (and Andy Green from the NPSG) reported:
- i. They are still awaiting the site scores from AECOM, the outside assessor, but constructive actions have been taken to complete the plan and 80% of the “big write up” is done, the consultation statement is complete. There are now several plans all approaching completion and many parishes are at the same stage which may produce a “log-jam” of applications needing attention and it is hoped to have the draft plan in place for referral to Ricardo Rios before the “summer break”.
 - ii. Concerns have arisen over the Haddenham N/Plan being challenged by a barrister over procedural shortfalls, resulting in AVDC no longer supporting the plan. The NPSG constantly review other local plan progress and are confident that our plan will stand up to scrutiny as slow but steady progress has been made by following the process diligently.
 - iii. The overall situation has now been greatly improved by the recent announcement that SODC now have a 5.4 year housing supply, comprising actual approved applications and not any still in progress or proposed which means any future speculative developments are not so likely to succeed. Once the NP is complete, the Steering Group will be disbanded, and the plan is then owned by the PC. A new NPSG could be set up in future if the need arises due to planning policy changes or housing supply dips below a 5-year supply again.
- 14) GRASS CUTTING & GENERAL PARISH MAINTENANCE:** Grass-cutting has now commenced with the weather improving and a request was received for the Kingston Blount lanes to be cut as they have become over-grown. It was reported that this has already been done, in preparation for the Street Fayre on 12th May.
- 15) PLAY AREA** – Apparent vandalism reported to the perimeter fence and the gate latch has been removed. George Stevens has made temporary repairs, but the clerk reported expenditure may be needed soon to rectify.
- 16) FOOTPATHS AND AMENITIES GROUP (FAAG)** - Cllr. Hetherington reported:
- i. Forth-coming expenditure at Fiveways to erect information boards with illustrations and footpath roundels.
 - ii. Work continues on the proposed footpath to Crowell with preparations for levelling the surface and seeding grass in the Autumn and application to TOE for a grant to match spending from reserves (c. £4000 in total).
 - iii. Invoice received for materials to replace stiles with gates on local footpaths, labour to be provided F.O.C by the Chiltern Society. The invoice is being contested over a delivery fee and will not be paid until clarified. Additionally, the materials have been delivered early (due in July) and now must be stored until then.
- 17) CORESPONDENCE:** - The Chairman reported that he had received a copy of a letter from an anonymous Aston Rowant resident to the Head of Planning at SODC, stating concerns over lobbying by ARKB Action Group over the St John Homes planning application and the “vocal and aggressive manner” in which it was carried out. It also questions the integrity of the SODC Planning Officer following comments overheard and points out that not all Aston Rowant residents agree with them. Noted, no action.
- 18) OTHER MATTERS & WRITTEN REPORTS:** – Aston Rowant school have not provided a report this month, but Cllr. French was able to report that Cycling Proficiency training had now started.
- 19) OTHER URGENT MATTERS at the discretion of the Chairman** – It was unanimously agreed that Cllr. Tinson should speak with the ARKB action group following the Parish Meeting on 1st May with a view to reaching a compromise and issuing a joint statement. An initial approach had been made by a representative of the Action Group. Efforts are needed to ensure parishioners understand the planning process and the constraints within which we work. Cllr Day proposed that the planning process and decision making should be the subject of a full discussion at a future meeting. It was unanimously agreed that this would be beneficial. Four Councillors and the Clerk are attending a planning seminar on 10th May as a start to increasing knowledge of processes and procedures and to clarify councillors roles in this respect.
- 20) DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – Wednesday 9th May 2018 in Kingston Blount Village Hall at 7.30pm.