

ASTON ROWANT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the above Council held on Wednesday, 10th February 2016.

Present: Cllrs. G. Crossley, L. French, P. Gibbons A. Green (In the Chair), P. Hetherington, P. Tinson & D/Cllr. L. Lloyd.

1) **APOLOGIES:** Cllr. M. Day

2) **DECLARATION OF INTEREST** – None

3) **MINUTES of the meeting held on 13th January 2016, were approved and signed.**

4) **MATTERS ARISING**

None

5) **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS** – *The Report from the District Councillors & County Councillor accompanies these minutes.*

6) **OPEN FORUM** – Three members of the public were present.

7) **PLANNING**

a) **Applications** as follows were confirmed/discussed:

P16/S0155/FUL Erection of a pair of two-storey semi-detached 'barn style' dwellings with access, parking and amenity space at Apsley Cottage, Stert Road, Kingston Blount, Chinnor, Oxon, OX39 4SJ – *The Council were informed shortly before the meeting that modified plans would be submitted in the next few weeks and all consultees would be contacted by SODC. Comments will therefore be submitted to SODC once the new plans are considered.*

b) **Decisions of S.O.D.C.** as follows were noted:

None - Noted

8) **FINANCE**

a) The following payments were noted:

£ p

Clerk December Salary	
Post Office Ltd (HMRC)	33.60
Alice Surman (Litter)	25.32
Clerk Expenses (Mileage)	143.00
Clerk Expenses (Print Cartridges)	27.69
P. Hetherington Travel Expenses	25.35
Thank you gift for Simon Coulon (Village Flower tubs) for the year	10.49
RoSPA (Playground post-install inspection & training - £395 contribution to come from the Hillwerke Trust)	534.00
George Stevens	90.00
M40 Chilterns Environment Group (£3500 grant received - £1750 already approved in December 2015)	1750.00
S.Johns (Printing costs – not on agenda)	8.91

b) The following payments were approved:

Clerk January Salary	
Post Office Ltd (HMRC)	33.60
Alice Surman (Litter)	25.32
Ridgeway Woodlands	432.00
Just Ducks Ltd	34.45
S. Johns - Litter Pick Sticks	13.98
S. Johns - Public meeting refreshments & printing (Not on the agenda)	23.50

c) Receipts as follows were noted:

Hillwerke Trust (Playground post-install inspection)	395.00
NS&I Investment Account – Interest	83.56

d) The current financial situation as at 29th January 2016:

Barclays Bank – Community Account	11096.17
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Barclays Bank – Business Saver Account	1089.91
National Savings	11224.62
Village Hall Reserve fund	(3590)
Play Area Reserve Fund	(5490)
Parish Notes Reserve Fund	(1000)
Trees, Footpaths & Environment Reserve Fund	(2318)

Cash 1.19

e) Budget 2015/2016 – v10 January 2016 – *Noted*

9) HIGHWAYS

a) 30MPH Roundels on the Stert Road to Kingston Blount – *These will be repainted in early Spring when the surface is warm enough.*

b) Traffic Calming – *Deferred to March meeting.*

10) POORS HILLOCK CHARITY – None – Noted

11) HILLWERKE TRUST

a) *Cllr G. Crossley requested that the cost of a new sewage pump for the village hall (if it is needed) be funded from their reserves with the Parish Council. Any shortfall would be made up by way of a donation to the Parish Council funds. This will be considered once the costs are known.*

b) *The new Hillwerke Trust Committee was noted.*

12) KINGSTON BLOUNT PLAYGROUND None – Noted

13) ASTON ROWANT SCHOOL – None - Noted.

14) GRASS CUTTING & GENERAL PARISH MAINTENANCE – None - Noted

15) ASTON ROWANT CRICKET CLUB (ARCC)

a) *Report from D/Cllr. L. Lloyd – Astonbury's licence allows them one event a year, which would be the July event. Licencing are aware of the event but have had no formal notification of the event yet. The licencing office has been contacted by the organisers about holding the second event in May. In order to do so they have to submit a variation application to their existing licence to make this possible. An application has not yet been placed with SODC. When and if it is, we will receive notification of this application, which I understand requires consultation and we will be informed, when this consultation is due to begin. This is the point where the Parish council and ARPC residents, should put forward their challenges. Report noted and ARCC will attend the March meeting to discuss the Astonbury plans.*

16) FOOTPATHS AND AMENITIES -

a) Report from Cllr. P. Hetherington – None - Noted

17) OTHER MATTERS & WRITTEN REPORTS

a) The Clerk reported that her printer was not working. The Councillors agreed to fund up to £120 (including VAT) towards the cost of a replacement if it was unable to be fixed.

18) CLERK'S REPORT – ITEMS NOT NEEDING NOTICE OF DECISIONS

a) None - Noted

19) CORRESPONDENCE – None - Noted

20) WEBSITE

a) Item for amendment on the website – None

21) OTHER URGENT MATTERS at the discretion of the Chairman

a) *Cllr. P. Tinson reported that the defibrillator is to be delivered imminently. He will write to SSE to request funds to place a plaque on or close to the cabinet it is installed in. The plaque will be promoting the fact that SSE have funded the defibrillator by way of a grant to the parish council.*

b) *Immediately following the Parish Council meeting there was a public meeting to discuss the possibility of creating a Neighbourhood Plan (NP), following the request made by SODC to all Parish Councils and the request from our MP John Howell (see previous minutes)*

A presentation was made by Charlotte Colver of SODC to a gathering of over 100 parishioners, representing over 80 households. The meeting was Chaired by the ARPC Chairman

The meeting had been publicized in advance via Parish Notes, a leaflet drop, the ARPC website and the 'KBAR'

Community Facebook page.

This matter will be formally reviewed and discussed at the next meeting on 2nd March

22) DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 2nd March 2016 at Kingston Blount Village Hall at 7.30pm.

CHAIRMAN

Aston Rowant Parish Council Budget 2015 / 2016

2014/2015 Actual £	Description	2015/16			Current Available Reserves 2015/2016 (Based on Actual figures to date)
		Original £	Actual to January 16	Revised Forecast	
EXPENDITURE					
5,972	Administration	7,550	5,292	7,350	
	Election Cost (Payment 1 of 3)		393	393	
50	s.137	50	50	50	
0	Maintenance		100	100	
1,382	Capital	255	645	2,027	
1,934	Grants	1,934	5,434	5,434	
425	Village Hall	-		2,360	3,590
245	Play Area	2,164	13,909	13,814	5,490
0	Parish Notes	-	-	-	1,000
297	Agency Services - Litter	409	253	409	
220	Dog bins emptying	409	293	409	
4,315	Village Grass cutting & maintenance	4,296	3,180	4,146	
218	Subscriptions	338	367	367	
4,954	Trees, footpaths and Envir.S fund	1,800	1,834	1,834	2,318
	Traffic Calming			500	
25	Sundries	100	49	100	
766	Website and publicity	897	690	897	
2,301	VAT		3,430	3,430	
23,104	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	20,202	35,919	43,620	
Less INCOME:					
18,100	Precept	19,200	19,200	19,200	
287	CTRS mitigation Grant	287	204	204	
83	National Savings Interest	82	84	82	
0	Bank Account Interest	2	0	2	
437	Grants - Agency Services	437	448	448	
20	Village Hall Rent	20	20	20	
212	Walks Booklet	160	216	160	
500	Other Grants / Donations	-	19,042	19,042	
0	Playground		395	395	
10	Wayleave	10	10	10	
2,260	Trees & Environment	-	31	-	
2,697	VAT Reimbursed	-	-	3,430	
24,606	Total Income	20,198	39,649	42,993	
1,502	Net Income [- Expenditure]	- 4	3,730	- 627	
18,128	RESERVES B/FWD	19,630	19,630	19,630	
19,630	RESERVES C/FWD	19,626	23,360	19,003	
BANK & CASH POSITION					
7,399	Barclays Current Account	7,399	11,096		
1,089	Barclays Deposit Account	1,089	1,090		
11,141	National Savings	11,141	11,225		
1	Cash	1	1		
19,630			23,412	-	
RESERVES					
8,603	GENERAL		10,963	8,957	
1,230	VILLAGE HALL	3,590	3,590	1,230	
5,190	PLAY AREA	7,204	5,490	5,585	
1,000	PARISH NOTES	1,000	1,000	1,000	
2,105	TREES & FOOTPATHS	3,905	2,318	2,231	
18,128				19,003	

Lynn Lloyd and Ian White

District Council Activities – January 2016

Lynn has continued her work supporting the Team working on Chinnor's Neighbourhood Plan and the SODC officers working on the Plan with us. We are both working with Aston Rowant, Sydenham and Towersey Parish Councils to help them determine the best options for their neighbourhoods, with Sydenham having their public introduction meeting at the end of January and Towersey having theirs on 6th February with Aston Rowant having theirs on the 10th Feb.

On the Planning Front, the Secretary of State, in a recent Planning Refusal Case, has ruled that SODC does in fact have a Five Year Land Supply. Developers have previously tried to argue that there was a 'short-fall' in the District and this has formed one of the key areas in their Appeals as it impacts all District Council local policies. The Secretary Of State's ruling means that the local policies in the Development Plan can be considered up to date and as a result, we have no doubt that the late night oil will be burning furiously in 'Chambers' as the Legal Eagles consider the impact of this on the imminent Gladman Appeal and the Judicial Reviews. Ian has had a busy month on the Planning Committee with a full programme of work and including site visits and is working with Chinnor Parish Council to confirm that OCC has the traffic calming measures agreed for the Thame Road in hand..

Lynn continues with her busy Cabinet Programme Of Work, and has also continued her work as a Member of the Chiltern Conservation Board to protect this Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Ian had further Constitutional Review Panel meetings this month. The Policies now being brought up to date are those concerning the procedures around delegation to Officers and the Council Meetings together with those relating to the way Contracts are handled. Whilst the changes here are not major, they are necessary to tidy up the effects of changes to legislation and additionally some streamlining leading to greater efficiency. The way that Petitions from the general public are handled has also been reviewed and amended to ensure that the process is made more efficient and up-to-date.

One of Lynn's biggest pieces of work as a Cabinet Member is in respect of the Corporate Services Project, which defines how the Council will work in the future. In a nutshell, whereas we presently work with the Vale of the White Horse, when the existing contracts expire later this year, the plan is for us to combine with not only the Vale, but also three other Councils for delivery of the following services:- Accountancy, Property management, HR, Facilities management, IT operations, Car parks, Land charges, Licensing, Procurement.

This is as well as the services already contracted out:- council tax collection & council tax reduction scheme, business rate collection, housing benefit administration, payroll, provision of financial management system, accounts payable and accounts receivable, customer services (switchboard and reception)

The Project is reaching its final stages, and crossed a major hurdle when it was reviewed by the Joint Scrutiny Committee and recommended to Cabinet. We will report more on this in the near future, but the bottom line is that, for the nine years of the agreement, SODC will save around £8M over the 9 years of the project, helping us to keep our element of the Council Tax frozen and reduce the likelihood of service cuts.

Ian is also working on the Panel reviewing the spending proposals for Thames Valley Police. Following the abrupt withdrawal of the Home Office's proposals for Police funding with the Minister apologizing to Parliament at the beginning of December, and the Chancellor's announcement that some Police Funding has been ring-fenced, the Panel has worked with the Police And Crime Commissioner to ensure that the new proposal for our area is value for money. The Working Group has completed the review and the 2016/2017 Budget was agreed at the meeting of the Police And Crime Commissioner's Panel last Friday (29th Jan). This means that, whilst the Police Precept part of the Council Tax will rise by the expected 1.9%, the impact on our Policing will be relatively minimal with the cut in costs being largely absorbed by 'smarter working'.

Lynn has also attended the Village Leaders' Meeting hosted by our Rector, and attended a visit to the Harwell Science Campus, which does play an important role in the economy of our District, and which is expected to be an even greater contributor in the future.

We have both continued to work with those who live and work in the Ward to provide as much support as we can, and provide guidance, especially with regard to issues around Planning.

There is much more in the detail of what we are doing but in the interests of brevity, that's it for December.

SODC A Conservative District Councillor's View (Or What The Council Is Doing) January 2016

On behalf of all of our District Council colleagues, we hope that you all had a good Christmas and we wish you a prosperous and happy 2016.

Things are not going to get any easier economically as a result of the continuing global economic climate, but here at SODC Officers and Members have been working to get the maximum value for money and we are now in a position to honour our election pledge not to raise our element of the Council Tax. So, for 2016/17, this will remain at the same level as the current year.

Corporate Services Project

This piece of work plays a crucial part in helping us to keep our part of the Council Tax frozen and the Report compiled by the Team working on this has been examined by our Scrutiny Committee which has recommended that Cabinet agrees the proposals. Five councils including ours will combine with two providers to manage and deliver our services and if all agree to the recommendations, our District will save £8 million over the nine year course of the contract. More on this next month!

Constitution Review

The Panel has continued with its work, and, along with the simplification of the Scrutiny and Officer Employment Processes which have already been implemented, the work on rules governing Contracts, Council Procedures and the Petition Scheme have now been completed.

Policing

We continue to work with Police And Crime Commissioner Anthony Stansfeld to get the best value for money possible whilst maintaining and improving standards. Following the Home Office's change in its funding proposals, as announced by the Chancellor in in Autumn Statement, the Budget proposals for the coming year have been revised and are now in the scrutiny process.

For Thame Valley policing, one area of significant concern is the growth in cybercrime. Whilst this is a National issue, we all need to be vigilant, and an initiative has been launched which will help our residents. We urge all Councils and the public to be aware of the Cyber Crime Awareness initiative and to visit Cyber STREETWISE at www.cyberstreetwise.com/ and we ask you to do everything you can to spread the work.

Grants

The next window for grants opens in February. It runs from 1 February to 1 April 2016 for decisions by 10 July 2016 and as we have made changes to this process to make it easier to apply for Grants and obtain the funds to support projects, we hope that our communities will make full use of the opportunity this presents. The Working Group has met to determine the way we will handle the funds available following the withdrawal of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, and an announcement on this will be made in the near future.

The Council's Home

As the Anniversary of the fire at Crowmarsh passed, there was a great deal of speculation in the press about the location of our new, permanent home. Work on this continues and for the time being, all we can say at is that it is very unlikely that we will be returning to the old site. On the basis of progress to date we expect an announcement during May or June this year.

Planning

We've just set up a new register for people interested in building their own property - this will help us get an idea of how much local interest there is in self-build, which will help us write our planning policies. Whilst we're not currently aware of any plots of land that are available for self-build, the register will help us match people up with suitable plots of land should they become available in the future. This can be found on our web site; you just need to search for 'Custom Build Register'.

The planning inspector has approved our Community Infrastructure Levy schedule subject to a few minor amendments and this will go to cabinet early this year.

Work continues apace across our District on Neighbourhood Planning with more communities starting work on a plan and we will continue to provide the best support that we can with this piece of work.

Didcot Garden Town

Didcot and the surrounding areas are set to get major infrastructure funding to help with the delivery of 15,000 new homes and 10,000 new high-tech jobs in both our District and the Vale.

Housing and Planning minister, Brandon Lewis MP visited the town to announce that our joint bid for Garden Town status for Didcot was successful; this will pave the way for improvements like a northern perimeter road for the town and the 'Science Bridge' over the railway line into Milton Park, as well as improvements to existing areas of Didcot.

Community Safety News

Some businesses caught serving alcohol to underage children in Wallingford have tightened up their act thanks to training from the Community Safety Partnership.

In August, the partnership sent people under 18 years old into five premises to try and buy alcohol, and three of them failed to ask them for ID.

The staff were given training and in a re-test in October, all five premises successfully checked IDs and refused to serve the young people.

Winter weather

To help people prepare for the inevitable rain, wind and snow this winter we've updated the advice on our [South](#) severe weather pages. The county council has also produced a Winter guide, [which you can see here](#).

Armed Forces Covenant

We have a significant Military presence in our District, not only with RAF Benson, but also with Services Family Accommodation in Didcot for Dalton Barracks in Abingdon, and residents from St David's and St George's Barracks across the border at Bicester, and RAF Halton and Air Command (formerly Strike Command) in Buckinghamshire.

The Council signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant a few years ago and we have commenced work on a 'refresh' to our approach to meeting this commitment.

This is just a brief summary of the work we are doing, and our thanks to our roving reporter, Stephen Harrod, District and County Member, for his contributions this month.

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