

**Minutes of the Meeting of Ashton Parish Council  
held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at 7.15 p.m. at Ashton Primary School**

**Present:** Terry Turvey (Chair), Sandra Lemon, Bernard Day, Lee Gardiner, Steve Green, Carl Johnson

**Clerk :** John Marshall

3 members of the public; NCC Cllr Walker and SNC Cllr Wilson unable to attend.

- 72. Public session:** Action  
Representatives of ASPA reported back on their meeting with MORFC regarding the proposed fireworks event and future co-operation and collaborations. Agreement has been reached for the fireworks event to be held at MORFC; the event will be styled as a ASPA, APC and MORFC joint enterprise.
- 73. Declarations of interest:**  
Cllr Lemon, Hut Land and Ashton Playground Association; Cllr Green, Hut Land; Cllr Gardiner, Ashton Playground Association.
- 74. Apologies for absence:**  
Alan Beber (prior engagement)
- 75. Approval of Minutes of last Meeting:**  
The Council resolved to accept the Minutes of the meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> June.
- 76. Matters arising from the Minutes and Clerk's Report:**  
The Clerk's Report had been circulated previously; there were no questions.
- 77. Planning:**
- i. New Applications**  
S/2014/0945/TLN, Roade Hill, replacement of 2 antennae + new cabinets; the Council resolved its response to be 'no objections with no added comments'.
- ii. Update on existing Applications**  
S/2014/0675/FUL; 2 Vale Brook, Hartwell Road, single storey rear extension has been approved.
- iii. Other planning matters**  
Cllr Lemon raised 2 issues regarding the South Northants Homes site at Stoke Road Green. Children were playing on a spoil heap left by contractors on the Green and the sign was felt by several residents to be excessively large. The spoil heap is due to be removed but the Clerk was asked to refer both matters to Susan Bland, the GUHP Project Officer responsible for the site. **Clerk**
- 78. Finance:**
- i. Financial Report.**  
The Clerk reported the financial situation as follows;  
Cash at bank at 31st June 2014 (includes AVN funds of £113) £16,767.95
- ii. Receipts and Bills for Payment:**
- Receipts
- | Date | Payee | For | Amount |
|------|-------|-----|--------|
|      |       |     | Nil    |

The Council resolved to approve the following payments;

	Cheque	Payee	For	Amount	VAT
09.07.14	656	W J M Marshall	Salary + exes for June	224.05	1.20
09.07.14	657	Post Office Ltd	HMRC/PAYE	48.20	
09.07.14	658	JS Landscapes	Grass cutting, June	250.00	
09.07.14	659	Barbara Osborne	Payroll services	30.00	
09.07.14	660	BDO LLP	External audit fee	120.00	20.00
09.07.14	661	e-on	Electricity for s/lights	140.66	6.70

### iii. Annual Return; External Auditor's Report

The Clerk reported that the Annual Return had been received from BDO as External Auditor. The accounts for 2013/14 had been approved with no audit issues arising and thus there were no issues or matters for the Council to address, going forward. The Clerk further reported that, as required the Notice of Conclusion of Audit had been displayed for the statutory 14 day period from 21 June – 05 July.

79.

### Other issues:

#### i. Street lighting , budget and maintenance arrangements.

The Clerk, in his Report had drawn attention to the fact that the street lights have reached an age where lamps are starting to fail. To date in this financial year two repairs have been logged with e-on; the cost per repair is £58 ex VAT. This situation was not foreseen when the budget was prepared in late 2013 and the budget contains just £100 for maintenance and repairs to lights. Consequently, the effect of the two repairs is that at the end of Q1, the budget is already over spent. The Council discussed options to resolve this situation including

- to request repairs in clusters of 2 or 3 lights. This *should* reduce the cost, as a large percentage of the unit charge is the call-out cost. It was noted that whilst this policy might well be unpopular with residents, it would certainly save money and need not necessarily be applied rigidly, allowing 'safety critical' lights to be dealt with immediately.
- seeking cheaper alternatives by using an alternative contractor eg Aylesbury Mains, perhaps in combination with e-on .

The Clerk was asked to pursue the matter and make enquiries as necessary.

Clerk

#### ii. Future arrangements for Council budget and precept setting.

The Council considered a recommendation from the Clerk to establish an *ad hoc* group to prepare the draft budget and precept for approval by the full Council. The Council resolved to establish such a group comprising Cllrs Green and Gardiner together with the Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer, with Terms of Reference as above. The group will meet in November or December latest with a view to bringing the proposed budget and precept to the January full Council meeting for approval.

Clerk  
SG, LG

#### iii. Footpaths

The Council discussed correspondence received from a resident regarding footpaths being partially obstructed by overgrown vegetation. The Council, whilst noting that this was, to an extent an inevitability at this time of year observed that it was open to residents to report this and indeed any highways-related matters directly via NCC's Street Doctor if they so wished.

The Council also discussed reports of gates on KA12 being tied shut. Cllr Lemon undertook to walk the path and investigate.

SL

#### iv. Highways issues.

Cllr Lemon reported on the visit on 08 July by the MGWSP Parish Enhancement Gang. The gang was unable to carry out the requested works (siding out of Stoke Road) as this required a digger or clearing of Hartwell Road gully pots but cleaned and cleared signs at the village gateways.

**v. Neighbourhood / Parish Planning**

No report was available from Cllr Beber but Cllr Day reported that the planned meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June had not taken place as Adrian Colwell from SNC had been unavailable.

**vi. Neighbourhood Watch**

Cllr Johnson reported on two thefts – a car and a bike – within the village. The Millennium Oak on Stoke Road Green has been vandalised; Cllr Johnson was asked to convey this information to police.

CJ

**vii. Grants policy.**

The Council considered a recommendation from the Clerk that in the light of increasing demands and expectations from the community for funding of projects, events etc, if the Council wishes to continue making grants - and there is no legal obligation to do so - then the Council should have a published policy to cover this element of its activity. Doing so will not only provide transparency in the spending of the Council's funds but will also enable all involved in the process, particularly the residents to understand what funds are available and from where, how funds can be accessed and crucially, given that once in the Council's purse, it is public money that is being disbursed, what will be required of successful applicants by way of accountability. The Clerk was asked to prepare a draft policy for consideration at the August meeting.

Clerk

**80. Correspondence requiring a response or a decision:**

The West Northants JPU consultation on draft CIL charges was considered but the Council resolved to make no comment.

**81. Items for next meeting:**

None

Cllr Turvey closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

**Date of next meeting:**

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2014 at 7.15pm.