

**Minutes of the Meeting of Ashton Parish Council held on
Wednesday 12th April 2017 at 7.15 pm at Ashton Primary School**

Present: Cllrs Lemon, McAllister, Johnson, Roychoudhury, McAllister and Day

Clerk : John Marshall

1 member of the public; SNC Cllr Budden and NCC Cllr Walker unable to attend

Action

2017/

31.

Public session:

No issues raised.

32.

Declarations of interest:

None.

33.

Approval of Apologies for absence:

Cllr Green (ill-health).

34.

Approval of the Minutes of previous Meeting:

The Council resolved to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of 8th March 2017.

35.

Matters arising from the Minutes and Clerk's Report:

The Clerk's Report had been circulated previously. There has been no response to the trawl for someone willing and able to provide 'handy-man' services within the village. The Clerk reported that he had discussed with Jason Smith outstanding work in and around the Rec and after discussion of the growing list of minor works needed, the following actions were resolved;

- JAS will repair the football goal-mouths in the Rec using topsoil and re-seeding. Once repaired, the area will need to be protected for up to 6 weeks
- JAS will supply and fix a spring closing mechanism to the pedestrian gate to the Rec
- JAS will supply and lay 2 slabs in front of the Old Crown notice board
- the Clerk will approach the Roade Village Technician to ask whether he is able to install the 3 new notice boards and Rec sign, offering the same hourly rate as is paid by Roade PC

Clerk

36.

Planning:

i. New Applications.

None

ii. Update on existing Applications

No applications outstanding

iii. Other planning matters

None

37.

Finance:

i. Financial Report:

The Clerk reported the financial situation as follows;

Cash at bank at 31 st March 2017	£ 13,936.72
this sum includes 'ring fenced' funds as follows;	
i. election contingency funds	£ 777.79
(after addition of 2017/18 £250 contribution)	
ii. residue of Transparency Fund grant	£ 301.56

ii. Receipts and Bills for Payment:Receipts

Date	Payee	For	Amount
21.03.17	SNC	NHB grant	950.00

Payments

The Council resolved to approve the following payments;

Date	Cheque	Payee	For	Amount	VAT
19.02.17	DD	Total Gas & Power	Street light electricity	69.96	3.33
27.03.17	DD	PWLB	Loan repayment	1693.59	
12.04.17	834	Northants CALC	Member & audit fees	419.23	
12.04.17	835	Barbara Osborne	Payroll services	45.00	
12.04.17	836	David Farrand	AVN production	90.00	
12.04.17	837	WJM Marshall	Salary + exes, March	295.90	
12.04.17	838	Post Office Ltd	HMRC / PAYE	66.80	
12.04.17	839	Aylesbury Mains	Replace street lamp	108.12	18.02
12.04.17	840	JAS Landscapes	Grass cutting, March	125.00	
12.04.17	841	WJM Marshall	TFund; extra hrs	301.56	

iii. To receive the report of the Internal Auditor:

The Clerk reported that the Council's Internal Auditor, David Harries MBE visited on 10 April to conduct the year-end audit; Cllr Johnson as Internal Controls Cllr also attended. The Report had been circulated to Cllrs and will be posted on the website as required by the Transparency Code. Whilst all matters on which formal reporting at Section 4 of the Annual Return were satisfactory, he drew attention to 2 issues *viz*:

- the grant paid to the Council from the Transparency Code Fund (central funds) to compensate for the additional staff hours worked by the Clerk to fulfil and deliver the requirements of the Code that had not been utilised for the intended purpose
- the potential vulnerability in the Council's financial controls arising from online access to the Council's bank account.

The Council discussed these issues and resolved the following;

- to pay the Clerk, retrospectively the balance of the Transparency Code funds held in the Council's account as a ring-fenced sum. The Clerk advised and the Council noted that a further, similar grant application would shortly be made for the 3rd year of the 3 year scheme; if successful, the grant will be similarly disbursed.
- to note the comment but recognising that this vulnerability existed across the entire banking sector as an inevitable consequence of the introduction of online banking, to make no alterations to the current financial management arrangements, and further that the continued use of cheques as the primary payment method significantly reduced and limited the risk.

iv. To receive the Q4 / year-end report from the Internal Controls Cllr:

Cllr Johnson indicated that following his attendance and observations at the year-end audit, all was in order.

v. Annual Return 2016/17:

a) The Clerk read out and addressed each of the questions in the Annual Governance Statement, Part 1 of the Annual Return form; Councillors unanimously approved the Resolution 'that the Council approves the Annual Governance Statement as required by the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2017'. The approval was signed by the Clerk and Cllr Lemon as Chairman of the meeting.

b) The Clerk then took Cllrs through the Accounting Statements, Part 2' of the Annual Return form; Cllrs unanimously approved the Resolution 'that the accounting

statements that form part 2 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2017 be approved'. The Accounting Statements were certified by the Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer and the confirmation of approval by Cllr Lemon as Chairman of the meeting. The Chairman thanked the Clerk and Cllr Johnson, as ICC for their work during the course of the year, contributing to the receipt of a satisfactory audit report.

38. Highways issues:

A road 'bend' sign on Hartwell Road has been displaced from its mounting pole; the Clerk will report on Street Doctor

Clerk

39. Other issues:

i. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Roychoudhury reported on a meeting of the Steering Group held on 16 March. A further meeting is scheduled for 20 April.

ii. Neighbourhood Watch

Cllr Johnson had circulated reports; there has been a recent burglary in Stoke Road.

iii. Footpaths

Cllr McAllister had no issues to report. The Clerk advised that he had recently received correspondence including a copy of the definitive map from NCC Rights of Way (RoW) Team who are conducting a survey as part of a revision and updating of the RoW Improvement Plan. The Council has been asked to complete a review of all RoW and identify the top and bottom 10% by popularity. After discussion, it was agreed that Cllr McAllister will manage the exercise; Cllr McAllister was asked to complete and return the survey to the Clerk by the end of June. The issue of marking RoW with their designated numbers was again raised; Cllr McAllister will pursue the issue; names of residents who might assist with both tasks were suggested.

SMcA

iv. Play equipment inspection

The rota for weekly inspection of the play equipment was confirmed as follows;

April – May, Cllr McAllister

May – June, Cllr Roychoudhury

June – July, Cllr Bullock

July – August, Cllr Johnson

August – September, Cllr Lemon

repeating *ad infinitum*

v. request for an additional street lamp in Cook's Close to Hartwell Road jitty

The Council discussed the request from a resident for an additional street light. The Clerk reported that he had received one response (in favour) to the residents' consultation; he had also received a quotation from Aylesbury Mains in the sum of £1217.51 ex VAT for the works. The Clerk advised that if the Council wished to proceed, it would be necessary to identify the location and then the ownership of the land in question in order that the appropriate permission is obtained; NCC Highways, Helen Howard had confirmed from the definitive map that the jitty was not in NCC's ownership although, as a public right of way, it was responsible for the surfacing.

The Council resolved to pursue the project in principle, subject to the above *caveats*; the funding will form part of the 2017 Windfarm Grant bid.

Clerk

vi. Correspondence requiring a response or a decision;

The Council considered correspondence from 'Parishes against Pollution' a project being taken forward by Milton Malsor PC and Collingtree PC with a view to "preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water and noise pollution or land instability." The Council resolved to confirm its support for the initiative; the Clerk will advise the promoters.

Items for next meeting (10th May) for report only:

None. NB this is the Annual Meeting of the Council preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting at 7pm. Cllr Lemon closed the meeting at 8.40 pm.