**ASTWOOD & HARDMEAD PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes** of the meeting held Thursday 20th October at 8.00pm in Astwood Village Hall

**Present:** Cllrs John Durden (Chair), Teresa Giddings, Derek Phillips and Paul Das

1. **Welcome & apologies for absence**
   1. The Chair welcomed those present including 3 members of the public
   2. Jo Roberts from the Forest of Marston Vale was also welcomed
   3. Apologies were received from Cllr Sheddon
2. To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 21st July 2022
   1. The Minutes were approved and signed
3. Declarations of interest
   1. There were no declarations of interest
4. Jo Roberts of the Forest of Marston Vale then gave a short presentation about Trees for Communities, part of the Trees For Climate programme. Grants are available for woodland creation, but unfortunately they are looking for an area for a minimum of 160 trees.
5. Ward Councillors Report
   1. There were no Ward councillors present, so no report was received
6. Police Report on Crime
   1. PCSO Arlene Ormston was on leave and no Crime Report had been received.
   2. Cllr Durden had recently attended the North East Rural Community Forum where local crime, fly tipping and speeding matters are discussed with the local police.
   3. In addition a long discussion was had about Travellers and Unauthorised encampments,
7. Financial Report
   1. Was deferred to the last item in order to discuss next years budget
8. Traffic & Speeding Report – by Cllr Derek Phillips
   1. The Community Speedwatch programme is continuing, showing that speeds seem to be reducing. Offenders have been getting a formal written warning, and in the worst cases, a police visit
   2. The information is also used to determine the frequency of visits from the police speeding camera van
   3. Further volunteers are required, and all are requested to make this public
   4. Cllr Durden reported that the NERC Forum had particularly congratulated the Speedwatch efforts, as very few villages have managed to get a scheme going.
9. Play Areas Report – by Cllr Teresa Giddings
   1. The recent survey carried out was in favour of equipment for 2 to 5 year olds
   2. Order has been placed with Broxap a Toddlers Tower in the sum of £6,757 plus Vat, totalling £8,108.40
   3. The CIF grant is £4,500.00, with a minimum contribution from the Parish of £1,500.00, so we have overspent by £757.00
   4. Piers Sheddon has made an application for CIF Funding for further equipment at Hardmead. He believes it has been successful, but awaits confirmation. The age and number of children in Hardmead will require investigation.
   5. Letter to be written to Zurich Insurance to list all the play area equipment.
10. Village Hall & Village Green Garden Report – by Kim Durden
    1. The Hog Roast was held 7th August and was very successful with an excellent turnout
    2. Unfortunately the Harvest Supper has had to be cancelled due to lack of interest.
    3. As a result, and as money is tight, the re-furbishment of the kitchen is on hold at present
    4. New shelves have been erected in the entrance hall, so the bookswap facility is improved
11. Planning Report – by Cllr John Durden
    1. Cranfield Road development of 5 houses has started
    2. Solar Farm at Stagsden/Astwood has been approved by Bedford, MK approval awaited
    3. Green Valley Farm Flexible Commercial Unit has been refused
    4. 3 Main Road Appeal – no further news
    5. 37 Main Road, Astwood Single Storey rear extension – no objections
12. Financial Report – by Cllr John Durden
    1. £11,561.57 in the bank
    2. Payments made since last meeting
       1. Zurich Insurance Annua Premium £790.32
       2. Karen Betts (Bromham Parish Clerk) £300 for AGAR Return
    3. Payment of £8,108.40 will be required shortly for the new play area equipment, but £4,500 grant will then be available from the CIF
    4. Budget for 2023 – 2024 was then discussed at length and agreed
    5. The £1,600 grass cutting bill included both Astwood and Hardmead church yards. JD to write to both to obtain contributions
    6. It was agreed that an increase in the Precept will be 10%
    7. Serco to be asked for inspection report
    8. VAT return needs doing once payment for new Play Equipment received
13. Chairmans Report – by Cllr John Durden
    1. Well done to the Speedwatch and Cllr Derek Phillips for their continuing efforts
    2. The position of Parish Clerk has not been filled; advertising to start to try and fill the post by Christmas
    3. Cllr Durden attended the North East Rural Community Forum on 28th September; JD and DP to attend the next one in January

Next Meeting: Thursday 19th January at 8.00pm in Astwood Village Hall

Meeting dates for 2023: Signed as Approved: ………………………………………

Thursday 19th January

Thursday 20th April

Thursday 20th July Date: ……………………………………..

Thursday 19th October