

## Astwood & Hardmead Parish Council

### Minutes and Annual General Meeting

22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2025

**Present:**

Derek Phillips (Chair), Teresa Giddings, Paul Das, Pauline Mitchelmore (Clerk), PCSCO Arlene Ormston, Keith Mclean & 7 members of the public

**Apologies:** Piers Sheddon

1.	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>	
2.	<b>Election &amp; Acceptance of Chair &amp; Vice Chair Positions</b>	
	DP was nominated by Paul Das and seconded by Teresa Giddings. DP will contact Piers Sheddon as it would not be appropriate to nominate as Vice Chair in his absence. UPDATE: PS has accepted the position. DP stated that it has been challenging to recruit new councillors but was encouraged by the members of public in attendance.	
3.	<b>To approve the minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2025</b>	
	Approved, signed and passed to clerk.	
4.	<b>Declaration of Interest</b>	
	Two members of the public raised their concerns regarding the safety on the T Junction at Cranfield & Main Road.	
5.	<b>Public Question Time</b>	
	<p>A member of the public asked when the A509 roadworks will be completed. KMc has been advised that this will be 31<sup>st</sup> August. Another member of the public commented that the developers have failed to meet the deadlines and should be held to account. Blaming weather and ground conditions is not acceptable. This should have been opened in September 2024.</p> <p>The T junction of Main Road &amp; Cranfield Road was raised by two members of the public. The verge is adopted land and should be maintained by MKC. The tree and hedge have been allowed to block the pavement, giving no clear line of sight for traffic and for pedestrians to safely use the pathway, meaning they are having to cross an already heavily used junction to reach a safe point of access. MKC will be lobbied for action to reinstate the pathway and the owner of the property will be contacted by the parish council to cut back the hedge to reveal the pavement.</p> <p>It was reported that several residents have overgrown hedges which are causing a hazard to pedestrians. The parish council will write and ask that they rectify this as soon as possible.</p> <p>Overzealous use of pesticides by MKC has been evidenced in Hardmead and Astwood by a member of the public. This has resulted in the killing of wild flowers and grass. MKC have been contacted but this will now be escalated by KMc to MKC.</p>	<p><b>DP &amp; KMc</b></p> <p><b>DP</b></p> <p><b>KMc</b></p>

6.	<b>Ward Councillors Report</b>	
	<p>KMc stated that changes to procedures of parish councils being able to “call in” decisions made by MKC is now restricted. Many parish councils are challenging this decision and a meeting will be held in June to discuss the imposed restrictions and without sufficient notice of the changes.</p> <p>Water pressure in the villages has been a constant issue in recent months. KMc will support DP’s letter to the MD of Anglian Water to request clarification.</p>	<b>DP</b>
7.	<b>Police Report</b>	
	<p>No crime has been reported in the parish between 27<sup>th</sup> Feb – 19<sup>th</sup> May.</p> <p>AO is offering a SCAM talk to all parishes, highlighting what’s current and how to be aware of potential scam operators. PM will reach out to the villages, garner interest and secure the village hall for a presentation.</p> <p>AO confirmed that fly tipping should always be reported directly to MKC.</p>	<b>PM</b>
8.	<b>Special Interest Groups (SIG)</b>	
	<p><b>Road Safety:</b> DP read his report highlighting the excessive speeding and safety issues in Astwood, which makes for shocking reading. As raised in the February 2025 report, speeding (both volume &amp; velocity) is an increasing issue.</p> <p>Speedwatch volunteers have recorded 74 vehicles speeding during the period of Feb – May, within just 6.5 hours of monitoring sessions. A significant increase on the last quarter.</p> <p>The SID (Speed Indication Device located on Cranfield Road) statistics after 2nd February 2025 to May 2025 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>117,621</b> recorded vehicles</li> <li>• <b>46,892</b> were travelling above the 30mph limit (40% of all recorded traffic);</li> <li>• <b>70,729</b> vehicles were travelling within the 30 mph;</li> <li>• The highest speed travelling out of the village was <b>100mph</b>;</li> <li>• The highest speed travelling into the village was <b>100mph</b>;</li> </ul> <p><b>3,628</b> inbound vehicles were travelling in excess of 30 mph between 06:00 and 09:00  <b>7,254</b> inbound vehicles were travelling in excess of 30 mph between 15:00 and 19:00  <b>6,635</b> outbound vehicles were travelling in excess of 30 mph between 06:00 and 09:00  <b>16,603</b> outbound vehicles were travelling in excess of 30 mph between 15:00 and 19:00</p> <p>The significance of the inbound/outbound volumes (10,882 and 23,238 vehicles respectively) is that these vehicles were breaking the speed limit at the times when residents of the village were most vulnerable (heading to/returning from work or school).</p> <p>DP will follow up with his continuing concerns at the North East Rural Community forum on 17<sup>th</sup> June in Astwood village hall. <b>All welcome to attend.</b></p> <p>TG asked AO how many vehicles have been caught speeding when the police van is in the parish? AO will investigate.</p>	<b>AO</b>

	<p>DP stated that speed cameras in the village will cost £100,000 to purchase, with an additional annual subscription to ANPR.</p> <p>DP will investigate costs of a variety of “traffic calming furniture” in attempt to identify what might be financially feasible. Sponsorship by local businesses was suggested as an option. PD suggested that we have a meeting to solely focus on the speeding issue as it’s not dissipating, only increasing and substantive action needs to be taken.</p> <p>DP was thanked for his diligence and tenacity over the past three years, despite the lack of support from Thames Valley Police.</p> <p>KMc &amp; DP will meet with Murray Woodburn, Traffic &amp; Transportation Manager at MKC to address all of the highway issues currently unresolved in the parish.</p> <p><b><u>Play Areas:</u></b> The “donated” football frame is to be removed as it is not covered by the parishes insurance policy. The owner will be asked to remove by the 26<sup>th</sup> May or it will be destroyed.</p> <p>Slabs will be placed under the bench to make it sit more securely and perimeter fence needs attention. TG is requesting quotes which will be submitted to MKC.</p> <p><b><u>Planning Matters:</u></b> None</p> <p><b><u>Financial Report:</u></b> Heather Cecil of Beneficial Book Keeping has been appointed as the parish accountant and auditor. All accounts for 2024 -2025 have been approved and verified.</p> <p>Councillors all agreed that the annual village hall donation of £1200 was to be paid in full this month, as opposed to two separate payments during the financial year. This will aid vital works that need to be carried on the continuing maintenance of the hall.</p>	<p>DP</p> <p>KMc &amp; DP</p> <p>TG</p> <p>TG</p>
9.	<b>Village Hall &amp; Green Report</b>	
	<p>KD was not available but DP did announce the monthly farmers market coming to Astwood on the 8<sup>th</sup> June. Ten stalls have been invited by North Crawley Estates, who will be organising and managing the event. This will be beneficial to the pub and the village hall who will be hosting their montly fundraising coffee and cake mornings.</p>	
10.	<b>Management of Culvert &amp; Hedgerow</b>	
	<p>TG stated that the entrance to Lewenscroft is overgrown and causing an obstruction to pedestrians and vehicles. TG approached MKC who said, it wasn’t a hazard and there is no funding to rectify. DP &amp; KMc will raise this issue at the meeting with the Traffic &amp; Transportation Manager.</p>	KMc & DP
11.	<b>Grant Applications</b>	
	<p>The Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) is available for any proposed projects within the parish. PS had suggested a number and DP will issue a poll amongst the councillors to ascertain the priority project.</p>	DP

12.	<b>Other Items</b>	
	<p>JD's memorial bench and planters will be sited outside the village hall under the memorial plaques. PM is to source and report to councillors with costs.</p> <p>PM reported broken street sign (Cranfield Road) to MKC who decided it was not in need of repair. A few days later, its on the list for repair!</p> <p>PM reported to MKC that the white line markings at the T junction were no longer in existence (with photographic evidence). Response was, it was "low risk" and no work was required. This will be discussed with the Traffic &amp; Transportation meeting.</p>	<p><b>PM</b></p> <p><b>KMc &amp; DP</b></p>
13.	<b>Chairman's Report</b>	
	DP will produce a parish bulletin of the meeting to update and inform residents of the vital work that is carried out on their behalf. An opportunity to engage and hopefully encourage willing volunteers.	<b>DP</b>
14.	<b>Meeting Dates for 2025 – 21<sup>st</sup> Aug, 13<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	

Approved: .....

Date: .....