

ASTWOOD & HARDMEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held Thursday 22nd July 2021 at 8pm in Astwood Village Hall

Present: Cllrs John Durden (Chairman), Piers Sheddon and Teresa Giddings
Jane Brushwood (clerk)
Ward Councillor David Hosking
Kim Durden

1. Welcome and apologies for absence - The Chairman welcomed those present and accepted apologies from Ward Councillors McLean and Geary and Derek Philips.

2. To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held 13th May 2021 – The minutes were signed and approved, and Declaration of Acceptance of Office were signed and received.

3. Declarations of Interest on agenda items – none

4. Public question time – none

5. Ward Councillors Report – Cllr Hosking requested that we respond to the MKE expansion proposal in support of rural communities; the new bridge over the M1, the 5,000 homes and industrial areas will have a significant affect.

We're still waiting for the planning decision on the Cranfield Road application.

MKC are suspending or pausing the green waste due to a lack of staff.

The flooding on the junction to Cranfield Road is believed to be caused by broken drains, Cllr Durden to send pictures to Cllr Hosking who will escalate.

6. Chairman's Report – From the Parish Council's point of view the best news is the appointment of our new parish clerk Jane Brushwood. We have purchased a laptop for her to record all the PC matters and records, and she is now taken over the Astwood & Hardmead G-Mail account from me including the distribution of the various e-mails. We are still two councillors short of our required number of 5, we hope that interest will be shown so that we can co-opt 2 more people.

Cllr Durden thanked our 3 Ward councillors for help with on-going matters concerning Planning, Traffic & Speeding and Green and other Bins. Arlene Ormston our PCSO continues to help with the activities that concern her in the village. The fly tipping seems to have stopped for the time being.

We can be proud that we have funded and provided a Defibrillator in Hardmead, so we now have one in both sections of the Parish. It is probably time to organize another training session on their use.

The Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee continues to monitor and to market the Plan. But there are now further delays with the final approval by MK Council, and the NHP Chairman's report will explain this later in the meeting.

The village play areas in both Astwood & Hardmead require further work, and at some stage. I am hopeful that we can find a few willing people to form a sub-committee to advise on what to do next, particularly in Astwood where a number of e-mails have been received by the Council requesting play equipment for the younger ages. All this equipment is horribly expensive, so Jane our new Clerk will be looking into grants, as the £3000 we allocated as a Council will hardly buy anything.

Village Hall Committee continues to look after our two major assets the Village Hall and the Village Green garden. The Hall with its new coat of paint looks fantastic, and the planters around the village also look great and show some real community spirit. They also deserve praise for letting Phil our

Publican use the village tents to help him stay open and wine and dine us through the latter half of the pandemic regulations.

Speeding and Traffic Calming continues to cause concern in the village. We are due to have the SIDS back shortly, and I believe the Community Speedwatch will start again before too much longer.

7. Financial Report – The new Nat West account is open, it has £8628.37 in it. £309.68 remains in the Barclays account which will be transferred and closed in due course. AGAR is yet to be submitted.

8. To agree the Standing Orders – Cllr Sheddon proposed and Cllr Giddings seconded to change the Standing Orders to read meetings being held in January, May, July and October, on or around the second Thursday of the month with one meeting held in Hardmead.

9. Neighbourhood Plan Report – The Neighbourhood Plan currently rests with the independent examiner, as has been the case since the completion of Regulation 16 (21st May 2021).

The examiner was furnished with hard copies of the Plan and supporting documentation in advance of closure of Regulation 16, to permit familiarisation with the Plan. In addition, upon closure of Regulation 16, a summary response against all individual and public body observations was produced by the Steering Committee and submitted to the examiner via MKC.

MKC notified the Steering Committee on 1st July that, due to personal circumstances, her opportunity to review the Plan, and production of the final report would be delayed, with an anticipated delivery target of late August / early September. MKC advised that the committee could accept this position, or could seek to nominate a new examiner. The risk associated with the latter was the availability of a new examiner, and the ensuing 6-8 week familiarisation period that they would need before reviewing & reporting on the Plan.

The Steering Committee met on 6th July to assess the best option; the outcome was to continue with the original examiner, but to seek assurance (as far as possible) of commitment to the forecast report date. This decision was accepted by MKC, and subsequent confirmation of commitment by the examiner was received. The impact is that the Referendum is likely to be mid-October 2021 (on the anticipation of a positive report from the examiner which does not attract revision of the Plan).

The Committee is, therefore, obliged to wait for the next update from the examiner, be that the expected report on the Plan, or further update on their personal situation. No further action can be taken. In order to keep the Parish informed a summary communication was issued via the Parish WhatsApp (*note that there is no SCAN published in August, so WhatsApp is the only available medium for blanket notification).

In the meantime, the Committee continues to consider marketing activities in readiness for the Referendum.

10. Village Hall & Village Green Garden Report – funds are down by £3000, money has been spent on gardening, painting and windows with help from the windfarm grant. The hall is open again for classes, The hog roast (due to take place 15th September) and the harvest supper auction are the main fund-raising events. There is a book share scheme planned monthly, with refreshments in the village hall. The planters continue to be looked after by the committee and are looking great.

11. Planning - the application on 3 Main Road was refused, still awaiting the decision for the 5 at Cranfield Road. There is no objection from the PC on the application at 31 Main Road or the restoration at St Mary's church.

12. Play Areas - we need to look generally at the two play areas and at equipment required. The requests received had mainly been for the younger age group. Clerk to apply for CIF grant to double the £3k allocated in the budget.

13. Police Report on Crime and Traffic Calming - data shows that speeding on the A422 is an average 62mph with no major accidents. Cllr Hosking stated it was a dangerous stretch of road. Children are required to cross it to catch the bus to Bedford and the Hardmead turn is dangerous. We are due to have the SIDs back and Speedwatch is able to recommence in the near future. PCSO Ormston sent in a report that there were 3 crimes in Astwood and none in Hardmead for the period 15th May to 21st July 2021

14. Co-Opting additional Parish Councillors – clerk to inform MKC of the vacancy.

The next meeting set for Thursday 14th October.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed Chairman

Dated