**Meeting of Ashbury Parish Council**

**Ashbury Village Hall**

**Monday 11th September at 7.30pm**

**Minutes**

**Present:** Cllrs K Watkins (Chairman),L Halford (Vice),C Davies, R Furgusson, County Cllr Y Constance, District Cllr E Ware

10 members of the public

**Apologies**: Cllrs R Furgusson, P Dubois, District Cllr S Howell, C Arnold (Clerk)

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| **ITEM** |  | **ACTION** |
| **14** | **To receive apologies for absence** |  |
| **15** | **To receive any declarations of Personal, or Personal and prejudicial interest in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting**  N/A |  |
| **16** | **Update from County Councillor (Yvonne Constance)**  Clerk to publish on website and notice boards | **CA** |
| **17** | **Update from District Councillor (Elaine Ware)**  Clerk to publish on website and notice boards | **CA** |
| **18** | **To take questions and comments from members of the public**   * Marion Turner asked whether APC are still a member of the Western Vale Village Consortium. This organisation can help look at the impact of development on the area. Cllr Watkins to look into this. * Roger Simons asked why the numbering on the Agenda had changed from previous format. Cllr Watkins explained. * Roger Simons asked that in future could the meeting minutes and agendas be displayed on all notice boards in parish with more notice. | **KW**  **CA** |
| **19** | **To take questions and comments from members of the Council**  N/A |  |
| **20** | **To approve the minutes of ordinary meeting held on 08.05.17**  Approved |  |
| **21** | **To approve the minutes of ordinary meeting held on 10.7.17**  Cllr Davies objected to these minutes being approved pending changes | **CA** |
| **22** | **To address matters arising from the ordinary meeting held on 10.07.17**   * Ramp Investigation – Cllr Spence to chase * Strip of grass alongside shop – Cllr Davies has investigated and this belongs to No 5 Wixes Piece. | **BS** |
| **23** | **To address planning matters**   * P17/V2049/HH – Lordwell Cottage – Awaiting decision from Planning Officer – due 13/09/2017 |  |
| **24** | **To discuss funding via Network Rail**  Information to be sent to Jonathon Loose, Pauline Smith and Sally-Ann Spence. Possibly something that may interest the Canal Trust. | **KW** |
| **25** | **To discuss and agree Councillor duties and responsibilities**  KW proposed an extraordinary Meeting on 09/10/2017 to discuss these. | **CA** |
| **26** | **To discuss and agree Council Policies**  Add to agenda for discussion at proposed Extraordinary Meeting on 09/10/2017.  KW extended an invitation to the room to attend if they are interested. |  |
| **27** | **To discuss and agree Transparency Act application for funding**  Council agreed for clerk to action. Will funding stretch to noticeboards? | **CA** |
| **28** | **To discuss Heart Defibrillator for the village**  KW advised that the village has one that is mounted by the front door of Ashbury Primary School. Need to look into publicising it within the village. | **CA** |
| **29** | **To agree presentation on Story of the North Wessex Downs**  Clerk to organise presentation to coincide with next meeting. | **CA** |
| **30** | **To agree attendance at the Town and Parish Forum**  Cllrs agreed to check availability to attend on 08/11/17 | **CA** |
| **31** | **To discuss Ashbury Planters Group Report**  Report available in Appendix A. |  |
| **32** | **To discuss Ashbury Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Report**  Report available in Appendix B |  |
| **33** | **To discuss the Open Space at Wixes Piece**   * **Access – where we are and next steps**   + KW explained that there are conflicting Deeds. Next step to contact Land Registry.   + Need to install a bollard in the access gap at the end of Malthouse Close. Council agreed to spending up to around £200 to make the space secure until a permanent access solution is found. * **Maintenance**   + Meeting to be arranged with Gardener to plan maintenance for the year   + Playground needs to be regularly inspected – Cllr Watkins to discuss weekly inspections with Cllr Dubois   + Clerk to arrange for Local inspector to perform a yearly inspection   + Cllr Watkins to order and install signs on gates | **KW/PB**  **KW/PB**  **KW/PB**  **KW/PB**  **CA**  **KW** |
| **34** | **To discuss procedures for future planning applications**  Cllr Davies to email proposal to council. | **CD** |
| **35** | **To discuss closure of Ashbury Pre-School**  KW presented the statement sent by the Pre-School Trustees. |  |
| **36** | **Agenda Diary**   * **Register of Member’s Interests**   No changes required.   * **Section 137 Payments – Be Free Young Carers**   Council discussed that funds are limited so will not be donating.   * **Update Planning Register**   As above – Item 23   * **Code of Conduct – Sign**   To discuss at proposed Extraordinary Meeting on 09/10/2017   * **Acceptance / approval of External audit**   To discuss at proposed Extraordinary Meeting on 09/10/2017   * **Remembrance Service Attendance**   KW to attend. |  |
| **37** | **File Back-up Storage**  To discuss at proposed Extraordinary Meeting on 09/10/2017 |  |
| **38** | **To note correspondence**  N/A |  |
| **39** | **Any Other Business**   * **Bus Shelter**   Cllr Watkins proposed a vote of thanks to Ray Gigg for maintaining the Bus Shelter for the past 25 years.  Cllr Watkins proposed a vote of thanks to Mr & Mrs Luke for agreeing to continue maintaining it.   * **Bus Timetable**   New timetable should already be displayed on noticeboards. Clerk to add to website.   * **Unsung Heros**   Cllrs proposed Ray Gigg, Margaret Smith and David Blake.   * **Village Deep Cleanse**   Due to take place some time in September.   * **Village Fete**   Cllr Watkins proposed a vote of thanks to the Village Fete Committee for all their hard work.   * **Malthouse Close**   Mary Davies asked whether it would be possible to have a sign installed at the gap to warn children that they are walking onto a road. Cllr Halford suggested perhaps a chicane on the pathway. Clerk to contact SoHA and Highways to investigate options.   * **Dog Walkers**   Sally-Ann Spence raised that there continue to be instances of dog walkers allowing their animals off the lead in fields with live stock. This has led to sheep being attacked and stressed. Cllr Watkins advised that the council will help if they can. Notice to be put in Village Newsletter. | **CA**  **CA**  **CA**  **KW** |

Meeting Closed 21:55

Claire Arnold

Clerk to Ashbury Parish Council

25.09.2017

Next Meeting: Monday 13th November 19:30hrs, Ashbury Village Hall

**Appendix A**

Report to: Ashbury Parish Council for September meeting

From: Ashbury Parish Planters Planning and Working Group

Date: September 5th 2017

**Areas to report on and actions required**:

1. **Council fund for maintenance work in Ashbury**

The outcome of our exploration with the Council re the Ashbury allocation for parish maintenance is the following:

* The amount allocated is £466.00 per year for verge cutting of 4,550 sq. metres *twice yearly*

Our recommendation is for the Council to continue to hold and manage this fund because it would not be financially viable for the fund to be transferred to the Parish to hold - to source a cheaper sq. metre rate than the above and or to find a contractor with the necessary equipment just for use twice a year. **Status: exploration closed**

1. **Highways and work required in Ashbury**

Despite constant repeated contact with the Highways allocated link person for Ashbury, Highways actions below remain outstanding as follows:

* A date for the insertion of the drain pipe in front of the left hand (as you enter the village) planter – as this area floods
* Sawing off of a metal post holder in front of the right hand side Lambourn planter (which would have held a speed limit pole sign before it was moved). This post holder protrudes about 6 inches above the ground, is ragged and presents a health and safety risk because of the ragged edges
* A decision about the materials required to form the path (that will allow wheelchair access) from the roadside to the bench again on the right hand side of the road near the Lambourn planter

We therefore, in August, put the work required in writing to Highways but still await a response. The Highways team speedily responded to the request for the site visit to assess the work required by them after the site clearance work we did in March, so at this point we are unclear of the reasons for the ongoing delay in their agreed actions

**Status active: Ongoing Action required**, if by end of September we have had no response, we suggest direct Parish Council input via Bill Spence – so will keep you informed

1. **Planters sites**

* We will plant some wallflowers in the planters at the end of October to provide some spring colour.
* The permanent plants planted in April will make a fuller show for next year and now established confirm the shallow depth of the planters and the very dry and poor conditions of the planters soil. They are not deep enough to plant spring bulbs.
* Following the sowing of grass seed in the designated triangle areas in front of the planters, the Parish maintenance contractor (Barry) has been strimming these areas 2weekly or so since May 2017. The horseradish at the left hand side Wantage planter site is still very rampant, though less so than before the clearance and strimming work. We do however expect a reduction in the growth of these very longstanding plants to take up to 4 years of regular cutting.
* The permanent specification for the maintenance of these sites was agreed at the July 2017 Parish Council meeting. The contract needs to be shared and discussed at a meeting with the contractor in the next few weeks

**Status ongoing** – for us to be invited to the next Parish council contracts meeting to be held with the contractor

1. **Wixes Piece: Area external to gated/railings play area and Open space**

* An access point to Wixes Piece was cleared and the surrounding area weeded by PS, DP and JL on Friday 1st September. The area has:
  + little top soil so the clay soil will become mud very easily during wet weather.
  + This path area is very uneven
  + It is ridden with bind weed, which we were not able to totally remove. It has invaded the root systems of the shrubs we left in place and these will need treating too.

**Action required**: We recommend this

path area to be grassed end of next April but will require active bind weed removal from next March prior to grass seeding

* ***To Note:*** *while doing the path area work the contractor was using his small sit on lawn cutter to mow the Open space grass – it took him nearly 7 hours to complete this work with this small machine. We think it worth revisiting with him what he needs to access the site to be able to use a larger tractor type mower.*

* The Stage 1 work to the shrub area external to the gated play area, for tidying purposes prior to the fete took place via 2 activity sources:
  + Mick Lippett (Wixes Piece) for the area facing the houses.
  + The working party on 3rd September.

We had advertised the need for a working party in the parish newsletter and via the M Smith email. While I received only 2 apologies from interested parties because of holiday, the advertising only yielded 2 people present for the work, Jane Clarke and Marion Jeffreys. The remaining 5 were sourced direct by Kate!

Kindly Mick has offered to provide ongoing maintenance to this site once we have completed the stage 2 work as below and will add of his own accord a more suitable variety of plants and shrubs to the bed facing the houses. Marion and Nigel Jeffreys also offered to start weed digging work at the site the week before the fete.

* Stage 2 work on 29th October 10 -1

The working party request has been advertised as above and is identified on the village website. However we will repeat the request nearer the time

The work required is 2 tasks:

* 1. To provide the yearly prune (i.e. to the Lavenders and Spirea) and dig up many of the shrubs external to the railings facing the open space and replant these in gaps on the sides facing the houses. There will be an excess of plants and these can be purchased/donations by those in the village either on the day or after via adverts/photos of what’s available and then collected from PS allotment where they will be temporarily heeled in one of the raised beds.

2. to dig up some ‘deep rooted weeds’

Then in April next year that area will be seeded with grass (by the planters group) and the Parish Council will add this area to the open space mowing contract.

***Open Space – suggestion***

Just one of the many most immediate maintenance actions required is the cutting down of the brambles at the Church/Pre School fence area.

Suggestion: *The October 29th WP date could also have an afternoon session from 2 – 4.30 to address this task*

The bramble branches once cut down will need cutting into smaller pieces. It would be ideal if they could then be burnt on site – if permissible or saved to burn on a possible Parish Open Space bonfire event???

*We will include this extra time and task in the reminder to advertise this*

**Status: Ongoing actions as identified above**

1. **Community maintenance actions**

We are mindful that the Council has cut back enormously on a number of maintenance tasks that were previously provided in Villages and therefore Ashbury Parish and that many in the Parish may not be aware of this fact. Neither we believe of the fact the parish precept has not been increased to allow for taking over such previous actions.

One way to engender an active parish community response could be provide the information/facts as above alongside a request for input and responsibility against a set of identified tasks and amount of input required shared between us all. We would be happy to discuss such an approach further and how this group can somehow oversee or coordinate the required actions and activity. There are however a small number in the village who already undertake a sample of the actions we are now required to take on (if we want some level of maintenance in the parish) so these could be named, acknowledged and continue as now.

**Status: for ongoing discussion with PC**

Pauline Smith, David Pain, Jonathon Loose

**Appendix B**

**Ashbury Neighbourhood Plan : Steering Group**

**Report to the Parish Council Meeting**

**to be held on 11th September, 2017**

**PLAN PROGRESS :** We have now commenced the drafting of the Plan and, having established the format, the next step was to draft the 'plain English' version of the Plan policies. These are based entirely on the feedback from not just the V&O survey, but also those that have been conducted throughout the Plan process including those on specific issues.   The draft has in turn been submitted to our consultants for vetting [i.e. to ensure that our policies do not duplicate or contradict those at district and/or national level] and for formatting within a planning framework – a ‘planning English’ version if you like.

The intention then is to make both versions available to the community as a whole for comment and/or to address any queries that residents may have, with the aim of ensuring that the reasons for these policies are fully understood.   At the same time as the policies are released a spread of publicity materials will also be made available expanding on the background for each, and the steering group will also engage in other explanatory exercises in an endeavour to demonstrate that the views of residents have been represented as fully as possible.

Our target date for embarking on this exercise is mid-October.

**RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER :** Our new Parish Clerk, Claire Arnold, is now firmly ‘in post’ including acting as RFO for the Plan. Claire has yet to finally confirm whether we are able to reclaim VAT on any Plan expenditure, but the steering group’s feedback from HMRC suggests that, as all Plan funding is processed through the Parish Council, this should indeed be the case. The best evidence of this of course will be a successful claim, and the spend too date more than justifies such a claim.

**RESIDENTS CAN STILL HELP :** The steering group is still open to any comments/observations that residents wish to contribute, and some topics where this could prove particularly helpful are those of views, historic buildings and footpaths. To explain;

1. With the aim of protecting the character of the Parish we would like proposals on key areas to be made **‘designated green spaces’** whether these are publicly or privately owned - e.g. the field at Wixes Piece, the allotments, etc.
2. Similarly, while many properties of historic interest within the Parish are ‘protected’, many that are centuries old are not. We would therefore ask for help in identify such buildings and/or features [e.g. monuments] of the Parish to be added to a **‘list of community assets’**.
3. And finally, there are a number of ‘cross country’ footpaths that have fallen into disrepair to the point that they are potentially unsafe. Again we would like to hear from residents if they can provide details of any that they are aware of.

**Cliff Davies**

5th September, 2017