

# Minutes of Ordinary Meeting

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015

P517

The meeting commenced at 7.55pm

1. **Apologies:** Councillor Chris Williams.

**Present at meeting:** Trevor Gill, Michael Blakeman, Darrell Muffitt, Alastair Whetstone, Martyn Heard, Clerk (Helen Hide-Wright), Councillor Bart Dalla Mura.

**Public:** David Hutt, Kevin and Kathy Martin

2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:** None.

3. **CONFIRM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:** Proposed: Trevor Gill, Seconded: Alastair Whetstone, Signed and dated by David Hutt.

4. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:** none.

5. **MATTERS ARISING:**

## Community

- a) **Burial Ground:** Alastair Whetstone confirmed that the area is in good order.
- b) **Community Policing/Neighbourhood Watch:** Parish Councillors commented on the number of crime reports in recent weeks. Residents are encouraged to be vigilant about securing their properties and cars.
- c) **Playground** (including monthly check): Trevor Gill has looked at the area and identified that the picnic table is rotten and needs replacing. Trevor has found one for £140 net. Expenditure up to £180 was sought and approved by the meeting: Proposed: Trevor gill, Seconded: Alastair Whetstone: unanimous.
- d) **Superfast Broadband:** Trevor Explained to Councillor Bart Dalla Mura that superfast broadband is essential to the compliance of the Parish Council to the new Transparency rules. The current poor broadband service in the village inhibits the Parish Council's ability to load up documents onto the website. The service causes daily issues to the residents of the village.

Councillor Bart Dalla Mura asked where the closest community was with superfast broadband and it was thought that Kineton is the closest. Bart Dalla Mura undertook to look into this matter and exert what pressure he could to improve the situation.

- e) **Post Office:** Trevor Gill reported that Ettington Post Office is not able to support the AD PO because they are fully committed. Zoe Hibberd is still trying to progress the matter.
  
- f) **The Avon Pub:** Michael Blakeman confirmed that an email has just arrived from Sarah Richardson, saying that it appears someone is looking into the potential purchase of the pub.
  
- g) **Visit by Warwickshire Local History Society 13<sup>th</sup> June 2015 (2-4pm):** Cemetery Car- Park. Alastair confirmed that he has this in his diary to open up the car-park. Security for the car-park is being reviewed.

Trevor Gill passed on a request from Graham Miller to borrow the tables and chairs from the Reading Room. This was approved by the Parish Council. The table and chairs will need to be returned to the RR straight after the event and in good order.

#### **Roads: Traffic, Roads and Drains:**

Michael Blakeman reported considerable damage has been done to the verges and debris has been left following the works by the electricity company contractors. Some of the work is not acceptable and needs remedial work.

Graham Miller has asked if there is any chance of having the road swept prior to the Soap Box Derby because it has debris and dirt on the surface.

The verges that have been damaged by the dust carts are being dealt with by Stratford.

Trevor Gill will circulate an email with all known issues prior to these being raised with the appropriate authority.

He will contact SDC to find out where we are with the issues that have been raised with them and also Western Power to make good and ask for confirmation of a date to finish the works.

#### **Environment/Maintenance**

g) **Green areas** – Removal of grass cuttings from play area. Alastair Whetstone raised the issue of the grass mulcher. Bart Dalla Mura reported that the challenge is the length of the grass with a mulcher mower. It was decided to leave the situation and the frequency of cuts unchanged.

**Village Flower Tubs and materials:** Alastair Whetstone reported that the total expenditure required to replace and stock the flower tubs is likely to be £920 for 20 large tubs, 5 small tubs, compost, watering cans and plants. Proposed: Alastair seconded: Trevor Gill, unanimously approved by the meeting.

h) **Condition of verges:** Covered in Roads, Traffic and Drains.

i) **Reading Room maintenance:** Michael Blakeman said that the windows need to be looked at with a view for the works to be commenced in the near future. Quotes previously obtained may need renewing.

### **Communication/Administration**

j) **Administration** - Authorisation for emailed agendas to Parish Councillors. Proposed: Trevor Gill, seconded: Alastair Whetstone, unanimous support for the delivery of agendas by email.

k) **2015 Elections:** The Clerk confirmed that the results have been emailed out to Parish Councillors, put onto notice boards and have been sent on for inclusion on the website.

l) **Audit 2015.** The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council had passed audit. The return was signed by the Chairman, Trevor Gill, Trevor Gill reported his thanks to the Clerk for her work on the audit. Trevor outlined that in future years an internal audit may not be required but highlighted the worth of the auditor, Bill Robinson, who was able to offer advice and guidance to the Parish Council on its operations.

m) **Direct payments for suppliers:** The Clerk outlined the possibility of using direct bank payments. The meeting supported this idea to run alongside or instead of the use of cheques. Proposed: Trevor Gill, Seconded: Martyn Heard, unanimous.

n) **Change of meeting date** request by Clerk (August meeting): Moved from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

## 6. COUNCIL REPORTS:

### **Avon Dassett Annual Meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015 County and District Councillor's Report**

During this year the County Council has been proceeding to implement its Four Year Plan to accommodate a £90million reduction in the grant from central government in a £320million Annual Budget. This has resulted in cutting out all the non-mandatory services and consequently the number of staff has been reduced by around 1,000 in a 6,000 strong workforce. Although there have been some redundancies most of the reductions have been achieved by non-recruiting when Officers have retired, or taken early voluntary retirement and filling vacancies when people move to another job by internal recruitment where possible. We are becoming more of a commissioning Council out sourcing contracts wherever financially viable.

We are also working in partnership with other adjacent Local Authorities to combine resources where possible. Indeed, only last month we agreed to combine our Internal Audit function with Worcestershire County Council.

The two biggest areas of spend in the Council's Budget are the Care of the Elderly, about £180million a year; and Looked After children, as well as Safeguarding Children, about £80 million a year. This children's total is increasing as more and more allegations are made which have to be investigated, sometimes researching past records etc. Potential of Child Sexual Exploitation is also becoming a major concern and we are working closely with the Police and the Child Care Groups to ensure an exchange of information.

We are all growing older and have a longer life expectancy. Therefore the demand for independent living in the community is increasing. For example, 70 apartments are being built in Southam. Dementia is an increasing disease and is requiring an increase in our resources. The new Care Act which came into force on April 1<sup>st</sup> obliges Local Councils to regularly assess older people and to provide care and advice when needed. It also legislates, for the first time, the welfare of Carers.

Over the year we have seen the merger of Warwickshire and Mercia Police Forces. A new Chief Constable took over in Warwickshire this month and the Police Service, like the County Council is having to find savings without effecting front line services. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire came to the Southam and Feldon Community Forum last month and talked about his role and aspirations.

The Fire & Rescue Service is also undergoing fundamental reorganisation and successful negotiations with the Fire Brigade Union have led to a more efficient shift and manning system. There are also talks progressing over collaborative working with Hereford and Worcester Fire Brigade. Leamington Fire Station will be having a major refurbishment and a replacement Training Centre is proposed near Ryton on the A45.

During the past year there has been little legislation that would have a direct impact upon Avon Dassett. The District Council has strengthened its cooperation with Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council which has produced efficiencies in the operation of the Council. Despite receiving £1 million less than in previous years to run the Council through our organisational improvements we have been able to keep the Council Tax frozen for another year and Stratford District Council is now the lowest tax authority in Warwickshire.

There is a perception that Rural Crime is on the increase but in reality we live in the safest part of the country. We have recently appointed a Rural Crime Officer who is coordinating reports of rural crime including anti-social behaviour by working with the Police to tackle these issues.

Stratford District Council is proud of its waste collection service and you might be interested to know that we are the 7<sup>th</sup> best District Council for Recycling in the whole of the UK. The percentage of users of our recycling service is exceptional and it seems that we are far more successful at recycling than urban areas, such as Birmingham and Solihull. This saves our Council funds by not having to pay so much Landfill Tax.

A Boundary Review has recently been completed by the District Council and as a result the number of Councillors has been reduced from 53 to 36. As a result Avon Dassett is now in Red Horse Ward..

This time last year there was an application for a relatively large Solar Farm to be built at Deppers Bridge. The Planning Committee voted against this proposal and we now know, last week, that an Inspector supported our point of view that Deppers Bridge was not a suitable site.

The proposed Windfarm at Knightcote was rejected by the Inspector and Broadview are reconsidering their proposal to construct a Windfarm between Wormleighton and Priors Hardwick. We await the outcome.

The Core Strategy, I know, seems like a never-ending story. The Public Examination was carried out in January and in March the Inspector has advised us that certain changes will have to be made before he approves the document. In effect, he challenges the number of houses we think are appropriate for the next 15 years. Stratford were

proposing 11,400 and the Inspector feels the figure should be nearer 14,000. He was quite content with the Gaydon/Lighthorne Heath proposal but felt that we should consider an application for 900 houses in Southam as well together with the proposal for some 1500 houses to be built on Wellesbourne Airfield. Even though both submissions were submitted after the closing date, the Inspector thought there was value in considering their proposals.

The result of yet a further delay in completing the Core Strategy means that that Stratford District Council is still vulnerable to attacks by developers wanting to capitalise on the weakness that Stratford is currently experiencing. It is expected that the Core Strategy will be adopted in the late summer. However, the good news is that the Inspector accepted 70% of our proposals.

In conclusion, I must complement the Parish Council on their commitment to Avon Dassett and thanks to David Hutt, the departing Chair of Avon Dassett Parish Council, for his wise and sound judgement. It has been a pleasure working with you all for the benefit of the village.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE** – Paper copies circulated at meeting. Electronic mail circulated prior to meeting. Documents were circulated at the meeting. David Hutt took away the correspondence on the registration for pensions which has a compliance date to nominate a contact by June 2015. David Hutt undertook to report back to Trevor Gill within the next couple of days.

8. **PLANNING** (Declarations of interests): Nothing to report.

## 9. **FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Accounts for Payment

- To approve the following accounts for payment

### Appendix A

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENT MAY 2015, Avon Dassett Parish Council:

#### **Balance at close of business 30.4.15**

Current Account	£ 6,697.52 (Contains Precept of £5,240.00)
Savings Account	£ 8,751.01* (£2k transferred from current a/c 14.4.15)

This figure represents ring fenced funds for ADPC plus any interest received into the account.

**Bank Transactions**

<b>Current Account</b>		<b>Chq/SO/DD</b>	<b>In</b>	<b>Out</b>
7.4.15	N Power	DD		47.00
14.4.15	Transfer to Deposit			2,000.00
16.4.15		1315		35.01
20.4.15		1316		817.76
27.4.15	Precept		5,240.00	
28.4.15	Douglas TonksDD			245.70
29.4.15		1313		5.69
29.4.15		1314		6.46
29.4.15		1310		9.18

<b>Deposit Account</b>		<b>In</b>	<b>Out</b>
9.4.15	Interest	0.29	

<b>Cheques issued from mtg</b>		<b>Cheque No</b>	<b>Amount</b>
13.5.15	J. Sherriff (May coffee)	001317	5.61
13.5.15	H. Hide-Wright (April Exp)	001318	19.50
13.5.15	N Power (electricity)	001319	20.71
13.5.15	WALC membership	001320	94.00
13.5.15	Bill Robinson (Internal Audit)	001321	60.00
13.5.15	MFM Services (April Mows)	001322	246.00
<b>Total Cheques</b>			<b>445.82</b>

Notes: Current account includes first part of precept payment 2015/16.

**New Balances for Ring Fenced Funds:**

Neighbourhood Watch	£ 185.00
<b>St John's Steps appeal Funds</b>	<b>£ 359.13</b>
Community Grant Fund (Laptop)	£ 6.59
Interest Received	£ 0.29
Play area lease grant from AD Fete Committee	£ 200.00
Tubs (From Fete Committee)	£ 500.00
RR Maintenance (From Fete Committee)	£ 500.00
Ring fenced RR Maintenance	£ 5,000.00
Ring fenced Parish Plan/RR Refurbishment	£ 2,000.00
 Total	 £ 8,751.01

Cheques were proposed by Trevor Gill and seconded by Michael Blakeman, unanimously approved. The cheques were signed by Trevor Gill and Alastair Whetstone.

Financial report signed by Trevor Gill.

Clerk confirmed overtime for April of 15.5 hours due to work on the audit and the election. The expense was approved for submission to the payroll agency for payment. Proposed: Alastair Whetstone, Seconded; Trevor Gill.

The bank mandate was signed with Darrell Muffitt and Martyn Heard going on and David Hutt coming off.

10. MEMBER REPORTS: Discussions took place regarding the division of responsibilities for the Parish Council.

<b><u>Responsibility</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>
Planning (incl. Neighbourhood plan)	Mike Blakeman
Play area, cemetery and green areas	Alastair Whetstone
Roads and Drains	Trevor Gill
Reading Room	Martyn Heard
Website, broadband and community	Darrell Muffitt
Finance, Standing Orders	Trevor Gill

**Action: Clerk to send Word copy of Parish plan to Michael Blakeman**

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS – 2015 : 1<sup>st</sup> June, 6<sup>th</sup> July, 10<sup>th</sup> Aug Date change from 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 7<sup>th</sup> Sept, 5<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov, 7<sup>th</sup> Dec.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.