

AVON DASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held at the Reading Room on Monday 5 October 2009

Present J Burgess; L Hope-Frost; S Richardson; A Rutherford;
Cllr C Williams; Clerk

1. Apologies: D Hutt

2. Declaration of Interest: None

3. Confirmation of Minutes:

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as correct by L Hope-Frost and seconded by S Richardson; they were then signed by J Burgess.

J Burgess welcomed the new clerk, Helen Hide-Wright, to the Parish Council.

Due to time constraints, Councillor Chris Williams made his statement to the Parish council and remained at the meeting until the conclusion of the discussion on Planning.

4. Council Report:

Cllr Williams presented his report – see attached.

Within the District Council Report Councillor Williams highlighted the local development Framework. The Government recognises we don't have the infrastructure to cope with significant increase in traffic but the Parish Council does need to plan for 2021 to 2026.

Government insists that new housing must be mixed to include social housing, private housing and travellers.

The location of the proposed Ecotown at Middle Quinton is unlikely to be supported because of its location. The location around upper Heyford is favoured because of the infrastructure.

Upkeep of St John's churchyard. When churches become redundant District Councils are not obliged to take them on. The bi-annual grass cutting has been a goodwill gesture by the DC. Lack of funding is likely to impact upon this. Councillor Williams advised that a local precept may be necessary to cover the cutting of verges within the Parish of Avon Dasset. Lily Hope-Frost commented that the Parish council will continue to accept the 2 cuts per year currently undertaken by the district Council and that the Parish Council will cover the rest (potentially 2 further cuts per year). Councillor Williams recommended making a provision for increased grass cutting in the next budget.

Jill Burgess suggested that the next meeting should look at forthcoming projects in order to assess likely expenditure and commitments.

County Council Report

Fire Service

A public consultation is in progress and occurring across Warwickshire. Councillor Williams opposes the closure of Fenny Compton Fire Station. The retained fire service operates from Fenny Compton. The staff work elsewhere but when called upon, attend the station ASAP. Clearly this

does slow down their response times when compared to a manned station but full-time staff are unaffordable. Fenny Compton only has one fire engine. Most fires need 2 engines and the time for this to arrive complicates the matter further. The engine at Southam normally comes. However, under the proposed closures, this station is likely to be covering a larger area itself and may not be available to support Fenny Compton.

The council have suggested Banbury would supply a second engine but this has not been agreed. From previous experience, Fenny Compton tends to send its engine to support Banbury far more than the opposite situation. In addition, the Kingsbury Oil Terminal and Kineton Camp both have to have cover from a fire station as a priority. This currently comes from Coleshill and Fenny Compton respectively.

Fire Cover on Motorway.

It has been suggested that this could be via a rapid response, with two staff in a high powered Range Rovers. However, a 2 man team would be inadequate to deal with the frequently occurring situation of strapped person's in cars. This is normally dealt with by cutting off the roof but 2 men cannot do this.

Councillor Williams summarised by saying that if Fenny Compton station closed, there would be no fire service cover in south Warwickshire.

Lily Hope-Frost will be attending the meeting regarding the proposed closure of Fenny Compton fire station at the Dassett School on the 8th October at 7.30pm

Review of Budgetary Requirements

The County Council are hoping to keep council tax at a 2% increase. 55% of the Council's expenses comes from staff costs and therefore this is an obvious place to make cost savings but will affect services. Certain services such as education are protected in terms of provision but not buildings. Primary Care has overspent by £25 million, so that money has to be found.

Councillor Williams stated that whilst next year won't be so bad, the financial situation will become increasingly difficult the year after and the year after that.

4. Planning

Post Box Cottage, Caroline Englefield. It was agreed that comments made on the previous applications still stood and should be reiterated. The Parish Council therefore concluded: "We do not support this application. There is a moratorium in this area. This application contravenes the Local Plan which this Council supports."

Appeal against enforcement: Michael Reilly. Councillor Williams confirmed that the PC could add comments. Jill Burgess stated the PC had no comments to add.

Orchard End, Mr Mullane Planning permission granted

Tree Order Land by the bus shelter Permission has been granted for the removal of a dead hawthorn tree

Tree Application No objection to fell 3 Cyprus trees at Avon Carrow.

Pump House, Jeremy Davies Application has been withdrawn following apparent irregularities in the drawings submitted.

Matters Arising:

5. Community Policing/Neighbourhood Watch (NW)

Two incidents were presented by Lily Hope-frost. The Parish Council were saddened to learn of the death of Alistair Mackay in the M40 incident on Saturday 3rd October. The Police are investigating it.

Secondly, there had been a theft of a vehicle and its valuable contents from Ox Bow Farm. The incident appeared to be related to the brief visit of two men to the Farm.

Traffic, Roads and Drainage Issues

Jill Burgess confirmed that the last traffic survey had confirmed an average speed of 38 mph, with some vehicles recording up to 60 mph going into the village, near the play area bend in the road. Jill stated that she will be seeking the data.

ACTION: JILL BURGESS

The patching to Farnborough road, as far as Ox Bow Farm, has been carried out.

The subsistence on the motorway bridge has been marked and therefore Jill Burgess believes that the work is pending.

There was no update to the drainage works in the village. Jill Burgess to seek update from Councillor Williams.

ACTION: JILL BURGESS

Playground

There was a review of progress on the lease on the land. The owners have suggested a lease of 10-15 years but the consensus at the meeting was that this was too short a period of time. It was agreed that a term of 25 years should be sought. A draft proposal is to be formulated for further discussions with Richard Worrall

Andy Rutherford stated that the matter of the lease also highlighted the issue of the yearly fee which currently stands at £10. Andy will seek clarification from Richard Worrall prior to engaging legal help to draw up a lease.

ACTION: ANDY RUTHERFORD

St. John's Church

Lily Hope-Frost confirmed that the National Garden's will not countenance the advertising of a musical event in the yellow book. However, Fiori Musicali considers the church to be a great venue for a musical concert and it may still be possible to hold one next year.

LHP distributed the order of service to Council members for the 40th anniversary of the churches Conservation Trust which was held on the 16th September 2009.

LHF said that it was time for another team clean of the church and grounds and perhaps the aim should be to have one clean per annum.

ACTION: LILY HOPE-FROST

Upkeep of Green Areas

Sandra Rice has organised a planting session on 10th October. She has asked if the PC would be agreeable to her extending the hedge. This was agreed by JB and Seconded by LHF and AR.

ACTION: JILL BURGESS

John Glover has worked on the verge near to St. John's. In addition, Sarah Richardson confirmed that the Parish Council will fund 2 extra cuts per year at St. John's. She suggested organising a village tidy up, targeting specific areas of the village. Perhaps the spring would be the best time?

ACTION: SARAH RICHARDSON

Andy Rutherford suggested a team could work at the church to clear leaves and trim shrubs and hedges. November was identified as an appropriate time. Jill Burgess reminded the PC about the Probation Service as a good resource for helpers

ACTION: ANDY RUTHERFORD

Social Housing

Phil Ward, Rural Housing Enabler has looked at the proposed site and has been in contact with the land owner. Nothing further has been heard to date.

ACTION: ANDY RUTHERFORD

Appointment of clerk

The PC welcomed Helen Hide-Wright.

Parish Plan

Nature area: Tree felling by Andy and Steve has been discussed but a date needs to be confirmed. Once the dead tree is felled work can commence on the nature area.

ACTION: ANDY RUTHERFORD

Jill Burgess confirmed that the Village Design Statement Group are finalising the report.

The lay-by proposal has been submitted. Peter Samwell has stated we will not know until January whether there will be any funding allocated to Area Committees next year (and what the criteria may be for spending the allocation) as the previous amount was for three years only. Jill will update website on the Parish Plan.

ACTION: JILL BURGESS

Correspondence:

A brochure on Playground equipment was given to Andy Rutherford.

Various information leaflets from WALC were acknowledged.

Jill Burgess has set up drop off points for completed fire Service questionnaires:

Reading rooms, Pub, Parish Councillors or postal returns.

Jill holds paper copies of the proposed closures of all of the fire stations.

A letter was read from resident outlining issues with flower tubs. A response will be made and Sarah Richardson suggested that the PC should offer to pay for the flowers in the tubs close to the playground.

ACTION: JILL BURGESS

Financial Statement:

Balances at close of business on Monday 5 October 2009:

Current account £250.53 credit

Deposit account £7,790.02 credit

Cheques issued:

a) Fenny Compton PC (donation for fire station)	£50.00
b) Sue Harris (cleaning/ supplies)	£11.13
c) John Glover (mowing)	£170.00
d) Mick Harris (mowing)	£70.00

Note: £3,500 precept paid into savings account

Payment of cheques was proposed by L Hope-Frost and seconded by S Richardson.

The August Financial statement stated "Priors Marston" and should have read Avon Dasset Parish Council.

6. Any Other Business:

Wind farm

There will be a meeting on Thursday 13th October at 8pm at the holiday inn, Leamington. Andy Rutherford checking availability to attend. This follows on from the public consultation meeting on the 28th September at Knightcote.

ACTION: ANDY RUTHERFORD

A member of the public has been in touch to see if postcards and Christmas cards will be sold via the website. It was agreed that this was a good idea. Items to be added to website.

ACTION: JILL BURGESS

Diary Date: Sun 29th Nov, 12.00 Avon Pub, Sale of Christmas cards.

ACTION: JILL BURGESS & L H-F

The Board has arrived from St Mary's, Shrewsbury. It is all wrapped and stored in the bell tower of St John's.

Jill Burgess has spoken to Roger regarding the Christmas cards. Matter to be progressed.

ACTION: JILL BURGESS

Remembrance service

Jill Burgess has spoken to Ian Hiley who has confirmed he will be in the village for the service. Jill will email the priest who will sort out the service.

ACTION: JILL BURGESS

Parking

There has been another complaint about parking at low End. Jill Burgess proposed putting leaflets onto the windscreens of the cars involved. Lily Hope-Frost will prepare leaflets.

ACTION: LILY HOPE-FROST

Thanks were given to Sarah Richardson for her work on the finances during the period without a Clerk

7. Questions from the Public: None.

8. Date of Next Meeting: Monday 2 November 2009 at 7.30 pm in the Reading Room.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Avon Dassett Parish Council 05.10.09.
District Councillor's Report

1. Members may recall that earlier this year the Parish Council was invited to comment upon the Local Development Framework (LDF). In essence this document sought to determine how much additional housing was required for our district and where it was to be located.
2. The District Council's initial response was that between the period 2015 through 2021 some 5,600 dwellings were needed. The Government has recommended that this figure should be increased by some 1,900 dwellings to 7,500. It is clear that the Government feels that this additional capacity can be identified throughout our district. In addition to this increase the Government is recommending that a further review of our Core Strategy should take place to identify a further 3,000 dwellings for the period 2021 through 2026. The Government was clearly convinced that there is a case for an increase in Housing Provision to minimise the problem of worsening affordability and enabling a more flexible provision of affordable housing. The Government thought that this could be done whilst reducing the migration from major urban areas to our district. A further comment was made that the location of the proposal Ecotown is very doubtful due to sustainability and transport problems that do not meet the required criteria for Ecotowns.
3. At last month's meeting of the Parish Council I note that you required clarification regarding the District Council's commitment to maintaining the Churchyard. I have confirmed with Rob Weeks that when churchyards become disused the District Council undertakes to cut the grass in accordance with its regular grass cutting schedule. It has no obligation, nor desire, in the current financial climate to undertake maintenance. Any maintenance that has been undertaken in the past was purely a matter of goodwill and not as a result of legal obligation. I believe we will be reviewing our grass cutting regime and this is one area that I suspect will be open to a reduction in service, rather than an enhancement.

Cllr Chris Williams
04.10.09.

Avon Dassett Parish Council 05.10.09.
County Councillor's Report

1. Members will be aware that the Public Consultation has started with regard to the Review of the Fire Service. I must stress that we are in a period of discussing with all of the communities in Warwickshire the various proposals. Obviously, it is unacceptable to move to a situation where the communities will receive a reduced Fire Service.
2. In our own area there is a proposal to close the Fenny Compton Fire Station which, of course, provides a service for Avon Dassett. As a matter of record, I oppose this particular aspect of the Review although there are many good initiatives that should be implemented. My main concern is the question of access time to an incident. The Fenny Compton Fire Station is, by definition, a Retained Fire Service. This means that the Firemen have regular employment and supplement their activities by being available 24 hours, 365 days a year to provide fire and rescue cover in our area. The Fenny Compton crew, as indeed all the Firemen in Warwickshire, are dedicated and committed to their work.
3. The issue for debate is whether or not, as a result of the proposals, all of the communities served by Fenny Compton Fire Station are within the 20 min. access time as allowed by Fire Regulations. It is quite obvious that this is not the case and the only way the 20 min. rule can be achieved is through possible service from the Banbury Fire Station in Oxfordshire. A further issue of concern is that the Kineton Ammunition Depot has always been identified as Strategically Important requiring the facility of the Fenny Compton Fire Service.
4. There is to be a Public Meeting on Thursday 8th October 2009 at 7.30 p.m. in The Dassett School in Fenny Compton when the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Glenn Ranger, will be available to answer specific concerns of residents. I must stress that the format of this meeting is basically a 'Question and Answer' Session and will not be available to those residents who wish to make a statement. I do hope Avon Dassett will be well represented at Thursday's meeting so that the Fire Station will have a clear understanding of the views of Avon Dassett.
5. As I mentioned last month, the Review of the Budgetary Requirements for the County Council has already commenced. To put it into perspective, the Council has a shortfall of some £20 million and a 1% increase in Council Tax produces £2.25 million increase in income. It is hoped to keep the Council Tax at 2%. Clearly, where employee costs amount to some 55% of the spending in running our Council, it indicates that we will have to review spending pressures. Areas have already been identified where savings can be made and I am confident that the proposals are not only achievable but will meet with the support of most tax payers.

Cllr Chris Williams
04.10.09.