

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly of the Parish of Avon Dassett

Wednesday 5 May 2021, following the Annual General Meeting

The meeting was held remotely and recorded, in accordance with the Avon Dassett Parish Council Remote Procedures.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm

- 1) Present: Trevor Gill, Mike Blakeman, Darrell Muffitt, Phil Baxter, Liz Hirst, Clerk (Helen Hide-Wright), District Councillor John Feilding, 4 members of the public.
- 2) Apologies: Chris Williams. Apologies were accepted by the Council.
- 3) Acceptance of minutes of last meeting held on 14th December 2020. Proposed: Mike Blakeman, Seconded: Darrell Muffitt. Unanimous.
- 4) Matters arising from the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting: None
- 5) Chair's report (Appendix 1).
- 6) County Councillor Chris Williams: No Report for Annual Parish Meeting.
- 7) District Councillor John Fielding: Councillor Fielding commented upon how residents have pulled together to support the effort to fight the covid pandemic and support others throughout the period. Councillor Fielding commented upon the development of the Code of Conduct and Trevor Gill's valuable role in that process.
- 8) Parish Matters – Including proposed Parish Plan
The Parish Plan launch is being held on the 22nd May. The market will be set out one-way. There will be stalls on one side with items for sale and on the other side will be villagers highlighting activities in the village.
Children will be able to submit drawings of their ideal play area and outline ideas for the area behind the bus shelter.
The Parish Plan will be advertised around the village and through social media. Posters will go into the noticeboards. Proceeds from the Market will go to Katherine House Hospice.
- 9) Parish Plan Summary:
 - a) Launch to be held [on 22 May 2021](#) at The Yew Tree, 9am -11am.
 - b) The Parish Council, Community Benefit Society and other parish groups will attend.
 - c) Pop-up market currently has 17+ stalls
 - d) Details will be published in the Compton Chronicle.
 - e) Leaflets, advertising the Parish Plan and market has been delivered throughout the village and will be repeated, as the date for the market approaches.
 - f) Pop-up market, village social and parish plan launch have been publicised on community website, social media, WhatsApp group and [nextdoor.com](#). Further publicity is planned.
 - g) Database of local business being compiled.
 - h) There will be opportunities for children's input into parish plan and for adults to highlight their priorities
 - i) [After May 22](#), data will be analysed in collaboration with Stratford District Council and the questionnaire will be devised.
 - j) The Questionnaire to be launched in September.
- 10) Open Forum
 - a) A resident paid a tribute to Councillor Chris Williams (Appendix 2).
 - b) District Councillor John Feilding: Paid tribute to Councillor Chris Williams.

The meeting closed at 7. 35pm

Avon Dassett Parish Council

Chair's Report to The Annual Parish Assembly May 2021

The last report that I gave was in November 2020 and this report will cover the period since then.

1. Covid19

The recent months continue to be dominated by the Covid pandemic and this has had continued to have a huge impact on the lives of residents of the village. In addition, we have seen local businesses, their owners and employees severely impacted by the restrictions and the forced closure of some of our businesses. Hopefully with the vaccination rollout and the increase in testing both at home and in the many testing centres we have turned a corner and can now look forward to the 'new normal'.

The Parish Council has continued with remote meetings, but tonight is the last zoom meeting that we are allowed by law to hold, and we will have to revert to face to face meetings in the future unless central government can be persuaded to change the law. Personally, I would like to see all Parish Councils given the opportunity to decide whether to hold a meeting face to face, remotely or a mixture of the two formats. My belief is that our meetings have been better attended whilst they have been held remotely and that there are many benefits to be gained by some form of remote meetings.

The Parish Council Covid support group has continued to help local residents during these difficult times. The group ensured that regular contact was maintained with residents who lived alone, collected and delivered shopping and prescriptions and generally provided support as and when needed.

Several residents have baked cakes which have been delivered to Fenny Compton and Kington surgeries, the Southam vaccine centre and Lisle Court Vaccine centre in Leamington. We have received a formal thank you from the lead nurse at Lisle Court and the other centres have expressed their appreciation as and when cakes have been delivered. I am sure that my colleagues will join me in thanking all who have helped by either organising, baking or delivering the cakes.

I am also aware that some of our residents have volunteered at the local vaccination and testing centres and without the help of the many volunteers nationally the NHS would not have achieved the remarkable success rate of testing and vaccinations.

It would be remiss of me to pick out any one individual as this has been a community effort and has demonstrated that when needed we can work together for the benefit of those of us who need help. So, to anyone who has helped in any way a thank you, without you this would not have been possible.

2. Charity Events

I am aware that plans are being progressed for The Dassett Country Show to hold its annual event on 7th August, and Avon Dassett Open Gardens on 4th July.

Full details will be made available in due course, and I hope that residents and visitors to the village will support these events.

3. Green Areas

There is general agreement that last year the tubs once again enhanced the appearance of the village and our thanks to Dave Hicks for his considerable support in supplying the plants for the tubs and also for his hard work in making the pots look so attractive.

4. Avon Dassett Community Benefit Society Limited – The Yew Tree

The last 6 months has proved to be very a very difficult period for Jack and Ella our new tenants at The Yew Tree. For a large percentage of the time the Yew Tree has been closed but they have not wasted the time. They have spent much time and effort in making then garden more attractive and generally making improvements to the offering.

The Yew Tree was reopened for outside customers only and is really pleasing to see the numbers of customers that have visited the Yew Tree many from outside the village. Let's hope that the weather improves and that before too long the restrictions can be fully lifted, and The Yew Tree can continue to prosper.

5. The Parish Plan

Liz Hirst and Sarah Richardson have been working very hard on developing a process to deliver a new Parish Plan for Avon Dassett.

There is to be a market at The Yew Tree on 22 May 2021 as a part of the launch of this project and it is important that this project is supported by all areas of the village.

6. County and District Councillors

After a period of 23 serving as our County Councillor and for many years as our District Councillor Residents Chris Williams has decided to retire.

During this long period in office Chris has always strived to ensure that the interests of the areas that he has represented are at the forefront of all that he has managed to achieve. In addition to this Chris has always been there to support the activities of the Parish Councils and has on many occasions provided guidance and good and considered advice when it is sought.

Chris always displayed a stoical attitude to his ongoing health challenges we all very much wish and hope that his health will improve, and he can enjoy his retirement with Carol and his family.

Secondly, Avon Dassett Parish Council has been fortunate to have the support and guidance of John Feilding our District Councillor. I think that it is fair to say that we have worked well together on the wide range of challenges that we have faced, and I certainly value your support.

7. Avon Dassett Parish Council

I must say a very big thank to Helen, our clerk. The last few months have continued to be a very difficult period with the continuing Covid pandemic and all of the implications on the Parish Council's activities that this has brought.

She has had her workload increased due to the number of changes needed to ensure that we can continue to operate efficiently and within legal requirements, the number of guidelines that have been issued, the need to continually update risk assessments and to liaise with advisory bodies where necessary.

We really are indebted to you for the smooth running of the council you always guide us, supports us, and generally ensure that the Parish Council runs efficiently and within the rules and regulations by which we are regulated. Helen, thank you.

It would not be right of me to finish without me thanking my colleagues on the Parish Council. We all have many different skills, knowledge and abilities and I never cease to be amazed how valuable these are. We are very lucky not only that my colleagues have these attributes but that they are prepared to give their expertise and most importantly time for the benefit of the village. I am sure that our local residents appreciate all of your efforts, I know I certainly do.

Trevor Gill
Chair
Avon Dassett Parish Council
5 May 2021

Appendix 2. Tribute to County Councillor Chris Williams.

My best recall is how very supportive he was of little AD and attended our meetings almost every month for years. When I was Chair, he even rang me within minutes of getting home to add another issue or make a comment. Felt he was always approachable.

[Lily Hope Frost]

Chris was fundamental in helping us gain grant funding for a huge number of projects including actions from the parish plan, the first iteration of the community website, the playground and upkeep of the village. He was a huge supporter of the village.

[A Contributor]

Hearing of Chris Williams stepping back I felt I could not let that event take place without my taking this opportunity to thank him for his great contribution and support to the Avon Dassett Parish Council during my time as Chair.

Always well informed Chris had a valuable ability to present his news from Stratford District Council in an interesting, informative and engaging manner. He also demonstrated excellent diplomacy. On the odd occasion when I needed to contact him for guidance or support on a local council matter his response was always wise and took all parties in the matter into consideration.

Thank you, Chris.

[A Contributor]

Chris was always quick to provide answers to questions I had relating to District Council matters and share details of his many contacts in District Council departments. His position on the Planning Committee made him a useful source of information when dealing with the many planning applications that came through the Parish Council during my time as clerk.

However, my fondest memory is rather a comical one:

It was a very hot summer's evening, and we had both doors open to enable fresh air to circulate in the Reading Room during the Parish Council meeting. At that time the chairs that were used by visitors to the Reading Room were lined up in a row and of the sort that used to be found in office receptions, padded, with deep chair backs.

We were well into the meeting when Rose - my little black cat - slowly ambled into the room, jumped onto the back of the chairs and proceeded to walk back and forth along the chair-backs directly behind the head of Cllr Williams while he was, if memory serves, presenting his District Council report. I was busy trying to continue taking the minutes and Chris continued with his presentation without missing a beat, even though he must have been well aware of the purring creature behind his head! Once Chris had completed his report, I lifted Rose off the chairs and she spent the remainder of the meeting curled up on the lap of Cllr Deborah Brangwyn, who was more than happy to look after her while I continued minute-taking.

A silly story, but I couldn't help but be impressed by the way that Chris carried on unperturbed by our uninvited guest - most professional.

[Margaret Maughan]

So, on behalf of past chairs, vice chairs and clerk we would like to express our immense thanks to Chris for his decades of service. We hope villagers the next time they consult the website, look at the PC noticeboard or sit on benches in the playpark and around the village will remember Chris's input with great thanks.