

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF ASPENDEN PARISH HELD AT THE PAVILION ASPENDEN ON WEDNESDAY 27 May 2014 AT 8.00 PM**

Present: Paul Spears (Chair)  
 Officer attending: Marty Kilby  
 Present: 4 members of the public

**APOLOGIES**

14.01 Toni Barrington-Long

**14.02 APPROVE MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2013**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13 May 2013 were before the meeting and signed as a correct record.

**14.03 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Cllr Paul Spears gave his report as follows:

Our council has remained at full strength (6) throughout the year although 2 councillors, Barnaby Cornish and Karen Cordell stepped down in the autumn. Olivia Blakeney-Edwards and Thomas Poulton were subsequently co-opted in January 2014. Paul Spears was re-elected Chair and Jeffrey Poulton took over as Vice Chair at the Annual Parish Council meeting on 16 May 2013. The council has continued to meet bi-monthly throughout the year and there has been no need for any extraordinary meetings.

In the absence of a Local Plan Buntingford TC decided to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan and asked the surrounding Parishes to participate in a joint project, which we agreed to do. Two committees were formed; Paul Spears representing the village on the planning team which is responsible for strategy and implementation. While Birgit Gibson and Ben Surrey volunteered to represent the village on the planning forum which seeks to ensure a diverse range of opinions is covered. The plan is currently at the first stage of public consultation with household, business and youth questionnaires having been distributed.

EHDC also released the draft Local Plan for consultation between 27 Feb and 22 May. Aspenden has been designated a category 3 village which effectively means development is not permitted ' other than that appropriate in green belt and rural area beyond the green belt. As the village is tightly enclosed within a conservation area new building applications are very unlikely to be granted. However, it must be recognised that the majority of the Parish lies outside the area hence the need for a neighbourhood plan. Given our close proximity to Buntingford the recent granting of 3 large building applications with at least 4 pending is cause for considerable concern.

Your Parish Council strongly opposed the application to build 56 houses on land immediately opposite Watermill industrial estate on the grounds that Aspenden Rd was dangerously inadequate for the addition of increased traffic without widening. EHDC agreed the site was unsuitable and refused the application subject to appeal. The PC will renew its opposition should an appeal be lodged.

Once again our thanks are due to Glyn Jones for continuing to maintain our Parish paths. It has been a particularly challenging year due to excessive rainfall and high winds. Major work scheduled to take place to halt the bank erosion near the Westmill Road footpath bridge could not be carried out as it coincide with a period of high water level.

HCC highways resurfacing of the village road to Buntingford in January was completed in only 1 day but did not include the entire length as scheduled. Whilst it is an undoubted improvement the road still remains hazardous at the bend where it should be widened.

A wreath was laid on behalf of the Parish at St Mary's church during the Remembrance Day service. During this year when we mark 100 years from the start of WW1 we hope to encourage a large attendance at this years' service.

**14.04 OPEN FORUM**

There were no questions.

The meeting closed at 8.09 pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_