

MINUTES of the ASPENDEN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on Tuesday 28th FEBRUARY 2023 at 7.00pm in THE FOX.

Present Cllr Richard Blackburn (Chairman) Cllr Tracy Devonshire (Vice Chairman)
 Cllr Andrew Huggins Cllr Tom Poulton
 County Councillor Jeff Jones
 Pat Murray (Church Warden)
 1 member of the public - Martin Prescott

Officer attending Denise Anderson (Clerk)

APOLOGIES

23.01 None

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

23.02 None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

23.03 County Councillor Jones introduced Martin Prescott who is standing as a member for the Buntingford Ward in the forthcoming District Council Elections.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

23.04 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 22nd November 2022 having been circulated previously, were before the meeting and signed as a correct record.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

23.05 Aspenden Parish Council Chairman's Report (February 2023)

Village Planters

Our sincere thanks goes once again to Chris Newman for building and fixing four large planters for the Village gateway signs, which are now full of bulbs, thanks to Stuart & Jenny, and Tom for providing top quality soil.

Highways Update

Pot holes along Aspenden Road outside the Watermill Industrial Estate and Poulton's yard continue to be an issue, despite repeatedly reporting them. We will take this up with Highways as patch repairing does not seem to solve the problem. Similarly, the road into Westmill has seen an increase in traffic as a result of the London Road closure, and the surface is in part breaking up in significant areas – once again we will take this up with Highways.

A507 Update

Following further consultation, Hertfordshire County Council have agreed to extend the area covered by the proposed weight limit restriction along the A507, effectively banning over 7.5T HGVs, from the Buntingford A10 Roundabout to the Clothall Road, South Road and Wallington Road Roundabout at Baldock. HGV traffic will be rerouted to the A602 and A505. Appropriate signage will be placed at key locations. There will be an "except for access" arrangement in place allowing deliveries and operational needs of business and farms. A consultation period is open and closes on 12th March 2023. Subject to feedback, the scheme is likely to commence Summer 2023.

Kings Charles III's Coronation

St Mary's Church and the Parish Council will be hosting an afternoon tea party with children's games on Monday 8th May 2023 to commemorate and celebrate King Charles III's Coronation – more details will be circulated over the coming weeks, and the event will take place at St Mary's from 2pm. We will be looking for cake donations and volunteers to help on the day.

Village Spring Clean 2023

I will be organising a Village Spring Clean in late March/early April again and details will be circulated shortly.

Village Green Litter Picking

Unfortunately, East Herts will cease to provide funding for our litter picker, Jeff Poulton, from April 2023. The Parish Council has however decided to provide funding so the service can continue and there should be no change to the current arrangements.

Glyn Jones

It is with much sadness that I report the recent passing of Glyn Jones, a much loved and long-term village resident along with his wife Joan. A service celebrating Glyn's life will be held on Tuesday 7th March at St Mary's from 1.45pm.

Pat Murray (Church Warden) joined the meeting at this point. Cllr Blackburn reported that he had attended a meeting of the Parochial Church Council to agree arrangements for the village celebrations for King Charles III's Coronation. The Parish Council will contribute to the budget for the event which would be agreed under Finance on the Agenda. Mrs Murray left the meeting after the discussions were concluded.

Cllr Jones provided his report to the meeting.

He confirmed that following the Boundary Review Aspenden was now part of the Buntingford Ward and would be represented by 3 Councillors after the District Elections.

He said the East Herts budget will be set on the 1st March 2023 and the County budget was set the previous week. Council Tax was up 4.99% equating to £1.47 per week on a Band D property. A budget of £80m was allocated to Highways, £170m to Children's Services and £443m Adult Care.

Cllr Jones reported that the 321 Arriva Bus Service contract was due to finish on 26th March 2023 but it had been agreed that Arriva will continue to provide the service.

Cllr Jones told of a further aid trip to Turkey delivering essential items to a distribution centre with the help of 3 local Turkish residents. The donations were gratefully received and distributed immediately.

Cllr Devonshire expressed concern about the weight limit on the bridge by Watermill Industrial Estate. Cllr Jones said it had been assessed and deemed adequate.

PARISH COUNCIL DOCUMENTATION

23.06 None for this meeting

FINANCE

23.07 Finance report and payments authorised

To receive the finance report. The report is an appendix to the minutes.

The Budget Tracker Sheet was distributed and Cllr Huggins requested an additional 2 columns were added to the document showing the actual expenditure for the previous two years.

23.08 Change of Bank for Parish Council

Due to the difficulties the Clerk was experiencing with the current bank account held with Barclays Bank Cllr Blackburn proposed that the Parish Council change their bank account to an online Lloyds Bank Account. Cllr Huggins questioned whether the Council's Financial Regulations allowed for online banking. The Clerk stated she would check the Financial Regulations before proceeding.

PLANNING

23.09 Planning Report

To receive the updated Planning Report. The report is an appendix to these minutes.

3/22/1285/HH	Shem Nichols The Street Aspenden Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9	Refused
3/22/1873/HH 3/22/1874/LBC 3/22/1876/LBC	Gorhambury The Street Aspenden Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 9PG	Approved

23.10 Planning Applications since the Parish Council meeting on the 22nd November 2022

3/22/2535/HH	Gorhambury The Street Aspenden Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 9PG	Refused
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23.11 Planning Applications

None

Cllr Blackburn stated he had been asked by a number of local residents to contact East Herts Planning with regard to the access made to Manor Cottage. He had written to the Head of Planning with photographic evidence requesting the matter be investigated

HIGHWAYS

23.12 Cllr Blackburn reiterated the ongoing issue of the pot holes outside Watermill Industrial Estate and Poulton's yard as well as the appalling state of the road between Westmill and Aspenden which was being used as a cut through due to the road closure of London Road. Cllr Blackburn considered that these problems should be flagged and dealt with especially due to the inconvenience caused by the ongoing works on London Road. Cllr Jones stated that Westmill Road was an unclassified road and that he would seek a budget for unclassified roads. The issue of parked works trucks and cars near the junction of Aspenden Road as a result of the London Road works was also raised. Cllr Jones said this would be monitored after the completion of the works.

23.13 20's Plenty

Cllr Blackburn attended the zoom meeting urging the Parish Council to write to the local authority to implement speed restrictions using a proforma letter to encourage a 20mph speed limit through residential areas. Cllr Huggins stated that the Highways Committee set a priority order.

PARISH AND DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS THURSDAY 4th MAY 2023

23.14 The Clerk briefed Councillors on the process for the 2023 Elections. A poster for the Noticeboard and Parish Council website on the Elections was agreed.

PARISH MATTERS

23.15 Armed Forces Covenant

Cllr Blackburn outlined the scope of the Armed Forces Covenant and stated that a local resident was willing to be the required 'champion'.

Resolved that the Parish Council will sign the Armed Forces Covenant and Steve Parlour will be appointed as the 'champion'.

23.16 King Charles III Coronation Celebrations

Resolved to budget £100 match funded with the church for the celebrations.

23.17 Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill

Cllr Huggins reported that this was mostly about how changes to Planning are being made making them more neighbourhood focused with more weight being given to Neighbourhood Plans. He said that the current Neighbourhood Plan was now 5 years old and the District Plan dates from 2018 and as such these documents would lose weight in Planning matters.

Cllr Blackburn, as Chairman, will draft a letter and send to the Parish Councils allied to the Neighbourhood Plan with a view to discussing this matter.

23.18 Litter Picking and Litter Bin emptying arrangements

The Clerk reported that Cllr Blackburn and herself met with two representatives from the EHC & NHC Shared Waste Partnership to discuss this matter. It was agreed that the Parish Council will fund the current Litter Picker from their budget and arrangements will be made to have the litter bags picked up as normal from the Village Green.

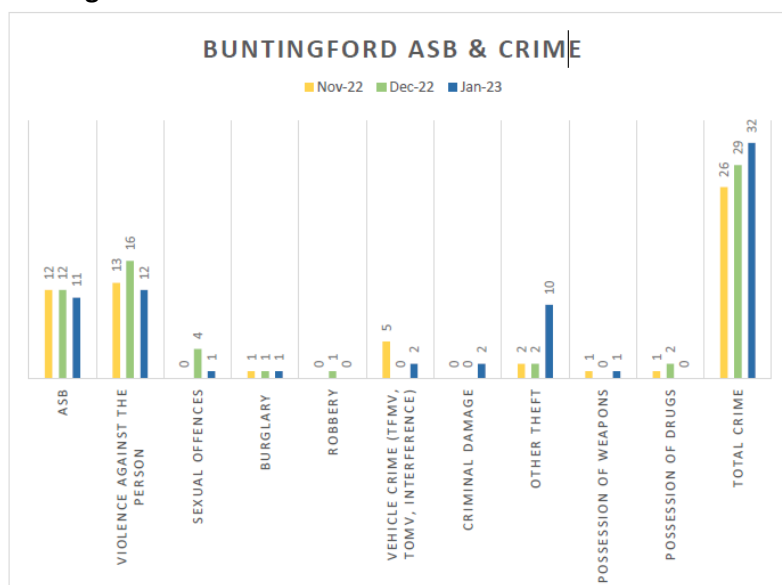
23.19 Police Report

This had been circulated previously to Councillors.

Aspenden - 1 recorded crime in January 2023 (theft from motor vehicle)

Buckland and Chipping - 3 reported crimes in January 2023: 1 x malicious communication, 1 x criminal damage, 1x assault

Buntingford Town



Wyddial - 2 recorded crimes in January 2023: historical sexual assaults

OWL:

General East Herts messages:

- Increasing thefts of motor vehicles in East Herts
- TV licensing scams

Local specific messages:

- Attempted residential burglary – Buntingford

23.20 Village Green and Pavilion Committee

Cllr Blackburn reported that he was in receipt of the paperwork and that he would talk to the Secretary of the Cricket Club about their view for the future and how they could contribute towards costs. He considered that currently there were enough funds not to impinge on the Parish Council finances.

23.21 General Village Matters

I. Spring Clean 2023

A provisional date of Sunday 26th March 2023 was agreed. The Clerk will produce some posters and post on the Parish Council website when the date is finalised.

II. Storage and Salt Bin

Resolved to purchase a further Heavy Duty Grit Bin in Black or Green

CLERKS REPORT AND CORRESPONDANCE

23.22 Clerks Report

The Clerk reported she had put a post on the Parish Council website thanking Cllr Chambers for mounting and installing the commemorative plaque to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

These were agreed and will be published on the Parish Council website.

Agendas will be put on the Parish Council website www.aspendenpc.org.uk and the village noticeboard.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Signed _____

Date _____