

MINUTES of the ASPENDEN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on Tuesday 26th SEPTEMBER 2023 at 7.00pm in WESTMILL VILLAGE HALL.

Present Cllr Andrew Huggins (Chair) Cllr Richard Blackburn
 Cllr Stuart Chambers Cllr Tracy Devonshire
 Cllr Tom Poulton
 District Councillor Cllr Vicky Burt County Councillor Jeff Jones

27 members of the public

Officer attending Denise Anderson (Clerk)

ELECTION OF A CHAIR

23.73 Chair, Councillor Blackburn opened the meeting and stated that due to the current complaint being investigated about him he considered it inappropriate for him to chair the meeting. He proposed that Cllr Huggins chair the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Devonshire. Cllr Huggins took the Chair.

APOLOGIES

23.74 Apologies were received from PCSO Paul Dearman and the Neighbourhood Team. Apologies were received from the District Councillor Cllr Sue Nicholls due to her attendance at a EHDC meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

23.75 None

STANDARDS COMPLAINT AGAINST MEMBER OF ASPENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

23.76 The Clerk reported that a complaint had been made about Cllr Blackburn and was with the Monitoring Officer, Legal and Democratic Services at East Herts Council. The complaint will be investigated by the Monitoring Officer and will be determined in line with East Herts Council's Complaints Handling Procedure.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

23.77 Members of the public asked if the complaint would be discussed at the meeting. The Chair informed the public that the Council was not in a position to discuss the complaint but members of the public were at liberty to make comments should they wish to do so.

27 members of the public were in attendance supporting the Cllr Blackburn and the following comments were raised in relation to the complaint against Cllr Blackburn:

- A letter of support had been submitted to the Parish Council with 50 signatories supporting Cllr Blackburn in coming forward to support and raise their concerns over the management of The Fox Public House.
- Regulars at The Fox for over 20 years were concerned about not being able to drink at their local pub and Cllr Blackburn had been asked to represent their views
- Residents, as long-term loyal customers had welcomed and supported the new tenants however after many failures, custom fell away and there was a consensus that the tenants had let local residents and regulars down
- Would Cllr Blackburn have the opportunity to address the potentially slanderous comments made against him in public on social media
- Could the Monitoring Officer be invited to speak to the village community about the complaint against Cllr Blackburn who they consider to be an outstanding Parish Council Chair who has achieved much for the village since his election
- Questions were asked about access to social media posts with comments about Cllr Blackburn

There being no further comments on this matter the Chair thanked the public for attending and welcomed them to remain for the rest of the meeting if wished. The public left the meeting at this point.

County Councillor Jeff Jones delivered his report to the meeting:

Winter Self Help

An email would be circulated shortly to enable the Council to request a delivery of salt for distribution within the village. A request can also be made for replacement salt bins if parish bin(s) are in poor order.

Highways

Cllr Jones has put forward in his Highways Locality Budget 2024-2025 the resurfacing of Aspenden Road from the Watermill Industrial Estate. The section of road outside Keepers Chase would be repaired via the Section 278 works related to the Dandara development, in addition repairs to the road between Aspenden and Westmill would also be considered.

It was raised that EHC had not adhered to the occupation condition and the Section 278 works had not been carried out prior to occupation. Enforcement will not take matters further as developers need to sell houses and there had been a delay to the works caused by an issue with the sound barrier closer to the A10.

Cllr Devonshire asked if the repairs outside Watermill Industrial Estate would continue until the works were carried out. Cllr Jones confirmed they would.

District Councillor Vicky Burt had no further update at District level.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

23.78 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 25th July 2023 having been circulated previously, were before the meeting and signed as a correct record.

CHAIR'S REPORT

23.79 Aspenden Parish Council Chair's Report

Not available for this meeting

PARISH COUNCIL DOCUMENTATION

23.80 None for this meeting

FINANCE

23.81 Finance report and payments authorised

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

PLANNING

23.82 Planning Report

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

3/23/1083/HH	Home Farm The Street Aspenden Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 9PB	Refused
3/23/0966/HH	Lakeside The Street Aspenden Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 9PG	Refused

23.83 Planning Applications since the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 25th July 2023

3/23/1597/HH	Lakeside The Street Aspenden Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 9PG	No objection
3/23/1640/HH	Manor Cottage The Street Aspenden Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 9PB	No objection but comment
3/23/1447/OUT	Land East Of The A10 Buntingford Hertfordshire	Object
LPA Appeal Reference 23/00038/REFUSE 3/22/2123/LBC	Shem Nichols The Street Aspenden Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 9PG	APC made no comment on the original application

PL/0340/23	Change of use of former Buntingford Recycling Centre (Watermill Industrial Estate) to Hertslynx Recharging Centre.	No objection but comment - highways works to Aspenden Road are completed before it is put into use
------------	--	--

23.84 Planning Applications

None

HIGHWAYS

23.85 Highways matters were addressed in Cllr Jones's report in Public Participation.

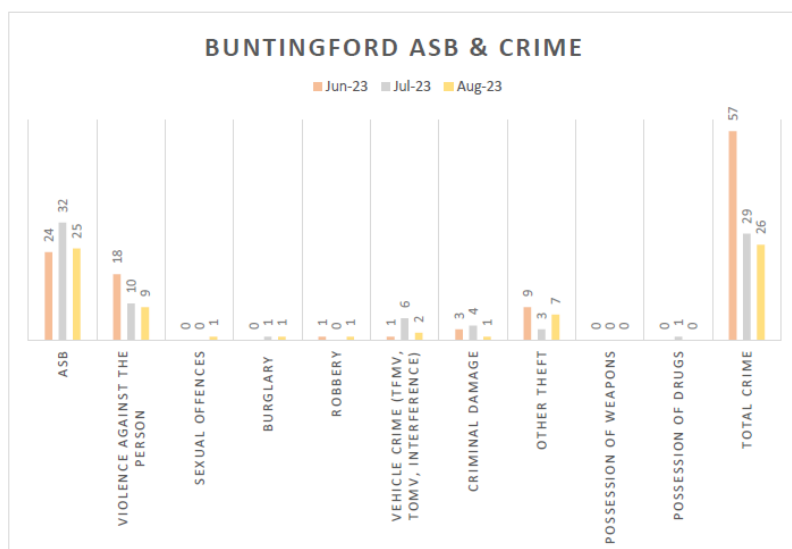
VACANCY ON PARISH COUNCIL

23.86 Councillors are aware of an interested party who they will consider subject to an application being made.

PARISH MATTERS

23.87 Police Report

PCSO Dearman had provided a report for August 2023



12 of the ASB calls in August relate to alleged drug dealing in various locations around the town.

Aspenden

1 recorded crime in August 2023

- 1x criminal damage

Buckland and Chipping

1 recorded crime in August 2023

1 x Theft from Motor Vehicle

Wyddial

0 recorded crimes in August 2023

OWL:

Local specific messages:

- 41/68846/23 – Theft from Vehicle (number plates) - Buckland
- 41/68421/23 Criminal Damage – Hare Street Road Park, Buntingford
- 41/67190/23 Criminal Damage (vehicle) – Aspenden

Upcoming events:

2nd Sept - Buntingford Classic Car Show

9th Sept - Chipping Harvest Fayre

Neighbourhood Policing Priorities August to December 2023:**BUNTINGFORD:**

- SPEEDING IN BALDOCK ROAD

Key times to be identified from Static Indicator Device

RURAL:

- SPEEDING

Monitor and address speeding on A507 between Cottered and Buntingford, and the A10 between Chipping and Buckland at weekends.

23.88 Village Green and Pavilion Committee

Cllr Blackburn reported that the trustees were not ready for a handover and a new meeting date would be scheduled within the next 2-3 weeks.

23.89 Pavilion Project Working Group

Cllr Huggins reported that he and Sara Poulton were putting together a survey, for approval by the rest of the group, in preparation for distribution around the village to seek residents' views on the refurbishment or replacement of the pavilion. It was hoped they would be able to report back on the findings at the next Parish Council meeting.

23.90 Tree Survey

Cllr Blackburn reported that he had been endeavouring to find a qualified arboriculturist to undertake a new tree survey for the trees on Aspenden Green. The previous company had not returned his or the Clerk's emails or calls.

Cllr Huggins provided a contact used by Buntingford Town Council.

23.91 General Village Matters

- I. The fallen tree trunk on the Village Green was raised by Cllr Poulton. Suggestions were made to maybe make this into a natural bench or a bug hotel to support nature.
- II. Cllr Blackburn thanked Wheatley Homes for doing a road sweep through the village
- III. Cllr Chambers presented a quote of £150 (£35 per planter) for Winter perennials for the village entrance planters.

Unanimously resolved to approve the quote and agreed Cllr Chambers to go ahead with the purchase and planting.

CLERKS REPORT AND CORRESPONDANCE**23.92 Clerks Report**

The Clerk asked what the Winter Self Help salt requirement was for this year. Cllr Poulton offered to check the stock and let the Clerk know.

Correspondence

The Clerk had received an email request from Citizens Advice East Herts for a donation to their work. It was agreed that the Parish Council were not in a position to make a donation.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Date	Meeting	Venue
Tuesday 21 st November 2023	Parish Council Meeting 7.00pm	To be confirmed
Tuesday 27 th February 2024	Parish Council Meeting 7.00pm	To be confirmed

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

The meeting closed at 7.55pm.

Signed _____

Date _____