

MINUTES of the ASPENDEN ANNUAL MEETING of the PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 21st MAY 2024 at 7.30pm in THE FOX ASPENDEN.

Present Cllr Richard Blackburn (Chair) Cllr Stuart Chambers.
 Cllr Tom Poulton Cllr Joe Murphy
 District Councillor Sue Nicholls
 0 members of the public

Officer attending Denise Anderson (Clerk)

ELECTION OF CHAIR 2024-2025

24.27 Cllr Blackburn was proposed by Cllr Murphy and seconded by Cllr Chambers.
No other nominations proposed.

It was unanimously resolved to elect Cllr Blackburn as Chair for 2024-2025.

Cllr Blackburn signed the Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took the Chair for the meeting.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR 2024-2025

24.28 Cllr Murphy was proposed by Cllr Blackburn and seconded by Cllr Chambers.

It was unanimously resolved to elect Cllr Murphy as Vice Chair for 2024-2025.

Cllr Murphy signed the Vice Chair's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

APOLOGIES

24.29 Apologies were received from Cllr Tracy Devonshire due to work commitments.
It was resolved to approve Cllr Devonshire's absence

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

24.30 None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

24.31 **Report by Sue Nicholls District Councillor**

Vistry

Appeal date set for 16, 17, 18, 23, 24 and 25 July at the Council Chamber, Wallfields.

Vistry have appealed the planning application for 350 homes on land east of the A10 on the grounds of non-determination. East Herts Council have appointed a KC and 2 technical experts to appear on behalf of the council. There are robust grounds for refusal and on top of principle objections that this is a speculative development outside of the district plan and neighbourhood boundaries the council has appointed to experts who can robustly defend the 5.95-year land supply and argue the case on grounds of density and design incursion into the surrounding landscape and that it is unsustainable development.

Swimming Pool

I see from the agenda that Aspenden Parish Council are proposing a letter of support for the swimming pool community ownership fund – thank you for that it's this kind of support from local councils that will make a difference in the application process.

There is now a developing business plan in place and trustees have been appointed as part of the Ward Freman Pool Community Interest Organisation. Fundraising events have so far raised over £2000 and many people have come forward from the community to offer their skills, knowledge and time to support the campaign to reopen the pool. The best chance is to apply for a Government Community Ownership Fund grant which can award up to £1M to fund work to carry out work to save facilities that are at risk of being lost. The final round of funding for this is now open (the closing date hasn't been announced yet). Herts County Council have also agreed in principle to transfer ownership of the pool building to the community which is good news.

Planning Application for 600 homes on west side of the A10

East Herts Council have received notification (today) that Hallam Land Management have lodged the first of 3 planning applications for development on land west of the A10. The first application is the residential/local centre and school development (outline) which has been submitted today and the following sites are anticipated to come forward for submission in the coming weeks for a solar farm and an employment centre. East Herts Planning have not had any formal pre-application input into these speculative schemes and there is no planning performance agreement between the parties which binds the LPA (and applicant) to proactively work together on resolving technical issues, improving the quality of development irrespective of the principle of development. It is likely, the applications will be processed with minimum back and forth between the LPA and applicant with a view to reaching prompt determinations.

Development Management Forum (DMF) – Taylor/Wimpey planning application for around 200 houses and medical centre

There is a new part of the East Herts planning process for proposed developments of 50 or more houses. It is an opportunity for local residents and stakeholders to hold a one-off meeting (DMF) with the applicant with East Herts Planning Officers present. It is a chance to raise issues and concerns associated with the planning proposal and to discuss any suggestions there might be to improve the application. My application, which included a 25-signature petition to show support from the community, has been successful and a date for the meeting is in the process of being finalised (likely to be in the second or third week of June).

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

24.32 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 27th February 2024 having been circulated previously, were before the meeting and signed as a correct record.

STAFFING COMMITTEE

24.33 Cllr Balckburn proposed the current members; Cllr Chambers, Cllr Devonshire and Cllr Poulton continue to serve on the Staffing Committee for the forthcoming Council year. This was seconded by Cllr Murphy,

PARISH COUNCIL DOCUMENTATION

24.34 The Clerk reported that a new NALC Financial Regulations document had been circulated by HAPTC. This required modification to suits the needs of Aspenden Parish Council and would be presented at the next meeting for Council consideration and adoption.

The Clerk confirmed that she hadn't received any guidance from HAPTC with regard to any amendments to Council documents and Councillors hadn't requested any changes.

Resolved to approve all other current Council documents; Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Risk Assessment, Register of Assets, Complaints Procedure, Publication Scheme, Privacy Policy, Staffing Committee Terms of Reference.

CHAIR'S REPORT

24.35 **Aspenden Parish Council Chair's Report**

Village Green Matters

Trees

A health & safety tree survey was commissioned in November 2023 and a number of recommended works were identified and these were completed in full in April 2024.

Play Area

With the unprecedented rainfall this year the play area has been flooded for some considerable time. Residents do recall previous instances of flooding however nothing on the scale we are currently seeing. We are working towards finding a solution to the drainage problem and will provide an update once we have determined the best course of action to take.

Dog Bin

A new dog bin has been purchased for the Village Green and this will be installed over the coming weeks.

Planning

A further planning application submitted by Countryside Partnerships Home Counties North comprising 350 dwellings on land east of the A10 was refused by East Herts in February 2024. The applicants have submitted an appeal and we understand an Inspector has been appointed and the inquiry will open on the 16 July 2024 at a venue to be determined.

Dandara Phase 2

Phase 2 was completed and occupied without agreement between the Developers and East Herts in respect of satisfying the planning conditions relating to the highway works which were to be completed before occupation. This matter was raised with East Herts and we understand Planning Enforcement are looking into the issue.

In respect of the highways works, which are to be documented via a S278 Agreement, we are advised by East Herts and HCC that discussions are continuing with the developer to satisfy pre-commencement conditions. We will keep you updated on the timing of the works.

We understand the section of Aspenden Road from the A10 flyover to Fairfield will be resurfaced by Dandara's highway contractor, under the S278 Agreement.

We have also expressed our concern over any proposed road closures whilst the works are carried out stating that to shut Aspenden Road during normal working hours should not be an option for consideration. Hopefully common sense will prevail and a safe and workable solution can be found.

Highways

The section of Aspenden Road from Fairfield up to London Road junction does not form part of the Dandara's S278 works and we understand from Cllr Jeff Jones that it has been added to the Integrated Work Programme for future resurfacing. We await an update on timing of these works.

We have also raised with both East Herts and HCC the poor condition of the road between Aspenden & Westmill – we are advised that as the road is unclassified there is no urgency to undertake any repairs.

We would recommend residents continue to report pot holes, broken surfaces etc. through the East Herts website: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/highways-parking/report-street-light-or-pothole>

A507 Update

HCC have agreed to implement 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. There will be an "except for access" arrangement in place allowing deliveries and operational needs of business and farms. Works will begin in two phases as follows:

- Phase 1 – the installation of advisory signs on smaller roads in and around the A507 to inform HGV drivers that they are "unsuitable for HGV's";
- Phase 2 – the installation of the formal weight restriction signs on the A507;

Further information can be found on www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/A507WeightRestrictions

Diary Dates

Thursday 6th June 2024 – Commemoration to mark the 80th Anniversary of D Day at St Mary's Church, Aspenden from 7.30pm

Sunday 4th August – Aspenden Fete

Rosemary Poulton

Finally it is with much sadness to report the recent passing of Rosemary Poulton, a much loved and long-term resident of the Village. A funeral service celebrating Rosemary's life was held on Wednesday 8th May 2024 at St Mary's Church.

FINANCE

24.36 Finance report and payments authorised

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

24.37 Annual Governance and Accountability return (AGAR) 2023-2024

The completed AGAR 2023-2024, having been circulated previously, was before the meeting and the following documents required approval at this full Council meeting.

24.38 Certificate of Exemption

It was resolved to formally certify that Aspenden Parish Council meets the qualifying criteria for exemption.

The Chair and Responsible Financial Officer signed and dated the Certificate of Exemption.

24.39 Internal Auditors Report

It was resolved to approve the Internal Auditors Report

24.40 Annual Governance Statement

It was resolved to approve the Annual Governance Statement

The Chair signed the Annual Governance Statement

24.41 Accounting Statements

It was resolved to approve the Accounting Statements

The Chair signed the Accounting Statements

24.42 Dates for the period of Public Rights

It was resolved that the period of Public Rights would be Monday 3rd June to Friday 12th July 2024

24.43 Parish Council Insurance

Resolved to approve a renewal quote of £1,875.41 for the forthcoming year.

24.44 Parish Council Bank Account

The Clerk reported that the Council were waiting for Online Access to be set up and confirmed for Cllr Blackburn and Cllr Devonshire.

PLANNING

24.45 Planning Report

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

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 3/24/0194/FUL | How Green Farm Baldock Road Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 9RH | Approved |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------|

24.46 Planning Applications since the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 27th February 2024

None

24.47 Planning Applications

None

24.48 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Blackburn to update the Aspenden Parish Council narrative

24.49 District Plan

This document is in the process of being reviewed. The Parish Council will be asked for input which Cllr Blackburn will spearhead.

24.50 Village Hierarchy Study 2024

A narrative about the village to be included in the District Plan. Cllr Blackburn will circulate a proposed update.

HIGHWAYS

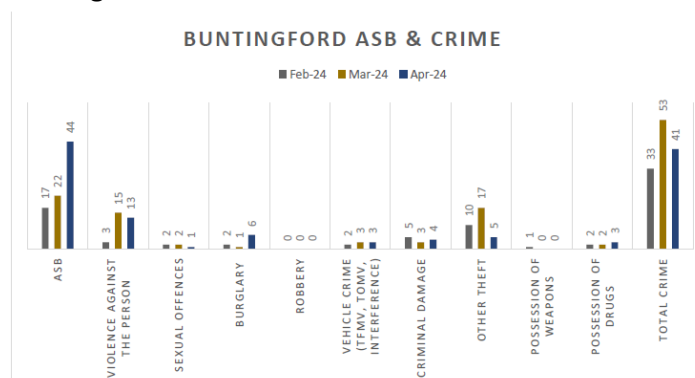
24.51 Highways matters were addressed in the Chair's Report.

PARISH MATTERS

24.52 Police Report

This had been circulated previously to Councillors.

Buntingford Town



Aspenden 0 crimes recorded in April 2024.

Buckland and Chipping 1 crime recorded in April 2024 (blackmail online)

Wyddial 0 crimes recorded in April 2024.

Local Policing Priority activity update (from 1st-30th April 2024).

Reduce Anti-Social Vehicle usage in Buntingford Town. Activities included:

- 2 x Notices of Intended Prosecution issued: Church Street wrong way.

- 1 arrest for drink & drug driving

New Neighbourhood Policing Priority for May – August 2024:

Reduce offences of Shoplifting from retail stores in Buntingford Town Centre

Herts Connected:

Local specific messages:

- Bike marking event Norfolk Road Pump track- 14th April 2024
- Residential Burglary- Snell's Mead 41/28359/24
- Business Burglary- COOP 41/29659/24
- Attempted Burglary – Philips Way 41/32586/24

PCSO Paul Dearman provide a Aspenden Year on Year Crime Reports which is included in the Annual Parish Meeting Minutes. He explained that Herts Connected has replaced OWL as the method of online communication between Police and local residents. We had around 44 local people signed up to OWL, but now we only have 3 people registered in Aspenden on the new system and he encourage the Parish Council to 'spread the word. The Clerk will put an update on the Parish Council website and noticeboard.

24.53 Pavilion Management Committee PMC

Report by Cllr Blackburn

Following the retirement of Gordon Devonshire and Steve Merriman, an interim Committee was formed in January 2024 comprising Tracy Devonshire (acting Chair), Denise Anderson (acting Treasurer), Richard Blackburn (acting Secretary) & Mark Pankhust (General Committee member).

The interim committee was formed to manage the Pavilion whilst options are explored to secure the long-term future of the Pavilion.

The PMC is a registered charity [Charity No: 800714] and the following trustees were appointed: Mark Pankhust & Richard Blackburn.

The interim committee has met three times and has instigated the following:

- Charity Commission reporting up to date;
- Commenced the transfer of Barclays bank mandates to the new interim committee and will seek to transfer the account to Lloyds when completed;
- Reduced utility costs (water & electricity);
- Funded maintenance including new toilets, flooring, & lighting repairs;
- Regularised the agreement with Aspenden, Standon & Puckeridge Cricket Club;

I would like to express our thanks to Chris Newman who has carried out a number of the recent repairs in his own time and I would like also to thank the members of Aspenden, Standon & Puckeridge Cricket Club for their time and effort spent in clearing out the Pavilion and for giving the inside a coat of paint. In addition I would like to extend our thanks to both Gordon and Steve for their long-term contribution to the upkeep and running of the PMC.

24.54 Pavilion Project Working Group

It was agreed that the focus need to be on the Children's Playground area. Cllr Poulton volunteered to clear the gutters on the Pavilion and will liaise with the Cricket Club.

24.55 Tree Works

The Clerk reported that all the works identified on the Safety Inspection Report had been carried out.

24.56 Children's Playground annual works and drainage solution

It was acknowledged that it had not been possible to carry out any annual works due to the flooding of the area. Cllr Murphy reported that he had been in contact with a drainage specialist to discuss the problem. Land drains were a possible solution but the issue is where to take the water due to the difference in levels within the area. Cllr Murphy was also in discussion with East Herts Council with a view to applying for funds from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to assist with the cost of drainage works.

24.57 Dog Bins

The Clerk confirmed a new Dog Bin had been delivered. Cllr Blackburn had spoken with Chris Newman re. creating a base for the new Storage Bins and Dog Bin and will liaise with Cllr Poulton and Jeff Poulton.

24.58 Ward Freman Community Pool Group

The Clerk presented a draft letter of support from Aspenden Parish Council for the application to the Community Ownership Fund (COF) by the Ward Freman Community Pool Group CIO.

Resolved to approve the draft letter.

24.59 Your Tree Our Future free tree initiative

CLlr Chambers will investigate what is available.

24.60 General Village Matters**I. D Day 80th Anniversary Commemoration 6th June 2024**

The Clerk had produced and laminated a number of posters that be placed around the village. The information will be placed on the Parish Council website and on the noticeboard.

Aspenden Millenium sign

- II. CLlr Chambers suggested some refurbishment to the wooden Aspenden village sign. It was suggested that it was cleaned first to see how it looked prior to any decision on further works. It was emphasised that H&S practices should be adhered to when carrying out any works.

CLERKS REPORT AND CORRESPONDANCE**24.61 Clerks Report and Correspondence**

The Clerk had nothing further to report.

CLlr Blackburn thanked Jo, Jim and Helen for allowing the Parish Council to hold their meeting in The Fox.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

| Date | Meeting | Venue |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Tuesday 23 rd July 2024 | Parish Council meeting 7.00pm | The Fox (Restaurant) |
| Tuesday 24 th September 2024 | Parish Council meeting 7.00pm | The Fox (Restaurant) |
| Tuesday 19 th November 2024 | Parish Council meeting 7.00pm | The Fox (Restaurant) |
| Tuesday 25 th February 2025 | Parish Council meeting 7.00pm | The Fox (Restaurant) |

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

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Signed _____

Date _____