

## ALTON PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of meeting at the Coronation Hall, 7.30 pm, March 12, 2020

**Present:** Polly Carson, Robert Carpenter Turner, Alex Oliver, Mike Golden, Carol Whittle, Hayley Kington, Robin Aspinall (Treasurer), Charles Reiss (Clerk). Apologies: Steve Hepworth, Paul Oatway. In the absence of Steve Hepworth, Polly Carson (vice-Chair) presided.

The minutes of the previous meetings (Jan 23 and 28) were agreed and signed.

Matters arising: none.

- 013/20 Public comment and question time:** The Chair invited members of the public to give their views on any items on the agenda. Residents again voiced strong concerns over the state of Browns Lane. The condition of the verges, road surface and drainage was so bad that delivery vehicles were reluctant to use the lane and there were questions over Fire emergency access. Pewsey Fire Brigade had been approached but no response as yet. Flooding at Bakers Corner was another long-standing problem still not dealt with.
- 014/20 Finance:** Robin Aspinall reported a £734.39 VAT refund relating to the playground refurbishment and a further VAT refund of £161.83 applied for. Current PC reserve (minus the ringfenced Springs Fund) stands at £12,400. Members voiced concern at the ongoing costs of the playground where on top of maintenance and insurance new equipment would soon be needed. The site was little-used but members agreed that as the only Parish Council facility it must stay. The question was whether the £2,500 a year set aside for costs would be enough. Members agreed there should be no immediate change but that it must be taken into account for next year's precept with the probability that the amount will need to rise by at least £2,000. RA confirmed that Polly Carson, Mike Golden, Robert Carpenter Turner and Carol Whittle have been authorised as cheque signatories. PC signed a letter to close the separate White Horse account.
- 015/20 Chandlers House 19/10051/FUL update:** Members voiced continued strong sympathy at the impact on those neighbouring the site. However the work was being carried out in line with planning permissions; and it was noted that as a general rule it was not advisable for the PC to take sides in neighbour disputes.
- 016/20 Highways, Alton Barnes, Browns Lane etc:** Cllr Oatway said he was very concerned about the state of the roads in the parish and would raise the issue with the chief highways engineer for the area. Members complained that many of the problems, including Browns Lane, had been coming up for years with no action. Agreed that Robert Carpenter Turner follow up with Cllr Oatway and on the agenda for the next PC.

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- 017/20 Clock House 19/09834/FUL:** Members urged a positive response, sooner rather than later, to the developers' offer of talks to seek a way forward. After discussion it was suggested a small PC working group be set up comprising Polly Carson, Robert Carpenter Turner and Mike Golden representing each of the three villages. Proposed Polly Carson, seconded Robert Carpenter Turner, agreed unanimously.
- 018/20 Fernbank 19/10812/FUL:** Most of the tall fence was down but the remainder still projected into the lane, against the terms of the planning consent. Cllr Oatway suggested the first step should be to raise this directly with the property owner, failing which it would be an enforcement matter for Wiltshire planning. Agreed RCT and PO to chase.
- 019/20 Chimney Lane damage:** The condition of this unadopted road was becoming worse but the PC had no power to compel any action. Members accepted that though John Wyles was the owner of that part of the lane the damage had been mainly caused by heavy construction traffic to and from Fernbank. Agreed that Carol Whittle raise the matter with Mr Wyles informally; if no progress Charles Reiss to draft a letter on behalf of the PC. Members stressed that any consent for building work in future must include a condition that the contractors make good any damage.
- 020/20 Tree work, The Manor & Kate's Cottage, Alton Priors:** Agreed by email no objections. Noted for the record.
- 021/20 New Clerk:** CR reported Ruth Kinderman, Clerk to a number of neighbouring parishes, sadly felt unable to take on the extra workload. Based on her hourly rate, the cost of a paid Clerk might be in the region of £1,600-£2,000 a year. Agreed CR prepare vacancy ads for the Wilts Association of Local Councils website and for display as widely as possible on parish and local noticeboards and websites.
- 022/20 VE Day commemoration:** Plans were discussed. But members noted that due to the Corona virus the event might have to be postponed.
- 023/20 Spring Newsletter:** Topics were discussed.

Any other business (for discussion only)

**024/20 W. Stowell farm sheep unit, 20/01544/FUL.** CR reported this newly-arrived application, a re-submission with additional details. There were no objections previously.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 8.51pm.