

ALTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting at the Coronation Hall, 7.20 pm, July 11, 2019

Present: Steve Hepworth (Chair), Polly Carson, Robert Carpenter Turner, Alex Oliver, Mike Golden, Richard Heacock, Charles Reiss (Clerk). In attendance: Cllr Paul Oatway. Apologies: Debby Lester (Responsible Financial Officer)

Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising:

042/19 White Horse: Steve Hepworth reported that Woodborough School had arranged for the White Horse to be re-chalked, with assistance from two RAF Chinook helicopters, on July 19. Members strongly welcomed the news and agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to the school.

043/19 Canalside war memorial: The access stile has been repaired.

044/19 Parish Council vacancy and resignation: *Note: this agenda item covers two changes in PC membership. Firstly, a choice to fill the vacancy created by the resignation, in May, of Ben Owen. Secondly, the start of a brand new vacancy process with the resignation today of Richard Heacock.*

Richard Heacock confirmed that he would resign with effect from the end of the meeting. With three strong candidates to fill the vacancy left by Ben Owen there was an opportunity for greater diversity on the PC to which he was happy to contribute. Members thanked him for the part he had played and wished him well for the future.

Members moved on to decide whom to co-opt to fill the Ben Owen vacancy. They agreed that, as one member put it, there were three very strong candidates any of whom the PC would be happy to accept. After meeting each of the candidates and after further discussion members voted by a clear majority (4-2) that Carol Whittle should be co-opted.

045/19 New Treasurer: SH reported that Robin Aspinall, a resident of Honeystreet, had kindly volunteered to take over from Debby Lester as Responsible Financial Officer (unpaid). He will take over in November and Debby will guide him through the first few months.

046/19 Fernbank - enforcement: Members noted that the two metre solid fence alongside the property, erected in place of the promised 0.8 metre picket fence, had been ruled by Wiltshire as a breach of the planning consent. The fence was “a real eyesore.” It blocked what had always

been an open view to the canal. An application for retrospective consent was expected. If granted it would contradict and make a mockery of the conditions imposed by the original consent.

- 047/19 Representation and diversity:** Alex Oliver circulated a document which he invited members to consider before discussion and possible decisions at the next PC meeting.
- 048/19 Crop Circle exhibition - AA signs:** Members voiced very strong objections to a permanent exhibition in a totally unsuitable place. Honeystreet – a tiny hamlet – was being clogged by traffic, including coaches. The car park was also completely inappropriate, as were the large number of AA signs. Members questioned why the exhibition could not return to the Barge Inn barn – a designated exhibition space with car parking alongside. The pub had been the centre for crop circle enthusiasts for 20 years and more. The exhibition owner said that the signs would only be up for six weeks instead of four months as last year. She did not wish to go back to the Barge and saw no reason why she should. Members replied the reason was the impact on Honeystreet. Agreed that the issue be on the agenda for follow-up at the next meeting.
- 049/19 VE Day commemoration 2020:** Suggestions included a Village Party on May 9-10, possibly funded by a PC contribution, and a beacon on Walkers Hill. It would be useful to liaise with Woodborough PC who might also be planning a beacon. Plans should be firmed up for approval at the next PC, along with publicity and an appeal for volunteers.
- 050/19 Playground repairs:** Alex Oliver said he had received a quote for nearly £3000 but was hoping for a lower quote of around £1000 in the next few days. SH said new swings would be very expensive but the PC had funds available. The playground was the PC's one real asset and it was important to keep it in good order. Meanwhile it was agreed Peter Emery should be asked whether he could clean the existing equipment.
- 051/19 Planning application 19/05190/FUL, Chandlers House:** There was no objection to the proposed potting shed but members agreed the PC comment should include a request for the builders to show consideration for neighbours.
- 052/19 Application 19/04815/TCA Field Cottage, Alton Priors:** The application for tree work, circulated to pc members by email and accepted with no objections or comment, was noted for the record.

Any other business:

053/19 Barge Lane: A resident had requested more speed bumps and better signage to slow traffic. SH had advised him to contact Wiltshire Council but there were questions as to who was responsible and who owned the road. There was also a question of whether the reopened campsite at the pub needed planning permission. AO and Charles Reiss to inquire.

054/19 White Horses projects: SH and CR met a staff-member from Wessex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to discuss a large number of projects involving the eight chalk white horses in Wiltshire and Oxfordshire. The cost would be between £1.5 million and £3.5 million including, it was hoped, a contribution from the national lottery. Members, briefed on the outline plans, felt there were far more deserving needs for the money, in Wiltshire and beyond. They were also unhappy at the possibility of yet more signs and information boards. However they wished to be kept aware of plans and consulted over any involving the Alton White Horse.

055/19 Road sign: The Honeystreet sign South of the canal is missing. RCT to report to Wiltshire Highways.

056/19 New Clerk: CR said he wanted to give plenty of advance notice of his intention to stand down at the Annual Meeting next May when he will have completed 10 years as Clerk.

There being no further business the ended at 9.12pm.

