

ALTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting at the Coronation Hall, 7.30 pm, September 12, 2019

Present: Steve Hepworth (Chair), Polly Carson, Robert Carpenter Turner, Alex Oliver, Mike Golden, Carol Whittle, Debby Lester (Treasurer), Charles Reiss (Clerk).
Apologies: none.

Steve Hepworth, declaring an interest, said he would leave the meeting for agenda item seven. Polly Carson as Vice-Chair would preside.

The minutes of the previous meetings, on July 7 and July 25, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising:

059/19 Crop Circle Exhibition, India Shop parking: SH, having visited the site, reported an extreme problem with overflow parking. He had hoped a planning application for a new car park would have been submitted, as promised by the India Shop owner. However a resident had complained about overdevelopment of the site with the result that Wiltshire Council planning enforcement were now actively involved. Alex Oliver, declaring a non-pecuniary interest, commented with consent of the Chair. He said substandard visibility at the exit from the site was a significant safety hazard with an accident eventually inevitable. He asked that the PC take up the matter with Wiltshire Highways. But excess parking was merely a symptom of the overdevelopment of the site. The cafe was welcome but the permanent Crop Circle Exhibition had never been authorised nor had the India Shop, described as a “warehouse” but now open full-time. AO then left the meeting. A resident, speaking with the consent of the Chair, stressed that the Exhibition, the shop and a massage room were all operating without planning permission. Parking and access for residents was being blocked. SH pointed out that now Wiltshire enforcement was involved the matter was out of Parish Council hands. The next stage the PC could become involved would be if and when any planning application was submitted. Until then the PC could do nothing further.

060/19 Barge Lane, Honeystreet: A resident had asked the PC to establish the ownership of the lane in order to raise issues of traffic and speed bumps. The owner was Mr John Dunford and the resident had been informed.

061/19 Barge Inn music festival and campsite: Robert Carpenter Turner reported that the pub owner had taken the noise issue very seriously and Wiltshire Council had been fully involved. The music had stopped precisely at the time specified. Members thanked Councillor Paul Oatway and Council officers who had come out on a Saturday night to monitor the sound. Early warning by residents was a real help. SH noted the campsite, while having planning

permission, did not have a current licence. The pub owner and council were working to resolve that.

062/19 Parish Council vacancy: One resident, Ms Hayley Kington of Alton Priors, had volunteered to join. This was welcomed and after brief discussion it was proposed Robert Carpenter Turner, seconded Alex Oliver, that she be co-opted as a member. Carried unanimously.

063/19 Representation and diversity: AO presented a paper proposing the PC seek a better membership balance to avoid being or appearing to be predominantly male, elderly and middle-class. Members agreed the council should be as proactive as possible but stressed that this objective was not new and efforts had long been made to widen recruitment. Gender diversity was no problem at the moment but should always be a consideration. Another issue was that no one village of the three in the parish should have a dominant number of members. The suggestion that members serve a five-year term had some merit as long as it was not rigid. It could create problems if, as in the past, there was a shortage of volunteers to fill the gaps. After discussion it was agreed AO present a modified statement to the next meeting.

064/19 Application 19/06465/FUL Fernbank: Residents invited to speak vigorously objected to the latest application in this long-running saga. They stressed they simply wished to return to the original proposal from the applicants as approved by Wiltshire Council, with the site fully surrounded by a picket fence at the original height specified.

This view was fully and strongly shared by every member of the PC. There was particular concern that the applicants were seeking to open the grassed space for car parking by stealth. The previous proposal for a hardstanding for cars had been dropped after it became obvious that it would not be approved. The picket fence had instead been replaced along much of its length by posts 9m apart joined by "a rope or chain". The Agent's assertion that this was "simply to offer a more open aspect" did not convince members. Rather it was seen as a device to allow access for parking regardless. Members also opposed the unannounced increase in height of the picket fence. And they saw no need for a high fence at any point given that the privacy of the downstairs bedroom could be protected by curtains or a blind. Finally, members said the fence, of whatever kind, must be set slightly further back on safety grounds since it currently obtrudes onto the lane. Motion to object to the application with comment reflecting the views expressed proposed Polly Carson, seconded Mike Golden, agreed unanimously.

065/19 Application 19/08908/TCA, 1 The Granary, Alton Priors: SH, having declared an interest as the applicant, left the meeting. PC chaired. After brief discussion of the requested treework it was proposed Carol Whittle seconded Mike Golden that the PC has no objection. Agreed unanimously.

- 066/19 Application 19/08426/FUL, The Priory, Alton Priors:** Members having looked at the plans and the site agreed that there was no objection to the proposed open air swimming pool and associated plant but agreed the comment should note the need for an archaeological check. No objection proposed Steve Hepworth, seconded Mike Golden, agreed unanimously.
- 067/19 VE Day commemoration 2020:** Charles Reiss reported Wilcot PC had agreed to support the plan for a chain of beacons across the hills, with the possibility that Woodborough would follow suit. Members welcomed the suggestion that the wartime RAF airfield be included, with the Service invited to send representatives. In response to a request for a volunteer, Alex Oliver agreed to carry plans forward.
- 068/19 Commemoration oak trees:** SH reported that nameplates had been placed to remember the four servicemen from the parish killed in World War I. It was agreed that the Rector, the Rev Deborah Larkey, be asked to say a few words and read out the names at the Remembrance Day service marking the hundredth anniversary of the end of the war. Other villages might also like to take part.
- 069/19 First aid training:** Carol Whittle, as a fully-qualified first aider, was prepared to offer all residents training to use the defibrillator installed outside the Coronation Hall. Sessions could be held in the hall for up to 12 at a time. The parish would need to buy a training doll. Members agreed funds should be made available from the Robert Pile Education Trust, with publicity via the website, Newsletter, notice boards and flyers. Robert Carpenter Turner also to place a new list of first aiders on the site. Members thanked CW for her offer.
- 070/19 Road safety:** There was particular concern over vision obscured by the hedge in front of the Honeystreet bridge on the north side of the canal. Agreed that CW report to Wiltshire Highways to contact the landowner and get it cut back.
- 071/19 Playground repairs:** AO presented two quotes, from S J Aplin Ltd, and Idverde UK. These had been hard to secure with other firms not interested. Members agreed the playground was in need of a thorough overhaul. Debby Lester confirmed funds were available. AO said that Aplin, though the cheaper of the two, had good references and a good reputation. Noting the need to add repair of the climbing frame to the quote, Steve Hepworth proposed, Polly Carson seconded that the Aplin quotation be accepted in principle, AO to negotiate final details. Agreed unanimously. Members thanked AO for chasing up the issue.
- 072/19 Finance:** DL presented a cheque for £565, to Ben Owen for grass cutting. She noted the next playground safety inspection is due shortly. Will liaise with AO.
- 073/19 Autumn Newsletter:** Topics were discussed and agreed.

Any other business (for discussion only):

074/19 Chimney Lane damage: Residents, speaking by consent of the Chair, voiced strong concern at the "atrocious" state of this narrow lane. It was mainly due to the intense movement of heavy traffic in the construction of two new houses at Fernbank. There was severe subsidence as well as potholes and erosion. The road was unadopted with no prospect of Wiltshire Council taking responsibility. AO pointed out that in construction projects it was normal for the contractor to repair road damage. Agreed RCT identify the contractors and email them, copied to John Wyles owner of the India Shop and the eastern half of the lane.

075/19 New Treasurer: Members welcomed Robin Aspinall, of Honeystreet, who has volunteered to take over as Responsible Financial Officer later in the year.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 9.15pm.