

**Minutes of the meeting of Alconbury Parish Council  
held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at Alconbury Memorial Hall.**

Councillors present: Mrs. E. Adams, Mr. A. Bush, Mrs. J. Aylott (Chairman), Mrs. E. Elphick, Mrs. L. Isles, Mrs. K. Tarabella, Mr. S. Tarabella, Mr. P. Watson & Mr. A. Welsh.

Also present: County Cllr. P. Ashcroft, Mrs. D. Benham (Clerk) & 2 members of the public.

Open Forum – A member of the public asked a number of questions regarding the fraud case which were answered by the Chairman.

1. Apologies for absence: Cllr. R. Sale (Work commitment), District Cllr. K. Baker (Attending another meeting) & County Cllr. P. Brown (Attending another meeting).

2. Declaration of Interests: Cllr. Adams declared an interest in item 10, being a trustee of Alconbury Recreation Field Charity. Cllr. Aylott declared an interest in item 21a, as the Clerk had purchased a printer cartridge for use by Cllr. Aylott in her capacity as Chairman and this expenditure was contained within the Clerk's expenses claim.

3. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2014: Approval of the minutes of 25<sup>th</sup> February 2014 proposed by Cllr. Welsh, seconded by Cllr. Elphick, unanimously agreed.

4. Result of the court case against the former Parish Clerk, Mrs. Joanna Sharp: On 6<sup>th</sup> March, Mrs. Sharp was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment, with £100 victim surcharge, a Proceeds of Crime order for £56756.39 and confiscation order of £1. All residents received a newsletter over the weekend of 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> March giving full details of what has happened.

5. Councillor vacancy: The Clerk advised that two parishioners had expressed an interest in the remaining vacancy. "Candidate's qualification" forms had been sent to both. Only one had been received back, but that candidate had since withdrawn his application. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council was not obliged to fill the vacancy if there was less than 6 months term left to serve. Councillors unanimously agreed not to co-opt before the election, which is due on 22<sup>nd</sup> May..

6. Recruitment Policy: Cllr. Welsh proposed that Alconbury Parish Council adopt the Recruitment Policy copied to all councillors with the agenda. Seconded by Cllr. Aylott and unanimously agreed.

7. Data Protection Policy: Cllr. Watson proposed that Alconbury Parish Council adopt the Data Protection Policy copied to all councillors with the agenda. Seconded by Cllr. Adams and unanimously agreed.

8. Report from County Councillor: County Cllr. Ashcroft advised that reorganisation within CCC would cause delay to projects such as the A14 improvements and the Cambridgeshire Future Transport project.

9. Grass cutting: Clerk to contact Anthony Abbs to find out when the first grass cut will take place. Cllr. Welsh agreed to talk to the Environment Agency about cutting the banks of the brook.

10. Village entrance feature: The Clerk had contacted Jo Challis and confirmed that solid entrance features were not forbidden. Two members of Neighbourhood Watch attend Traffic Management meetings with Highways and Urban & Civic, where new signage had apparently already been discussed. Cllr. Aylott and the Clerk had asked Rebecca Brittain to arrange a meeting between Urban & Civic, Highways, and members of the Parish Council, so that plans for signage and entrance features could be consolidated.

11. Update on Alconbury Weald: The Chairman and Clerk attended the liaison meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March in the newly completed Incubator Building. The Section 106 is almost complete. There will be an enabling application put forward shortly, for demolition of redundant buildings. Urban & Civic had received a £5 million grant for infrastructure in the Enterprise Zone, which will be spent on roads. They are working on the design for the area to the north of the Incubator Building which will also be for commercial use. There are a few small businesses wanting to move in but they are finding it difficult to attract larger businesses and intend to build a community building with creche, café, gym etc. to provide facilities for employees. The next step will be to construct the southern access later this year, followed by the first area of housing in Spring 2015.

12. Brook tidy and wildlife survey: Cllr. Isles and the Clerk will be meeting with Andrew Walters from Keep Britain Tidy on 3<sup>rd</sup> April to discuss arrangements.

13. ASSC: Cllr. Watson advised that the Charity Cricket Match would likely take place on 18<sup>th</sup> July. Cllr. Adams advised that lots of fund raising events were being planned - Easter family fun day Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April, band and family fun day 6<sup>th</sup> September, Halloween and Bonfire Night. Councillors agreed that parking was becoming a problem. Cllr. Watson agreed to report this concern back to ASSC.

14. Community Orchard/Trees: Cllr. S. Tarabella had carried out some maintenance at the orchard and was researching the correct times of year for pruning. Cllr. Tarabella agreed to contact Matthew Bell of Global Tree Solutions to obtain a quotation for removing the lower growth from five trees on the green and will discuss with Bridget Halford, planting a few new trees in the autumn.

15. Memorial Hall: Cllr. Adams reported that a committee meeting had taken place last week and the AGM will be on 8<sup>th</sup> April. Regular user income was up by 20%, with a good level of private bookings. The flooring in the main hall will be refurbished on 11<sup>th</sup> April. Cllr. Isles reported that committee members had carried out repairs to the lighting and cut the hedge and a quotation was being obtained for the emergency lighting.

16. Neighbourhood Watch: Next meeting is on 26<sup>th</sup> March. The police crime report for January shows 3 recorded crimes.

17. Playgrounds: Cllr. Watson had nothing to report. Cllr. Welsh agreed to install the two new “No dogs” signs for Bramble End play area which the Clerk had collected from Borney UK Ltd.

18. Youth Group: Cllr. Adams advised that 46 juniors and 35 seniors attended the last club night, which saw a good number helpers assisting with craft activities and pizza making. The donation from Urban & Civic has still not yet been received but is in hand.

16. Website: The Clerk confirmed that she had written to mh-p giving 30 days notice and that their contract will terminate on 9<sup>th</sup> April. mh-p had provided a CD-ROM of the existing website which had been passed to askiT, who are preparing the new website. The Clerk will include details of the new website address - [www.alconburyparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.alconburyparishcouncil.co.uk) in the next Parish Pump article.

20. Infrastructure report:

a) Churchyard – The next Churchyard tidy will take place on 10<sup>th</sup> May at 9.30am. Cllr. Aylott will put a poster on the notice boards. Clerk to include in the Parish Pump.

b) Village Green – The Clerk had received a request from a parishioner for the Parish Council to consider placing concrete bollards along the edge of the green to prevent damage from vehicles. Councillors unanimously agreed that they did not wish to pursue this idea.

c) Roads and footpaths – The complaint about off road vehicles using the ford and surrounding grass at the end of Polecat Lane is still with Highways. CCC’s Assets department are meeting with the Environment Agency to establish ownership of the area involved and in the meantime, CCC’s Enforcement Officer has been asked to look into the matter. Polecat Lane – This will be surface dressed in 2015. In the meantime, only pot holes deeper than 50mm will be filled. Clerk has requested an inspection. The Maltings – Clerk has requested that the road is swept. Roundabouts over the A1 – resurfacing complete. Slip roads on to the A14 – Clerk has requested a litter pick to clear numerous bottles of urine.

d) General – Overhanging conifers at 3 Mill Road – Highways have responded saying that they are not effecting the carriageway, therefore no action at present. Street Lights – The Clerk had received a response from Peta King of Balfour Beatty, saying that there is no funding available for additional street lighting along North Road to ASSC but they can provide a quotation if the Parish Council or ASSC wish to pay for it. Clerk to request a quotation. The reply also stated that there was a requirement to remove one column, outside 14 Manor Lane, and there was no suitable alternative.

21. Financial report:

a) Payment of outstanding debts.

Cllr. Bush proposed approval of payment of items (1) to (6). Seconded by Cllr. Adams, unanimously agreed.

(1) Cq. No. 770 Mrs. D. Benham, wages and expenses for March.	£636.08
(2) Cq. No. 771 HMRC, PAYE & NI	£55.40
(3) Cq. No. 772 SR Howells & Co., payroll services 1/10/13 to 31/3/14.	£60.00
(4) Cq. No. 773 St. Ives Quickprint Ltd., newsletters.	£155.00
(5) Cq. No. 774 askiT Services Ltd., meeting to discuss website.	£42.00
(6) Cq. No. 775 Buckden Parish Council, training course Cllr. K. Tarabella	£97.50

Cllr. Aylott took no part in the vote having declared an interest in item (1)

b) Current position.

A copy of the receipts and payments and bank reconciliation was handed to each councillor. A copy will be attached to the minutes. The bank statements were available for inspection and Cllr. Welsh confirmed that the balances in the bank account were correct as shown on the bank reconciliation.

c) Update on external audit.

The Clerk had been advised by PFK Littlejohn LLP that the Annual Return would be received back shortly and that a "Report in the Public Interest" would not be issued as they believe that adequate information is already in the public domain. Advance warning had been given of additional charges which have already been discounted by 40%, amounting to £778.05 plus VAT for 5.85 hours of staff time. These are charges over and above the normal external fee of £300 plus VAT, and have been incurred as a direct result of the fraud committed by Mrs Sharp. Cllr. Welsh proposed that the Clerk should arrange payment of the invoice from PFK Littlejohn LLP, amounting to £1293.66 including VAT, so that these charges will appear in the accounts for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. Seconded by Cllr. Bush and unanimously agreed.

d) To appoint an internal auditor for 2014.

Councillors unanimously agreed that the Clerk should approach Brian Cox & Co.

e) Request for a donation from the Over 60s Club.

Councillors discussed the application for a grant towards an outing for their members. Councillors unanimously agreed that the club had sufficient funds in their bank account to cover the cost of the outing and that a donation should not therefore be made. Clerk to reply and to pass on details of the Huntingdon Community Chest.

## 22. Correspondence:

a) A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme – updated information about the preferred route announcement forwarded to councillors.

b) Adult support drop-in sessions – poster to the notice board.

c) Letter from Johnathan Djanogly MP asking for a poster advertising his new constituency office address, surgery advice and contact details to be placed on the notice board.

d) 2013/14 verification report, End of Year Declaration and P60 received from SR Howell & Co.

e) Flood Insurance – Cllr. Aylott advised that an "Insurance Related Request" (IRR) could be obtained free of charge by contacting the Environment Agency on [ANC.enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:ANC.enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk) This document may assist in obtaining insurance for properties at risk from flooding.

f) Telephone call from Mr. R. Read asking for the following to be minuted: Mr. Read wished to pass on his thanks to all councillors and the new Clerk, for the way in which the situation with regard to Mrs. Sharp had been dealt with. He said that it was clear that the Parish Council had acted very quickly once the fraud had been discovered and he now understood how difficult it must have been for all concerned and how much strain everyone must have felt by not being able to give any details until now. He said that since the details of the case had become known, he had been astounded at the lengths that Mrs Sharp had gone to in covering her crime and that it was clearly a very complicated and extensive deception. He wanted the Parish Council to know that you had his full support.

24. New agenda items for the next meeting: Cllr. K. Tarabella asked whether it would be possible to have additional dog waste bins in the village. The Clerk advised that this had been discussed on a number of occasions at previous meetings and that unfortunately this was not possible as HDC would not empty them.

25. Date of the next meeting: 29<sup>th</sup> April 2014, starting at 7.30pm at Alconbury Memorial Hall.

Signed.....

Date.....