Minutes of the Alconbury Annual Parish Meeting
held on Tuesday 27th May 2014 at Alconbury Memorial Hall.

The meeting was chaired by Mrs. J. Aylott, Chairman of Alconbury Parish Council.

Councillors present: Mrs. E. Adams, Mrs. J. Aylott (Chairman), Mr. C. Bodley, Mr. A. Bush, Mr. R. Sale & Mr. A. Welsh.
Also present; County Cllr. P. Ashcroft, County Cllr. P. Brown, District Cllr. K. Baker., Mrs. D. Benham (Clerk) & 1 member of the public.

1. Apologies for absence: Cllr. L. Isles (Personal).

2. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th May 2013: Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 28th May proposed by Cllr. Bush, seconded by Cllr. Adams and unanimously agreed.

3. Annual report from the Chairman of the Parish Council: A copy of Cllr. Aylott's report is attached.

4. Annual report from the Responsible Financial Officer of the Parish Council: A copy of Mrs. Benham's report is attached.

5. Annual report from the District Councillor: a copy of District Cllr. Baker's report is attached.

6. Annual report from the County Councillors: Copies of County Cllr. Brown's and County Cllr. Ashcroft's reports are attached.

7. Resolutions received from parishioners: None received.

Signed……

Date……

This last year, my third as Chairman, is not one I would care to repeat. It was extremely difficult and stressful after discovering that our previous Parish Clerk had defrauded us of a large sum of money and even more difficult not being able to pass any of the details to the residents in the village, until the case had been finalised in court. I would however, like to thank all the Parish Councillors who stayed with the Parish Council and worked through those troubled times.

I would also like to thank Sally Dalley for stepping into the breach and helping us by being the Minute taker at some of the PC meetings. We have been very fortunate in recruiting Denise, as our new Parish Clerk, as she is not only a very experienced Parish Clerk, but also the person who completed our investigation into the fraud, so she was aware of all the facts!

Earlier in the year two Parish Councillors decided to step down and I thank Jerry Lay and Jeremy Adams for the time they gave to the community. Last month, because of work commitments, we also said farewell to Paul Watson, who had been a councillor for 8 years and we will truly miss his planning expertise and advice.

I also thank our District and County Councillors as they always strived to keep us informed of what was happening in the Huntingdon and Cambridge councils.

The Youth Group continues to be very successful as each month there are a large number of children attending each of the sessions. The Parish Council thanks the local businesses and County Councillors for their support, without which the Youth Group would have not been able to exist. The number of Volunteers fluctuate, and more helpers are always most welcome.

The Parish Council newsletter is now only produced a couple of times a year, as we have been trying to cut costs and we find that all the information can be supplied via the excellent Parish Pump magazine. In another cost cutting exercise, the Parish Council has changed its website provider, to a local firm. The website, still looks the same but has a slightly different address of .co.uk instead of .org.uk.

The Parish Council works closely with the Church and once again organised two 'tidy up' sessions of the churchyard, which were well supported by many residents of both Alconbury and Alconbury Weston.

The trees in the community orchard are growing well and I thank Steve Tarabella, our Tree Warden for his enthusiasm in caring for these trees as well as keeping a watch on other trees around the village. Hopefully in the next few months we shall be able to label the trees in the orchard with the variety of fruit.

The Parish Council continues to be involved at Joint Parish meetings at Alconbury Weald and is also in negotiation with Highways and Urban & Civic with regard to new 'entrance gateways' to the village, to try and deter large articulated lorries taking the wrong turn.

We have close links with the Environment Agency and have been looking into the new documents they provide with regard to flood waters and insuring our properties.

The Parish Council continues to support village groups and will endeavour to continue to do so.

We do enjoy hearing from our parishioners and are always pleased when a few join us at our monthly meetings. Despite all the financial difficulties the Council continues to strive to make the village an attractive and enjoyable place in which to live.

Judith Aylott
Chairman

Alconbury Parish Council
Annual report from the Responsible Financial Officer.

This time last year, I received a call from Judith Aylott, asking if I would be willing to assist in carrying out an investigation into some irregularities that had been uncovered in the Parish Council finances. Unfortunately, it became apparent very quickly, that this was a very serious case of fraud. By the time that the fraud was discovered in late May 2013, Mrs Joanna Sharp had stolen all of the Parish Council's reserves and most of the first part of the Precept received from HDC for 2013-14. The scale of the deception and the methods used to avoid discovery have been widely reported in the press, Parish Council minutes and in a newsletter sent to all parishioners.

As a result of the fraud, it was necessary to take out a short term loan of £12,000 from Huntingdonshire District Council in order for the Parish Council to continue to function and to fulfil its obligations. The loan was secured over three years at an interest rate of 0.5%.

Following the investigation and subsequent court case, I was very pleased to be appointed your new Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer on 1st August last year. I would like to thank you all for your cooperation, especially during the first few months whilst changes were being implemented. With the court proceedings still ongoing, this was a difficult situation for all of us and I appreciated your support.

With the aid of the loan, we have been able to meet all our commitments and have ended the financial year with a balance of £9068.66. Ideally, a Parish Council should hold an amount equivalent to one year's precept in reserves. In Alconbury's case, this would be approximately £36,000. It will take some time to build the reserves back up to this level but by cutting costs where we can and continuing to manage our finances carefully, we have been able to keep the precept for 2014/15 at the same level as 2013/14.

The accounts for year ending 31st March 2013, which showed a year- end balance of -£396.96, have been externally audited and will be published on the new website in due course.

The accounts for year ending 31st March 2014 have been approved by the Parish Council and an internal audit has been carried out by Brian Cox & Co. with no issues raised. The accounts will shortly be externally audited by PKF Littlejohn LLP and published on the website later in the year.

Denise Benham
Parish Clerk & RFO to Alconbury Parish Council
27th May 2014

The Alconbury's and Stukeley's Parish Councils Annual Report

Over the last 4 years HDC have worked hard to meet government targets for local government cost reductions. In order to maintain our statuary requirements with reduced funding we have taken to review the efficiency of each of the departments.

Finances: There have been senior management reductions. A restructuring and assessment of each department, which included a new salary structure for officers. This has resulted in some voluntary redundancies. We are negotiating to have one call centre as a shared service. There is also a policy of using outside sourced services wherever possible.
There has been a review of HDC capital Assets to maximise income.
We have modernised some of the leisure facilities. St Ivo has been extensively revamped in order to encourage greater usage and therefore more profit. The aim is to encourage people into a healthier lifestyle.

Alconbury Weald: The first stage outline planning has been approved. The main entrance is now revamped and up and running. I understand that progress is now happening at a fair pace. The incubator units are now nearly all occupied. This may result in other constructions. I have been told that there is an issue with HGV's missing the signage to the new entry and are ending up in the Stukeleys. This is in need of signage improvement. As a member of the traffic management group this is something I am going to discuss with the developers

.

Truck Stop: – I was invited by the owners of truck stop to visit and view all the improvements they now have. They have improved refreshment and general facilities. This is to try to attract locals to use the facilities. There is a now also a cash point there.
I have also been informed that they are trying to evict the manager of the 'swingers' club. The accommodation will be updated to attract more customers.

Planning: There is a proposal to alter the directive concerning affordable housing. The percentage of affordable houses per development is to be reduced. The understanding is that developers are finding the directive to restrictive. Developers cannot afford to develop with the ruling as it stands.
The Conservative rural affairs group have put forward a suggestion that small villages are allowed to have small developments to encourage younger families into the community.

Voluntary Organisations: These have shown a wealth of enthusiasm in their work. The Hunts forum of Voluntary Organisations acts as a conduit between the district council and the numerous voluntary organisations within the district. There is some merit in building on the strengths of Hunts forum.

I wish to thank everyone for their support at my recent re-election. I feel the difficult financial times we have gone through have made us a stronger community and given us strength to move on. Pulling together is the answer.

District councillor Keith Baker 27th May 2014

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013/14 FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR SIR PETER BROWN

The Cambridgeshire County Council, elected in May 2013, has just completed its first year. What a challenging year it has been. We are still being required to reduce out expenditure whilst making every effort to avoid cutting services further. This has led to see where savings can be achieved internally rather than at a cost to the council taxpayer.

Making Assets Count has become an important part of local government thinking throughout Cambridgeshire. It requires all our local authorities and emergency services working together to make savings by using assets more wisely and sharing them whenever possible. A major part of this work involves examining the property portfolios.

I know I bang on about the Localism Act but I truly think this gives more power to local communities and local councils to run their own affairs. I see this as a huge opportunity for local people to actually shape their own environment and to help provide services in a beneficial manner. We must continue to try and find ways to encourage our friends and neighbours to take an interest in their local communities. Neither Alconbury nor Weston had enough candidates to have a contest this year. They are not alone. The vast majority of parishes in Huntingdonshire didn't have elections or even enough candidates to fill the required vacancies. It is time for local politicians at County and District to reconnect with those they represent.

For the past year the County Council has been considering the introduction of a Committee system to administer the Council. This replaces the Cabinet system. The Committees are now in operation and the first cycle of meetings is about to start. Each Committee will have 17 members appointed proportionally to the number of seats held on the Council by the various political Parties. This means that no Party has an overall majority on any Committee and the Chairmanships again are shared on a proportional basis.

I have been appointed to serve on the Children and Young People's service Committee and the Health Committee and on the following sub committees and outside bodies.

Education Transport Appeals
CALC
Cromwell Museum Management Committee
Hinchingbrooke Park Management Committee
Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership.

I also currently serve as Chairman on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority.

The future of the Cromwell Museum is looking more secure as the County Council is working with the Management Committee to find a way forward. It is looking as though the Museum will be managed by a Trust although there is still some way to go to finalise this.

In the past twelve months my priorities have been to

- Listen to local people and represented local interests wherever possible
- Continue to support the County Council's campaign to improve Broadband throughout the area
- Help Lordsway residents to mitigate environmental concerns regarding Alconbury Weald.
- Monitoring the Alconbury Truck Stop
- Helped to secure the future of the Alconbury Youth Club with funding from local businesses
- Liaise with the Police and Crime Commissioner on matters of local concern
- Continually addresses Road Safety issues throughout the Division.
- Along with your Parish Councillors, working with the Community Transport Groups to provide a meaningful and relevant rural local bus services.
- Deal with litter problems.
- Work with the County Council, the Highways Agency and Government to emphasize the importance of upgrading the A14

Many of our local interests are served by Huntingdon. It is therefore very pleasing to see that work is well underway to create a vibrant town centre which will encourage Shoppers and Tourists alike. Within a year we will see new shops appearing in the Chequers Court area of Huntingdon. Although no announcements have yet been made I think you will be delighted if some of the major retailers come to Town.

The West of Town Centre Link Road has been open for less than two months. It appears to be working well although there are still a few teething problems which are being dealt with.

As we are currently witnessing, these are uncertain times for local and national government which may result in many changes. Whatever they may be it is important that we are in a position locally to take advantage of them.

Peter Brown
County Councillor for the Huntingdon Division incorporating the District Wards of Alconbury & Stukeleys, Huntingdon North and Huntingdon West.

2013/4 ANNUAL COMMENTS

THE BRAMPTON LOW BRIDGE HEIGHT WARNING SIGNS ARE LARGER THAN NORMAL ONES AS THE HEIGHT IS NOW BELOW THE 16' 6" STANDARD HEIGHT. THE FREQUENCY OF THESE SIGNS GIVES RELEVANT HIGH-SIDED VEHICLES TIME TO EARLIER RE-ROUTE, INSTEAD OF A LATER DIVERT.

A14 UPDATE. THE HUNTINGDON BYPASS HAS BEEN RESCHEDULED, AND A REVISED BRAMPTON A14/A1 INTERCHANGE HAS BEEN PROPOSED NOW THAT NO TOLLING IS PLANNED. THEY ARE CONSIDERING MAKING THE A1 A 3 LANE DUAL CARRIAGEWAY FROM BUCKDEN TO ALCONBURY. I HAVE SUGGESTED TO THE HIGHWAYS AGENCY THAT, WITH THE A14 TRAFFIC FROM FELIXSTOWE TO ALCONBURY WEALD THEN COMING BY WAY OF THE HUNTINGDON BYPASS, THEY WIDEN THE B1043 FROM ITS JUNCTION WITH THE A1, JUST SOUTH OF ALCONBURY, UP RUSTS LANE, TO ALCONBURY WEALD. THE HUNTINGDON VIADUCT WILL NOT BE DEMOLISHED UNTIL THE BYPASS IS UP AND RUNNING IN SOME 5 OR MORE YEARS TIME.

THE EDISON BELL WAY, THE HUNTINGDON NORTH WEST BYPASS, NOW LINKS ERMINE STREET TO THE RAILWAY STATION AND BRAMPTON ROAD, WITH ITS CURRENT 14' 6" VIADUCT BRIDGE. THE A14 FROM THE SOUTH WILL ALSO TERMINATE HERE WHEN THE VIADUCT IS DEMOLISHED.

THE FUTURE OF THE A46A AND THE 400-409 + 415 IS AN ONGOING QUESTION AS THE COUNTY COUNCIL IS CURRENTLY DECIDING HOW IT WILL SUPPORT SUCH SUBSIDISED SERVICES WITH A FINANCIAL CUTBACK.

PETER ASHCROFT