

**Minutes of the meeting of Alconbury Parish Council  
held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2014 at Alconbury Memorial Hall.**

Councillors present: Mrs. E. Adams, Mrs. J. Aylott (Chairman), Mrs. E. Elphick, Mrs. L. Isles, Mr. R. Sale, Mr. P. Watson & Mr. A. Welsh.

Also present: County Cllr. P. Ashcroft, County Cllr. P. Brown, Mrs. D. Benham (Clerk) & 3 members of the public.

Open Forum – A member of the public asked why the Midsummer Fair no longer visited Alconbury: Clerk to try to contact Mannings & Thurston to enquire why this is. The same parishioner asked about the Parish Council's response to planning application 1300666FUL, Former Megatron Site, Ermine Street. The Chairman referred the parishioner to HDC's website where Alconbury Parish Council's full response can be viewed.

1. Apologies for absence: Cllr. A. Bush (Work commitment), Cllr. K Tarabella (Work commitment), Cllr. S. Tarabella (Work commitment) & District Cllr. K. Baker (Attending another meeting).

2. Declaration of Interests: Cllr. Adams declared an interest in item 10, being a trustee of Alconbury Recreation Field Charity and item 19, being the spouse of an allotment holder.

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

4. Election arrangements: The Parish Council election was uncontested, there being 9 applicants for the 11 seats. Mrs. L. Adams, Mrs. J. Aylott, Mr. C. Bodley, Mr. A. Bush, Mrs. L. Isles, Mr. R. Sale, Mrs. K. Tarabella, Mr. S. Tarabella and Mr. A. Welsh have been duly elected Parish Councillors for Alconbury and will begin their new four year term of office on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2014. Councillors agreed that Mrs. E. Elphick would be co-opted at the May meeting as she had been unable to submit her nomination papers due to being away on holiday.

5. Report from County Councillors: County Cllr. Ashcroft advised that the new A14 would result in more traffic coming off the A1 to Alconbury Weald and that he had drawn Highways attention to the need to widen the slip road. The Chairman asked Cllr. Ashcroft to bring to Highways attention that the truckstop would be in the wrong location once the new A14 was built.

County Cllr. Brown advised that CCC's new committee system would start after the AGM on 13<sup>th</sup> May. The consultant's report on the Cromwell Museum had recommended that it apply for trust status. It is hoped that CCC will allow the museum to stay in the same building and pay a peppercorn rent. The Fire Service have further strikes planned for this weekend – Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May (noon – 5pm), Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May (2pm – 2am), Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> May (10am -3pm). The town centre link road is now open and the new multi storey car park is partially open. Work will be starting on Chequers Court soon and there is lots of interest from potential retailers.

6. Cambridgeshire Future Transport: Mr. Read attended a meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March on behalf of the village to discuss the future of subsidised bus routes, following a reduction in funding from £2.7 million p.a. to £1.2 million p.a. The meeting followed a series of roadshows and the opportunity for villagers to complete a questionnaire. Mr. Read advised that the level of response from the Alconburys to the road show and to the questionnaires had been very good and that the A46a route was well used in comparison to the other subsidised routes being reviewed. Issues discussed included a possible change to the timetable to accommodate bus pass users; the type of bus currently being used as it is not suitable for wheelchair users and has little space for shopping; an extension of the route to Serpentine Green. Alternatives to the subsidised services had also been discussed, such as shared cars and pool cars. Mr. Read has agreed to attend the next meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> July.

7. A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme consultation: Councillors agreed to return individual comments.

8. Grass cutting: Cllr. Welsh had spoken to Mike Bodell of the Environment Agency at the drop-in event and had been advised that the bankside vegetation would be cut in July in order to facilitate a bankside inspection. The Clerk had asked Anthony Abbs to cut the top of the bank between the willow tree and the bridge on every other cut, to improve visibility for drivers crossing the bridge. This would be done at no extra charge to the agreed contract. The Chairman and Clerk advised that if the Parish Council wished to have more extensive work carried out, a quotation would be required and this would need to be built in to the budget and precept for next year and could be discussed at the November meeting. In the meantime, the Clerk will ask Anthony Abbs if he can cut as close to the bank as possible either side of the brook.

9. Village entrance feature: The Chairman and Clerk attended a meeting with Jo Challis and Stuart Bell from Highways, and Rebecca Brittain from Urban & Civic on 28<sup>th</sup> April. New signage has been put forward for approval which will contain a lorry symbol on all routes to Alconbury Weald. Other redundant signage will be removed. Ms. Challis and Mr. Bell are supportive of Alconbury Parish Council's request for entrance features and agreed that these should be substantial solid structures. Ms. Brittain has agreed to ask Urban & Civic's design engineers to take this forward and will look into the possibility of funding two of the three entrances requested. Ms. Challis has agreed to attend future Traffic Management Meetings (TMM) at Alconbury Weald. Chairman and/or Clerk to attend the next TMM meeting if possible.

10. Update on Alconbury Weald: The Chairman and Clerk will attend the next liaison meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May.

11. Brook tidy and wildlife survey: Cllr. Isles and the Clerk met with Andrew Walters from Keep Britain Tidy on 3<sup>rd</sup> April to discuss the proposed brook tidy. Cllr. Isles reported that during their inspection of brook, very little rubbish had been evident. It was thought that the previously high water levels had washed most of it away. Councillors agreed that the planned brook tidy should therefore be postponed. Mr. Walters has agreed to apply for a Flood Defence Consent, for permission to put a small raft into the brook which contains a clay panel to collect animal foot prints. Mr.

Walters has said that Rivercare will pay the £50 application fee. The result of the application will be known in two months.

12. ASSC: Cllr. Watson advised that ASSC had held a big Easter Party which was attended by 83 children, their families and the Easter Bunny! The recent band evening had attracted 70 people and two football finals had also boosted takings. The AGM will be held on 13<sup>th</sup> May.

13. Community Orchard/Trees: Cllr. S. Tarabella had carried out some pruning at the orchard and obtained a quotation from Global Tree Solutions for £252 plus VAT to remove the basal sucker growth from 7 trees on the village green. Cllr. Watson proposed that the quote from GTS be accepted. Seconded by Cllr. Welsh and unanimously agreed. Clerk to request that the work is carried out before the Village Fete on 12<sup>th</sup> July.

Councillors agreed that the trees in the orchard should be labelled with the variety and date planted but not with the name of individual sponsors. Clerk to investigate costs of tree labels and an information plaque. The Chairman will respond to an enquiry from a member of the public regarding the orchard.

14. Memorial Hall: Cllr. Adams and Cllr. Isles had attended the AGM on 8<sup>th</sup> April and reported that everything was going well. The Committee was re-elected, a new Secretary appointed and the Treasurer and Chairman re-elected.

15. Neighbourhood Watch: No report available. The police crime report for February shows 3 recorded crimes.

16. Playgrounds: Cllr. Watson reported that the swings and see-saw at Bramble End play area were beginning to show signs of wear. The next safety inspection is due in August. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Welsh for fitting the “No dogs” signs at Bramble End play area.

17. Youth Group: Cllr. Adams advised that 47 juniors and 12 seniors attended the last club night, during which a window was broken. This has since been repaired. The next club night will be 2<sup>nd</sup> May and will include an “e-safety” theme. At July’s club night there will be a bar-b-q. There will be no club night in August – Clerk to include this on the website. A donation of £2500 from Urban & Civic has been received.

18. Website: The Clerk advised that the new Parish Council website - [www.alconburyparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.alconburyparishcouncil.co.uk) is now in operation and is currently being updated by Andy Smith from askiT. Mr. Smith will transfer this task to the Clerk in the next week.

19. Allotments: The Chairman had been asked by AAGA whether vacant allotment plots could be offered to persons outside the village. Councillor Aylott proposed that the Parish Council had no objections to vacant allotment plots being offered to Alconbury Weston residents in the first instance. Seconded by Cllr. Watson and unanimously agreed. The Chairman will respond to AAGA advising that this will require an amendment to the Plot Holder Agreement Document.

## 20. Infrastructure report:

a) Churchyard – The next Churchyard tidy will take place on 10<sup>th</sup> May at 9.30am. Clerk to ask Highways if they will resite the new grit bin as it is too close to gates which are occasionally used by undertakers and which may also need to be accessed when building work commences.

b) Village Green – Clerk to obtain a quotation from GTS to prune back a tree overhanging the brook, opposite the phone box.

c) Roads and footpaths – Off road vehicles using the ford – Highways and the Environment Agency have both denied ownership of the land being used to access and exit the ford, stating that it may belong to the neighbouring farmer. The matter has been reported to the police and highlighted in the Parish Pump. The Chairman and Clerk inspected the area before the meeting and reported that activity appears to have ceased. It was therefore agreed to monitor the situation and for the Clerk to request that the footpath is swept.

The Clerk has assisted a resident in Beech End with a complaint about damage caused to the private road and public footpath by refuse lorries and will follow this up with Highways and HDC.

d) General – Street Lights – The Clerk has requested a quotation from Balfour Beatty for additional street lighting along North Road to ASSC. The Flood drop-in event had been well attended. The Chairman advised that she had applied for and received an “Insurance Related Request” from the Environment Agency for her property. The “Flood Risk Report” only applies to properties fitted with flood defence equipment. Both documents can be presented to insurance companies and may help in obtaining insurance cover. Flood maps are currently being updated.

## 21. Financial report:

a) Result of the external audit for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

The Clerk read the external auditor’s report to councillors. Councillors agreed it was unnecessary to publish further information regarding the fraud case, as the Chairman had written a comprehensive report in the last newsletter, detailing what had happened and the actions taken, that had been delivered to every household in the parish. Councillors agreed that a copy of the newsletter should be placed on the Parish Council website with the accounts for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

b) To agree and sign the accounts for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 and to complete the Annual Return.

All councillors had received a copy of the accounts and receipts and payments prior to the meeting. Cllr. Watson proposed that the accounts be accepted and signed by the Chairman and Clerk. Seconded by Cllr. Isles and unanimously agreed. Chairman and Clerk signed the accounts.

The Clerk had completed the Annual Return in preparation for external audit and this had been checked by the Chairman prior to the meeting. Cllr. Watson proposed that the Chairman and Clerk should sign Section 1, Accounting Statement and Section 2, Annual Governance Statement. Seconded by Cllr. Adams and unanimously agreed. Chairman and Clerk signed Section 1 & 2 of the Annual Return.

c) Result of the internal audit for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.

The Clerk had supplied a written report to Brain Cox detailing the fraud that had occurred. The internal audit had subsequently been completed with no further issues raised.

d) Payment of outstanding debts.

Cllr. Watson proposed approval of payment of items (2) to (9). Seconded by Cllr. Adams, unanimously agreed.

(1) Cq. No. 776 PKF Littlejohn, external audit fee for year ending 31/3/13	£1293.66*
(2) Cq. No. 777 Four Seasons, village grass cutting, 1 <sup>st</sup> instalment.	£1160.00
(3) Cq. No. 778 CCC, supply and installation of 3 Speedwatch signs.	£248.40
(4) Cq. No. 779 Mrs. D. Benham, wages and expenses for April.	£739.32
(5) Cq. No. 780 askiT Services Ltd, new website costs.	£147.60
(6) Cq. No. 781 CAPALC, councillor training.	£35.00
(7) Cq. No. 782 CAPALC, annual affiliation fee.	£518.82
(8) Cq. No. 783 London House Signs Ltd., refurbishment of village sign.	£420.00
(9) Cq. No. 784 Brian Cox & Co. Ltd. Internal audit fee.	£144.00

\* Item (1) was approved at the Parish Council meeting held on 25/3/14

e) Current position.

A copy of the receipts and payments was handed to each councillor. A copy will be attached to the minutes.

f) Risk Assessment.

The Clerk had completed the annual risk assessment and will e-mail a copy to councillors and attach a copy to the minute book.

## 22. Correspondence:

a) Invitation to attend the Annual Civic Leaders Tour of RAF Alconbury on 10<sup>th</sup> June – Cllr. Sale to attend.

b) 1<sup>st</sup> Alconbury Scout Group WW1 Centenary Cycle Challenge 26-27 July 2014 – members of the Scout Group will be cycling from Alconbury to the National Memorial Arboretum near Lichfield in honour of those who died during World War 1. The ride replicates the task that scouts undertook during the war when acting as messengers. The group are seeking sponsorship in various forms. Further information from Nigel Murphy 07766574930 or Roz Starkey at r.starkey@lineone.net

## 23. New agenda items for the next meeting: None received.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Watson for his service on the Parish Council and for his invaluable advice on planning matters.

25. Date of the next meeting: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2014, starting at 7pm at Alconbury Memorial Hall – Annual Parish Meeting followed by the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

Signed.....

Date.....

