

ALCONBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 6th December 2005 in the New Memorial Hall

Present:

Mr. Brown (Chairman), Mrs Adams, Mr Dawson, Mrs Dyer, Mrs Elphick, Mr Vanbergen, and Mrs Watkin. Mrs Lancey (Clerk). No members of the public.

1. The Parish Plan

Mr Dave Scotney, (Chairman) introduced Richard Scott, Wilda Freeman, Cliff and Marilyn Noon, Robert Hodgson and Gordon Dawson the other members of the Parish Plan Steering Group.

The first draft of the Parish Plan had already been circulated to all Parish Councillors. He explained that there were two sections, the first containing the raw data and the second the plan itself with conclusions drawn from this data. It was envisaged that the final Plan would also contain a map of the village together with photographs. This initial presentation was to seek the views of the Parish Council as to the content and format of the Plan before proceeding with the final document. Mr Scotney said that sadly only around 22% of households had responded to the questionnaires, but that this actually was slightly higher than the national average for such projects.

Mr Brown, on behalf of the Parish Council, thanked the Steering Group for all the hard work that had gone into the production of the Plan. It was recognised that a huge amount of time and effort had been spent by the Steering Group. The Plan itself was then discussed together with the way forward after distribution of the Plan to residents. It was clearly the responsibility of the Parish Council to act upon the results of the Plan. Once the final document had been produced, the Steering Group had fulfilled their role. It was envisaged that the final Plan would be distributed to the 99 households who had provided their names and addresses and more copies would be made available at the same locations that had been used for the red collection boxes. It was planned to produce 250 copies. The Parish Council agreed that as only 22% of the population had responded to the questionnaire the final Plan should not be distributed to all households, so saving a considerable amount on printing costs.

Although the concept of the Plan was clearly outlined in Mr. Scotney's letter printed at the beginning of the report, it was felt that some sort of conclusion could be added at the end of the document and that this should be written by the Parish Council. This should reiterate to residents the commitment of the Parish Council to pursue points of concern highlighted by the Plan.

The Steering Group were again thanked by the Parish Council for all their hard work. The Steering Group then left the meeting. It was subsequently agreed that a meeting should be held on Monday 12th December to discuss the Parish council letter.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mr Senior, Mrs Aylott, Mrs Dix, Mrs Williams, District Councillor Sarah Vanbergen and County Councillors Elaine Kadic and Sir Peter Brown.

3. Councillors' Interests

None were recorded

4. Planning

New Applications:

0503640FUL – Erection of conservatory – 9 Willow End – no observations

5. The Parish Precept 2006-2007/Payment of Accounts

As previously advised to the Councillors the following cheques were approved and signed:

Victim Support – Donation - £50

K. Fergusons – Grass Cutting - £635.38

Playground Management Ltd. – ROSPA Inspection - £292.58

The Parish Precept for 2006-2007 was then discussed. As agreed at the last meeting Mrs Adams provided a budget from the Youth Group detailing their requirements until the end of 2007. This showed that in order to cover the bare essentials of the group such as salaries of youth workers etc. there would be a deficit of £1550.09 by the end of 2007. This budget did not allow for any planning, construction or maintenance costs for a youth shelter or activity area and a minimal amount of planned activities. The Clerk confirmed that as the Youth Group intended using the £4000 set aside for them in the current year's precept, there might only be an underspend of approx. £2000 by the end of March 2006. It was acknowledged that the Parish Council needed to set aside any underspend as a reserve as recommended during the recent CALC training session.

Mrs Watkin proposed that the Parish Council should continue to show its support of the Youth Group by allocating £4000 to their cause as in the last two previous years. This proposal was seconded by Mr. Brown. Mr Vanbergen was not in agreement with this proposal who argued that the Parish Council would be setting the 2007/2008 precept budget which could meet any shortfall of the group's finances before the end of 2007.

The financial implications of the Parish Plan also needed to be taken into consideration. Observation had been made in the Plan that some parishioners felt the Parish Council should be more visible. It was suggested that in terms of the 2006/2007 Precept, money should be set aside for the production of an annual report/newsletter informing the general public of Parish Council activities. Mrs Watkin suggested that this should be done in conjunction with the Annual Parish Meeting when the past year's activities were discussed. Mr Vanbergen felt that the Parish Council already made their activities well known to the public via the noticeboard and the Parish Council website. At this point in time there were no other financial implications arising from the Parish Plan.

After lengthy discussion, two proposals were made. Mrs Watkin proposed that £4000 should be put into the budget making a total of £19,500. Mr Vanbergen proposed that the budget should remain at £17,000 (as the current year). Mr Vanbergen requested that a recorded vote be taken on these proposals.

Those voting for the Precept to remain at £17,000 were Mrs Dyer, Mrs. Elphick and Mr Vanbergen. Those voting for the Precept to rise to £19,500 were Mr Brown, Mrs Adams, Mr Dawson and Mrs Watkin. It was agreed that the Clerk should prepare a revised Precept of £19,500, also incorporating a small sum for a parish newsletter. This would be achieved by a reduction in the Section 137 money set aside as discussed at the last Parish Council meeting. The Precept request should then be submitted to Huntingdonshire District Council before the deadline of 16th December.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting would be held on Tuesday 31st January 2006 at 7.45pm in the New Memorial Hall. The Clerk also had provisional dates for the meeting with Claudia Waters concerning the bus shelter. It was decided that this should take place on January 10th. Please note that this has subsequently been cancelled. New date is 11th January 2006 at 7.30pm in the New Memorial Hall.