Minutes of Avon Dassett Parish Council

Monday 3rd September 2012

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm. **411**

1. APOLOGIES: Trevor Gill, Daniel Robertson, Amanda Wilson-Patterson

   Present at Meeting: Alastair Whetstone, David Hutt, Diana Biddlestone, Councillor Chris Williams Clerk

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS: None

3. CONFIRM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: The minutes were signed by Alastair Whetstone.

Councillor Williams stressed that the response rate to the Broadband questionnaire will not dictate whether an area will be considered for Superfast Broadband.

4. MATTERS ARISING:

Community

Amanda Wilson-Patterson was unable to attend the meeting and will attend the October meeting instead.

a. Community Policing/Neighbourhood Watch

Councillor Williams confirmed that he has requested a visit to a parish council meeting from the Community Police Office in order to explain the current policing.

b. PO Computer

The Clerk confirmed that she had sent an email to Bala Jaspal following from the last meeting but had not received a response.

c. Superfast Broadband Update

Councillor Williams commented that the greatest demand for Broadband comes from high school children. Providers will look at where demand is in order to make investment decisions.

d. Playground

Alastair Whetstone confirmed that he had delivered the cheques to Catherine Whalberg and had tried to set up a meeting to discuss the matter of the playground lease but this had not happened yet. He will continue to try to set up this meeting and report back to the Parish Council.

ACTION: Alastair Whestone to seek meeting to discuss playground lease.

e. General Village Maintenance and littering issues

Trevor Gill had undertaken to put up posters including information on littering. An update was unavailable due to Trevor Gill's absence from the meeting.

f. Stratford on Avon Governance Review

Councillor Williams encouraged the parish council to consider whether it was content with current arrangement or wished to submit ideas for changes/improvements.

ACTION: Clerk to send Governance emails to David Hutt for his consideration.

g. Village Tidy Up Date

It was decided to set this at the next Parish Council meeting. The item will be carried forward.

Roads

Traffic, Roads and Drains

Alastair Whetstone commented on the potholes at the top of the hill. Some of the potholes are quite deep and of concern, particularly for cyclists.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Patch Byrne to establish when the potholes will be filled.

Environment/Maintenance

h. St John's – including plaques and settlement of accounts

Diana Biddlestone explained that the plaques were now all in place. She expressed some concern about

the clarity of the text on the big plaque. 412

ACTION: Diana Biddlestone to investigate the state of the text on the large plaque and possibly raise the matter with the engravers.

Diana Biddlestone confirmed that no monies had been paid out to the Council yet. The clerk confirmed that £3,443.40 is currently held in the ADPC accounts for the Steps Fund and Diana confirmed that a further £600 is due to come from the churches conservation Trust for other improvements on the church such as lighting which has been mentioned in the past.

After discussions it was decided to issue a cheque for £3,000 from the October meeting for the attention of Tim Berwick of Stratford district Council.

ACTION: Diana Biddlestone to obtain payment details for cheque to Tim Berwick of SDC prior to October meeting in order to issue a cheque for £3,000 for the refurbishment of the St. Johns steps.

The remainder of the monies, £443.30, will be retained for contingencies at St. John's and in preparation for Christmas Events and other events.

ACTION: Diana Biddlestone to seek volunteers to organise events to be held at St John's church.

Communication/Administration

i. Grants/Fundraising opportunities for street lights

No further update on this matter. Councillor Chris Williams stated that Parish Councils cannot raise funds directly for capital expenditure but could set up separate groups for fundraising projects. Councillor Williams explained that income to Parish Councils as restricted to the precept.

j. Laptop

Alastair Whetstone confirmed that the laptop is being held by Trevor Gill.

k. Contents of Bank Safe – archiving and AD History Group

Trevor Gill is looking into options and had previously explained that whilst the History Group are keen to review the documents, they are not in a position to do so at present. Carry Forward Item to October.

5. COUNCIL REPORTS

Avon Dassett Parish Council Meeting - 3rd September 2012
County and District Councillor's Report

1. **Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service -** I am delighted to advise you that WCC's Fire and Rescue Service is officially the 'Best Performing Authority in the Country' for reducing accidental fires in the home and attendance to unwanted automatic fire alarms. Over the past two years Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service has undergone a huge programme of change in an effort to increase the safety of our residents. The outcome of this change is clearly evident with the service now leading some 42 other Fire and Rescue Services from across the country.

2. **Street Lighting** – The proposals made in the 2010 budget to reduce the working hours of street lighting will be implemented in the next two months. I must stress that lights will only be turned off at places at other than road junctions, roundabouts and where the Police deem it is not safe to do so. It is proposed that lighting will be turned off between 12.00 midnight and 5.30 a.m. At the moment it is only lighting under the control of the WCC that will be turned off and Parish Councils can make their own decisions as to whether or not to follow the lead of the County.

3. **WCC Fiscal Matters** – As I reported earlier the government has indicated that the financial settlement made to local authorities to run their administration will be reduced even further than had been predicted. At the County we are already formulating our budget proposals. It is still the intention not to increase Council Tax next year and to maintain an efficient level of service. However, we are visiting every area of expenditure and some savings which might have to be made will not please everyone.

4. **SDC Community Governance** – SDC is currently reviewing Community Governance whereby they can either create Parish Councils, or review and change Parish Boundaries and, in extreme cases, abolish parishes. Ideally, the District Council wants to know what local people think about the Community Governance arrangements for their parish. The deadline for sending your views for the

first stagre of the Review is 12th September. The District Council will consider all the representations and then publish draft proposals and the reasons behind them. There will be a further period of time

for people to comment on the draft proposals before the final proposals are agreed. Full details of this Review have already been provided to the Parish Clerk.

5. **Welfare Reform** – As a result of the last national budget proposals there is an initiative to reduce the amount of benefit fraud that currently exists. One of the proposals, and I must stress it is only a proposal and has yet to be ratified, is that reform should protect the amount vulnerable, for instance, pensioners in particular, and the long term unemployed returning to work. Central government has indicated that in view of the level of fraud that is taking place they will reduce the amount of grant funding that is provided to authorities to fund this sort of benefit. For example, currently 60% of Council Tax Benefit claimants in our district could be excluded from any reduction in entitlement. SDC is very fortunate that the amount of fraud that is taking place compared to other areas is below the national average. The alarmist circular sent out by WALC does not apply to our district and in the event of the government proposals being implemented the increase that Avon Dassett will have to claim on their Precept would be no more than 1.5%. I will keep the Parish Council informed of developments.

6. **Community Grants** – Last year Community Grants were made available through the District Council and Avon Dassett benefitted from these grants. For example, the History Society was allocated £500 and the Chruch Steps Appeal was granted some £1500. This year the criteria for these grants has been altered and some of the restrictions for allocation has been relaxed. The prime purpose of the Community Grants is to fund initiatives, either by the Parish Council or Societies within the community who would benefit from a small sum of money. I am afraid that money cannot be used by the Parish Councils or other organizations for the revenue purposes and can only be used for capital projects. If you are aware of any scheme that might benefit, please let me know.

Cllr Chris Williams
Member for Kineton Division - WCC
Member for Fenny Compton Ward - SDC
02.09.12.

ACTION: Councillors to consider application to the grants fund for Avon Dassett.

6. Correspondence

David Hutt and Diana Biddlestone signed the new declaration of interests form.

ACTION: Clerk to send new Declaration of Interests forms off to SDC

Clerk explained that Grant Thornton have been confirmed as the new external auditors for ADPC.

7. Planning

No items for consideration

8 Financial Statement September 2012: Was signed by David Hutt.

Balance at close of business 31/8/12

Current Account	£ 3,685.69 *
Savings Account	£ 3,751.81

This figure includes a balance of **£3,443.40** for St John's Steps Fund. Total balance for ADPC is £3,994.10.

Bank Transactions August 2012

Current Account		**In**	**Out**
6 Aug DD	Npower		37.00
14 Aug Dep	D. Biddlestone (St John's Steps)	100.00	
16 Aug Chq	1192		10.40
20 Aug Chq	1199		5.00
20 Aug Chq	1196		109.39
20 Aug Chq	1197		360.00
21 Aug Chq	1194		222.00
21 Aug Chq	1195		297.00
22 Aug DD	Douglas Tonks		218.02

23 Aug Chq	1198	200.00	
28 Aug Chq	1193	11.00	
			414

Deposit Account	**In**	**Out**
9 Aug Interest	0.21	

Cheques issued from meeting		**Cheque No**
Sue Harris (Aug cleaning)	11.00	1201
Clerk (Aug Expenses)	14.00	1202
Total cheques for ADPC	25.00	

Income to ADPC: None

Quarterly Budget update.

The Clerk ran through the second quarter review of expenditure to budget. She sought feedback on the updated format and this was approved unanimously by Councillors.

September 2012 2nd Quarter budget update. Areas of overspend/concern are highlighted in red

	Budget £	**Spend to date £**	**% of Budget**
Expenditure	9,120	6,304	69
VAT	250	478	191 *1
RR Ins	750	790	105
RR Rates	100	0	0
RR Clean	150	65	43
RR Maintenance	380	247	65 *2
Clerk Pay	2,500	907	36
Admin	350	179	51
PC Training	300	0	0
WALC	100	88	88
Xmas Cards	0	0	0
Elec supply RR	450	132	29
Street Light Supply	1,000	424	42
Other: Street Light replacement	450	1,048	233 *3
Playground Rental	10	0	0
Website	0	0	0
Playground	140	343	245 *4
Other	0	248	248 *5
Mowing	1,710	1,044	61 *6
Audit Fees	190	60	32
Safe Fees	20	0	0
Coffee Morning	120	42	35
Election Fees	400	0	0

Notes on Overspend/Concern

*1 VAT refund higher than anticipated
*2 RR Maintenance slightly high but should balance out in remainder of year
*3 4 lights replaced
*4 Playground least legal bills paid but not anticipated
*5 £24 to Community links, £224 to Mr Elsmore for his erroneous credit, therefore this is over spent by £24 only
*6 Mowing slightly high but should balance out over remainder of year as growing season comes to an end

Other Funds held by ADPC:

Neighbourhood Watch £ 185.00

St John's Steps appeal Funds £3,443.40

Audit 415

The Clerk confirmed that she had chased up the audit closure and had been informed that the audit had passed and closure notice would be issued.

Member Reports

The Clerk asked Councillors if there was a footpaths maintenance group within Avon Dassett in order to send on recent information from the Footpaths Department. Councillors were not aware of such a group.

The Clerk asked if any Councillors were holding the Smart Water viles. Councillors wondered if they were still being stored with Kevin Martin.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Kevin Martin to establish if he has the Smart Water viles and if so to organise their return to ADPC.