# Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Avon Dassett Parish Council
## Monday 6th November 2017, 7.30 pm at The Reading Room

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm.

1) PRESENT: Trevor Gill (Chairman), Mike Blakeman, Martyn Heard, Darrell Muffitt, Clerk (Helen Hide-Wright)

   APOLOGIES: Councillor John Feilding. Councillor Chris Williams

2) DECLARATION OF INTERESTS: None.

3) CONFIRM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: Proposed: Mike Blakeman, Seconded: Martyn Heard, unanimously agreed. Signed and dated by Trevor Gill.

4) QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC: None

5) MATTERS ARISING: Repairs to playground are still outstanding and remain with Trevor Gill.

   Trevor Gill is progressing the Superfast Broadband matters with the Broadband Team and to advise the residents who are still to be upgraded with the results of his discussions.

   Darrell Muffitt commented that he is looking to the Broadband Team to provide firm dates when the final issues will be resolved.

   Defibrillator: Trevor Gill is awaiting a response from the Warwickshire Ambulance Centre re their requirement following the completion of the training. Darrell Muffitt confirmed that several other people were interested in being trained. Trevor Gill explained that further training opportunities will be available early on 2018.

   The final window has been installed: Thanks to Martyn Heard for sorting the matter out.

   Liz Hirst arrived at 7.40pm.

6) Adoption of New Councillor Code of Conduct: The new Code was highlighted and will be an agenda item next month.

Community

a) Burial Ground: See above.
b) Community Policing/Neighbourhood Watch: Van broken into in Farnborough.
c) Playground – (weekly inspection reports): See above.
d) Superfast Broadband: See above.
e) The Post Office: Nothing to report.
f) Village Communications and website: Nothing to report.
g) Installation of final window in Reading Room: See above.
h) War Memorial: Workshop: Trevor Gill will be attending the forthcoming training event.
i) Volunteer for Cotswold Conservation Board: A volunteer is sought. A Mail Chimp communication will be sent out.
   **ACTION: Trevor Gill to send out communication.**
j) Remembrance Service: Fr. Bill will be officiating. The service will start at noon.
k) Christmas Carol Service: 17th December at St. Joseph's church with a pre-service gathering at The Carrow.

Roads: Traffic, Roads and Drains (Church Hill).

l) Theft of the village sign opposite Top Lodge: Police are aware. Patch Byrne is dealing with this.

m) Church Hill Pavement: Patch Byrne is dealing with the clearing of this.

**ACTION**: **Clerk to contact Patch Byrne to establish a date for the work.**

**ACTION: Clerk to contact Angela Lloyd to get next date for street cleaning and send information to Sarah Richardson.**

Concerns were raised about the state of pavements which appear to be cracking.

Environment/Maintenance

n) Green areas: Tenders for 2018 onwards: Two tenders have been received. It was decided to go with the contractor who can collect the grass clippings to deal with the complaints received previously.
**ACTION: Clerk to contact successful contractor and send a letter of thanks to the other contractor.**

**o)** Reading Room: Notice Board/Refurbishments at RR (Grant). An estimate of 3-days work has been outlined for the painting of the RR. It was agreed that the notice board decision and painting of the RR would take place in the spring. Trevor Gill confirmed that the Avon Dassett Fete Committee has donated £500 towards a new notice board.

Communication/Administration

7) COUNCIL REPORTS:

Councillor Chris Williams: Appendix A.
Councillor John Feilding: Appendix B.

8) CORRESPONDENCE – Paper copies circulated at meeting. Emails circulated prior to meeting.

9) PLANNING (Declarations of interests):

a) Land for sale at Treetop Farm Avon Dassett: The Parish Council has seen the land is being advertised as residential. Trevor Gill has written to the agents to highlight that the land is not residential, but no response has been received.

**ACTION: Mike Blakeman to check the Stratford District Council planning register against the postcode to check the status of the land. If there is no change of use to residential and no satisfactory response is received from the agents then Trading Standards will be contacted.**

10) FINANCIAL STATEMENT. (Appendix C).

Payments

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6.11.17 | Clerk: Expenses | £ 60.99 |
| 6.11.17 | Michael Mann Inv 1890 | £147.60 |
| 6.11.17 | Trevor Gill (WALC Training) | £ 45.00 |
| **Total** | | **£253.59** |
| 17.10.17 | Royal British Legion (Wreaths) | £ 50.00 |
| | Data Protection annual renewal | £ 35.00 |

a) Presentation of the draft budget for 2018-2019 (attached in Appendix C): Trevor Gill went

through the figures and agreed to put brief explanations formthe increases in the published version. The budget will be discussed further and agreed at next month's meeting, ready for the precept application in January 2018.

b) Proposal for Precept capping by central government: The Parish Council discussed the proposed cap of 2% with anything above resulting in a compulsory referendum which could cost a considerable sum to the PC. Appendix E: Response from ADPC to consultation.

£500 grant from AD Fete Committee for Notice Board to go into RR ring fence funds.

**ACTION: Clerk to transfer £500 from Current account to Deposit account (Ring Fenced funds).**
**ACTION: Clerk to send a letter of thanks to Avon Dassett Fete Committee for their donation.**

**ACTION: Clerk to ask for letter of acknowledgement of £50 donation for wreath.**

11) MEMBER REPORTS: Liz Hirst has been looking into the play area development. Liz will present a report to the PC next month.

12) DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 18th December 2017. Please note change of date.

a) Meeting dates for 2018: 22nd January 5th March, 9th April, 14th May, 4th June, 2nd July, 3rd Sept, 1st Oct, 5th Nov, 3rd Dec.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

## Appendix A: County Councillor's Report: Chris Williams

**County Council Activities –** The County Council continues to be fairly quiet as budgetary constraints and unknowns continue to influence both capacity (including staff numbers) and innovation. The full council agenda included such items as Corporate Parenting Policy; Strategic Plan for Youth Justice Service, Health and Well-Being Board Annual Review; Improvement to Europa Way using Warwick District Council S106 money and Government grant via the Coventry Warwickshire LEP.

**Administration** – Changes in the Adult and Children's Directorate have been the return of Nigel Minns to be the new Director and Chris Malone to be the permanent Head of Education. Ms Malone fills a much-needed post at a time when education is going through so many changes with the continued introduction of Academies anew funding formula. We still await confirmation of the financial grant from the government for next year's budget. The pressures associated with Adult Care and integrated Health Care have not subsided and will still play a significant part in our budget deliberations.

**Children's Centres** –The Consultation has now ended and the responses are being analysed with changes being made to the final proposals. There have been over 2,000 responses as well as many on line comments. As expected there are many conflicting proposals depending on where the respondent lives and whether they use the Children's Centres. Whatever the final decision taken by the Cainet it will only form part of the all-round review of Children's Services that is so badly needed. Another Consultation finished on 2nd November on Home to School Transport where some changes to the arrangements are being implemented..

**Boundary Reviews -** There has been much confusion about the current steps that are being taken in Parliament to reduce the number of MPs from 650 to 600. It appears that the present constituency of Kenilworth and Southam could disappear if the proposals are accepted and be realigned with Stratford. If this realignment occurs Avon Asset would have a new MP from Stratford-on-Avon. The composition for the new Constituency is a numerical compilation, not geographical.

This realignment of constituencies does not affect either the County or District boundaries and Avon Dassett will still be part of the newly-formed Kineton & Red Horse Division at the County Council.

**Community Forums** – The debate continues over the future of the Community Forums and what value they add in their role in keeping the County Council informed of local aspirations.

**Warwickshire Unauthorised Encampments Protocol –** The County Council has adopted the Warwickshire protocol 2017 as the Council's overarching approach to managing unauthorised gypsy and traveler encampments. The current shared protocol for managing these sites known as 'firm but fair' was agreed in 2007 and has been used ever since. Following numerous unauthorised encampments it was considered the protocol was in need of revision and updating. The new protocol aimed at ensuring that the response to unauthorised encampments is treated in a cohesive, consistent, efficient and effective manner. This document will provide clear guidance when unauthorised encampments occur.

Appendix B: Cllr Feilding's report 30 October

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, has since my last report, have a presentation from Orbit on current leases of their new properties.

Also reports

**South Warwickshire Foundation Trust**

To receive an update from Dr Christina Ramos on end of life care process from the South ırwickshire Foundation Trust.

The biggest area requiring work was in education in end of life care, particularly in Care mes. In addition, becoming proactive in planning advance care before reaching crisis point s key, and exploring alternatives to dialling 999 and/or hospital admissions. To facilitate this, espect Forms' (replacing 'Do Not Resuscitate' orders with a more wide-ranging personalised m) were being promoted, and an Over 75's Project, which included GP's, were being couraged to plant the seed of a personalised plan for end of life care before reaching crisis point.

Another large area of work was in looking to promote joined up IT systems providing a single nt of access for Hubs. The Out of Hospital Programme was much broader in its systems in the ed to share information. However, a lack of funding was instrumental in being able to share s more widely.

A point was raised on the shortage of permanent staff in hospitals, coupled with high demand, d it was reported that data was being reviewed to see which teams were providing most of the liative care, with the view to taking some other work away from those teams.

**Citizens Advice South Warwickshire**

Aiden Knox, Chief Executive of Citizens Advice South Warwickshire (CASW), supported by Helen Knight, Court Desk Worker, presented an update on threatened homelessness/repossession cases across the District, a copy of which is appended to these Minutes.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council funded a part-time post to represent people in court on repossession and eviction processes and the demand for this service had quadrupled in the last financial year. This was down to various reasons; the first tranche of five year tenancies that were coming to an end, the introduction of Universal Credit, Housing Benefit and other areas of welfare reform, such as Spare Room Subsidy and Benefit Cap. The Court Hearing process was very formulaic and extremely difficult for tenants to represent themselves. CASW also run an Outreach Help service to provide support in rural areas.

At the District Housing Forums, which Helen Knight chairs, it was apparent that some Social Landlords had invested in support workers and there were varying approaches and relationships with tenants. Ms Knight also raised issues with the current Tenancy Agreement Policies and had made the offer to assist Social Landlords with redrafting, but the offer had not been taken up to date.

Severn Trent will give a presentation last Wednesday re problems in the District.

Appendix C: FINANCIAL STATEMENT November 2017, Avon Dassett Parish Council:

**Balance at close of business 31 October 2017**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Current Account | £ | 10,994.14 |
| Savings Account | £ | 12,331.59* Ring fenced funds and interest received. |

**Bank Transactions**

| Current Account | | Chq/SO/DD/TRF/FPI | In | Out |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 Oct 17 | Clerk Expenses | TRF | | 85.15 |
| 10 Oct 17 | Wi-Fi Plug In (Refund to Clerk) | TRF | | 19.94 |
| 10 Oct 17 | Grant Thornton | FPO | | 120.00 |
| 10 Oct 17 | MFM 1870 | FPO | | 295.20 |
| 10 Oct 17 | MFM 1851 | FPO | | 147.60 |
| 10 Oct 17 | Playsafety inspection | FPO | | 100.80 |
| 17 Oct 17 | Royal British Legion | TRF | | 50.00 |
| 19 Oct 17 | ICO | DD | | 35.00 |
| 19 Oct 17 | AD Fete Committee | CR | 250.00 | |
| 20 Oct 17 | Npower | DD | | 28.00 |
| 20 Oct 17 | AD Fete Committee | CR | 250.00 | |
| 20 Oct 17 | Clerk Pay Oct | TRF | | 324.51 |

| Deposit Account | | In | Out |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9 Oct 17 | Interest | 0.47 | |

**Payments Authorised From The Meeting**

| | |
|---|---|
| 6.11.17 Clerk: Expenses | £ 60.99 |
| 6.11.17 Michael Mann Inv 1890 | £147.60 |
| 6.11.17 Trevor Gill (WALC Training) | £ 45.00 |
| Total | £253.59 |
| 17.10.17 Royal British Legion (Wreaths) | £ 50.00 |

**New Balances for Ring Fenced Funds:**

| Description | Amount |
|---|---|
| Neighbourhood Watch | £ 185.00 |
| St John's Steps Appeal Funds | £ 86.19 |
| I.T. Equip & Software | £ 545.40 |
| Play area lease | £ 200.00 |
| Reading Room Maintenance | £ 8,310.00 |
| Playground | £ 250.00 |
| Parish Plan | £ 2,000.00 |
| Village Cemetery | £ 275.00 |
| Village Maintenance | £ 230.00 |
| Defibrillator | £ 250.00 |
| **Total** | **£12,331.59** |

## Appendix D: Invoices for payment.

**FRANK MANN FARMERS**
**FENCING LANDSCAPING**
**MICHAEL MANN**

TEL 07759 863269 (ANYTIME)

**TO:** **Avon Dassett Parish council** **DATE 30/9/17**

**INVOICE NOS** 1890

| | INVOICE | VAT | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13/9/17 | Mow Village, cemetry, play area | y | £123.00 |
| | **Sub TOTAL** | | £123.00 |
| | **VAT** | 20 | £24.60 |
| | **TOTAL** | | £147.60 |

**Please make cheques payable to Frank Mann Farmers**

**Bank Transfer preferred payment to HSBC Bank, sort code 40-27-06 Acct No 32321718**
**Referencing Invoice Number**

**THE ELMS FARM, PLOUGH LANE, BISHOPS ITCHINGTON,SOUTHAM, CV47 2QG**
**VAT NO: 273 4787 25**

Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils (WALC)
The Warwickshire, Solihull, Birmingham Training Partnership for Parish and Town Councils
Warwick Enterprise Park, Wellesbourne, Warwickshire CV35 9EF
Telephone 01789 472617
Email: alisong@walc.org.uk
Website: www.walc.org.uk

Representing and Advising Town and Parish Councils

| Customer Information | | Invoice Information | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name: | Helen | Invoice Number: | inv17299 |
| Council: | Avon Dassett Parish Council | Invoice Date: | 05-Oct-2017 |

**Event booked**

**Data Protection (GDPR) and Freedom of Information** Invoice total: £45.00

**Please quote the invoice number on all payment transactions**

- Cheques payable to 'WALC' and post to WALC, Warwick Enterprise Park, Wellesbourne, Warwickshire CV35 9EF
- BACS payments can be made to Unity Trust Bank account number 20369462, sort code 60-83-01
- All '241' places are subject to the conditions of payment for other delegates from the same council attending on the same day

| | |
|---|---|
| General information | |
| Event | Data Protection (GDPR) and Freedom of Information |
| Event date | 23-Nov-2017 10:00 am |
| Location | Dunchurch Village Hall (Rugby Road, Dunchurch, Rugby, Warwickshire CV22, UK) |
| Number of delegates | 1 |
| Billing Information | |
| First Name | Helen |
| Council | Avon Dassett Parish Council |
| Email | avondassett.clerk@googlemail.com |
| Comment | |
| Amount | £45.00 |
| Payment method | Offline Payment |
| Transaction ID | GIDVBLXG |
| Delegates information | |
| Delegate 1 Information : | |
| First Name | Trevor |
| Last Name | Gill |
| Council | Avon Dassett Parish Council |
| Role | Chair |
| Email | avondassettchair@gmail.com |
| Do you require disabled access? | No |
| Do you have any dietary requirements? | No |
| Payment Due | £45.00 |

## Clerk Expenses: Nov 2017

| Month | Phone | Mileage | Stamps | Misc |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| October | £15.00 | £18.00 | | £27.99 * |

*Shredder

Includes mileage to 26.9.17 to 28.10.17

**Total £60.99**

**Subject:** Budget Capping or the Extension of Referendum Principles to Parish and Town Councils
**Date:** Saturday, 28 October 2017 at 13:30:49 British Summer Time
**From:** Trevor Gill
**To:** Jeremy Wright
**CC:** Avon Dassett Parish Council - Clerk, John Crossling, Darrell Muffitt, Michael Blakeman, Liz Hirst, Martyn Heard

Dear Mr Wright

There has been much speculation over the last 2 or 3 years about the possibility of Central Government imposing a cap (currently 2%) on the amount that Parish Councils are permitted to increase their precept. Whilst we are supportive of the need to keep our costs down we are concerned, that for small parish councils such as ourselves, any imposed cap will either mean that we cannot meet our obligations from the precept or else we will incur disproportionate costs if we are forced to hold a referendum.

The email below is a copy of our submission which I believe sets out the issues from our respective.

I am sure that you aware that this consultation is taking place and Avon Dassett Parish Council will be pleased to receive any comments which you might have on this issue

Trevor B Gill
Chair
Avon Dassett Parish Council

---

**From:** Trevor Gill <avondassettchair@gmail.com>
**Date:** Thursday, 26 October 2017 at 11:15
**To:** <LGFConsultation@communities.gsi.gov.uk>
**Cc:** Avon Dassett Parish Council - Clerk <avondassett.clerk@googlemail.com>, John Crossling <johnc@walc.org.uk>
**Subject:** Budget Capping or the Extension of Referendum Principles to Parish and Town Councils

**Budget Capping**
**or**
**the Extension of Referendum Principles to Parish and Town Councils**

I feel that I must respond on behalf of Avon Dassett Parish Council to the proposals to limit our ability to raise our precept to cover the services and functions that we provide to our local residents, and also the problems that any referendum will cause.

Having reviewed the proposals it is evident that they will be unworkable and will cost a disproportionate amount when applied to Parish Councils with small precepts.

We are a very small rural community with approximately 100 properties and 210 residents (of which approximately 160 are on the electoral role). The only local amenities that we have is our local pub, The Avon which is community owned, and a Post Office for 4 hours per week. We have a very limited transport service (one bus per week). We are situated on the border between Warwickshire and Oxfordshire and we are in a conservation area. Our annual precept is to the order of £13k and from this we must:

- Provide street lighting in terms of maintenance and electricity costs
- Maintain the infrastructure of the village – mainly mowing the green areas
- Maintain our local playground
- Maintain our local Reading Room
- Meet the salary and administration costs of running a Parish Council

It is very relevant when considering imposing any restriction on our ability to raise the precept that 2% of our precept is only £260 and on many occasions this increase would be insufficient to meet the increase in expendture imposed upon us by Central Government. We budget very prudently and are very conscious of the need to ensure that all expenditure can be fully justified and only raise our precept of there is no viable alternative. Examples of where this has been necessary include:

- The need to replace street light bulbs to meet current standards and requirements
- The legal requirement to provide our clerk with a pension
- The need to ensure that we fully meet the transparency requirements
- General inflation costs relating to electricity supplies
- Increase in generally maintaining the village

Turning to the proposals for a referendum. There needs to be greater clarity as to how this would work and who will be responsible for the costs involved if this is required. As stated above we are a very small Parish Council (5 members supported by our clerk) and if we are to be forced to undertake a referendum in respect of precept increases the referendum costs could well be in excess of the increase required. In addition we have no experience in holding a referendum so would there be central support available and again who would pay for this. If a referendum were needed then the likely costs would be:

- There was a cost levied upon us by Stratford on Avon District Council for the recent Parish Council elections were £1,000 and it is reasonable to assume that this cost would be repeated although it could well be in excess of this figure. The infrastructure (counters, accomodation, counting supervisors etc) were readily available as this election was a small part of a larger number of local elections. If we were required to hold an individual rererendum then these costs could well to to the order of £2,500.
- If we were obilged to to hold a referendum there would be the need for our clerk to support this process and there would be an additional cost incurred. It is not unreasonable to estimate this as a minimum of 20 hours equating to approximately £250 of additional costs.

Based upon the above our conclusion is that the proposals are unworkable, not properly thought out in respect of small parish councils and, if implemented, would lead to a dramatic increase in costs to our local residents Based upon the estimates of the costs for a referendum, they could exceed any proposed increase in the precept. Based upon 9000 parish councils if 50% are small (turnover below £25,000) if every one of these were to increase their precept by £2,000 the total would be £9m. In the grand scheme of public expenditure this is not going to change anything

An alternative approach could:

- for small parish councils with a turnover less than £25k to be given an exemption where the increase is less than 50% of the previous year's precept
- for small parish councils with a turnover between £25k and £100k to be given an exemption where the increase is less than 25% of the previous year's precept
- for small parish councils with a turnover between £100k and £250k to be given an exemption where the increase is less than 10% of the previous year's precept

This would, I suggest, in the majority of cases enable Parish Councils to set precept at sensible levels sufficient for us to meet ther obligations.

Trevor B Gill
Chair
Avon Dassett Parish Council