AVON DASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held at the Reading Room on Monday 3 October 2005

Present L Hope-Frost; D Brangwyn; K Martin; J Burgess; Cllr Williams; Cllr Booth; Clerk

In Attendance A Del Principe (part attendance); J Sheriff

Prior to commencement of the formal meeting a short presentation was held to express thanks on behalf of the Councillors for the exemplary work carried out by Amanda Del Principe during her 5 years as Clerk.

1) Apologies: A Fraser

2) Declaration of Interest: None

3) Confirmation of Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as correct by K Martin and seconded by J Burgess. They were then signed by L Hope-Frost.

4) Matters Arising:

a) Reading Room – David Finch due to begin work on the benches in the Reading Room week commencing 3 October. Quotations awaited for repairs to window and work required to drain cover. A new quote for a bespoke ramp to enabled disabled access to the Reading Room to be obtained – see item 9a below.
Woodworm treatment to be carried out by A Fraser.
The damaged table has been repaired and returned.

b) Election – Jill Burgess formally signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office ledger and completed necessary documentation, copies of which to be sent to District Council Monitoring Officer by Clerk.

5) Correspondence:

Best Kept Village: Letter to Mrs J Cranfield from Clerk dated 18 August read to meeting; as yet no response has been received. Clerk to write to Allison Chappell (Mrs Cranfield's superior) enclosing copy of 18 August letter to express concern with regard to lack of reply. Cllr Williams suggested that successful Fête should be cited as further evidence of 'community involvement'.

Dog Fouling: Cllr Williams was asked to source District Council leaflets regarding dog fouling; leaflets to be issued to all dog owners in the village.

Planning: Application received regarding crown lift and pruning of trees sited on main village thoroughfare – no representations made.
Flag pole permissions still outstanding, correct payment now made.
Cllr Williams requested that all future planning notifications be summarised and posted on village noticeboard – Clerk to action.

L. Hope-Frost 7th Nov 05

6) Financial Statement:

Balances as at close of business on Monday 3 October 2005:

Current a/c	£ 301.69	credit
Deposit a/c	£ 6527.07	credit

Cheques to be issued:

a) A Del Principe (clerk's pay)	£ 100.00
b) A Del Principe (clerk's expenses)	£ 4.16
c) M Harris	£ 19.66
d) L Hope-Frost	£ 21.99
e) M Mann	£ 70.00
f) County Contractors	£ 176.25
g) W Sheriff	£ 6.98

The payment of the cheques was proposed by K Martin and seconded by D Brangwyn.

Clerk to investigate whether J Burgess has mandate to authorise cheques and to arrange for appropriate authorisation documentation as required.

Cllr Williams advised that play area maintenance expenditure can be reclaimed under '136', but that this will soon cease under new rules.

7) Council Report: to follow
Key points: Opportunities to claim grants for play equipment; recycling debate; Council Tax consultation.

8) Any Other Business:

a) Cllr Booth reported availability of fund for disabled access to village halls. Maximum grant of £5,000 to be match-funded 50-50 (Warwickshire Rural Community Council). L Hope-Frost proposed that bespoke ramp be made for Reading Room access if grant could be obtained (see item 4a above). Cllr Booth to advise contact point for application process. Reading Room 'disabled access' audit already completed. Clerk to locate audit correspondence.
b) Cllr Booth reported availability of local fund for small projects to improve roads and footpaths; AD Council to advise of possible projects by next month at latest.
c) Cllr Booth advised of plans for reorganisation of Police Forces and, separately, NHS Trusts. Local organisations deemed too small to be financially viable.
d) Cllr Booth reported that future landfill taxes will be huge if recycling targets not met.
e) Cllr Booth reported that consultation process for Council Tax is ongoing.

L. Hope-Frost 7th Nov 05

f) Fête Committee AGM to be held Tuesday 4 October 2005 – L Hope-Frost recommended attendance of Councillors where possible.
g) L Hope-Frost reported that her visit to MOD Kineton was both informative and interesting.
h) Consideration should be given to budget issues prior to discussion at next meeting.
i) Update reference Pump House Cottage planning application: owners trying to reach compromise regarding lime tree and size of dwelling/garage prior to submitting modified application.
j) Contribution of £6 per Councillor requested by K Martin for memorial wreath.

9) To Receive Questions from the Public: None

Date of Next Meeting as agreed by all councillors:

Monday 7 November 2005 at 7.30 pm in the Reading Room

Meeting closed at 9.00 pm

L. Hope-Frost
7th November 2005

Avon Dassett Parish Council Meeting 03.10.05.
District Councillor's Report

1. As indicated previously, the District Auditor, after receiving guidance from the Electoral Commission, has indicated that in future all election expenses for Parish Councils shall be met from individual parish councils' precepts rather than from the District Council. You will shortly be receiving an indication of the cost of holding an election in your parish but it is anticipated that it will be somewhere between £500 - £700 depending upon the size of the electorate. Where no election is held, but a Parish Councillor is co-opted onto the committee, the cost goes up from £75 to £100 per adoption. These costs have been imposed upon the District Council after receiving advice from the Audit Commission.

2. After a small hiccup, the Local Plan is now back on course and it is anticipated that it will be adopted and finally published in March 2006. Central government is pressing for a tremendous expansion in housing and is threatening to impose their requirements on areas which are currently protected from development through the Local Plan. An example of this, is north-west Hertfordshire where Mr Prescott has insisted that a large area of Green Belt surrounding Stevenage should be released for development against the wishes of the Local Authority.

3. The District Council is in the midst of consulting various departments in the council in preparation for next year's Council Tax. It is a fine balancing act between income and expenditure, savings have been identified and much depends on the support central government provides. Last year, with the prospect of an election the government provided generous sums of money and this allowed the District Council to increase Council Tax by only 3.5%. However, with no prospect of an election it is doubtful whether the government will be as generous and to balance the books there will undoubtedly have to be savings in expenditure which will not be to everyone's approval.

4. The Council is going through a major reorganisation with its management. We will be reducing the number of Directors from 3 to 2, and the numbers of Heads of Service from 13 to 8. This reorgnisation will lead to improvements and ultimately, savings. Many other councils have adopted the model which Stratford has been encouraged to adopt.

5. The Area Community Committee will be meeting on 8 November 2005 with a wide range of topics including the Priors Marston Parish Plan, a Report on Crime in the District as well as applications from many communities seeking grant support. With the completion of the grant applications the Dassett ACC will have contributed £100,000 to local projects since April 2005. It is anticipated that a further meeting of the Dassett ACC will be meeting in January when, amongst other items, the public will be invited to comment about the Council's proposals for next year's budget.

CRW
03.10.05.