



Ashley Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Ashley Parish Council held on Monday 12th February 2024 at the Pavilion

Present: Cllr Sarah Howell (Chairman) Cllr Simon Hull
Cllr Twink MacLachlan Cllr Georgia Winson-Pearce
Cllr Maria Parkin Cllr Sarah Summers
Kevin Dadds (Clerk)

01. PUBLIC MEETING

District/County Cllr Sharp and 44 members of the public were present. Cllr Howell welcomed the members of the public and introduced the representative of the owner of The Crown, who had agreed to speak at the meeting and answer questions. He read out a pre-prepared script stating that due to a number of issues, including the economy, planning restrictions and the theft of oil, they did not foresee being able to operate a viable business and that the owner was willing to sell the premises to the “village” for £400k.

A number of questions were asked about the original purchase, what works had been completed and what further works are required. The reply was that mould injection had been completed, flat roof repairs, some replacement tiles, re-pointing of flint-work and bedrooms had been finished, with carpets in place. There remains a hole in one ceiling as a result of boiler damage after the oil was stolen.

The room were clearly unhappy with the present situation where the building is deteriorating and there is no plan to reopen as a viable pub.

Cllr Howell explained that it was possible to make an application to East Cambs District Council to have the building designated as an “Asset of Community Value”. If agreed this prevents an immediate sale and gives a 6-month period for residents to make an application to purchase. The owner’s representative was asked if a group of residents could visit the pub to ascertain its condition and whether there may be an appetite to investigate further. He agreed to speak to the owner and refer back. Residents were asked to leave their contact details if they wished to be involved in the visit. Clerk agreed to follow up the request with an email. **Action - Clerk**

Cllr Sharp reported as follows;

Weeds – A survey by Highways receive 130 replies of which all but 13 were in favour of chemical weed control. A questionnaire had been received by the Clerk today asking if we would like Ashley to be included for the 2024 season. Whilst Cllrs expressed concerns about the use of chemicals, the lack of spraying in 2023 has let unsightly weeds growing in the pavements and gullies, posing a trip hazard and damaging the surfaces. Clerk was asked to respond asking for Ashley to be included.

There will be a vote on the County Council budget tomorrow with a 4.99% increase proposed. There will be additional funding for road maintenance, although this is from a lower base in

the current year. ECDC are expected to agree a nil increase in the District portion of Council Tax.

Highways have been advised about the road flooding issue adjacent to Hascombe stud and a response is awaited. Cllr Hull added that the run off from the elevated fields had nowhere to go, the gully's were blocked and the water has formed a channel to the road further along the highway.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

02. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

03. TO SIGN & APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8th JANUARY 2024

The Minutes were approved, proposed by Cllr Summers and seconded by Cllr MacLachlan and signed by the Chairman.

04. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

04 – Maintenance of the footpath adjacent to 28 High Street – Clerk advised that he had received a plan from PR Build Ltd that was followed up with a link to HM Land Registry giving an aerial view of the site including boundaries. It was agreed that Cllrs Howell and Hull would visit the footpath and try and ascertain the positioning of the boundary before further contact with the two landowners. **Action – Cllrs Howell/Hull**

04 – Damaged Signpost at Pond – Clerk advised that the repairs have been completed and McGregor Services have collected it from APD Ltd and will re-install this week.

Item 04 – Solar Lights in Church Street - Clerk presented costings received from Balfour Beatty. 3 lanterns connected to the grid would be approx. £18,500 + VAT with annual running costs of approx. £75 and 3 solar lanterns would be approx. £10,000 + VAT. D/C Cllr Sharp advised that Stetchworth were looking to install solar lights and the Clerk could contact his counterpart for their findings. A brochure of the solar lamps has been received by the Clerk and he will circulate and Cllrs can discuss at the next meeting. **Action - Clerk**

Item 04 – Play Equipment at Recreation Ground – Clerk advised that a provisional installation date was for the two weeks commencing 29th February. The contractors will advise exact dates nearer the time.

Item 04 - Notice Boards – Clerk advised that the notice board had been delivered and a quote had been received from Suffolk Tree Surgery for installation, to include an area of slabs for £350. The quote was agreed by Cllr Howell and seconded by Cllr Summers. Cllrs Howell and Hull agreed to visit the proposed site the and mark the exact location. **Action - Cllrs Howell/Hull**

05. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Cllr Parkin declared an interest in item 6b.

06. PLANNING MATTERS

- a) 23/01352LBC – Replace side gate, Thimble Cottage, High Street, Ashley. **APPROVED**
- b) 24/00065/FUL - Loft Conversion and internal alterations – 6 Dalham Road, Ashley. Cllrs discussed (excluding Cllr Parkin) and felt no comment was required.
- c) 24/00095/TRE - T1 Rowan, re-pollard to previous points (approx. 1.5m) 4 The Green, Ashley. Cllrs discussed and felt no comment was required.

- d) 23/00021/REFAPP - Roof extension over existing garage to form annexe - Highfield House 72 Mill Road Ashley APPEAL LODGED. Cllrs discussed and felt no further comment was required.

07. FINANCE MATTERS

(a) To note following receipts in January/February

	£
Pride of Place Grant for Bat Boxes	323.75

(b) To authorise the following payments

	£
Anglia fabrication and Design Ltd – Repairs to damaged sign	1,041.60
Greenbarnes Ltd – new notice board at Pond	2,545.39
TEEC Ltd – website hosting and domain renewal.	259.20

08. PAVILION TRUST

Cllr Howell reported that the landlords of the Recreation Ground had agreed in principle to the re-building of the Pavilion. They have requested details of any agreement between the Parish Council (as owners of the Pavilion Building and lessee) and APT (as the party that will finance and build the new Pavilion and sub lessee), and advised that the Pavilion Trust will be responsible for their legal fees. The Chairman of APT and Cllr Howell (as Chairman of APC) have agreed to draft and send a letter confirming the relationship between the parties in respect of the proposed new build. The PC will need legal advice in drawing up documentation relating to the demolition of the existing Pavilion and the building of a new one.

09. WEBSITE

Cllr Howell advised that the Chairman of APT had been working with the web hosting co. and the site has been tidied up and is ready to populate. APT will manage their own data and the PC will need to take over managing its portion of the site and update. It was agreed to speak to the Chairman of APT about access to the site and a decision would be taken on who would populate the site with relevant content and provide updates on regular items such as monthly news. Clerk agreed that subject to training, he is happy to add the regular information such as Agenda's and Minutes to the site himself. As the site can facilitate .Gov email addresses, it was agreed to ascertain what limitations there were as to who could be allocated PC addresses. Clerk agreed to take advice from CAPALC as to what the precedent is for usage by Cllrs. **Action - Clerk**

10. CROWN PUBLIC HOUSE

Discussed and Minuted under "Public Meeting"

11. ANNUAL INSURANCE RENEWAL

The insurers have asked for completion of a questionnaire prior to the annual renewal of the PC insurance policy that will be year 2 of a 3-year agreement. Cllrs discussed, and felt that the insured sums were sufficient and the Clerk agreed to respond to the questionnaire.

Action – Clerk

12. ICE ON ROAD AT JUNCTION OF DALHAM/GAZELEY ROAD

The stretch of road approaching the bend is elevated and exposed, resulting in ice at times during the winter months. There have been instances of vehicles leaving the road and two years ago the Church Street sign was damaged and had to be replaced. It was agreed to write to Highways and ask whether they have any suggestions such as signage or a safer road surface that may help. **Action - Clerk**

13. POND VEGETATION

Clerk advised that a quote for £1,450 + VAT had been received from h2o plants to reduce the bulrushes in the pond. The treatment needs to be carried out in August and September with the vegetation removed in November. The quote was accepted by Cllrs, proposed by Cllr Hull and seconded by Cllr Parkin. Last year's growth that has died back in the winter requires moving, and some reduction of growth on the edges is required. Cllrs agreed to carry out the task and will co-ordinate between themselves. Clerk has agreed to arrange for a skip when required. **Action – Cllrs/Clerk**

14. CAMBS COUNTY COUNCIL 20MPH FUNDING SCHEME

Clerk advised that the scheme was open for applications with a closing date of 15th March. Cllrs discussed, having previously discussed last year when looking at other speed reduction measures. It was agreed that an application should be submitted. **Action - Clerk**

15. URGENT MATTERS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

- a) Village Apple Day
- b) Donations

16. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) County Council Weed Control – discussed in Public Meeting

17. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Monday 11th March at the Pavilion.

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm

KEVIN DADDS