

Minutes of the Amport Parish Council Annual General Meeting followed by the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 20th May 2023, 7.30pm at Amport School

Present: Cllr C Harris – Chairman, Cllr S Coke-Vice Chairman, Cllr A Montagu, Cllr P Waller & Cllr Ms C Hemmings.

Also present

Heather Bourner – Parish Clerk
TVBC Susanne Hasselmann
0 members of the public

Apologies

1) Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Stephenson, Cllr P Harvey, Cllr Mrs T Hawkings-Byass, Cllr Mrs S Baker and TVBC Mrs M Flood.

Election of Chairman

2) Cllr Coke nominated Cllr Harris to be Chairman for the forthcoming year. This was seconded by Cllr Montagu. All Agreed. Cllr Harris signed an acceptance of office form.

Election of Vice Chairman

3) Cllr Harris nominated Cllr Coke to be Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year. This was seconded by Cllr Montagu. All Agreed. Cllr Coke signed an acceptance of office form.

Monxton & Amport Village Hall

4) Cllr Mike Cleugh from Monxton Parish Council was not present.

Annual Chairmans Report

5) See report at appendix 1.

Public Participation

6) There were no members of the public present.

Review and agree Standing orders, financial regulations & Code of Conduct

7) All documents had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. These were all based on NALC model documents and the Clerk confirmed the only amendments were to the financial regulations and these had been circulated. Cllr Coke proposed all documents were re adopted for 2024-25. This was seconded by Cllr Harris. All agreed.

8) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in matters on the agenda. All Councillors confirmed that no changes to Register of Interest forms were required.

9) Minutes of previous meetings & matters arising

Resolved: The minutes of the meetings held on 15th April were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed Cllr Coke seconded Cllr Montagu. All in favour.

10) Specific reports

Principle & Process-Cllr Coke see report in finance

The Fen & Green- Cllr Harris reported the green still remains quite wet in places but the overall condition of the green is improving. Mole hills have been addressed. Most of the green has been cut and the rest of the green and the fen will be cut very soon. The broken seat on one of the picnic benches has been repaired. The school has requested that its sports day is held on the green on 7 June. The National Gardens Scheme event is set to take place on 26 and 27 May.

It is proposed that two wedding receptions for village families will take place next year in May and June. A quote regarding a new bench for the green will be discussed at the next meeting.

Play Area -Cllr Harvey confirmed that he has recently checked all the play equipment and there are no areas of concern. The Clerk confirmed the annual report had just been received and that there were no high risk concerns highlighted.

Weyhill- Cllr Hemmings reported the new notice board has now been fitted.

Footpaths- Cllr Hawkings -Byass had sent her apologies but the Clerk reported the first cut to footpaths had taken place and that the Clerk had written to a householder asking them to remove collapsed hedging blocking the footpath from Sarson Lane which ran behind the Hawk Inn.

Communications & School Liaison – Cllr Harris said more volunteers were required to distribute the paper newsletter. Cllr Montagu suggested there should be a point when the newsletter becomes digital only and this should be advertised in the newsletter.

Projects- Cllr Harvey had sent apologies.

Neighbourhood Plan– Cllr Stephenson had sent apologies however details from the Housing Needs Survey had been provided by the NDP steering group and all Councillors were asked to provide comments and feedback. The report was discussed in some detail and concern raised that the report is not representative for the whole of the parish as highlighted by the NPSG. There was agreement that the Parish Council will consider development of affordable housing if a site comes forward.

Highways- Cllr Harris reported HCC Chris Donnelly has suggested that action to carry out repairs on the Fyfield Road/Amesbury Road junction, and on Wiremead Lane should take place shortly.

The Clerk is pressing HCC for a response to the report submitted regarding sites for Speed Indicator Devices.

Finally, he reported on a meeting with Jonathan Bambridge of Hampshire Highways and the Pillhill Pan Parish Forum (PPPF) which focused on flooding / drainage issues.

Cllr Hemmings asked that thanks be noted to local transport company Lenham Storage as the drivers of their lorries are now not turning left into Fyfield Road from Amesbury Road but using the roundabout at Weyhill to turn and enter the junction from the right. Likewise, all lorries leaving Fyfield Road are turning left. This will undoubtedly help reduce damage to the junction.

Resilience Plan- Cllr Waller asked if the latest draft could be posted to the website. This could then be signposted in the next newsletter. He will send the latest report to the Clerk.

School Liaison-Cllr Baker had sent her apologies.

Southern Water update

11) Cllr Harris reported that due to the success of the project, despite high ground water levels, there are now no tankers operating in the area. The project will continue to monitor events in the parish and the wider catchment area.

Clerks report

12) The Clerk reported as follows-

A VAT claim for 23-24 Total £3120.67 had been made and payment had been received.

An email from the manager of the Hawk Inn regarding the defibrillator which had been subject to recall. The machine was in full working order however the storage unit is damaged from water ingress and will need to be checked to ensure the heater inside works. It may be that a replacement cabinet is required. The Clerk was asked to liaise with the Hawk to establish how the Parish Council can help.

The main purchasers of the water testing kits had now paid the invoices and the Clerk was awaiting confirmation of which Parish Councils to invoice for their contributions.

Finance

13) To note the bank balances as at 05/05/2024

Lloyds savings £13708.12
Lloyds current £8362.85

To approve the following payments and authorise online transactions: -

H Bourner salary	£475.56
HMRC	£119.00
H Bourner exp.	£21.55
Kinex (DD)	£15.34
Ray Welch	£184.00
Zurich Insurance	£883.94
HCC street lights	£109.35
Taits printers	£78.00
Sawscapes play	£234.00
Web site	£11.99
Greenflints (footpaths)	£1140.00
Greenflints(bench repair)	£60.00
Janet Wright	£6.25
Do the Numbers	£250.00
Playsafety Ltd	£117.60

Cllr Coke had reviewed the year end accounts and audit papers and proposed these were agreed this was seconded by Cllr Harris. Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024 were discussed and agreed. The Audit return was reviewed. Section 1 was reviewed and agreed followed by section 2 which was also reviewed and agreed, both were signed by the Chairman. The internal audit had taken place on 15th May and the auditor report did not highlight any issues. The Parish Council also agreed it had no conflicts of interest with BDO LLP and it was agreed Cllr Harris should sign the necessary form. Dates for public rights to review the financial records were agreed as 1st July to 09th August.

Borough & County Councillor Reports.

14) HCC Chris Donnelly was not present.

TVBC Susanne Hasselmann reported Test Valley Borough Council is hosting a free forum for local private landlords and letting agents on Monday 10 June from 5.30pm to 8pm at the Council offices at Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover.

On 30 April 2024 representatives from the Environment Agency and Southern Water met Test Valley Borough Councillors at Crosfield Hall in Romsey for a discussion about water pollution. Representatives from the Pillhill Brook and the Test Pan Parish Forum also attended.

Finally she confirmed Donna Jones has been re-elected as Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and Isle of Wight.

Planning

15) The following decisions by TVBC were noted:

24/00373/FULLN-demolish garage and erect garden store/garage with rooms above-Little Bec, Monxton Road-refused

24/00210/FULLN- rear extension, 6 Sarson Close-permission

24/00578/LBWN- repairs to listed boundary wall, Amport School, - consent

Resolved: that the planning advisory committee's approval on the following applications were endorsed:

24/00950/TREEN- tree works, Stonebrook, 5 Sarsons Barns-no objections

24/01049/TREEN- tree works, Nether Cottage, The Green- no objections

24/01114/CLPN-certificate of lawful dev-outbuilding, Greenacres, Dauntsey Lane-no objections

To Note-23/02086/FULLN- Woodside House, Furzedown Lane -Outline fire strategy submitted to support application.

Correspondence

16) The Clerk highlighted a recently received grant application from the PCC. This will be an agenda item at the next meeting.

An email from the manager of the Hawk Inn regarding the defibrillator
The latest Clerks & Councils Direct magazine
Playsafety report re play area

New Items for next agenda

17) Grant application

Community News

18) Cllr Harris confirmed he will be attending the Thriving Communities Forum on Wednesday 22nd May at Broughton Village Hall.

The next Amport Village fete is on Saturday 6th July. The suggestion is that the PC have a stall and the Clerk will contact Cllr Harvey to organise.

Cllr Harris reported The Hawk Conservancy is holding a Dreamnight from 6 pm to 8.30 on 4 July. This is an event where disadvantaged children and their carers have a free fun evening. The Parish Council have been asked to volunteer to help at the event.

Date of next meeting

19) The next meeting will be on Monday 24th June 2023, 7.30pm at Amport School

Appendix 1

CHAIR ANNUAL REVIEW – by Chris Harris - May 2024

I am Chris Harris, chair of Amport Parish Council, or APC.

This Parish is quite a large rural parish for this part of Hampshire. The Parish covers not just the old Amport village, but also the distinct communities of Fox, East Cholderton, the western part of Weyhill, as well as the area known as the panhandle that extends to the Wiltshire border. As PC chair, I acknowledge that APC has not represented **all** interests across the Parish sufficiently in years past, but we move on and I'd like to confirm that the current council works hard to represent everyone in the Parish. We don't always get it right – please don't be afraid to tell us when we don't.

The main highlights of the year, for me, have been the work with **Southern Water** and work on developing a **Neighbourhood Development Plan** in the Parish.

On **Southern Water**, I do not wish to overlook the scare over this weekend when the pump failed at the water pumping station in Amport, which allowed diluted sewage into the Pillhill Brook for some hours, and we saw tankers in Amport on Sunday afternoon. Nonetheless, APC has worked with Southern Water, over the past three years, to address the groundwater infiltration problems in the Pillhill catchment area from Kimpton at one end to Upper Clatford at the other. The consequence of groundwater infiltration was a major overload of the sewage network along the catchment, requiring significant tanker movements, and the major disruption to the roads in the villages. APC led a forum of 8 local parishes, now known as the PPPF or Pillhill Pan Parish Forum, in engaging with Southern Water, with input from the Environment Agency, in seeking significant improvement in the water related issues – above all preventing sewage discharge - along the Pillhill Brook through a Pathfinder Project for SW – i.e. the lessons learnt are being used elsewhere across their network. Janet Wright, who lives in Amport, is the secretary of the PPPF, and with representatives of various parishes, and has been instrumental in engaging with SW on a regular basis. Despite the exceptionally high level of groundwater over recent months, I am pleased to confirm that the sewer sealing work at the north of the catchment seems to have been successful. There were 39 tankers deployed in the catchment a couple of winters ago. Now, despite the groundwater level being exceptionally high, there are now none unless required exceptionally. I know that SW recognises the contribution of the local community in achieving this success. I hope that this model can be used by other local communities, and will be a model that can be embraced by other public bodies.

The Parish is engaged with developing a **Neighbourhood Development Plan**. This has required quite a bit of work by many in the community, our objective being to ensure that decisions on planning are made mainly in the Parish and not just by non-local planning officers. The work on the NDP has been led by Cllr Diana Stephenson and by Tim Grimshaw, and other residents who are members of the Steering Groups. Thanks are due to them all. Once the NDP report has been submitted to TVBC, it is expected that all residents in the Parish will be able to vote in a referendum on whether to approve the plan, before it can become effective.

One of the biggest features of the NDP work is that there has been much improved engagement by APC with parts of the Parish, especially with the community at Weyhill. This is to be welcomed.

TVBC tells us that the NDP should ideally accommodate plans to develop a small number of dwellings (10 – 20) including low-cost housing in a sensible location. We will press for the creation of a community open space in the north of the Parish as a price for any such development.

Moving on to other success stories, APC has been heavily engaged in the construction of the new **Monxton & Ampport Village Hall**. You have heard from Mike Cleugh about this exciting project.

On **Ampport House**, APC was heavily engaged with TVBC on the planning issues last year, before permission was granted for the development of a hotel on the site. It was disappointing that Another Place concluded that the project was not viable for it. It is understood that another hotel group is interested in taking on the site.

Another project in the Parish has been the proposal to develop a **Solar Farm** at Lains Farm. Planning permission was refused by TVBC due to a fear of glint and glare affecting aviation at Thruxton Airfield. The refusal of permission is being appealed by the developers.

Fox Farm estate has also changed hands recently. APC is engaging with the new owners and hopes to develop this relationship.

A less successful story relates to **Highways**. APC has been battling over many months with Hampshire Highways, which falls short in keeping roads in the Parish up to the standard that is required in terms of road safety and quality of surfaces. The constant refrain that we hear from the Highways team is lack of government funding. There are several areas in the Parish where road repair work is long overdue. APC will keep pressing for action. Indeed, we had useful discussions today with a Hampshire Highways engineer and with Cllr Donnelly, and it seems from those that a leaf has been turned in the book, and there will now be closer co-operation with Highways in seeking to get things done. Early days.....Aside from the country roads, we have also been campaigning for National Highways to address the junctions where Sarson Lane meets the A303, where the junctions are simply not safe. National Highways are pretty ineffective. There are unsurprisingly other matters that APC have been involved with – but I hope that you can see the current level of activity.

APC is made up of volunteers, here to represent all the residents of the whole of the Parish of Ampport, whenever we can properly. We are not party political. I should also pay tribute to the service of many other volunteers in the community. APC is very ably supported by our clerk, Heather Bourner, as well as by Councillors at TVBC and HCC, namely Susanne Hasselmann and Maureen Flood on TVBC, and Chris Donnelly on HCC.

Members of APC at this time, aside from me, are Stephen Coke, vice-chair; Sally Baker; Alan Montagu; Tessa Hawkings-Byass; Diana Stephenson; Peter Harvey; Peter Waller; and Clare Hemmings. All make their contributions and thanks are due to all of them. Thanks also to Derek Douch of Weyhill, who recently stepped aside from the Council. There is now one vacancy for a new councillor, so if you think you can assist – 10 meetings a year - please let me know. The only qualification for service is enthusiasm. There are many tasks that can be and are undertaken by ordinary people that benefit you, your friends and your neighbours. Things – whatever the size and complexity - get done by local people.

We have a cross-section of people on the Council. Between the members, there is expertise in several disciplines – for example in accounting, finance, law, communications and PR, and travel. There is simply not enough time for the members of the Council to accomplish everything that we would ideally like to do, but we do our best.

The current PC knows there is room for improvement in communications within the Parish. We have made some steps to improve things – including the circulation in the Parish of Parish Pages. Thanks to Tessa Hawkings-Byass for editing this, but we are asking for volunteers to help with the distribution. We hope that we may have some positive news shortly on the development of Full Fibre to the Premises in the parts of this Parish where broadband speeds are quite deficient.

Communication however remains a two way process – so this PC welcomes hearing from parishioners whenever they have a concern or idea that should be brought to our attention. Parishioners are encouraged to speak out when they have a concern or a suggestion.

As a resident, you may ask what does the Parish Council do for you? The PC may sound boring. But if you want someone to speak up for you and for the community, the PC is what there is. If you have a group of people your own age, irrespective of what that age is, please think of having someone who engages with one or more members of APC whenever you spot a need. We like to be approached, so approach us. We know there are needs in the community, but we are not all-seeing on all issues, nor do we have a dominance of wisdom, nor of budget. We can help to identify what is and what is not feasible. Only with your help can we do our best to make improvements. Please provide us with your support.

APC hopes you all have a good year.