

## **Minutes of the Aston Abbotts Annual Parish Meeting**

### **7.30pm 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2017**

Present: Mrs K Curry (Chairman, Parish Council), Mrs Zandy Ayres (acting secretary), Mr Peter Cooper (District Councillor), Mrs N Glover (County Councillor), Paula Boston (PCSO, North Wing) and 22 parishioners.

1. **Apologies:** Caroline Lane and Liz Barlow

2. The Minutes to the meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 were approved and signed as a true record

3. No matters arising.

4. **County Councillor Glover** shared her report:

- Modernising local government in Buckinghamshire:

I think everybody accepts now that it is inevitable that we are going to have a unitary authority in Bucks. The government is keen that as many people as possible are consulted so I would once again like to urge residents to take part in the survey. Log onto the BCC website and type "unitary" into the search box and you will be taken to the survey.

Here is the link:

[news/county-council-asks-residents-to-speak-out-and-give-their-views-on-the-future-of-local-councils-in-buckinghamshire/](#)

In the past 12 months we have been working on a range of priorities and projects with our partners, investing resources and commitment into achieving our vision for Buckinghamshire which is set out in our three strategic aims:

- Safeguarding Our Vulnerable
- Creating Opportunities and Building Self Reliance
- Keeping Buckinghamshire Thriving and Attractive

Here is an overview of some of this work:

- We are helping more older and vulnerable people stay independent for longer via our ground-breaking Prevention Matters programme. Council grants have enabled local communities to develop a range of new services and initiatives including a community bus for disabled residents in Haddenham and a new scheme to support elderly carers in Aylesbury.

- Latest figures show that schools in Buckinghamshire are amongst some of the best in the country with 93% being classed by Ofsted as either good or outstanding.

- There are many reasons to be positive about our children's services. In a recent visit Ofsted recognised the progress which has been made. They acknowledged that social work practice has improved and social workers often see children more frequently than required by national guidance. Inspectors found there has been "significant" improvement in the timeliness and quality of health assessments for looked after children and that there is evidence of proactive work to tackle the evil of child sexual exploitation.

- We continue to invest our resources into protecting vulnerable children. £39m was invested in 2013/14 and this rose to nearly £60m last year. This has enabled us to invest in our workforce and IT systems to ensure we have the right skills and capacity available to protect those most in need. We have more than doubled the size of our First Response team so referrals are dealt with even more swiftly and effectively.

- Our Families First project is a great example of partnership working and was recently praised by the Department for Communities and Local Government. Since 2012 we have helped over 3,000 families access the right services at the right time, helping them to build resilience so they are able to deal with problems that arise and know where to go.

- In the past year we have helped many individual communities around the county to pursue initiatives and projects of their own via funding from our Local Area Forums. Residents in Buckingham were given the chance to vote on how a pot of over £9,000 was spent in their local community in our first ever ballot – Buckingham Decides. Other areas have benefitted in different ways from providing important medical cards to all households in Winslow to new sports and fitness equipment for local clubs in Waddesdon.
- Communities across Buckinghamshire have been benefitting from our Active Bucks programme, taking part in physical activities that they have chosen to suit the needs of their local population. At the end of December, over 1,800 Bucks residents had taken part in an activity – with around 80% of them previously having not done enough exercise. The activities range from the traditional like yoga and jogging to LARPing – Live Action Role Play, Quidditch, photography walks and dog agility courses.
- There are numerous examples of other initiatives happening across the county to benefit local communities. Our Chesham wellbeing project is a really community-focussed scheme which brings together different organisations to provide extra support to those residents who need it and in Southcourt - one of our most deprived estates - our youth workers have reduced the scourge of anti-social behaviour by more than 50%.
- As most residents will know we have been working hard for several years in opposition to HS2. In recent months our focus has been on securing adequate mitigation measures for our communities and countryside that will be affected by the development. We have been successful in achieving a package of measures for Great Missenden which will bring road improvements and improved safety.
- This year we've worked hard on protecting our residents from the elements. Residents in Great Horwood, Princes Risborough, Marlow, Seer Green and Wooburn Moor (among many others) can now sleep a little easier thanks to the new drainage we've installed to prevent flooding and more communities including Burnham, Gerrards Cross and Cuddington are set to benefit during 2017.
- We continue to seek ways to streamline our services and save money using innovative means By joining forces with Surrey County Council to provide a joint Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Service, residents and businesses have benefitted from our pooled resources and expertise. In addition to saving money, last year the team received national acclaim for its work in the form of two awards in the Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise Awards 2016. We are also in the process of merging our HR services with the London Borough of Harrow which will give us opportunities to share knowledge, generate new business and find more efficient ways of working. The agreement has already saved Bucks £80,000 in management costs. It will save a further £315,000 in 2017, with a cumulative saving of around £600,000 after the third year. It will also enable us to sell HR services to other local authorities, bringing in extra income to the council.
- Our Energy from Waste plant at Greatmoor was officially opened in October by His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester. The innovative facility is revolutionising the way we deal with waste by turning all unrecyclable waste into electricity rather than dumping it into landfill. It will treat up to 300,000 tonnes of waste each year and will generate 22 megawatts of electricity – powering up to 36,000 homes – that's Aylesbury and Buckingham combined. The scheme is forecast to save £150m over the next 30 years by reducing the amount we pay in landfill charges and the income raised from the energy that is produced.
- In the past 12 months we have continued to invest in improving our roads. Last year we spent more than £16m in our ongoing programme of repairs and improvements, bringing the total spent since 2011 to more than £110m. This year a further £15.9m will be spent on surfacing and improvement work on over 50 miles of roads and pavements across the county. In the last financial year we fixed around 17,000 dangerous potholes, identified by our highway inspectors and the public. In addition we have continued to fix street lights, gritted roads and we clear around 150 gullies every day.

- Our zero tolerance approach has reduced fly-tipping in the county by 90%. During 2016 we have continued to build on our success in previous years of catching more criminals in the act and bringing them to justice. The culprits caught last year were ordered to pay a total of £133,000 in fines and costs, beating the previous best of £85,000 set in 2012. That's an average of over £2,500 per week. During 2016 we've invested in more portable hidden cameras which can be moved from layby to layby – fly-tippers will never know when and where we'll be watching.

This year the County Council has made £71 million from its commercial activities.

**District Councillor Peter Cooper** shared his report:

- The District Council is busy reorganising itself to save money as the Government grant has gone from 18million and will soon be down to zero. In their bid to save money they have moved to more IT based services.
- He discussed the Broadband situation and that BT were still being slow at giving any idea of dates. He has been in discussion with 'Village Networks' as possible alternative – broadcasting from Wingrave Church Tower to Aston Abbots Church Tower?
- The redevelopment in central Aylesbury will include shops, restaurants and flats with their own parking provided.
- He informed the Parish that the A418 had been confirmed as a supply route for HS2 traffic.
- The Unitary Council could be a possibility in 2 years
- The VALP is nearing its end which should be by the end of the year/ early 2018 but until it is in place there are areas still at risk. Neighbourhood plans are now being held up and are important for protecting villages.

He answered some questions:

On when the A418 was decided upon? - Only confirmed yesterday.

On the delay with the VALP – will there be another delay ? - No guarantee but hopefully not.

On the Crematorium at Watermead, will it go ahead? – Probably, the delay only a matter of proper procedure, the Bierton site is currently on hold.

On the timings for the A418 being used as a supply route as it is already very congested. – It was noted.

**PCSO Boston** shared her report:

- That there had been: 2 thefts from cars, 1 tractor key stolen from a barn, 2 thefts from non-dwellings, 3 reports of criminal damage, the theft of construction machinery taken from the Village Hall and 37 non-emergency calls.
- Thames Valley Police's structure is changing. There will be new Problem Solving Hubs in Aylesbury and Buckingham where the response units will be based. There will still be 1 Police Officer with support officers based in Wing.
- They have been targeting thefts of tools etc from vans. PC Boston urged the residents to mark their property so that they can be returned if recovered. Also any tools that have been marked are harder to sell on. She also urged residents to have CCTV installed – as it is much more affordable and discreet nowadays.
- She informed the residents that the Police are becoming more and more involved in Social issues – missing persons, vulnerable people etc. and are not always visible in patrols on the street.

## 5. **Parish Councils Chairmans Report:**

There were a couple of questions:

Q re bags being provided for the litter blitz

Q re the Dog Waste bins – not being emptied/ cleaned

**Orchard Report, Peter knight**

- Peter Knight reported on the progress of the Orchard which contains a wide variety of trees including many rare and local varieties. He said there were 142 spaces with 23 currently available. Most of the trees are growing well and will continue to do so, if looked after. He is disappointed that some of the trees are being slow to grow and that the Orchard is not used enough. The future of the Orchard looks good if it is supported.

#### **6. Traffic/ Traffic Calming:**

The issue of traffic through the village was discussed. The Chairman informed the residents that the Parish Council are in the process of getting a pre-feasibility study done on the traffic around the 'Inner Green'. She also informed them that she would be meeting with a member of the Transport for Bucks re: the gritting of Lines Hill.

Q: re: the use of planters to slow traffic down?

Q: re: the possibility of a priority sign at the gate at the top of Moat Lane

#### **7. Village Hall Update**

Nigel Palmer informed the village that the hall has been improved thanks to the hard work of the Village Hall Trust and funding from REN and the Community Trust – as well as generous local people. There is now a new kitchen, toilet, floor and will soon be a new door. They just need to finish the ventilation vents. Their next priority is to extend the lease to 99 years.

#### **8. The Chronicle**

John Whyte informed the village that the Chronicle is doing well in its new format. It cost approx. £1430 to get printed per year, and raises about £900 through advertising. After 2 years of no invoices being issued for adverts they will not be needing a contribution from the Village Fete this year, as they will have 2 years' worth of revenue.

#### **9. Fireworks**

Kevin Copping discussed the Fireworks display. He suggested that it would be a good idea to have a fireworks committee to help organise the event on the night, and think about how to fund the event going forward.

#### **10. Village Fete:**

David Gray informed the Village that last year's event was very successful and raised £5075. After deductions, there was £4,060 to be distributed between the Chronicle (£500), Recreation Ground (£200), Village Hall (£1,960) and the Church (£1,400).

Sally Palmer informed the village that the preparations for this year's event are going reasonable well but Volunteers are needed for handing out flyers and raffle tickets, also helpers are needed on the day in the tea room, with children's activities and for moving things on the morning. Sally Clarke will be running the dog show again. Any raffle prizes would be gratefully received. This year's event would be held on 22nd July

**Distribution of funds:** The following was decided upon

- £500 to the Fireworks
- £200 to the Parish Council
- Up to £1000 or 1/3<sup>rd</sup> to the Village Hall
- Remainder to the Church

#### **11. There be no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm**