

AMPNEY CRUCIS PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 11 MAY 2015 AT 7.30PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL, AMPNEY CRUCIS.

Present: 18 electors and County Councillor Shaun Parsons
Presiding: Councillor Barry Dent
Clerk: Jayne Webster

1. Minutes of the last Parish Meeting held on 12 May 2014

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

2. Annual Report of Ampney Crucis Parish Council

The Chairman, Barry Dent, gave the following report:

After 15 years of service Gerald Gaden stood down from the Parish Council. We would all like to thank him for his invaluable contribution over the years. This year the Parish Council has comprised of me, our Vice Chairman, David Vessey, Alan Lewis, Gerald Gaden, Adrian Grazebrook, Simon Holt, Rosanna Armitage and Doug Crook, who joined us in November. David has decided not to stand again after 20 years of service first as clerk and then becoming a Councillor in May 1999. Adrian is standing down after 24 years of service, Alan who has served for 8 years is also standing down and I have also decided to stand down after being a member of the Parish Council for 10 years. The Parish Council would like to give a vote of thanks to everyone who has served for so long giving their time, energy and expertise to the village.

The Parish Council has been very ably represented at District level by Sir Edward Horsfall, who did not stand for re-election at the May elections. We would like to thank him for his support over the years. Mr Shaun Parsons continues to represent us at County level. We always welcome their contribution in response to queries from the Council. Two villagers who provide a regular service to the Council are Janet Campbell, our Tree Warden and Neil Holt, our Internal Auditor.

We have held seven meetings this year covering a wide variety of topics.

Planning

The Parish Council received 29 planning applications this year, including 9 tree work applications. Should the Parish Council object to a planning application; copies of all letters of objection written by the Council are posted on the notice boards.

The solar farm at Crucis Park Farm is now up and appears to have little impact on the village. Crucis Park Farm have invited the school to visit both the solar farm, to learn about renewable energy and the more traditional side of farming. The Community Benefit Payment of £35,000 has been received from Sun Edison and an independent Community Council has been established to manage and allocate the funds. The Parish Council approved the initial membership; one representative from the Parish Council, one from the Parochial Church Council and 3 other members.

The new Local Plan (formerly called the Local Development Framework) has yet to be formalised and will eventually take the place of the 2001-2011 Cotswold Local Plan – the Parish Council will ensure that they continue to respond on behalf of the residents of the village.

All planning applications can be viewed online at www.cotswold.gov.uk

Sunhill

The Sunhill Action Group continues to represent the Parish Council in discussions relating to the composting plant.

Finance

The precept for the year ending 31 March 2015, was £7025, including a Council Tax Support Grant of £383.

The accounts for the year have been audited by our Internal Auditor, Neil Holt and externally by Grant Thornton.

Once again the Parish Council made a small donation to the Cotswold Tree Warden Group whose funding has been withdrawn by CDC.

Burial Ground

Mr and Mrs Kingsley have very generously transferred land to the Parish Council, enabling us to extend the burial ground. There have been many negotiations with the Planning Department at CDC and the Parish Council would like to thank David Vessey, who has been responsible for planning and surveying and Adrian Grazebrook, who has dealt with the legal side, for all their hard work and effort. Preparations are under way for the extension but it will be some time before it will be up and running.

In 2013, a three year grass cutting contract was awarded to local contractor, Tony Williams. Tony's company, Cottage Garden Services, has been cutting the grass in the village for number of years now, and his work is appreciated. The Burial Ground Conditions and Fees remain unchanged and will be reviewed in April 2017. A copy of the fees and conditions is available on the village website or can be obtained from the clerk.

On 19 October 2014 there was a very successful clear up of the Burial Ground and the Parish Council would like to thank everyone who gave up a few hours of their time to help out.

The Parish Council would also like to thank Harold Stevens for the fine pair of gates he made for the Burial Ground.

Praying Cross Wall

There has been no need for further maintenance this year, however, it is looking a little dirty and we are in the process of investigation the possibility of having it cleaned.

War Memorial

The War Memorial has been repaired and cleaned in the last few weeks. The Parish Council would like to thank Crucis Park Farm for their generous donation towards the repairs and the Parish Council also increased the precept for 2015-16 to help cover the cost.

Maintenance of the garden around the War Memorial continues to come under the grass cutting contract and is working well.

Highway Matters

The Parish Council continues to liaise with GCC regarding the traffic calming measures along the A417. David Vessey has led the campaign to persuade GCC to approve the installation of Vehicle Activated Signs by asking villagers to write to GCC in support of the signs. GCC have refused to consider the signs but the Parish Council feels that the village cannot give up and the way forward is to build up a wave of correspondence, although it will be a long process.

The school very kindly completed designs for proposed new entry signs and after much discussion with GCC, their sign maker has come up with a proposed sign. GCC have agreed to pay 50% of the cost of the signs through the GCC Community Initiative but this continues to be a work in progress.

Drainage

The relatively dry winter has meant that drainage was not too much of a problem. However, GCC have advised that a works programme is in place to replace the gullies along Butcher's Arms Lane. In addition, the ditches along Ridings Lane need careful monitoring especially after the hedges have been cut.

Footpaths

The village footpaths are walked on a reasonably regular basis by members of the Parish Council but we do depend on members of the public to alert us to any problems with the footpath network. We maintain good relations with the local farmers who can generally be relied upon to mark clearly any footpaths which have been disturbed by ploughing.

Community Emergency Plan

This year the Parish Council has completed preparation of an Emergency Plan which has been lodged with CDC, a copy appears on the village website.

Spring Clean

A very successful Annual Spring Clean took place on 28 March 2015 and the Parish Council would like to thank everyone who volunteered.

Communications

The Ampney Times continues to be delivered to all households in the three villages, Ampney Crucis, Ampney St Mary and Ampney St Peter. Thanks must go to the production team Frank Skinner, John Franklin, Sharon Buckley, the new editor, and David Wells.

The newsletter was produced using reserves and revenue from advertising for 2014 – 15. However, for the coming financial year it will be partly funded by the 3 villages from the precept. Due to environment and efficiency considerations the Parish Council will no longer fund the postage costs and the Parish Council understands from the production team that quite a few residents have already elected to receive their copy electronically.

Frank Skinner has managed the village website for 15 years and also manages the village database of email addresses known as the 'Village Network', which now links 140 households. Frank feels that the time has come for someone else to take on the challenge with new ideas. If you are interested please contact Frank or the clerk.

The Playground

The day to day management of the playground continues to be the responsibility of the Friends of the School and the Playground Committees, although the Parish Council meets the cost of insurance premiums. With help from County Councillor Shaun Parsons the playground has secured a Gloucestershire Active Together grant for £5000, this will be used to purchase two new items of equipment.

The Council has built up a sinking fund if ever the playground has to be removed, which is approximately £6000.

Finally, the Parish Council would like to thank all those who have contributed in any way to the life of the village in the last year - without their help the village would not be such a pleasant place to live in. Thanks also goes to those present for attending tonight's meeting.

3. Parish Council accounts for the year ended, 31 March 2015.

These were circulated and noted.

4. Accounts of the Village Hall Charity and the Robert Pleydell Educational Charity.

Reports were given and noted.

5. Reports from other Village organisations and County Councillor Parsons.

Ampney Crucis Association – the clerk read out the following report:

The Ampney Crucis Association (ACA) was originally founded to coordinate a village response and action to prevent inappropriate development in the village of Ampney Crucis.

Since its foundation, the two main areas of activity of the ACA were to oppose the development of the land in the centre of the village previously owned by the Cripps family, and latterly to seek to secure that land for use by the village, as part of a series of negotiations with the then owners. Those negotiations were contingent upon the success of various development applications elsewhere in the village that were subsequently refused by Cotswold District Council.

Since the failure of those applications, and the acquisition of much of the affected land by Anthony Kingsley (Ampney House), there has been no clear purpose for the continuation of the Ampney Crucis Association, as planning applications that potentially impact the village are already referred to the Parish Council for comment, as the village's representative body with Cotswold District Council.

Recent meetings of the Ampney Crucis Association have not been quorate, and the ACA Committee believe that is representative of a lack of interest in the village, in continuing with the Ampney Crucis Association as a village organisation.

The Committee are therefore proposing to call a meeting of the Ampney Crucis Association later this summer, at which the principal proposal will be to wind up the Association, and agree the distribution of funds held by the Association.

Those funds presently total £825.36 plus accruing interest, and the Committee will propose to donate that balance (less any costs associated with the final winding up of the Association) to The Church of the Holy Rood for the purpose of maintaining the fabric of the building.

Community Council

Councillor Armitage reported that the initial members of the Community Council would continue, these include Rosanna Armitage, Rev. John Swanton, Charlotte Holt, Andrew Lazenby and Tracy Paddison. The Community Council had received their first application from the Village Hall committee.

County Councillor Parsons reported that the largest budget item for the County Council was social spending. Over the past 4 years the County Council have saved £117 million, reducing staff numbers by 2,000 with very little loss to front line services. The County Council need to save a further £74 million over the next 4 years and are looking to abolish one level of management. Savings have been made without the need to increase the Council Tax. With regard to local issues, County Councillor Parsons explained that the new highways contract with Amey had taken a long time to settle down. He mentioned the safety issues along the A417 and advised that the Local Highways Manager, Richard Gray, has agreed to commission a review of the signage and in the summer there will be a Highways Safety team looking at the stretch of road. A discussion followed regarding the A417, the Chairman advised that the Parish Council would continue with its campaign and one resident suggested that the local MP could be involved. Mr David Vessey gave a brief outline of the campaign so far, but warned that nothing would happen very quickly and residents need to continue to put pressure on the County Council.

The Chairman thanked those present for attending.

Mr Simon Holt thanked the retiring Councillors for all their hard work and commitment to the Parish Council.

Meeting closed at 8.10pm.