

27th March 2023

At the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Baptist Schoolroom on Monday 27th March 2023, at 7.00pm.

Present.

Councillors George Smith (In the Chair), John Moran, Alice Olley and Michelle Lee,

Also Present:- Cllr. James De Vries (UDC) and 4 Members of the public as per the register. Mr. David Green (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for Absence had been received from Cllr. Mike Elsey (Chairman) and Cllr. Martin Foley (ECC)

2. Minutes.

Resolved – that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 28th March 2022 previously circulated, be signed as a true record (Cllr. Olley)

3. Matter Arising.

There were no matters arising. It was noted, however, that another sink hole was appearing outside Jesters Cottage adjacent to that which had been back filled and required urgent attention as it was becoming dangerous to passing traffic.

4. Chairman's Report.

"All Saints Field. After little progress in the past 12 months (and three years in total) the PC has had two zoom meetings with UDC officers in recent weeks. Arising from those meetings the PC has been provided with a proposal/schedule for the development of All Saints Field. However, these plans have generated some contentious issues and so UDC has agreed to a face to face meeting with its CEO Peter Holt and others and we hope to receive a firm meeting date shortly.

Highways/Speeding. Confusion continues to attend these protracted issues largely, it seems, due to changing legislation/regulations. The PC has submitted a number of requests to be considered by the Highways Panel including a 20mph speed limit through the village, traffic calming speed pads, and illuminated speed indicating/flashing signs. Unfortunately we continue to be without meaningful responses.

Village Drainage. An on-going and much debated issue. Well-known to village residents is the problem of blocked drains and damaged gulleys/pavements, particularly in the Radwinter Road area. The PC, with the help of Simon Foley District Councillor, has achieved some limited success in these areas but their efforts are, to a large extent, being undermined by the Radwinter Road development which continues to generate run-off from the site during rainy weather. This is not only problematic now but will be far more damaging if/when the planned drainage system for the site is commissioned and a very high proportion of contaminated matter is siphoned through a network of pipes/tanks down into the river. The PC is actively pressing Highways/UDC for action.

12/04/23
Village Hall/White Horse House. The installation of a much-needed fire safety system has been successfully completed in all three buildings. However this work has surfaced some potential problems with the electricity supply/equipment. This is under investigation at the present time. It is also planned to install a new disabled toilet to replace the existing unit. It was hoped to site this new facility more centrally in the VH lobby area but this has proved impractical. In tandem with this work the existing toilets in the VH will be up-graded. In the area of the car park a high percentage of the vegetation has been cleared and the PC is in the process of reviewing the uneven surface.

Recreation Facilities. Due to the deteriorating condition of the old kiddies multi-unit at Rectory Lane the PC was obliged to replace it with a new structure. The zip-wire equipment has been up-graded and the upright support posts are to be replaced. For the safety of pupils and staff this work is to be undertaken during the next school break at which time the property will be closed"

Cllr. Mike Elsey. Chairman of Ashdon Parish Council

In addition to the above Chairman's Report, Councillor Smith commented/noted the following:-

All Saints - Discussions had taken place with the District Council regarding the provision of affordable housing at All Saints. The District Council had concluded that it would be possible to build council housing on the site with a proportion of the dwellings reserved for Ashdon residents or persons with strong ties to the village as per the allocation of previous affordable housing.

Play Equipment.- the old climbing frame at Rectory Lane had been removed and a new frame installed. Maintenance was ongoing and the equipment was in good order. The wooden structure of the zip wire would be replaced in the early summer as the old equipment was beginning to deteriorate. Councillor Foley would be asked if funds could be made available from his Locality Fund towards the cost. It was noted that a certain amount of bottles and other alcohol containers had been found in the litter bins. This is unacceptable and efforts were being made to stop alcohol being brought into the play areas.

Highways - Problems remained with the sink holes in Walden Road adjacent to Jestors Cottage. Water run off and flooding remained a risk in Radwinter Road. Gulley clearing was not good. It was noted that Councillor Foley was aware of the problems, had visited the site with engineers on more than one occasion and would pursue the County Council to have this matter brought to a satisfactory conclusion. The speedwatch group had not been active since Covid. It was hoped it would be reactivated in the near future.

Village Hall - Cllr. Mrs Olley represented the Parish Council on the Village Hall Committee (VHC) following the resignation of Cllr. Hayler. The fire alarm system had been upgraded in the hall and White Horse House, the electrics checked in both premises with further checks and potentially work to be done in White Horse House. New toilets were being discussed with VHC. The new lease, as requested by Fairstone Group, had been completed and the invoice received from the solicitor.

Neighbourhood Plan - The new plan had been adopted by the District Council and would be used when deciding planning applications in the village. It was an outstanding piece of work by a very dedicated and able group from the village and had received high praise from the Independent Examiner and the District Council. A new representative on the

group would be appointed following the election in May. The plan would be constantly reviewed and updated at least every two years to keep it current and in force.

Community Hub - Whilst Councillor Smith was personally grateful to the owners of the Rose & Crown, Mr. Iain Ford and Mr. Dean Foster, for submitting plans for a shop to the rear of the pub, the village still required a hub where residents could meet, talk and be amongst their friends. Currently a "Warm Hub" was being provided in the Chapel Schoolroom on Mondays and Wednesday mornings. This was proving very successful but funding was limited and time dependent.

5. County Councillor's Annual Report 2020-2021

Councillor Foley had submitted a short report on highway and drainage matters which had been covered by Councillor Smith in his report above. Councillor Foley also reported that he was working with Mrs. Bren Brundritt, Baptist Minister on the provision of a youth club.

6. District Councillors Report.

Councillor de Vries reported that The District Council had set their budget for 2023/24 with an average increase of £5.00 on a band D property. The new CEO Peter Holt was in post as was the new head of planning Dean Hermitage. The Planning Department remained 12 officers short. The Council was still a "designated Council" meaning developments under 12 properties could be determined in house, above that number the developer had the option of going directly to the Government for approval. The Local Plan was ongoing, the timetable had been amended with consultation now in the summer of 2023 and adoption in 2025.

7. Village Hall

Councillor Mrs. Olley said that the points regarding the village hall had already been covered in the Chairman and Councillor Smith's reports. She had little to add other than that she had attended the VHC meetings and was working with the committee on the refurbishment of the toilets and future liaison with the Parish Council.

Cllr. De Vries left the meeting at this point.

8. Other Matters

Mr. Chris Pardue, Guildhall Way said how much he appreciated the Warm Hub and what an asset this had been to the village and hoped that it would continue.

Cllr. John Moran added that this could be put on a future agenda for the Parish Council and funding explored to maintain the hub as a vital village asset. Cllr. Moran also noted that there was a proliferation of deer round the village and that they were becoming more persistent and entering gardens. This could be due to the reluctance to cull the deer when more people had taken to walking during lockdown and the dangers of shooting with walkers about.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 7.35pm

Signed.....Chairman Date.....