



MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY, 15TH JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30PM

Present: Andrew Marchant
Simon Bagnall
David House
David Oxley
Amanda Parker
Jan Pledger

Members of the Public: Ann Grimsdale
Hayley James-Hoare

County / District Councillors: CC Jeff Jones

Police: PC Leon De Bruyn
PC Jack Culverhouse

Apologies: DC Geoffrey Williamson

Officer present: Caroline Jones (Clerk)

53.1 Apologies received: Geoffrey Williamson.

53.2 Personal / Prejudicial Declarations : None received.

53.3 County / District Councillor Comments : CC Jeff Jones

A large proportion of County Council time has been spent on draft **budgets** for 2024-25. Scrutiny on each portfolio will begin from 22nd Jan-24. There is a shortfall of £59K even with utilising £13K of reserves and increasing the overall budget from £98K to £1.1m. Council tax will be increased by 4.99% (the maximum allowed) with 2% to support adult social care. The budget is out for consultation until 28 Jan-24 and can be found by searching IP Survey 24-25 on the council website. HCC will lobby the Government for additional funding and continue to do all possible to alleviate the burden on parishioners.

HCC are trialing the world's first **pothole** prevention robot technology, ARRES (the Autonomous Road Repair System) which was developed by the University of Liverpool and uses new methods to analyse cracks via a probe and tarmac injection system.

Storm Henk caused disruption across the county and Highways attended over 1,000 fallen trees and localised flooding. Locally Silkmead flooded, but Cave Gate did not. A gully has been dug at Silkmead to alleviate the pooling of water, this is expected to have been carried out by the farmer. This also needs to be organised at Cave Gate.

Due to the continued issues arising from **flooding**, including the area by the Well and Phone Box, CC Jeff Jones confirmed he will identify the gully map and forward to the Parish Council. It was noted that signs are still positioned around the village following flooding and road closures, these have been reported and need collecting.

53.4 Public Comments : None received.

53.5 Police Report :

Report was provided ahead of the meeting – no reported crimes in Anstey during Dec-23.

PC De Bruyn and Culverhouse reported that 18 crimes took place across East Herts in Dec-23, the closest being interference with a vehicle at Hormead and criminal damage at Stocking Pelham. It was noted that increased vehicle crime was prevalent locally; Braughing and Puckeridge had increased nighttime patrols. Crimes included stolen number plates including cloning, often used for other criminal activities. A PS7 meeting was held in Dec-23 where hare coursing discussed, the next four months priority is vehicle related crimes including anti-social vehicle nuisance.



A report of dangerous parking is ongoing. Unfortunately, due to policing staff shortages, night drives have not been possible. Currently from the total of 12 staff; 6 offices and 6 PCSO's, Buntingford are down to a team of 8 including one PCSO on restricted duties. No police notices were available for vehicles parked in awkward/dangerous areas. A Parish Council note could be appended to the vehicle. Any significant obstruction can be ticketed.

53.6 Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th November 2023

The minutes were amended; CC House was not present at the last meeting and his name removed; the chairman was then authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2023.

53.7 Planning

53.7.1 **Anstey Hall SG9 OBY** : 3/23/1803-1804/CND condition 3 discharge refs. X/23/0508/HH and X/23/0519/CND.

For information only.

53.7.2 **8 Moatside SG9 ODD** : 3/23/2214/HH : Removal of rear canopy roof, loft conversion with rear dormer windows and bi-fold doors – no comments raised by PC – awaiting decision.

53.7.3 **Elm Cottage SG9 OBN** : 3/23/1910/HH – REFUSED 29/11/23.

53.7.4 **Anstey Hall SG9 OBY** : 3/23/1804/LBC and 1803/HH – GRANTED 24/11/23.

53.7.5 **Dove Cottage SG9 ODH** : 3/23/0558/HH and 3/23/0559/LBC : GRANTED 22/11/23.

53.7.6 **Two Twits SG SG9 OFD** Mobile home has been removed and a new application will soon be uploaded to the portal but still not showing as live. A new small agricultural barn is to be built where the pole barn is currently sited. This will be discussed once plans are available.

53.8 Finance

53.8.1 **To ratify a funding request / donation for Benefice Good Neighbours Scheme** :

A donation was agreed and ratified – this will be proportional to other Parish Council donations.

An advert has been included in the newsletter again and a reminder in the next edition to inform parishioners of this worthwhile service. It was noted that this could increase usage.

53.8.2 **Update on Finances**

Any expenses before receipt of the precept could virtually diminish funds in the bank account. It was agreed that money will be drawn from the capital account in the short term as a contingency measure.

53.8.3 **Bank Reconciliation** dated 15 Jan-24 was approved and accepted.

53.8.4 **Bank Payments** for Jan/Feb-24 payments due were approved to be arranged by D/D.

53.9 **Phone Box** – quotations received shared – the clerk will provide ongoing updates at the next meeting.

53.10 **Highways / Vegetation** – Gully has been dug at Silkmead to alleviate road flooding.

The road sign for Coltsfoot was knocked down and taken, but since returned and now requires siting.

Road signage needs collecting from Herts Highways following the flooding and road closure.

Pothole filled with water beyond Yew Tree Cottage to be reported by Cllr Bagnall.

53.11 **Flooding** – See 53.3 and 53.10 above.

53.12 **Playing Field** – no issues raised, hedge cutting to be arranged with Mike Johnson.

53.13 **Church**

Due to increased costs, a request for an additional £230 to cover grass cutting in the next financial year was received. Unfortunately, the request was received after budget approval. This additional cost was not approved but it was agreed that cashflow will be closely monitored over the year and funds allowing, the Parish Council would contribute towards these extra costs. This additional cost will also be noted for budget setting 2025-26.

53.14 **School / Parking**

Parking remains to be monitored. A number of holes in the car park need filling, Chairman to investigate if this can be arranged. It was noted that garden cuttings are to be cleared away.

53.14.1 **School / St George's End** – no new items raised.

53.15 **Village Hall**

Three exercise classes continue to run; carpet bowls, yoga and table tennis following the Christmas break.

A glitch on the film equipment seems to have been eradicated and the last showing was trouble-free.

The next film showings are on 19th January, 16th February and 15th March.

The next large fundraiser is the Village Quiz to be held on 23rd March.



Approximately 70 attended a successful music event on 13th January.

A grant application has been endorsed by DC Williamson to replace the two fire doors which are ill-fitting – this will be 50/50 match funding. It was confirmed at the thermal imaging check that heat was being lost from the doors, cost £6,000.

53.16 Newsletter

A 12-page edition has gone to print today, the electronic version will soon be circulated.

Advertisers to be contacted and invoiced for this year's advertising - £30/year, £5/issue.

53.17 Anstey Quarry

No update had been received. It was noted that the quarry site was looking untidy with metal and old cars that appeared dumped. Quarry gates are closed. This will be monitored. Any lorry activity should be photographed.

53.18 Defibrillator – was checked last week, it remains in good working order and ready for use if needed.

53.19 Correspondence – a list of correspondence received and sent was accepted.

53.20 Any other Business

Clerk to write to Environmental Health with regards to reports of the burning of plastic at Silkmead Industrial Estate.

53.21 Matters Carried Forward :

53.21.1 Laptop performance to be monitored.

53.21.2 BT Kiosk renovation quotations to be progressed.

53.21.3 Funds to be monitored to assist with the churchyard grass cutting additional costs.

53.21.4 Budget 2025-26 : consider increase of funding for churchyard grass cutting (£230).

53.22 Next Meeting : Next meeting to be held at the village hall on Monday, 11th March 2024.

Meeting closed at 20:31.