



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF ANSTEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY, 22RD APRIL 2013 COMMENCING AT 7.30 PM

Present: Andrew Marchant (Chairman)
Mandy Parker (Vice chair) and secretary to Village Hall Committee
Simon Bagnall
Jan Pledger
Stephen Wylie

Others Present: Tony Pledger - Chairman of Village Hall Committee
Nick Kirkpatrick – Treasurer of Village Hall Committee
DC Rose Cheswright
PSCO Amanda Higham
Karl Adamson
Gus and Jenny Goymour
Rob Johnson
David and Kate Oxley
Anthony and Mary Pearce

Officers present: Caroline Jones (Clerk)

1. Welcome Cllr Marchant welcomed the parishioners and councillors.

2. Apologies for Absence Apologies from Clive Hall

3. Declarations of Interest – none

4. Minutes of the AGM held on Monday 23rd April 2012

Chairman read through the minutes from last year's meeting. He requested any changes or comments, none received. The Chairman duly signed the minutes from the last meeting, 23rd April 2012 as being a true record of the meeting.

5. Chairman's Report The Chairman read his Chairman's Report to those present at the meeting.

Thank you for attending and welcome to our joint Annual Parish Council and Village Hall Meeting.

As always I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their attendance and input which implemented the smooth running of the Parish Council affairs over the last 12 months. I would also like to take time in thanking The Parish Council clerk, Caroline Jones for the superb support that she gives me as Chairman and the rest of the Parish Council in the arranging of meetings, agendas and keeping us informed of all local and district council machinations. I also thank Councillor Rose Cheswright and Councillor Jane Pitman for their efforts on our behalf, I also wish Jane the very best for the future now she has decided to stand down from her role and should the electorate decide to elect Rose as her replacement, I wish Rose the very best and look forward to continuing our close working relationship.

I would like to reiterate my comments of last year when I emphasised that the reason I accepted the position on the Parish Council was to try to help maintain the rural aspect of the village of Anstey and to enable the residents enjoy our very special part of England in peace with their fellow villagers.

We have not had a particularly busy year on the Parish Council, there has been the constant battle conversing and reporting with the highways to keep the roads "drivable" with some potholes becoming quite dangerous prior to repair, I believe we are now on top of these and I remind residents that the more these potholes are reported on the highways website then the quicker they will be dealt with (details on village website)



We have had a few village planning applications to consider, none which have proved to be too controversial, but none the less we have hopefully considered each one on its merit and responded in what we have thought to be, in the village's best interests.

The main concern we have is the uncontrolled expansion of Buntingford, we have taken the view that we will not just oppose the individual applications but only if they have a detrimental effect on Anstey residents, either by hindering access or by having a negative effect on local infrastructure and amenities within Buntingford that so many of us rely on.

We hope that the village is kept in a respectable condition and to this end David Moule has proved to be doing a fantastic job as litter picker and the daffodils sourced and planted by the Hilliers' I think look splendid and I fully support repeating this on a larger scale this autumn, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank David for his efforts in keeping the village tidy and the Hilliers' for their foresight and enthusiasm in the implementing of the daffodil planting.

The playing fields are in need of constant monitoring and maintenance and we are hoping to form a working party to keep on top of this, as there is much to be done with replacement gates, fencing and future plans for funding equipment needing to be replaced as we should be proactive to this situation and not reactive.

We are fortunate as we have been recipients of the New Homes Bonus that is a proportion of rates received from "newbuilds" within a Parish, which means we have some money for capital spending for the infrastructure of the village, so any ideas gratefully received.

St George's Church and the Chapel both still receive assistance from the Parish Councils funds to assist with the grass cutting and both put this to good use with both church yards being suitably managed. I have attended many District Planning meetings, most unfortunately a complete waste of time as East Herts has put off again publishing it's new District Plan as have so many other local authorities, but we will monitor and report any changes that may impact on our community.

We maintain a good working relationship with our PCSO Amanda Higham who regularly attend meetings to discuss local police and crime concerns which fortunately are of a very low count at present, but we must continue our vigilance in being aware of any "out of the ordinary" vehicles or individuals and recording and reporting any concerns.

Sir Roger and Lady DuBoulay have now left Anstey and there is a row of six oak trees that have been planted below Anstey House (The Rectory of Old) to commemorate the Queens Jubilee and to remember and recognise the hard work put into maintaining St Georges' by the DuBoulays and suitably named The DuBoulay Jubilee Oaks.

We were also able to celebrate the Queens Jubilee with a celebration that was hosted by Zena, Zoe, Barry and Emma at The Blind Fiddler, we had over 40 children attend the party with games, bouncy castle, pig roast, candy floss. The Blind Fiddler's generosity along with a grant to help cover costs the village celebrated in style and many thanks to The Blind Fiddler and Mandy for organising.

We are also fortunate to have a Jubilee wood recently planted in the valley from the playing fields to the west, on land owned by the Cokenach estate where 9,000 trees have been planted and which, deer permitting should be a valuable resource for our grand children.



Our Anstey website is up and running and would benefit by as much information being put on it as possible, our intention is for the website to be not only a record of present activities and information but also a history book of Anstey with records going back as far as possible where village matters can be stored and retrieved, whether details on the village fair, church, chapel or school or a file with the ancient village history in it which can be accessed and added to as time goes by, there are many different pieces of local history that are held around the village and if we can bring them all together I believe it could form a valuable village resource for now and into the future, if there is anyone interested in assisting Stephen Wylie in this project please come forward!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Village Hall Committee for their efforts in managing the village hall, it is much appreciated.

As always I would like to thank the Village Fair Committee for their hard work in planning and delivering Anstey Fair and the much needed funds to the different recipients in the village and also Adrian and Alison Cosser for allowing the village to take over their lovely grounds. Thanks also go out to John and Patricia for the newsletter editing, Simon and Liz Bagnall for the help with Newsletter production and Mike Thompson for his assistance in auditing the PC accounts.

The Parish Council intends to bring in some new blood and introduce a co-opted councillor this year, which will mean one councillor retiring, Clive Hall has suggested that he has served for many years on the Parish council and would be happy to step down and allow his position to be vacant, I would like to thank Clive for his input and hard work on the Parish Council. Apart from this change I believe that all other councillors are prepared to remain serving for the next 12 months.

Thank you

6. 2012-13 Statement of Accounts

These were explained. The New Homes Bonus payment has been transferred to a separate Capital Account. The Accounts were agreed and signed off for the internal audit.

7. Village Hall AGM Report

<i>The Committee:</i>	<i>Tony Pledger</i>	<i>Chairman</i>
	<i>Tom Sealy</i>	<i>Bookings & Maintenance</i>
	<i>Nick Kirkpatrick</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
	<i>Mandy Parker</i>	<i>Secretary</i>

Special thanks to Tom who bears the brunt of the Hall's day to day running and maintenance. There are 2 spare seats on the Committee – we shall not co-opt but applications to join would be most welcome.

We have undertaken no major maintenance projects or upgrades during the year.

Pattern of usage: *The pre-school group, who used to use the Hall every term time morning, moved its operation into the school during Spring 2012, primarily for administrative reasons. The pre-school was the Hall's major user.*

Use for band rehearsals was similar to last year but private functions have continued to decline.

A Zumba class was started a few months ago – hopefully this will continue.



One event worthy of special mention is the Village Dance, held on 24 November. The Hall was packed and at one stage every single attendee was up on the dance floor. The superb sound generated by the band certainly put pay to any worries about the Hall's acoustics. It was a reminder of life 50 years ago when Saturday night dances in village halls were frequent occurrences. Sadly folks' appetites have changed – nevertheless I'm assured we can look forward to a repeat performance this year.

Treasurers Report

The Hall charges are set to recover costs and protect the maintenance fund – the reduced bookings have not seriously affect our financial position, nevertheless the declining usage is a shame from the perspective of the Hall as a community facility.

A written summary account was presented to the meeting and is attached to this report.

The account is simpler this year due to the absence of major projects. Loss of revenue from Pre-School bookings is offset in part by reduced electricity costs but the books only balance courtesy of much appreciated donations from Anstey Fair, the Village Dance and the 'meet the neighbours' coffee morning.

Chairman Part 2

The Hall is in a generally good state of repair but will require internal redecoration during the next year or two. We have in mind to invite village volunteers to a mass decoration event, tempted by a barbecue and refreshments.

The drive is ready for its first 'making good' and a few heaters and lights are in need of repair. These will be attended to in the next few weeks.

Our headline strategy is to maintain the Hall as a facility for the use of the local community. We recognize that, like any other, the Hall has its strengths and weaknesses. Pleas for ideas for improvement at last year's open meeting and subsequently in the village newsletter unfortunately met with a nil return. One minor improvement under consideration is the addition of a curtain between the upper hall and lobby to reduce the heating costs when either space is used independently.

Open Discussion – Village Hall Committee

There is a loss of revenue of around £2,000 from the Preschool who stopped using the hall in the spring of 2012 and moved into the school. This equates to £1,000 when you take away the associated costs of hiring it. The Village Dance arranged in November was a success with a full hall. The acoustics were superb. On the Treasurers report the accounts balance due to donations, the chairman extended his thanks to the donations.

A resident requested that the pictures painted by Mrs Beddington could be put up. These are being stored upstairs in the hall but they could go in the lower lobby.

A request of some kitchen refurbishment was raised. The chairman explained that many functions bring their own food and it is difficult to make any suitable changes could be made without a large cost involved.

A resident asked if access could be provided across the piece of land by the hall rather than walk round on the main road – the Chairman confirmed he will look into the access and ownership of the land.

8. Open Forum – Parish Council

The Chairman asked the village if they had anything to add.

Highways; Although some improvements have been made to the roads it seems a slow process. The road to Wyddial is vastly improved. The digging of the ditch had been lengthy and a bad pothole just beyond Two Acres Development opposite Low Trees that needs attention. The patch outside the church has been re-reported. DC Cheswright confirmed that there had been major problems with the Herts Highways Fault Location Service but there had been recently been some improvements to the service. There have been regular meetings with the Chairman of Highways and the County Council.



Mobile Network; One resident asked about mobile phone reception which is so poor in the village. The Chairman confirmed he will investigate whether a central mast could be put in the centre of a village and if so, how many meters it would cover.

Broadband; There was a discussion on the lack of any stable connection to broadband which again, has a poor service in Anstey. It was agreed that 3G wi-fi is currently the best coverage for Anstey.

Church; The land in front of the church was tidy and the caravan removed.

Website; a resident is working on a project on Anstey's contribution to the war that will be available after the project has finished next year and could be provided to the website. Anstey Newsletter is available on the website. Ian Jennings is putting around a useful sheet that could be uploaded to the website.

Anstey Quarry; it was asked when the quarry would be infilled and turned the land back to farmland. Chalk extraction should cease at the end of this year. Currently lorry movements were limited to 30 movements per week day and 20 at weekends. Need to keep an eye on these. Clerk to request the repair of the road again and question if this can be done on a more regular basis. DC Cheswright confirmed that the request must go via Herts Highways and not the quarry. Although the chalk stockpiles are getting higher, the Chairman has checked this and it was confirmed there was no a height restriction. One resident queried if the piles were in the correct places. The Chairman confirmed he will check the location of the chalk and it's height, plus the infill dates.

DC Cheswright reminded parishioners that the day for voting was 2nd May.

Police; PCSO Higham confirmed that the area on the whole remained quiet. There had been no hare coursing incidents at all this year. She believes that the robust stance over the past 2 years seems to have made some impact. In all her areas, it remains fairly quiet at the moment.

School; a resident asked if anything could be done about parking. The Chairman had met with the headmaster regarding parking and he was assured that cars would park from the layby and down towards bridge, not up the hill and on the church corner. PCSO Higham says this is a problem at most schools at drop off and collection. The gate is opened to the village hall so people can park there. The Chairman will bring up with the headmaster again to request parking below the school as just before the bend is not a safe place to park. PCSO Higham requests her to be informed if it continues and she'll come along and advise parents to park safely.

The Chairman thanked all those who attended and the meeting closed at 8.30pm.