

## **BASILDON PARISH ASSEMBLY**

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY ON 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Ian Parsons (Chairman), Sarah Barnes, Elaine Cox, Geoffrey Couchman, David Jones, Helina Czajka

Attended by the Clerk and 16 parishioners. The District Councillor, Alan Law sent apologies.

1. MINUTES OF THE ASSEMBLY OF 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

The minutes had previously been circulated and confirmed as correct and were signed by the Chairman.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN

The Chairman welcomed the members of the public and speakers to the meeting and outlined the format that would be followed. The Chairman confirmed that all Councillors would cover off certain sections of Parish Council business with a short question to follow.

4. Parish Council Summary

The Chairman introduced the Council in turn and each covered off a specific topic:

Councillor Jones talked about support for the local library and confirmed that the Parish Council had paid £1740 to help keep the services running (£1 per member of the Parish).

Councillor Couchman confirmed that support for the 143 bus service continues. There is still a need for residents to use it or lose it although there's no imminent threat as things stand.

Councillor Barnes confirmed that speeding continues to be an issue and a meeting is scheduled this month to discuss speed limit and make West Berkshire Council aware of those areas considered to be most dangerous.

Councillor Cox updated the meeting on rights of way and informed the meeting that the Parish has 17 kilometres of paths, bridleways and rights of way across 26 locations. In the last year there's continued to be requests to clear fly tipping and clean up certain paths. Councillor Cox requested help from the community to survey footpaths – the clerk agreed to get involved.

The Chairman then provided a summary of Parish Council activity and confirmed the following:

As of the end of March, the PC have just under 25.5K in the current account and a further 32.5K in the deposit account.

Big spends of the year:

Library - £1740 has been paid as part of our continued support.

Bus Service support has risen to £1272, up £300 on last year but still considered good value for money.

Scofell Village Green replacement posts cost £4927.20, a one off cost to ensure the Green is not parked on.

Post Office room hire made up a £1600 cost to the PC.

Grass Cutting continues and the PC pay 3k per year with a two year fixed price contract signed.

Gritting this year accounted for £2526 - a cold winter made the cost a bit higher than expected but this is a well supported item across the Parish.

Our single biggest spend was on the Outdoor Gym which cost £19,802.

Our budget for the year was 27K and we kept within that mainly due to a number of items not being required (eg marque hire) - although it was noted that the outdoor gym and posts were deliberate separates to bring down the Parish Councils deposit total.

Going forward, the PC have a precept of 26K and are going to get about 3.5K from CIL for Pamber Green for spending on projects that were previously considered to be under section 106.

At the last Annual Assembly we reported that 56 planning applications had been received; in 2018/19 that number has reduced by 16 to 40. 6 of these concerned new houses; several related to Conditions for the two houses in Blandys Lane; others concerned a house opposite the Village Green, a replacement for Oak Tree Cottage on Aldworth Road and a new build on the corner of Maple Lane.

Of the 40 applications in 2018/19 the parish council objected to 11. A sizeable number of the objections related to where building was proposed beyond the settlement boundary and to where the council felt it could support concerns expressed by neighbours.

West Berkshire Council approved 33 of the 40 applications.

The bulk of the applications have been for small scale, usually ground floor extensions, though we have also had applications for sheds, porches, garage conversions, garage roofs, dormer windows, maintenance on the Gatehampton Bridge, stables and remapped driveways. And a couple of retrospective applications for work begun or completed without permission.

Building for new housing is complete in Blandys Lane, has been begun alongside Spring Close and is anticipated opposite the Village Green and next door to Emery Down Wood.

The Parish Council continued to object to anything outside of the settlement boundary.

Staffing changes – 5 councillors were elected and a further 3 have come forward and

will be co-opted. Natalie Weekes has also decided to step down from the council as she intends to move house. She will be missed and has been a significant asset to the council over the last 15 years.

The Chairman outlined a number of key Parish Council achievements:

Pot holes flagged to WBC and fixes now underway.

The outdoor gym has been installed.

Bus subsidies continue, as do those for the Post Office.

Winter gritting funded by the Parish Council at a cost of 2.5K

Support for the Village hall has changed with the PC taking up the grounds maintenance.

Two new litter bins have been requested but WBC confirm issues with the collection contract.

Ongoing conversations with the school over support.

Regular attendance at other council related meetings.

A meeting is held once a year in Lower Basildon.

## 6. District Council Update

Councillor Law was unavailable due to a meeting of West Berkshire Council. He continues to work on local issues following his recent re-election.

## 7. Any other Business

The Chairman opened up the meeting to questions and the following were asked:

There were questions around speeding in the village which were addressed by Councillor Barnes. Additionally, 'street furniture' was also discussed, in particular the use of mirrors potentially at Darby Lane and Maple Lane. The Chairman confirmed that one way road options had been considered but had proved unpopular. It was suggested hedges should be cut back and enforcement in place to allow the best site lines possible.

The clerk was asked to follow up the Railway Action Groups progress along with whether the car park at Pangbourne Station was scheduled to be increased in size.

Drainage issues in Lower Basildon were raised and these were forwarded to Alan Law for comment, as was potential recycling options which the Parish Council will also explore.

With the questions complete, the Chairman concluded the meeting at 9pm and confirmed that there would be another assembly in 2020.