

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF ASHURST AND COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL.
HELD AT COLBURY CHURCH ROOMS ON 21ST MARCH 2017.**

Present; Cllr Clive White (Vice Chair), Cllr Emma Lacey, Cllr Mike Thomas, Cllr Ann Sturgess, Cllr Ian Hobbs, Cllr Heather Richards.

Clerk; Helen Klaassen

NFDC; Cllr Les Puttock, Cllr Derek Tipp

ACCG; Alister Hutchin

Neighbourhood Watch; Mrs Karen Oliver

Police; PCSO Richard Williams (from 8)

Cllr Clive White welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. He then called for a minutes' silence to remember Councillor Sally Arnold who had suddenly passed away recently.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Cllr Caroline Hubbard, Cllr Keith Mans (HCC)

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 15.03.16.

It was noted that the minutes had been signed off as a true and accurate record of the meeting at the following full council meeting in April 2016.

3. To receive a report from the Chairman of Ashurst & Colbury Parish Council, Cllr Caroline Hubbard.

In the absence of Cllr Hubbard her report was read by the Vice Chair Cllr Clive White.

You will by now have heard of the sad loss 9 days ago, of Councillor Sally Arnold, who over many years has been a great support to me, and to this Council. She carried out an enormous amount of work on behalf of the residents of this village, and the New Forest National Park. Her untimely death will be profoundly felt, and my heartfelt thanks go to her, and her husband Roy, who was a great support to Sally in her work, and who is naturally inconsolable at her loss.

Her funeral will be held at Christ Church Colbury on Friday, 7th April, 10.30am, after which refreshments will be available in the Church Rooms. Her cremation will be held in Southampton at 1.15pm. Her husband Roy would like to extend an invite to anyone who wishes to attend either or both events.

I would first of all like to thank Councillors for their support for the time I have been in the Chair.

It is a real honour, although hard work, to have this position on the Parish Council.

I would like to offer my thanks too to our Clerk, Helen Klaassen, for her support, advice and good humour which is regularly required.

Reference also needs to be made to the Chairs of each Committee who are responsible for the success of each of them running smoothly and effectively.

Since taking over the position as Chair we have had another successful Village Fete where we welcomed our District and County Councillors and our local M.P. Dr Julian Lewis.

Thanks go again, particularly, to Cllr Ann Sturgess and Cllr Clive White for their sterling work in leading this Event. We must not forget, either the contribution made by former Councillor Max Coaker and his wife Charmaine.

In October the Parish Council held a Public Meeting at Foxhills School, attended by over 100 residents to address concerns about the National Park Draft Local Plan. A presentation was given by David Illsley on behalf of the National Park and questions were answered in response to residents' concerns.

Thanks must go to Cllr Emma Lacey for making a Presentation on the evening and for hosting the Parish Council Working Party Meetings.

In December the Recreation Ground was the venue for the National Park Tree Planting day. Much of the organization for this event was done before I took the position of Chair. It was an exceptional event which saw people from all over the country plant a tree in celebration of a personal event in their lives or in memory of someone special.

I have enjoyed writing my Chairman's report over the past few months in our excellent Parish Magazine.

I have also been proud to be part of the Ashurst and Colbury Parish Outreach Group which supports the needs of the elderly in our Village. It has shown how important and productive it is to work with other Organisations in the Parish.

4. To receive reports from the Chairs of the various Committees;

i. Allotment Committee – The Clerk

I must first mention Sally and the time and effort she put into the Allotments. I know she would want me to thank Ian sincerely for the amount of work he puts into their care. Sally always said that she didn't know what the Allotments would do without him. I must also thank the rest of the allotment committee for their time and input too.

Activities this past year;

The Drainage was completed last year and so far, is proving successful.

Network Rail will be replacing the trackside fence soon, at a height of 1.8 metres, which hopefully should go some way to stopping the deer jumping over.

Following the renewals at the end of last year, several plots are available and we will be looking to fill them soon.

Rokill are working with us and the allotment holders doing quarterly inspections to reduce the rats in the allotments.

Traps have been set and advice given to help reduce their numbers.

The allotment competition and presentation of prizes was held at the Allotmenters Annual BBQ in July last year and judging will take place in June again this year.

ii. Fete Committee – Cllr A Sturgess

The day was every organiser's worst nightmare; it rained all day. However, we stuck it out and the competitions, dog show and all went ahead. Many stall holders did not bother to show up, however, we did manage to generate a little money for the two Charities that we supported; Honeypot and Headway, £250 was given to each.

It was indeed a very disappointing day after so much hard work had been dedicated into the organising of such an event. A big thank you to those who came and got wet including Big Baps and Tony White for compèring.

iii. Magazine Committee – Cllr C White

Another successful year, profit estimated at £650.

The magazine is a great forum for passing information to residents, but not forgetting Facebook and our parish council website, we would like to see more interaction from residents through letters to the letters page.

The magazine continues to get good feedback and we would like to encourage a higher percentage of local stories. Reporting more about the activities of the Ashurst and Colbury Community Group which is good, but always want more stuff.

The committee have tried a few new initiatives in the magazine; top tips, articles for sale for example, but are always looking for more.

We are grateful to have a great editor, John at TLC Online who takes on last minute changes, and I must thank the committee members for their contributions too.

We are very grateful for the support of Steve and Val Rice (sadly Val passed away recently), and our magazine distributors who do a fine job. I believe we are now finally at the stage where whole village is covered, but please let me know if there any omissions.

iv. Planning Committee – Cllr C Hubbard

In the absence of Cllr Hubbard her report was read by the Vice Chair Cllr Clive White.

The first thing I would like to do is to thank Members of the Committee for their hard work over the last year.

The Planning Committee meets at 6.45pm each month before the Full Council Meeting and is open to Members of the Public. The committee has seen 42 application this year, 10 of which were refused by the NPA, 37 granted and 5 undecided. Of the total number, there have also been 5 which have gone to appeal, 1 of which was allowed, 2 allowed with conditions, 1 dismissed and 1 withdrawn.

We have noted an increase in 2016 in the number of residents who attend the Meeting, either to discuss their own Planning Applications or to express concerns about proposed development. Over the last year this has included discussion about tree applications.

Residents' views certainly help us inform our decisions in addition to site visits, briefing notes from the National Park and the Village Design Statement. Our submissions to the National Park need to reflect National Park Planning Policy Documents and we are expected to justify our decisions.

We have benefitted from a series of training sessions organized by the National Park which have focused on areas such as Enforcement, Tree Applications and the National Park Draft Local plan.

It is sometimes quite challenging to feel that we have arrived at the right decision, but it is clear that in most instances, the National Park take our comments into account.

We are also given the opportunity to speak at the National Park Planning Committee if our decision does not concur with theirs.

It has been a rewarding and interesting Committee to be the Chair of over the past year."

v. Recreation Committee – The Clerk

Thanks must go to the Committee for all their hard work and I would like to thank former Councillor and Chairman of the Recreation Committee Max Coaker for all his hard work too.

This last year has seen some improvements to the recreation ground, namely;

A new fence on the Lakewood Road side of the recreation ground.

Installation of Jubilee Fields in Trust plaque in a brick and flint plinth beautifully built by Alf Baker and unveiled at the very successful Picnic in the Park day in June last year. I would like to thank those who gave their support to making this day such a success.

A new piece of Multi-function toddler equipment has been installed under the trees, the reports so far are all good and it is well used.

NFDC tree completed their annual tree survey and their recommendations were used in pruning and trimming the existing trees as part of the maintenance the NPA did before the very successful Family Tree event in December last year.

The Community Payback Services still carry out regular maintenance, clearing weeds and undergrowth for us. We plan to continue using them this coming year.

The recreation ground is also now being used by a company in Wellow for practice safety inspections, but we do have our own quarterly safety inspections carried out by Elite Playground Inspections and annually by RoSPA – works are identified from those inspections and reported back to the committee for a decision on action.

Plans for this coming year;

Get a new and active committee formed and elect a chair

Continue with routine maintenance via CPS

Investigate the need for a new drainage pipe as pipe as the current one is still blocking and causing puddles across the path

Replace fence and kissing gate on Whartons Lane side using s106 contributions

Replace breaking play equipment and consider a plan for ongoing maintenance or replacement of older equipment.

5. To receive reports from County Councillor Keith Mans and the District Councillors for the Parish, relating to the activities of the Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council on matters affecting the Parish.

In the absence of HCC Cllr Keith Mans, his report was read by the Clerk.

The last year has seen further central government cuts to local councils. The County Council has done its best to ensure that back office facilities continue to bear the brunt of this cash reduction. It is encouraging to observe that all libraries and waste disposal sites have nevertheless been kept open and the County has retained its school improvement programme. We have also filled the gap from the reduction in funding from the Environment Agency for flood protection.

More locally I have spent all the £32,000 allocated to me under my devolved budget. Grants have included support for Parish Council defibrillators, energy saving projects, playground repairs and sports and arts groups.

NFDC Cllr Derek Tipp reported;

NFDC has increased council tax by £5 for a band D property and has made savings of £1.6 million, largely through reorganising Senior Management at NFDC, and will have to save another £1.6 million in the future, having already saved another £400,000 so far.

Reorganising local government is on the back burner for the moment, attempts were made to merge with Dorset and it seems attempts at devolution for Hampshire County Council have fallen by the wayside although there are still talks in the background.

Some services may merge, NFDC already provides services to other Councils for a fee.

The Housing White Paper was released recently and more houses must be built.

NFDC are currently re-doing their local plan. They must provide sites for more housings to be built at the right rate, e.g. 1000 per annum, in an attempt not to flood the market.

6. To receive the following reports;

i. from the Chairman of the Ashurst & Colbury Community Group

Alister Hutchin, Chair;

This year we have continued with our regular events and new and ongoing projects.

Last year we ran two litter picks, one in the spring and another in August as the village had become so untidy again. We have just completed our spring litter pick for this year.

Our walks programme, now in its 10th year, remains very popular. We have a weekday and a weekend walk every month. It is a great opportunity to explore the area we live in and meet our fellow villagers.

The Cycle Ashurst rides continue during the year and again are a way to enjoy the forest and socialise at the same time. The new Sustrans cycle route signs have been put up and we would like to see an expansion of the network of off-road cycle tracks to make cycling safer.

Our annual Apple Day in the autumn is popular. Our apple presses can be borrowed and our online booking system has worked well.

Despite a well organised campaign to rationalise the Woodlands Road speed limit Hampshire County Council have turned it down. However, we continue to work towards safer roads and to this end we are trying to set up a speed watch for the village. A new pavement between the bus stop and the campsite entrance has been built which now makes it safer for wheelchair users and young families to access the forest there. We would like to record our appreciation for the help and support given to us on this project by Cllr Sally Arnold.

We are still awaiting a decision from Hampshire County Council on the right of way between the station and the forest which avoids the busy A35.

New projects have been; our involvement in setting up the Ashurst and Colbury Outreach Group with the Parish Council and other groups in the village.

We will soon be starting work on producing an information pack for new arrivals and residents in the village.

Our next event will be on May 1st when we will be having a fun day to celebrate the 170th anniversary of Ashurst station.

Details of our activities, and the walk and cycle ride programmes, can be found on our interactive website.

www.ashurstaccg.wordpress.com.

ii. From PC Steven Norris

Mrs Karen Oliver gave the report on PCSO Richard Williams behalf.

There have been 9 reported burglaries in the last year, 5 in the last 10 days. 8 thefts from outbuildings and the same from cars in the last year.

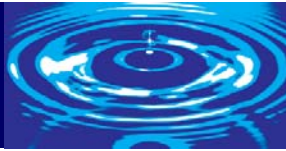
Police and Police Cadets are handing out leaflets to residents.

Thieves will target where they can see things have been left out. Thanks to Operation Falcon thefts are decreasing. Neighbourhood Watch goes from strength to strength.

Speedwatch is being encouraged and equipment is now needed for those who have volunteered to use.

If there are any questions please give them to Karen after the meeting.

iii. from the Neighbourhood Watch Group Co-ordinator, Mrs Karen Oliver



Chair, Councillors, Guests and members of the public,

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to give my report on behalf of the N.W. Group in the village.

Yet another year has gone by all too soon and the pace of life - instead of slowing down, seems to accelerate with alarming speed.

I was hoping to begin by saying that all has been quiet crime-wise in Ashurst but the very recent spate of attempted and successful burglaries has put paid to that, even the Forest Inn was targeted! It really does highlight the need for increased vigilance and awareness that although we do live in a low-crime area, we are by no means immune to organized crime-waves albeit small scale. I invite anyone in Ashurst who does not belong to a scheme to consider starting one and I will be on hand to help and support. In fact, another resident became a coordinator in January this year, but I still want more!

Another activity that has involved N.W. in the village is the now-established Ashurst & Colbury Outreach Group. The celebration of Her Majesty's 90th Birthday tea was a great success in June last year. There have been two smaller get-togethers since then –one was last November with the theme of Remembrance and one held this month to celebrate Spring. Here is another avenue for N.W. to impart advice and information.

The usual bi-monthly meetings of the County N.W. Association held in Winchester are regularly attended and any relevant information- either from those meetings or from subsequent emails and Alerts - are passed to the group then on to scheme members. Other meetings involving N.W. are attended where-ever possible. In May 2016, I represented HINWA at a 'Hate Crime' seminar highlighting the awful abuse that victims endure and how to recognize when someone is perhaps in need of help. In September, I attended a Strategic meeting with my HINWA colleagues to meet the new (then temporary) ACC responsible for Neighbourhood Policing. She spoke to each of the team regarding our roles and thanked us for our support in changing and challenging times.

As has been mentioned, who could ignore the "wonderful" weather endured by all those who took part and organized the village fete. Well done to the organisers who tried to enthuse those who visited and thank-you to those and stopped to chat - could it be because our gazebo offered shelter from the awful conditions?

The P.C.C. Mr. Michael Lane held several events during February. They were called 'New Forest Communities Matter Conferences'. Ian and I attended the one held in the Outdoor Centre in Minstead. This was to hear and establish the kind of crime currently being suffered by farmers, land-owners and rural communities. We all have property that- when it is stolen, costs a lot of money to replace – irrespective of insurance policies but when the rural community loses items such as tractors, large electrical equipment such as chain-saws and quad bikes which are used to patrol the larger estates, they cost thousands upon thousands of pounds to replace. Strangely, in all the printed matter available on that day, nowhere was N.W. mentioned – a point I rectified quite strongly in the requested feed-back.....N.W. is for everyone, everywhere.

Amongst the many other meetings attended, I continue to raise the profile of N.W. in the Forest area and have helped several schemes form in our surrounding areas and parishes. There is an Amani Children's home opening soon in Dibden Purlieu and I recently met with the staff member who will liaise with outside agencies such as the Police and N.W.

At this point I would like to pay tribute to Cllr Sally Arnold whose sudden passing has shocked our village. She was a strong supporter of N.W. and enabled grants to be awarded to our group in past years. She was a unique character and her great knowledge of this lovely village and its' residents will – I'm sure – be sorely missed.

In ending my report, Chair and Councillors, may I please thank you for your support of the work we do. We can only try to make life as difficult as possible for the perpetrators of crime – that is our common goal.

*Karen Oliver,
Area Coordinator,
A & C Neighbourhood Watch.*

7. To consider any matters raised by electors of the Parish of Ashurst and Colbury, affecting the Parish.

None.

The meeting was closed at 8.15pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____