

**Minutes of Ashurst and Colbury Parish Council's
Annual Parish Meeting.**

Held on 21st April 2015, at the Church Rooms, Deerleap Lane, Colbury at 7pm.

Present; Cllr. M Coaker (Chairman) Cllr. C Marchetti (Vice Chairman) Cllr. P Sopowski, Cllr. A Sturgess, Cllr. S Arnold, Cllr. C White, Cllr. C Hubbard, Cllr. M Thomas.
Cllr. D Tipp, Cllr. L Puttock (NFDC), Cllr. K Mans (HCC)
Clerk to the Council; H Klaassen.
12 Members of the public.

1. Apologies for Absence.

None.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 15th April 2014.

Cllr Arnold proposed and Cllr Sturgess seconded that the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record and it was; **unanimously agreed.**

3. Presentation by James Brown; Heritage on Your Doorstep.

The Parish Council heard a presentation from James Brown, Project Archaeologist, New Forest National Park Authority, on the lottery funded 'Our Past, Our Future' group of heritage projects.

JB spoke specifically regarding the 'Heritage on My Doorstep' project, which works with forest communities to support them in sharing their area's story with the local community. The project identifies different community groups and Parish Councils who have an interest in researching and sharing the physical and social history of their parish. The project enables help with research, funding and support to uncover their history and make it available to other local residents. JB used, as an example, the work undertaken in Exbury and Lepe to capture information about their gardens; involving a history project with old gardeners and local residents to help them share their knowledge with the whole of the New Forest and how to build on that information into the future.

The 'Heritage on My Doorstep project is currently looking for groups and volunteers with a desire to share their own unique stories, to capture links between communities to enable similarities to be identified.

4. To receive a report from the Chairman of Ashurst & Colbury Parish Council, Cllr Max Coaker.

The Parish Council received a report from Cllr Coaker (Appendix 1).

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

i. Allotment Committee – Cllr C Marchetti

The Parish Council received a report of the year's activities from Cllr Marchetti (Appendix 2).

ii. Fete Committee – Cllr A Sturgess

The Parish Council received a report of the year's activities from Cllr Sturgess (Appendix 3).

iii. Magazine Committee – Cllr C White

The Parish Council received a report of the year's activities from Cllr White (Appendix 4).

iv. Planning Committee – Cllr P Sopowski

The Parish Council received a report of the year's activities from Cllr Sopowski (Appendix 5).

v. Recreation Committee – Cllr M Coaker

The Parish Council received a report of the year's activities from Cllr Coaker (Appendix 6).

6. To receive reports from County Councillor 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.

Cllr Mans;

Once again this year the County council has not increased its proportion of the council tax. We have tried to restrict the reduction in front line services, resulting from our reduced grant from central government, by continuing to look at more efficient ways of carrying out our activities. As you know we now share many back room operations with both the police and the fire service. We are also increasingly selling our skills to public sector organisations outside Hampshire. This means we can provide services for people in the county more cheaply. Closer to home the Lengthsman scheme is now working very well in many parishes. In addition many individuals are helping us keeping costs down notably in clearing ditches and generally carrying out work that is reducing the risk of future flooding.

High speed broadband continues to be rolled out across the County. However the service we getting from BT is far from perfect and we are trying very hard to ensure that the company carries out work properly and on time.

Cllr Puttock;

I have served on the District Council for 12 years, Cllr Tipp has served for 16 years.

Traffic problems are continuing and are not just limited to Ashurst, Netley Marsh and Cadnam, but is on the increase forest wide. The district do try and deal with the problem, but the solutions are expensive. A recent report shows, however, that NFDC car parking charges are amongst the lowest in England.

NFDC has obtained substantial funds for waste disposal, including recycling and the black bag scheme.

Council tax has been kept at the same level for 6 years.

The Brand New Forest discount card scheme, which supports local shopkeepers, is a success with 5000 sales in the first two months of 2015. The card costs £5 per annum and gives a wide range of discounts in local shops.

There have been 1.6 million visits to our local leisure centres in the last year.

£2 million has been raised by the sale of local offices and housing and £5 million has been raised from the National Lottery for projects such as Eling Tide Mill.

The Open Top Bus continues to be a massive success with in excess of 40,600 passengers last year, compared to 4600 only four years ago.

The District Council continues to run Community Clean up Days – towns and parishes are issued with refuse sacks to be filled, which are then collected.

7. To receive the following reports;

i) From the Chairman of the Ashurst & Colbury Community Group

The Parish Council heard a report of the past year's activities of the Ashurst and Colbury Community Group, presented by Alister Hutchin, Vice Chair (Appendix 7).

ii) From the Neighbourhood Watch Group Co-ordinator, Mrs Karen Oliver

The Parish Council heard a report of the past year's activities from Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, Mrs Karen Oliver (Appendix 8).

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

None.

The Chairman noted that the minutes of the APM would be ratified at the May Full Council Meeting for expediency.

At 8.13pm the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Appendix 1

Chairman's Report.

I would like to start by thanking all the Councillors for their support and dedication over the past year. It has not always been easy and some of the decisions taken have not been easy.

As you all know this last year has been a particularly difficult one for the Parish Council and has seen our reputation tarnished, but hopefully these issues are now behind us and we can move forward. Since this time last year we have lost a very valued councillor and team player in Ken Kershaw, a change in Chairman and not to mention the drawn out saga of the Parish Clerk. Happily we now have a new team working together and kept in line by our new and efficient Parish Clerk, Helen Klaassen.

During the upheaval it came to light that we were very out of date with some of our obligatory official documents so I am pleased to say that with the involvement of all we are now fully compliant with our Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, risk assessments and Code of Conduct. On top of this a steering committee was set up to recruit a new clerk as well as bringing the clerk's employment contract up to date. All this took a lot of time and is not a visible task but is very necessary for the efficient running of your Council.

Some of the more visible successes are;

- The Fete, which continues to be a great success
- No increase in Parish Council tax contributions
- Healthy cash balance
- Improved monthly Parish Magazine
- Improvements to allotments; all plots fully subscribed
- Improvements in the Recreation Ground, including new goalposts and a Deed of Dedication that gives the recreation ground protected status under the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Trust.
- Successful Christmas Carol Singing Concert
- Parish Council lobbying resulting in the re-surfacing of Ashdene, New and Wood Roads.

Last year your chairman made the report for all, including each committee set up to oversee the various parish functions, but this year it is believed that each committee should speak for itself and indeed become more autonomous to promote each area and promote better facilities for our residents.

We are all aware that an election is upon us and there could be changes to your council but it is my sincere hope that we can continue to carry on to do the good works that have been set in place and to promote and facilitate further ideas to improve this wonderful parish that we live in.

Appendix 2

Allotment Committee Report.

Introduction.

The Allotment Gardens are continuing to prove a popular activity for our village. The new terms of the annual Tenancy Agreement were rolled out in January 2015 at a meeting in the Colbury Church Hall with most current tenants renewing their tenure. Only a few people had to drop out due to personal circumstances but these have quickly been replaced through our waiting list to maintain a full complement.

Prices at £25 and £15 per annum for a full and half plot respectively have remained unchanged since established in 2011.

We are looking to start the renewal process for 2016 in November so that all allotments have been allocated and paid for well before the new seasons gets underway.

Key Activity/Update.

- Flooding remains unresolved with no guaranteed solution being found; I have been reluctant to proceed with suggested excavation works which were only offered as a 'try it and see', with the only prospect of trying something else if it did not work. I cannot responsibly recommend nor commit our limited Council funds for an unknown liability with no guarantee of success. Cllr Arnold has also contacted land management people at the National Park in an attempt to find a solution and this investigation will continue.
- Network Rail has been contacted about the fence which leans into the allotments at an angle of 20 degrees; as well as providing access for deer it also prevents any access along that side for hedge/grass cutting. NR did send an inspection team and deemed it not of an emergency nature but would report it for attention in their planning schedule; we have been allocated a Service Notification Number and Helen will follow up with NR on a regular basis.
- An active and informal forum has been established under Ian Oliver and this has proved a great platform to enable collective ideas to be raised and acted upon; regular deliveries of mulch are one result of this.
- The Annual Best Allotment competition was once again well supported.
- One allotment holder has requested the introduction of bees and following a canvas amongst other allotment holders, where no objections were made, a special addendum to the Tenancy Agreement was prepared to proceed. This addendum included the legal, training communication, contact and appropriate association requirements that need to be complied with.
- Community Service support for weeding clearance etc., has been a great support in prior years. We are looking at this to continue and several good suggestions have come from the forum; Helen is actively following up with the Probation Services for this year.
- As hardcore has become available for voluntary sources, the central muddy track is gradually being filled in to provide secure access in all weathers.
- The water tanks will be turned on in April if required due to dry weather.
- Since erecting the sign on the main gate there have been further significant pick-up/drop-off school parking problems.

Appendix 3.

Fete Committee Report.

This year has been the 7th year of organising the village fete in the recreation ground and it has become hit with the local people; something to look forward to, meeting up with old and new friends, to talk about for weeks before and weeks after. Each year it has grown bigger in size and popularity. It involves the schools and local business. Each year the Parish Council donates most of the funds to local and national charities, i.e. the RNLI, Air Ambulance, Hampshire Fire & Rescue which all operate strongly in our area. This year the charity is to be the Hampshire Riding Therapy Centre, with a suggestion that an emergency defibrillator for the village be provided with some of the proceeds – the fete committee were in favour of this suggestion.

The committee do their best organising arena entertainment; colourful and noisy with local talent very much encouraged. Like all villages there are plenty of 'get up and do it' showmen and women, singers dancers alike, we just have to find them! We try to ensure there are things of interest for the young and old alike.

We are finding that people are coming forward with suggestions that are always seriously considered by the committee. For instance; cake/jam/chutney competitions being brought back by popular request, one of our councillors is working with a local lady to put together a very successful marquee of competitors showing homemade products, fruit and vegetables from the local allotments with judges being the local MP and District Councillors – who want the job permanently, I wonder why?!

There is also the dog show supported by the local vet and is always very popular. The fete usually ends with a tug of war where all the family can test their strength – it gets very competitive!

For the last 3-4 years the catering has been done by local lady who always donates all her profits charity. She and her team work tirelessly all day for the love of the village, her home made cakes always go down wonderfully and we are very grateful to her.

We must not forget Dj Tony White of Cool Sounds, who acts as our compère; he plays music, tells jokes and keeps the crowds entertained. We would also not survive without our army of local helpers who get up early to fetch tables and chairs for the school, help put up marquees and numerous other things – every little helps and we would not survive without them.

Finally, to close this report, we never talk about the weather – it has never let us down and it never will!

Appendix 4.

Magazine Committee Report.

The new A5 format magazine started a year ago with the May edition. The old style magazine was costing c. £7500pa to produce, using approximately £2500 from the precept to cover the deficit of cost less the income from adverts.

This year the magazine has cost c. £4500 and was expected to make a profit.

The new format has been well received and more and more businesses seem to want to advertise. This can cause a problem as we have 28 pages, 11-13 of which are adverts, and wish to keep a content/advert ratio of 60%/40%.

The non-advert content comprises general contact information, a 'What's On' column, input from Colbury and Lyndhurst Baptist Churches and information that the various Parish Council committees wish to disseminate. The remainder we want to generate from residents. We have two regular features; The Allotmenters and Foxhills School. We are trying hard to get other content and have had some successes from the younger residents, but are trying to get more. The message is; content from residents for the interest of residents.

Our letters page has been quite sparse over the year and that is good news for the Parish Council as it means we must be doing ok, but bad news for the magazine – people do like to read controversial letters!

In the coming months we intend further improvements. To make the content terms and conditions more flexible, encourage more letters, organise some competitions and continue a push for more regular and one-off items of interest. This month features a profile of our Clerk, Helen, and in the next few months we intend to do Councillor profiles.

I think our magazine is something to be proud of and I would like to thank the people who take the time to write in. I would also like to give a big thanks to the 25 volunteers who work hard delivering our magazine over 11 months of the year.

Appendix 5

Planning Committee Report.

Thanks must go to the Councillors on the committee and Ken Kershaw, who had been an active member of planning until he stepped down from the Parish Council.

The way that the Planning Committee deals with planning applications has changed. It used to be that the plans were sent to the Clerk, now however, they come to me and are handed around the committee to have a look at. Each Councillor gives their independent views of the plans. The plans are added to the agenda and the committee makes its recommendation within the full council meeting. Extraordinary meetings of the Planning Committee are only held when there are larger or more controversial proposals to consider.

After the meeting the clerk forwards the recommendations and comments / conditions to the relevant case officer at the National Park.

Appendix 6

Recreation Ground Report.

We as a Parish Council continue to ensure our beautiful Recreation Ground stays as it is and we constantly seek to enhance the facilities. To this end we are pleased to announce that thanks to the Clerk, Helen Klaassen, we finally have the letter of approval from NFDC which enables us to enter into a Deed of Dedication with the National Playing Fields Association. The deed ensures our recreation ground will be dedicated as a public playing field and recreation ground and known as Queen Elizabeth II Fields, Ashurst Recreation Ground.

The Recreation Ground benefits from regular maintenance and inspections such as tree surveys, a quarterly and annual equipment inspection continue, for which we have budgeted previously and this coming year, and to add to this list; last year at the request of several residents, the paths which were installed in 2012 and had started to become overgrown are now weed treated twice a year.

We have also to make provision for the unexpected, namely;

- April 2014 - replace climbing frame - £2682
- August 2014 - Replace and add goalposts - circa £200
- November 2014 - NFDC cut up and remove fallen willow tree - £657
- November 2014 - Treat wasps nest - £50

Total - circa £3500

We cannot stand still however and it is intended in this forthcoming year to review the toddler play facilities and seek funding to provide extra equipment so that we can cater for a wider age range.

Appendix 7.



www.accg.hampshire.org.uk

Chairman's Annual Statement 2015

We have had a busy and successful year continuing with our regular activities and also introducing some new projects. Three new members have joined our group this year. We feel confident that we can continue to help improve life in the village.

We have just completed the annual litter pick to tidy up the village and the 30 volunteers collected 30 bags of rubbish.

Ashurst Walks meet twice a month on a weekday and a Saturday. We rotate through the weekdays so everyone can have a chance to join us. Our 23 walks have been much enjoyed by those taking part. An average of 17 people come walking each time.

We hold a popular annual apple day. We have three apple presses of different sizes which can also be loaned at other times and for which there is a computerised booking system. They are already being booked for this autumn. A new project is a community garden waste shredder scheme and we may go on to add other equipment. Unlike the apple presses this will be for the use of Ashurst and Colbury villagers only as it is not our intention to be competing with local hire firms.

Cycle Ashurst is a new cycling group we have formed. The idea is to encourage those who would like to have a leisurely sociable cycle ride. We have had two meetings so far this spring. We are concerned with the quality of cycling routes locally and we are looking into improved and safer access to the forest. This links in with our interest in, and involvement with, the improvements to the cycle tracks through the village and beyond.

The Right of Way from the station car park into the forest by the pub saga continues. It is a popular path used by locals as well as campers. The application was sent to HCC on 13/1/09. The application was not registered until 14/3/11 [no 1095]. It is still marked as 'awaiting investigation' even though applications registered after this one have been ratified.

The Our Past, Our Future project is a new and exciting project promoted by the National Park and we look forward to working with the Parish Council on it. It is important to record and preserve our heritage for future generations. We are very pleased that the new gate to the recreation ground enabling easier access for buggies and wheelchairs has now been installed and is being used.

We are looking forward to contributing to the Village of the Year competition if the Parish Council decides to enter. Our committee continues to meet every other month and we are always open to new ideas from residents and do visit us at our stand at the village fête.



Report from the A & C N.W. Group
For the
Ashurst & Colbury Annual Parish & Parish Council Meeting.
On
Tuesday April 21st, 2015
By
Mrs. Karen Oliver, Group Lead Coordinator

Mr. Chairman, Councillors and members of the public,

In my report last year - and at last months' Council meeting, I spoke of different ways the S.N. Team have tried to liaise with our residents. A police surgery was held each month at the Welcome store to enable residents to talk to the Safer Neighbourhood Team about any issue of concern. These surgeries were not well attended nor were the mobile surgeries that followed. It has now been decided that future meetings will take place inside the Lyndhurst Community Centre where residents can come and discuss any issues they have. If more privacy is needed, this can be accommodated in a separate room. This arrangement will be beneficial -especially in inclement weather in both Summer *and* Winter – for matters to be discussed in relative comfort.

On the 5th of March, I attended the Netley Marsh N.W. A.G.M. where a new Lead Coordinator was appointed. She has since attended the Ashurst & Colbury N.W. Spring meeting to see how we work. No two groups will run the same way due to different governing factors but it is good to have communication between us for advice, support and flow of information.

Our village, along with Netley Marsh, Bartley, Copythorne South and Winsor will now come under the Neighbourhood Policing Team - as it is now to be known - based in Totton. As Totton residents pay their Council Tax to N.F.D.C., they are also part of the Forest policing team area and not a separate entity as perhaps was first believed. I made contact with our new beat Police officer – P.C. Rachel Gallimore and on Friday last, a meeting between P.C. Andy White, P.C Rachel Gallimore, P.C.S.O. Lisa Quinn, Cllr Charles Marchetti and some of the coordinators of the neighbouring parishes I am in contact with, took place to 'introduce' Rachel and say 'goodbye' to Andy & Lisa although we will not lose contact with our former team completely as duties will still be inter-active when coverage is needed for holidays, sickness etc.

To encourage more prospective coordinators to join our group, I have completed a leaflet drop in the village to those roads not currently covered by N.W. being ably assisted by Rachel who gladly volunteered in order to orientate herself with our village. A donation from N.F.D. Councillor Derek Tipp and agreement from this Council enabled this initiative to go ahead so, on behalf of our group, I thank you.

The Police & Crime Commissioner wishes to raise awareness of Neighbourhood Policing and N.W. in 'harder to reach' areas of Hampshire so - to this end last year – N.W. was represented at three Council

Tenant Open Days held in Council venues in Lyndhurst, Lymington and Hythe. These events will occur again this year with locations yet to be agreed.

Attendance is ongoing to the H.I.N.W.A. bi-monthly meetings where information can be disseminated and – if relevant – applied to our village and its' residents.

I have been asked about the 15p charge to users of the 101 non-emergency number. I would like to confirm that this single charge is paid to the handlers who direct the call to the relevant agency; Police, Fire & Rescue, Coastguard etc. and lasts for the entire duration of the call - be it from land-lines or mobile phones. The Police and other agencies/ Councils do not receive any part of this charge.

No Cold Calling zones have increased in the village and whilst this was not a N.W. initiative, I do have information and contact details for Hampshire Trading Standards who will be glad to deal with any enquiries.

It is our intention to attend the village fete again this year in September. We gained two new coordinators through this event in the last couple of years but we have also had some resignations for various reasons, though the ex-coordinators still support us.

Thieves continue to operate in our Forest car-parks. If you must take valuables such as handbags when in the Forest, please carry them with you – don't put them in the boot as you will be being watched.

I would like to thank this Council again for allowing us to post information on its' Website.

I would again like to thank this Council for its' continued and much valued support of Neighbourhood Watch.

Karen Oliver,
Group Lead,
A & C N.W.

Report from Rachel Gallimore (via Mrs Oliver);

I have been in the police for 13 ½ years. I have worked in Southampton as response at Bitterne, I have worked on the Public Protection Unit, Domestic Violence Unit and then I went back to Bitterne as a beat officer. I had a one year secondment to CID and for the last 18 months have been on the Anti-Social Behaviour team covering all of the New Forest. I have lived in or near to Totton for the last 20 years, I went to Foxhills School and I know the area really well.