

# RAMSBURY & AXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

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## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY HELD ON MONDAY MAY 20TH 2019 AT 7.45 PM IN RAMSBURY MEMORIAL HALL .

**PRESENT:** Diann Barnett, Denise Edwards, Graeme Fearon, Sheila Glass (Chairman), George Hawes, Erica Hodgson, Helen Lloyd, Christopher Payne, Chris Morgan, Roger Greasley, Ron Young, C Standage (Clerk), M Holdsworth (Minutes Secretary ) 2 members of the public attended.

1. **Reading of the Notice Convening the Meeting**
2. **Welcome by the Chairman** – S Glass welcomed all the councilors and the two members of the public.
- 3 **Apologies for absence** – S Smith, K Abbot
- 4 **Adoption of minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2018** - The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting were approved as a correct record and were signed by the chairman. Proposed – DE, Seconded –CM, All agreed.
- 5 **Matters Arising** - none

### 6 **Chairman's report**

*Sheila Glass*

Our new clerk, Carol Standage and minutes secretary, Mary Holdsworth took post in June and their job share is working well.

This year we also welcomed two new Councillors, Kate Abbott and Roger Greasley.

It was the centenary of the end of the First World War last year and as part of the village celebrations we published Di Barnett's well researched book commemorating the men from Ramsbury & Axford who went to the war. As a result of her painstaking research we discovered some names of men who died who were not on the memorial and they are now remembered on an additional stone in the Memorial Garden. We have also had the posts in the Memorial Garden refurbished so it remains a fitting tribute to those who died. The addition of some further names from the second world war on a separate stone is planned for next year. We were also helped by the WI to produce a poppy display and I'd like to thank Mary Holdsworth and Jilly Doore in particular for their help-600 poppies is a lot to put on stems and plant! The public loos have been refurbished but there will be further expense next year to keep the handwash system working.

We came third in the County round of the Best Kept Village competition, -better than the previous year and we've entered again this year so hopefully we may do even better-if we don't it won't be for want of trying on the part of Karen Rees

We helped to finance fibre broadband in Axford since BT declined to do so and this has now been finished. Many Axford residents now have fibre to house and can now download as many episodes of Game of Thrones as they wish.

The projects to get bins off the streets and repair some pavements have progressed well and we will continue next year.

Graeme Fearon helped us to weather GDPR which, like the millennium bug, has proved to be a bit of a damp squib for organisations like ours but we are prepared.

A review of electoral areas in Wiltshire has left us with no change-there was a suggestion that the ward should be renamed Aldbourne but this was fortunately refuted by our County Councillor James Sheppard

As usual dog mess and speeding figured in our correspondence. A resident expressed interest in forming a speedwatch group but this has not yet been activated. White and yellow lining near the school and preschool will hopefully help the parking situation. Further lining is planned in the near future.

Thanks to the help of Ramsbury Estates we finally had a good display in the Square and High Street at Christmas. They paid for the new lights on the tree and arranged and fitted the holders for the small trees. The PC paid for the battery operated lights on the small trees We intend to extend the display of small trees on the house fronts so this Christmas should be even better.

We finally got the open space payment of £4,700 for the Whittonditch houses-only four years in the trying and we also had CIL money of £1100.60 for the house by the Red Lion in Axford. This was donated to Axford Village Hall.

Financially things can only get worse but we will continue to do the best we can with the funds we have  
Thanks to all of you for your help this year

## **7 Committee Reports**

### **Planning committee report May 2018/19 Helen Lloyd**

The Planning Committee has had a busy year this year with 49 Planning Applications to be considered received across the two villages. These have ranged from requests to reduce tree height to new builds within the village boundary, some of which have been contentious and I am aware that not everyone has been satisfied with the final decision made by County. As a Committee, we have tried to provide County with the local insight they may lack, by not being “on the ground” or aware of other factors which we feel strongly about in our communities. We welcomed a new member to the Committee this year, when Kate joined us and her knowledge and expertise is much appreciated, adding to the long standing local experience of Sheila, Di, Dee, George and Christopher.

All in all being a member of the Planning Committee has not been an easy task this year, with several applications requiring site visits and with different views from neighbours and others affected by the applicants proposals to be balanced, but the challenges have been met by the Committee members with impartiality and a sense of fairness for all, and for this I thank them. The Committee does try to look at all arguments dispassionately and to hold the overall good of the villages of Ramsbury and Axford at the heart of its decision making process.

To pick out just a couple of examples the Red Lion at Axford site has caused us angst, firstly with the new build house which went to appeal after the PC objected to changes but was not upheld, and then with the change of ownership of the pub itself; also worthy of note has been the proposal to change the boundary in the Newtown Road which is still being debated at County level and the outcome of which may well change some of the stances made by the Committee in the past year should this go ahead.

I would also like to thank Carol for bearing with me as my working days have swapped around through the year, making the receipt of the monthly report slightly erratic and especial thanks to Di for her insight into the Axford applications, as well as Sheila for her ongoing support.

**2018/2019 Financial Year**  
**FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR 2018/2019:**

	Apr '18 - Mar 19	Budget	£ Over Budget	% of Budget
<b>Income</b>				
Annual Precept & top-up grant	51,015.00	51,015.00	0.00	100.0%
Bank Interest	48.54	75.00	-26.46	64.72%
Carried forward ( box 8)	0.00	46,150.00	-46,150.00	0.0%
Grants, prizes, donations to PC	60.00			
Other Income	15,429.94			
Ring-fenced income	600.00	600.00	0.00	100.0%
Sales & Services	815.00	1,800.00	-985.00	45.28%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>67,968.48</b>	<b>99,640.00</b>	<b>-31,671.52</b>	<b>68.21%</b>
<b>Expense</b>				
Capital Projects	4,101.60	40,393.00	-36,291.40	10.15%
Committee Expenditure	924.60	2,735.00	-1,810.40	33.81%
Events Expenses	2,754.99	2,345.00	409.99	117.48%
General Administration	7,353.22	8,950.00	-1,596.78	82.16%
Grants to village organisations	6,350.00	5,250.00	1,100.00	120.95%
Insurance, legal & prof fees	2,719.47	4,200.00	-1,480.53	64.75%
Public Conveniences	4,269.91	4,300.00	-30.09	99.3%
Ring-Fenced Funds	5,544.00	1,145.00	4,399.00	484.19%
Upkeep of village & facilities	3,859.50	5,760.00	-1,900.50	67.01%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>37,877.29</b>	<b>75,078.00</b>	<b>-37,200.71</b>	<b>50.45%</b>
<b>Profit for the Year</b>	<b>30,091.19</b>	<b>24,562.00</b>	<b>5,529.19</b>	<b>122.51%</b>

This financial year we applied for and were granted a precept of £51,015.00. In addition to this we received a healthy income from a kind donation from the British Legion (£3000) to use for relevant village activities and spend, payments from recent housing developments (Whittonditch and the house next to the Red Lion in Axford; £5801.60) plus income from hire of the projector and sound system to the Roxy and a small amount of bank interest. The additional income has been allocated or spent against; WWI commemoration activities & spend (British Legion donation), a donation to Axford Village Hall (Red Lion House donation) and payment for the Adult Fitness Trail (Whittonditch development).

Our expense this FY was lower than anticipated due to delays to our pavement repair program. The second of which (Crowood Lane) was completed in April 2019 and will form part of the accounts for FY 19/20. Our pavement repair program is a project that we had anticipated would not be funded by Wiltshire Council and we therefore requested precept money (into our village maintenance fund) to enable this. We have also continued to fund the requests from village organisations against our S137 allowance, critical to maintaining some key support networks within the village as well as many of our leisure clubs & amenities. We also used S137 funding to contribute to the Axford Broadband scheme and will make a final payment into this scheme in FY 19/20.

One notable change in FY 18/19 was an agreement with The Ramsbury Roxy that they would become an independent organisation. The Roxy will not feature in PC finances in 19/20 and beyond. We continue to hold a contingency fund of ~£15,000 and have allocated further funding to the village maintenance fund to cover shortfall of funding from Wiltshire Council against items such as pavement repairs and signage work. We will also continue to support funding for the Ramsbury Flyer as a key village amenity. With decreased funding for parishes from Wiltshire council, this fund is becoming increasingly important to us and we anticipate continuing to use this in FY19/20 for some critical projects in the village.

Looking forwards, we have agreed a budget for the next financial year, and applied for our Precept from Wiltshire Council. The precept this year is increased vs. last year which has allowed us to allocate further funds against village maintenance. Given the continued economic pressures on local authorities and discussion re. capping precept requests (albeit currently focusing on higher monetary requests than ours), we continue to be concerned that funding for Parish Councils will decrease over the coming years.

## **Rights of Way Subcommittee Report 2019      Graeme Fearon**

This year we've received several reports of obstructions of and encroachments onto public rights of way which we have been able to investigate and deal with. We have also improved waymarking on certain routes. We're grateful to all members of the public who have contacted us concerning these issues - please keep these coming so that we can continue to take appropriate action.

We have been in contact with relevant landowners to discuss the possibility of improving access to the old airfield (the former RAF Ramsbury) to provide a convenient circular route taking in the new memorial stone and wood. However, conservation concerns surrounding ground nesting birds have meant these have drawn a blank, certainly as regards Ramsbury & Axford – there's still the possibility of other options on the Froxfield side of the boundary.

The Boundary Walk took place last week with a twist to celebrate its 50th anniversary in its modern format. Rather than the usual "widdershins" route, we walked clockwise from Littlecote and deviated slightly from the boundary at the end to finish back in Ramsbury at the Crown & Anchor. The weather was perfect and the change of direction and timings meant we got to see the route in (literally) a new light e.g. Hen's Wood bluebells in morning sunshine, rather than towards teatime. We also relocated the Harker Hill challenge to a suitable slope next to Pentico Wood. Thanks to everyone who helped out on the day.

## **Play Area Committee report 2019      Simon Smith**

This year has been a little quieter than the last two years, the work has been completed on the Axford and Whittonditch sites.

During this year we have addressed an issue raised by residents in the Knowledge Crescent play area of bird droppings fouling the swings. Ron Young kindly sourced some plastic bird spikes following recommendations from ROSPA which we duly fitted in July of last year. After initial concerns raised by some residents that children may harm themselves on the spikes the issue seems to have been resolved. Axford play area requires its perimeter fence repairing as several the supporting posts are rotten, work on this is due to commence soon.

## **Emergency Report 2019**

**Diann Barnett**

Luckily another year has passed where we have not been in a position to need to use our incredibly well planned Emergency protocol. S glass has been very busy updating the Emergency plan with contacts and street wardens. If anyone is interested there are a few areas that still need cover.

We have considerable salt and gel – sac supplies for ice, snow and flood as and when they may be needed.

## **Ramsbury Nature Reserve report 2019**

**Chris Morgan**

The Ramsbury Meadow Nature Reserve is situated in the water meadow located between the houses on the south side of the High Street and the River Kennet. The entrance is adjacent to the Fire Station and clearly signed. It has several mowed paths and a boardwalk which gives easy all year round access to the river and a pond. The entrance gate and board walk are suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Since my last report, the Reserve footpaths have been strimmed fortnightly, during the period May to October, 2018 by a team of volunteers. In addition tree pruning and logging was carried out by a specialist team from the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank David Sweett, John Herbertson, Alan Smith and Steve Standage for giving their time to carry out the maintenance of the Reserve. Steve Standage very kindly agreed to become a volunteer in 2018 and brings valuable land management skills to our team. As always, I would also like to thank John & Sue Wilkins who kindly provide a home for the cutting machines.

If you have never visited our Nature Reserve, the next time you pass by the Fire Station, please take a few moments to look around and enjoy the experience.

We are always looking for new volunteers to maintain the Reserve, please contact Chris Morgan (Tel. 520501) if you can spare about 10 hours between May and October this year.

## **8 Axford Ward Report 2019**

*Diann Barnett*

Normally I would say, nothing much has happened in Axford, but this last year has seen some long term changes.

Despite extensive objections to the building of a house in the Beer Garden of the Red Lion, Wiltshire Council approved it, but they did object and refuse the enlargement of said house when the builders went beyond the original plans. Sadly, an appeal to the planning inspectorate then overrode all the objections and allowed it. It now stands empty and still for sale.

The Red Lion has recently been sold and while hope still exists, it's future is still uncertain.

Fibre broadband is finally finished, with grateful thanks to Nick Swan and Ashley de Safrin for carrying out all the preparation work, while Mary Askew and Ramsbury Estates kindly worked with the BT engineers in the logistics and channelling.

The Village Hall continues to improve, with thanks to the grant from the Parish Council the roof repairs have been carried out and new guttering all round has significantly improved the interior damp problems we had been having. It is now being used by several groups for a variety of purposes including the Ramsbury Band for practice. We hope to get community wifi this year and a new website.

The playground continues to be well used and enjoyed by all.

## **9 County Councillor's Report**

*Cllr Sheppard*

Cllr J Sheppard was not present at the meeting and had not sent a report.

## **10 Reports received from Village Clubs and Organisations**

Village organisations were not asked for reports. Instead organisations due to receive a grant were asked to include brief contact details for their organisation and where it exists, a link to their own website

## **11 Public Question Time**

There were no questions from the public. There being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting at 8.05pm