



Atworth Parish Council

Minutes of a CONFERENCE Meeting of Atworth Parish Council held on 17th June 2020

www.atworth.org

Invited:

Cllrs. Effie Gale-Sides (EGS) (Chairman), Richard Clark (RC) (vice-chair) and Cllrs. Heather Chaplin (HC), Andrew Gooding (AG), K. Hartley (KH)

Clerk: Philip McMullen

Ref. Agenda items

154/20 1. **Introduction**

155/20 2. **Notes from previous meeting**

EGS proposed that the notes of the May meeting be accepted as a true record.

156/20 3. **Receive Reports from External Agencies**

3.1 **Police Report**

The Clerk reported that there were no community impactful crimes in the Atworth Parish Council area reported in the May/June Melksham Area Community Policing Team Area Briefing, copies of which were available on request.

3.2 **Report from Wiltshire Councillor**

Cllr Phil Alford reported via email:

Wiltshire Councillor Report May 2020 – Phil Alford

This has been an extraordinary year for everyone and to have seen it as a Wiltshire Councillor has been a privilege; it has afforded me a clear view of the best that our community has to offer despite the tragic circumstances.

The Covid-19 response has inevitably consumed a vast amount of the Council's time since March and in Melksham we have been held up as an exemplar of best practice in terms of how a community can respond. Of course, that local response has been heavily driven by my colleague Cllr Jon Hubbard but I have been able to play my part too. When the lockdown first began it was clear that local community groups communicating through social media were keen to contribute to finding a way through and many of us, myself included were part of this fragmented response. Working closely with us on the Area Board Cllr Hubbard was able to bring together the Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council so that the three organisations had a clear plan with a focus on delivering a support service across the two and the other parishes across the Melksham Community Area. With a single point of contact, local knowledge and the staff the response team have been able to support hundreds of people and bring together hundreds of volunteers. For my part I kept the website updated with information on Shop and Food services and carried out weekly shopping trips for vulnerable members of the community through the project. As an Area Board most of us met weekly to agree funding to the response where needed, feed back to the police challenges and address local issues as they arose. This was vital to keeping the response effective.

The Wiltshire Council response involved reallocating staff to ensure that key services were maintained throughout the county. They worked to ensure the vulnerable received prescriptions, had food and accommodation and that mental health services, public health and the NHS were all equipped to deal with the new and intensified challenges. The authority has also been responsible for assessing applications and distributing tens of millions in support to local businesses, ensuring schools and nurseries had the money and equipment to support key workers and continued with its extensive highway improvements program in addition to other services.

As a member I have received weekly updates on that response from the executive and have fed back where appropriate in terms of ensuring our local businesses were receiving payments and support and our vulnerable looked after.

Prior to the pandemic response I had completed chairing a task group looking into the management and oversight of our recently altered Children's and Adolescents mental health Services. The recommendations of which have been passed back to the executive and are awaiting implementation.

I have also been asked to join the executive as a portfolio holder and I have taken on the newly created portfolio for whole life pathways. The precise role is yet to be fully fleshed out due to the pandemic response, but it will be working across both Adult and Children's services to identify and improve the transitions between the two.

At a local level I have been working with residents at George Ward Gardens and Melksham East to put together residents' associations. The work has been temporarily halted but the intention is having associations at each location that can then better hold the maintenance companies to account. Currently tensions occasionally flare as residents air their frustrations with the management companies due to the increasing cost of delivery and the perceived duplication of service with the Town and Wiltshire Council. Unfortunately, this has been exacerbated by some ill-informed individuals, but I am hopeful that once the associations are up and running tensions will ease as communication and relationships improve.

At the Area Board the Young people's intervention project that I set up has been very successful and delivered positive outcomes for the families and young people involved. We are currently in the process of trying to engage the school to support the cost of delivery of this program due to its emphasis on the Oak school. The longevity of the project could be affected by any future school support, but we are keen to maintain the service.

I have also proposed and secured funding to deliver an outreach project to have youth workers working in Melksham and Melksham Without to engage and support young people.

In addition, I have won support for a public open spaces project and secured £10,000 to be ringfenced and allocate to public open space improvements. This funding is now available to applicants and its key objective are to enhance the environment, support public engagement and 'ownership' of their communities, improve physical and mental health and improve inter-generational relationships through supporting community groups. The intention is also to purchase and store expensive machinery for shared use around the community area.

Moving forward we have a number of important issues that will need to be addressed this side of the election. We have the consultation on Wick solar farm, squeezed budgets due to the councils Covid-19 response and an expected reduction in business rate and council tax receipts and a number of planning issues. From my perspective the main opportunities for me to have an impact will be to put forward policies to improve service transition for children and adults, to influence further infrastructure investment for highways improvements and working to inform future strategic planning. All of this will be against a backdrop of a council that will need to turbocharge economic growth to overcome the immediate and medium-term economic challenges facing us, drive forward opportunity and manage a possible second wave of Covid-19.

157/20 **4. Planning Applications**

None received.

Plans are available to view on Wiltshire Council's website at <http://planning.wiltshire.gov.uk/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/ApplicationSearch.aspx>

158/20 **5. Finance**

5.1 Approval of Payment Schedule and authorisation of cheques

Approvals for the meeting taking place in			June 2020				
Date	Payee Name	DD/Chq No	Net £	VAT £	Gross £	Payment Details	Approved By
	GG-S via Tradesignz	DD	20.05	-	20.05	Aluminium sign fixings	
	Information Commissioners Office	DD	35.00	-	35.00	GDPR compliance	
	IdVerde	DD	310.28	62.06	372.34	Grounds Maintenance Works June	
	Furnitubes Benches	DD	1,062.00	212.40	1,274.40	2 x Southgate benches	
	Philip McMullen	DD	439.74	-	439.74	Salary and Office Allowance	
	HMRC	DD	109.93	-	109.93	HMRC income tax for wages	

RC proposed, AG seconded and the approvals were accepted as a true record.

5.3 Approval to accept Budget Monitoring Statement to end of April 2020

Atworth Parish Budget Monitoring 2020/21
June 2020

	Annual Budget	Spend to date	Balance Remaining	CODE
Expenditure	£	£	£	
CLERKS SALARY	5,600	1,091	4,509	4000
CLERK'S OFFICE EXPENSES	560	109	451	4005
WI VILLAGE CLEAN & TIDY	580	-	580	4010
GENERAL ADMIN	500	43	457	4020
INSURANCE	4,300	3,257	1,043	4030
WALC	500	408	92	4050
SLCC	50	-	50	4052
BENCHES	3,800	-	3,800	4065
SID DEPLOYMENT	400	-	400	4070
VILLAGE MAINTENANCE	1,700	-	1,700	4100
AUDIT FEES	300	-	300	4157
VILLAGE HALL RATES	135	157	(22)	4200
REC RATES	170	174	(4)	4201
VILLAGE HALL	6,000	-	6,000	4203
WATER RATES	145	146	(1)	4205
GRASS CUTTING	4,500	621	3,879	4215
ARMISTICE WREATH (S.137*)	20	-	20	4250
YOUTH CLUB RENT	30	-	30	4261
PRESENTATIONS	100	-	100	4265
HIGHWAYS WORK	5,000	-	5,000	4300
COMMUNITY RESILIENCE EQUIPMENT	450	-	450	4320
INFORMATION BOARDS	3,000	-	3,000	4331
TREE PLANTING AND WILDINGS	2,000	-	2,000	4332
NOTICE BOARDS	0	-	0	4335
VILLAGE ENHANCEMENTS	1,250	126	1,124	4336
CLOCK TOWER	0	-	0	4337
VAT ON PAYMENTS	0	231	(231)	515
HMRC	-	-	0	120
Total Expenditure	41,090	6,363	34,727	
Income	£	£	£	
PRECEPT	28,521	14,164	14,261	1176
B/F from existing balances			-	1180
HMRC			0	120
Interest			-	1190
VAT refund			0	115
Total Income	28,521	14,164	14,261	
Net Expenditure	-	(7,801)	20,466	
Balance Brought Forward	24,378			
Current Balance (Cashbook)	32,179			
Current Balance (Deposit A/c)	-			
-Current Balance (Bank)	32,180			
=Unpresented cheques	£1			

[Link to Budget Monitor](#)

Acceptance of the Budget Monitoring Statement was Proposed by AG and seconded by RC and approved by consent.

159/20 **6. Clerk's report**

6.1 Covid-19 update

The Clerk explained that week ending 30th May the UK government announced the easing of lockdown restrictions with schools opening to some students on 1st June and open-air markets

and car showrooms given permission to resume trading on the same day. The government also announced that, contingent on supporting data, non-essential shops will re-open on 15th June.

For the time being however it's clear that the Parish Council should only meet virtually.

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/.../392/.../uksiem_20200392_en.pdf

It is now a crime to stay at someone else's home overnight, or to hold gatherings of two or more people indoors or more than six people outdoors, under new legislation. Police can fine rule-breakers and arrest them if they do not co-operate. The laws came into force to coincide with lockdown restrictions being eased. Gatherings of as many as six people from different households can now take place outdoors - such as in parks or gardens - in England, so long as people remain 2m apart.

Any decision to implement face to face meetings or buildings re-opening should, regardless of government advice, be preceded by a full consideration of a Risk Assessment specific for that building. It needs to take account of who is in high risk groups, the number of people who may be in attendance, the size of the room, the length of the meeting, the ventilation system/number of volume air changes per hour, the level of community transmission at the time, the availability of PPE and hand sanitisation, size and use of communal areas (e.g. toilets/kitchen/break room) by multiple people in a day, the protocols to be adopted for decontamination including frequency in communal areas etc.

Social distancing is 2m FOR 15 MINUTES ONLY if indoors. After that (especially in smaller rooms with poor ventilation) you start breathing in each other's air and infecting yourselves unless you all wear that most elusive of creatures, the FFP3 mask. Over a period of 1-2hrs you are breathing in potentially a lot of COVID, increasing your viral load exposure and running an increased risk of developing severe symptoms. Surgical masks will help to reduce the viral load being breathed out but they will not protect the wearer from breathing virus in.

There is still a high level of transmission in the UK. 2000 new cases a day and between 200-400 deaths per day. Unless and until appropriate PPE becomes available or the daily figures reduce substantially, I will remain working from home, and there will be no face to face Council meetings.

6.2 End of Year audit. The Clerk reported the External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn, had been in contact to explain that the completed AGAR (annual accounting return) and supporting documents must be with them by Friday 31st July 2020 latest.

The Internal Audit Report had now been completed and signed off by the internal auditor.

[Link to internal audit report](#)

[The Annual Return](#)

[The Accounting Statement](#)

[The Annual Governance Statement](#)

[The Notice of the Exercising of Public Rights](#)

6.2.1 The accounting statement was considered by councillors. RC proposed, AG seconded, all those present were in favour and the paperwork was passed to EGS for signature as Chair of the Council.

6.2.2 The Annual Governance Statement was considered by councillors. RC proposed, AG seconded, all those present were in favour and the paperwork was passed to EGS for signature as Chair of the Council.

6.2.3 The Annual Return (amended 16/06 and revision linked above) was considered by councillors. RC proposed, AG seconded, all those present were in favour and the paperwork was passed to EGS for signature as Chair of the Council.

6.2.4 The Clerk explained that the Period of Exercise of Public Rights, during which parishioners are entitled to view the accounts by appointment, had been set between 15th June 2020 and 24th July 2020.

6.3 Casual Vacancy

The Clerk reported that he had written to Wiltshire Council notifying them of the resignation of Cllr. Snowball at the May meeting and seeking advice regarding when an announcement of the vacancy should be made.

We currently have four vacancies on the Parish Council. Councillors to note that there are full elections taking place in May 2021.

[Rules governing Casual Vacancies](#)

The Notice of Election has now been received, and advertised on noticeboards and the website. The closing date for parishioners to call an election is 25th June. After that time, the Parish Council will be able to co-opt at such time as Covid-19 restrictions are fully lifted and they are able to meet in person once again.

160/20 7. Agenda items

7.1 Flags. EGS explained that the new flags had now been received, but as two people are needed to raise them, social distancing prevents progress. The flag at Shell Court had a broken lanyard. It will need a team to lower the flag pole to install the rope, when social distancing is no longer an issue.

7.2 New bin at junction of Bath Road and Purlpit. EGS explained that the Clerk had raised an issue with the local authority, and the current one now appears to have been repaired.

7.3 Bath Road eastern bus shelter ivy cut-back, roof repairs and new window. The Clerk reported that a letter was posted to residents on 4th May asking them to cut back branches. EGS explained that there had been no progress to date.

7.4 Benches and noticeboard. EGS explained that there are now four benches and a noticeboard, all ready to be erected. As storage is proving difficult, perhaps the Clerk can press the contractor to do this as quickly as possible as soon as contractors are able to work again.

Quote received to remove and replace the benches at the Clocktower for £100 each and the notice boards will be £90 each.

7.5 Annual Parish Assembly. The Clerk reported that this had been postponed until the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions in line with Government advice.

7.6 Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. In line with advice from the National Association of Local Councils this has been deferred until May 2021.

7.7 Stone repairs to clock tower. The Clerk confirmed that the Stonemason had confirmed on 18th May that the work was now complete. The work, which was free of charge, had been inspected and was fully satisfactory. EGS asked that the Clerk write and expressed the thanks of the Council.

161/20 **8. Any Other Business**

8.1 Shield Wiltshire – the Clerk noted that the Shield Wiltshire initiative highlighted in the May meeting notes had now wound down its operations.

8.2 A meeting took place with APC and a resident of Atworth Court concerning heavy lorries turning down Studley Farm Lane. There was also an issue with parking in this area. With many returning to work as normal in WC, there is a need to progress our yellow line road markings to ensure there is no drift on this project.

8.3 Parish Clerk will be endeavouring to find someone to plant our trees in the Autumn.

8.4 The verges at the eastern side of Atworth are extremely overgrown and the drainage ditch is no longer visible again. Action on Parish Clerk to contact Idverde for a date when the next mow/strim will be done.

162/20 **9. Date of the Next Meeting of Atworth Parish Council**

There will be a further virtual meeting on 15th July. The Clerk will continue to maintain a documentary record of actions.

Signed.....

Date