

## **MINUTES OF MEETING OF AVENING PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY, 20<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2008 AT 7.30PM**

The following Councillors were in attendance: Cllr J Parsons (Chairman), Cllr T Slater, Cllr M Williamson, Cllr Mrs A Beszant, Cllr J Catterall

Also in attendance: Deborah Cook (Clerk), PCSOs Sue Fellows and Paul Hancock

The meeting started at 7.40pm

**109/07 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – none**

**110/07 ATTENDANCE BY PCSO SUE FELLOWS AND PCSO PAUL HANCOCK**

PCSO Sue Fellows reported that February's crime figures were 2 of violent offences, 2 burglaries and 4 criminal damage. They were pleased to report that there had been an arrest and conviction relating to the criminal damage at the playing fields in February.

The police also suggested that a public announcement be made reminding people that there is no permission to hold parties at the playing field.

Councillors reported that the feeling in the village was that the public kept reporting matters as asked, but that nothing was being done in terms of feedback/extra policing. The police advised that there were now enough incidents to allocate resources. Operations had been carried out and were in the process of being carried out - but the public could not be told about them until after they had happened.

There had been a meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> March for the professional groups assisting Avening with the antisocial behaviour. PCSO Sue Fellows mentioned that the SARA plan could have been introduced more quickly and the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme could be introduced before the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2008 (the date set for the drop in morning for the public). There is enough information now to put the SARA plan into place. It would be owned by the residents and could be used as a means to have crime prevention measures put into place. Any authority who did not assist if a need was identified could be asked to publicly explain why they would not help. It has proved a useful tool in other areas.

The event on the 19<sup>th</sup> April was planned to run 10am to 1pm. The police, NHWS, Fosseyway, Rev Celia Carter, CDC and the parish council would all be in attendance to speak to members of the public.

**111/07 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Mrs G Parsons (personal), Cllr Mrs C Mitchell (personal), Cllr Mrs E Oliver (business)

**112/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr J Parsons declared an interest in all planning matters because of his position as District Councillor sitting on the planning committee at CDC.

Cllrs Mrs A Beszant and J Catterall declared a personal interest in agenda point 8 re the appointment of a Parish Council Representative for the Memorial Hall Committee.

Cllr Mrs A Beszant declared a prejudicial interest in agenda point 14.5 re the Grant application for the Memorial Hall.

**113/07 PROCEDURAL MATTERS AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Clerk reminded Councillors of the following procedural matters and rules. Rules are laid out in standing orders, code of conduct, statutes and statutory instruments.

The rules are there for Councillor's individual protection and the Council's protection as a whole. If Council deviates from what it is supposed to do there can be sanctions: either the standards board or expensive legal costs that would be borne by the tax payer.

All rules apply equally to all Councillors, staff and community groups.

### **Agenda**

The only matters that can be discussed during a council meeting are those on the agenda. If it is not on the agenda council cannot make a decision on it. The Clerk reminds Councillors of the agenda deadline each month.

Any matters that are not on the agenda should be discussed after the meeting has been formally closed and a request made to put the item on the following month's agenda.

### **Meetings**

Binding decisions of the Council are made in Council meetings only. Email voting is not binding on the Council. The only voting that can bind the Council is voting by a show of hands in a properly convened Council meeting.

Predetermination and bias – from the standards board paper –Councillors should be careful not to predetermine their views before a council meeting. Councillors should come to a meeting with an open mind, debate the matter and then make their minds up which way they will vote.

Rules of debate will apply in council meetings. These are set out in standing orders.

All Members must observe the code of conduct. If anyone has behaved improperly in a meeting the Chairman can state this and it can then be put to the vote that the person be "no longer heard" or that the person leave the meeting.

The 6 month rule – council decisions cannot be reversed within 6 months, except by special resolution or report.

### **Finance**

Council has to have a legal power to pay out money before it can agree to pay something. If there is no legal power it cannot pay.

### **Code of Conduct**

An additional copy of the 10 principles were handed to Councillors attending the meeting. These are listed in the Code of Conduct.

Councillors were reminded of personal and prejudicial interests and how they affect ability to vote in council meetings.

### **Training**

GAPTC have offered training at a cost of £150 for one Saturday afternoon. The course can be tailor made. The cost can be offset by inviting neighbouring parishes. This was a good offer as the usual cost for 8 councillors to attend a training session would be £240. Councillors would consider the offer.

Cllr J Parsons also mentioned that CDC would be holding training shortly for parish councils on the new Code of Conduct.

### **114/08 APOLOGY TO MEMBERS OF THE VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Council wish to apologise for the way Council procedures were not enforced correctly at February's meeting, in that:

- matters that were raised were not specifically on the agenda for discussion,
- the Council failed to call the meeting to order and stop the discussion and
- for the fact that offence and upset was caused as a result of this, to the then management committee members.

The Parish Council wishes to state that procedures have been reviewed and no further such outbursts will be allowed. There will be consequences for those ignoring standing orders.

This apology will be minuted for the benefit of those not attending the meeting.

### **115/07 REGISTER OF INTERESTS – additional interests at part 8**

The wording of the new Register of Interests form had not been that clear. However question 8 was to cover all outside bodies that councillors were members of, not just ones to which the Council had appointed them to. Councillors gave the Clerk details of additional interests and the Clerk would write to

CDC to update. It was up to Councillors to ensure that their Register of Interests form remained up to date.

**116/07 APPOINTMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Cllrs Mrs A Beszant and J Catterall declared that they had a personal interest.

Cllr Mrs Elizabeth Oliver was proposed as the Parish Council Representative until the next AGM of the hall management committee in June - by Cllr J Catterall and seconded by Cllr M Williamson with a unanimous vote in favour.

**117/07 DECLARATION OF CASUAL VACANCY**

It was **RESOLVED** to declare a casual vacancy following the resignation of Cllr Chris Redpath. Cotswold District Council had already been advised and they will let us know whether the vacancy can be filled by co-option or public vote.

The Council expressed their thanks to Chris Redpath for the time he had given to the Council.

**118/07 DATE FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

The Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008.

**119/07 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

It was **RESOLVED** to accept and sign the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2008.

**120/07 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

None other than those already on the agenda.

**121/07 PLANNING**

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Planning Decisions as discussed at the Planning Meeting held on Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at 7.00 pm and recorded in the Minutes.

**122/07 FINANCE**

**122.1/07 Budget Status and Balance at Bank**

The current balance at bank was £2,788.95 with £14,669.90 now in the deposit account with projected expenditure and year end balance as set out on the monthly budget sheet.

**122.2/07 Bills for Payment**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following bills for payment:

▪ Clerk's Salary less NI/Tax plus Expenses	£580.96
▪ NI/Tax on Clerk's salary	£50.49
▪ Traditional Forestry (Mrs C Long)	£118.50
▪ GAPTC membership	£204.60
▪ Farm and Garden Services	£48.00

**122.3/07 To ratify the following payment issued since the last meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** To ratify the following payment issued since the last meeting:

▪ Information Commissioner	£35.00
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**122.4/07 To consider costs to trim hedge at playing field and brambles on High Street**

An estimate of costs had not been obtained at this stage. See minute number 126.3/07.

**122.5/07 Grant Applications**

**122.5.1/07 To consider grant application in the sum of £500 from Avening Memorial Hall committee for crime prevention purposes.**

Cllr Mrs A Beszant declared a prejudicial interest as she was a trustee of the Memorial Hall. She remained in the room during the discussion, but left for the final discussion and vote.

The grant application form from the Memorial Hall Committee was read over. The aim of the project was to prevent the Hall being vandalised on a weekly basis. It was planned to make some immediate changes to the protection of the Hall (to include bars for internal windows, locks for windows, improved lighting and improved door locks). This would be until the funding and new village hall design is implemented. The scope of the project would be matched to the funds available. The Committee were not applying to any other organisation for a grant. Match funding was being provided in the form of labour being donated free of charge on the project. A copy of the most recent accounts was inspected. It was confirmed that PC Mark Gosland had provided the hall with a crime prevention report.

Cllr Mrs A Beszant left the room.

It was discussed that the money may need to be provided upfront and so imposing special terms would be appropriate. The special terms that would be appropriate were:

- that the grant money will be paid over on acceptance of the parish council's terms.
- that the Hall Committee reports back to the Council within 3 months to state how they have spent the money (providing copy receipts). The council would like to hear at the latest by the meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> June 2008.
- The council reserves the right to reclaim any balance not spent at the end of the 3 month timescale.

It was **RESOLVED** unanimously to provide a grant of £500 to Avening Memorial Hall Committee for security/crime prevention measures at the hall under the SARA plan for Avening.

Cllr Mrs A Beszant returned to the Council meeting.

**122.6/07 Staff Matters – closed session**

**122.6/07 Clerk's hours**

**It was RESOLVED to put the meeting into closed session for agenda point 14.6 relating to staff matters, under The Public (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 in accordance with legal requirements.**

**123/07 PARISH PLAN/COMMUNITY PROJECTS**

**123.1/07 Dog Waste Bins**

This matter was deferred.

**123.2/07 Avening Walks Brochure**

A draft and ideas would be ready shortly for the Clerk to take to CDC.

**123.3/07 Hedge Laying at Rectory Lane**

The team had finished the hedge. The Parish Council expressed their thanks for the time and effort put in to the project.

**123.4/07 Crime and Antisocial Behaviour:**

This was discussed at agenda point 110/07

**123.5/07 Ash Path maintenance and dedication to County Council**

The Clerk reported that Solicitors had been instructed to advise on the dedication agreement. All paperwork had been supplied to them and they had queried the ownership of one part of the pathway. The Clerk would try and locate further paperwork to answer the ownership queries.

Cllr J Parsons noted that if the dedication agreement didn't take place the council can apply to Cotswold District Council for a 5 year maintenance agreement.

**123.6/07 Traffic and Highways**

The Clerk would carry out an index map search and apply for office copy entries (if appropriate) to try and locate and owner for the area of land on High Street with the overhanging brambles. The costs of office copy entries in the sum of £16 was approved.

Farm & Garden Maintenance would be asked to provide an estimate of costs to trim the hedge at the playing fields and the brambles on high Street (in case a landowner is not located).

Overhanging leylandii at Sandford Leaze – the council's initial letter (requesting the leylandii be cut back) had not been actioned. The Clerk had spoken to the estate agents and explained that the next step was to ask the County Council to issue a notice to cut the hedge.

Overhanging bush at Tetbury Hill – this had not been cut back despite the council's letter. The clerk would contact the county council.

It was also reported by Cllr J Parsons that the traffic lights on the Avening to Nailsworth Road would be in place for another 18 months to 2 years to allow the road to settle.

**123.7/07 Village Spring Clean 29<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

The litter collecting kit was delivered by the Clerk.

**124/07 CORRESPONDENCE FOR ACTION:**

- Gloucestershire County Council telephone numbers list
- Freight Quality Partnership

The correspondence was noted.

**The Next Meeting of Avening Parish Council will be held on  
Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2008 at 7.30pm  
In Avening Memorial Hall**

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.40pm

## CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

### **122.6/07 Staff Matters – closed session**

#### **122.6/07 Clerk's hours**

The clerk reported that her hours were rising and had been since January. The Clerk was contracted for 10-14 hours per week. 14 being the maximum. At present 14 was the minimum. The clerk reported she had carried out 20 hour weeks at some points in an attempt to get the work done. However, this was still not getting through the work and she had only just put in hand tasks from January as she had had to prioritise the work as it came in. It was stressed that we were approaching financial year end and there was additional work involved there. The financial paperwork would have to take priority.

The Clerk was bringing this to the Council's attention as she could not continue to work these hours because of other commitments. (Occasional additional hours was acceptable). Also whilst the Council had money in its current budget to cover the current expense it would be a shame to be over budget on the monthly salary budget at the start of the new financial year in April.

The Clerk was not proposing that anything be done this month. It was proposed to keep matter under review as current projects may well settle down. It was just to bring matters to Council's attention in case council needed to prioritise its workplan for the new financial year, or if Council felt it was needed to carry on with this work level then to look in budget to find money to employ another member of staff (this might have the effect of saving some national insurance overall).

It was decided to keep matters under review.