

HAM PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES OF A QUARTERLY PARISH MEETING

A Quarterly meeting of Ham Parish Council took place at 7.00pm on Wednesday 22nd November, 2023 in the Village Hall.

Present: Mr C Dean (Chairman), Lady Walker (Vice-chairman), Mr M Humphreys, Mr. A Taylor, Mrs. J Lamb and 4 members of public.

1. Apologies: Mr. J Marriage

2. Minutes

The Chairman asked if the minutes from the Parish Assembly 17/05/23, Parish AGM 17/07/23 and Quarterly meeting 17/08/23, could be signed off. All councillors concurred.

3. Matters Arising: None.

4. Roads, Signs and Speed Limits

Mr. Taylor raised the issue of Acorn builders speeding through the village on multiple occasions. The Chairman agreed to email the MD, Mark Baker again to ask for his assistance. Potholes were discussed and the water sitting on the road near No.1 The Acorns. Mr. Taylor agreed to email the current owners.

The Chairman reported that he had heard that the Parish Steward had not received any recent instructions. Mr. Taylor confirmed that he liaised as required and would continue to do so.

5. Flooding

Mr. Humphreys spoke to the team working on the ditch outside of Porch Cottages. One of the core issues is a mismatch in the size of pipes running underneath. However the pipes running underneath the various sections had been cleared out with good effect. The Chairman reported that Victoria Barker was happy to continue to investigate options and the council whole heartedly supported this and thanked her for all her efforts. Mr. Taylor reported that he had arranged a meeting to discuss the issue of the runoff from the field further up the road from the Green.

6. Bridleways and Footpaths

The Chairman reported on behalf of Mr. Marriage that no issues had been reported and that despite the recent weather conditions Field Lane was still passable. The Chairman explained that Shalbourne Parish Council had been in touch to discuss similar improvements to their half of Field Lane.

The exit from the permissive footpath on to the road near the Acorns was discussed. Mr. Taylor explained that due to insurance issues it was not possible to improve this but that he would talk to Mr. Clark to see if there was a middle ground option. It was agreed by all in the room that the permissive footpath was a very welcome addition to the official footpaths and enjoyed by many in the village.

7. Finances

Mr. Buchanan-Dunlop took the council through the existing finances, explaining that our usual reserve of £3,000, was likely to be closer to £2,700 at the end of the year. In the past the Parish Council had targeted a reserve of approximately two years' worth of running costs. Recurring expenditure this year was £1,300, with exceptional expenditure of £2,000 for the new noticeboard.

Mr. Buchanan-Dunlop explained that the council had to agree and set the precept for the coming financial year, and that it was important to consider the perception of any increase. For several years the precept has stayed at £1,500 which in the recent couple of years has resulted in a percentage decrease due to inflation. In summary he explained that a moderate increase should be considered to offset the increase in costs.

The Chairman explained that one of the key bits of additional expenditure each year was the summer party. In the past the Parochial Church Council and Parish Council alternated responsibility for organising and paying for a summer party, but as the PCC has decided not to proceed with this, it was important for the PC to try and organise something each year. As a result he explained that we should try to budget something for each year and if possible, resist the need to charge for attendance.

The Chairman suggested an increase from £1,500 to £2,000 which would be sufficient to cover the increase bills and allow for a modest summer party. All councillors agreed.

The Chairman raised the topic of the appointment of a new Responsible Financial Officer which would need to be formally voted on. He explained that very kindly Mr. Chris Daking had put his name forward and asked the other councillors to consider this in advance of the next meeting where he proposed a vote would take place.

8. Christmas Lights

The Chairman reported that with the kind assistance of Mr. Bicknell he would be organising the lights in advance of the official switch on at 6pm on Friday 1st December. He also thanked the pub for kindly offering electricity and mulled wine for the event.

9. Correspondence:

The Chairman reported back on several police reports for the area and announced that as of today the AONB ("Area of Natural Beauty") had been renamed "National Landscapes."

10. Any Other Business:

The Chairman extended the councils thanks to Mr. Simmonds for all his efforts in clearing rubbish from the sides of the roads.

11. Date of next meeting

The Chairman agreed to circulate dates by email.

The meeting closed at 7:45pm.