

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting – Wednesday 8th May 2024

Present; Councillors: Cllr Jeans, Cllr Page, Cllr Bull, Cllr Bailey, Cllr Thompstone
Also present C Holmes; 3 Parishioners

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr White; Cllr Smedley; Cllr Gaskin; Cllr Lock; Cllr Tomlinson; Cllr Reader

2. Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 1st June 2022

All agreed to be a true record of the meeting.

Action: Clerk to convert to upload to website

3. Matters arising from those minutes.

Item 8 – Visit to the bend on Main Road by SCC which now has a chicane to slow traffic.

Item 8 – Repair of footpath which has now been undertaken.

4. Chairman's Report

Good evening,

I am Russell Jeans, Chairman of the Anslow Parish Council, I am delighted to welcome you all to today's meeting.

It is heartening to see such a dedicated group of individuals gathered here, each committed to serving our community and contributing to its betterment.

First and foremost, I extend my gratitude to each council member and of course our Parish Clerk, Charlotte Holmes, for their ongoing dedication and hard work. Your commitment to the welfare of our parish is truly commendable, and I am proud to serve alongside you.

I also want to extend a warm welcome to members of the public who have joined us today. Your presence here reflects your genuine interest in the affairs of our community, and your input is invaluable as we strive to make Anslow an even better place to live, work, and thrive.

The review of the period since our last Annual meeting has seen us focus on advancing the same vital projects which have frustrated, and challenged us, for the last few years, as well as ensuring the integrity of the village infrastructure, but also supporting and encouraging the celebration of key events which bring fun into the village and engender community spirit.

Traffic still proves to be our biggest challenge, and in this reporting period saw us successfully have installed, drawing from our Staffordshire County Council speed mitigation budget, 7.5 tonne weight restriction notices installed at each of the seven village points of access. This was in response to the deluge of lorries, mostly construction, that were using

the village as a pass-through route. Although not perfect, I think the impact of this has been significant.

Speed and the reckless behaviour of some drivers is still an absolute priority as we continue with Phase 2 of the traffic mitigation scheme. We saw the successful instalment of the chicane near Little Monsters which has had a marked improvement of behaviour in that area and are currently working with our partners Staffordshire County Council on designing the layout of phase 2, whether that be another chicane, speed humps or a combination of the two. Designs are still draft and are not finalised, but our overarching objective is to slow traffic into the village especially near the school. Our pace of progress is of course dictated by the authorities, their budgets, and other external matters.

As reported last time, unfortunately Hopley Road, is unable to benefit from the fund on this occasion, but the problem remains that speeds of 100 mph have been recorded here in the past. Statistically, as result of driver behaviour, it is an accident-prone road and our concerns and lobbying, alongside those of concerned parishioners, continues at a pace.

You will note that we now have two speed indication cameras in the village. The first has proved very successful in providing compelling data on traffic behaviours. The new one is now solar powered, and we are having the second one converted shortly.

Other areas of challenge that we have dealt with include the 2023 flooding that blighted the centre of the village, causing misery to several individuals because of their property being flooded. Our lobbying and partnership work with Staffordshire County council resulted in some serious and swift intervention being undertaken regarding the drains, and thankfully, we have now seen no reoccurrence in this location.

On a celebratory note, we supported the village Coronation event as well as the increasing our support around the Armistice. We are grateful to those parishioners who brought those projects forward and gave their time freely to make them happen.

We are also pleased that the allotment is now fully subscribed.

Looking -forward into 24/25, our work continues. We are totally focused on delivering our long-term project of making the village safer for parishioners, as well as maintaining its beauty, integrity, and community spirit.

5. Annual Accounts: Unaudited Balance Sheet.

Income:

Precept for 2023/2024 was £10,963.00.

The parish council have also received £621.48 in allotment rents.

No VAT refund was received in 2023/2024 as it was claimed in the previous tax year. The VAT refund will now be received in 2024/2025 for £355.79.

The total income for 2023/2024 was £11,584.48.

Expenditure.

Some great work has been done this year to ensure that we remain within our budget areas. Savings have been made across many areas.

We have seen a reduction in our training costs but with the introduction of new councillors this should rise in the coming year.

The overspends have only been seen on the clerk's salary, village maintenance and misc. due to the cost-of-living increase and the vandalism of the planters on Hopley Road.

The budget for 2024/2025 has seen the council make a 6% increase to try and correctly accommodate the rising cost of inflation.

The expenditure for the year 2023/2024 was £13,039.80. This did see the council move into the reserves, but this was only due to additional spending on the planters and therefore should remain on budget for 2024/2025.

6. Councillors' Reports: Parish Cllrs, SCC Cllr Phillip White, ESBC Cllr Russell Lock and ESBC Cllr Simon Gaskin

No report was received.

7. Parishioners' open forum

A parishioner raised the issue of the chicane that has been situated close to Little Monsters Day Nursery with concerns raised for horse riders as well as traffic speeding into the blind bend. It was expressed that the chicane means that you must move into the centre of the road and then you can't see traffic approaching.

Cllr Jeans explained that the project has been led by Staffs County Council and the parish council are not experts, Staffs County Council have subsequently conducted a type of safety audit following installation. It was explained that the pace and finance behind these projects mean the parish council have limited opportunity to ultimately influence what is done. Cllr Thompstone explained that pedestrians are protected by the footpath that should allow them to walk past the chicane safely and Cllr Page explained that the parish council must adhere to what signage Staffs County Council will allow.

Cllr Thompstone explained that there hasn't been an accident or any incidents since the chicanes have been put in whereas this has previously been the case. Cllr Jeans explained that it is believed that it has modified behaviour for speeding close to the nursery. It was explained that further signage on the lead up to the chicane has been discussed and this is something that we will be raising with Staffs County Council as part of the project.

The treasurer of the village hall explained that they have their AGM on 20th May and that they are desperately short of trustees and for a booking clerk.

The income for the hall this year was £17,294.00 with £1500 received in grants for the new fuse boards.

Income from the occasional hirers makes up 36% of income with the regular hirers making up the other 53%.

The expenditure was £26,368.00. The kitchen had a new Burco boiler and the heating was completed. All internal doors have been painted, all external gutters and down pipes painted, area of the drains relined, blinds fitted to the kitchen and small committee room. New track for stage curtains has been installed. Electrical updates included all new fuse boards, complete revamp of all emergency lightening, second fire alarm installed. Anslow Village Hall has now been registered as a charitable organisation.

Hall now has a modern feel about it; however, repairs to the suspended ceiling were required January, which has shown it needs replacing. This is a large project of over £17,000. So far grants of £4000 from Burton consolidated charity have been obtained, with further grant applications to Biffa, Awards for All in place and possibly the Borough Council in May. Latest problem would appear to be damp in the kitchen, caused by failure of the mortar.

They were shielded from the huge rise in energy costs by the fixed agreement with EDF, this ran out in September and went from £161 to £369 a month. The agreed increase in the hirers fees again, should help with running costs but the hall does seem to require constant repairs and updates.

Meeting closed at 19.03pm.

The next Parish Council Meeting is the Annual Meeting of the parish council and is to be held directly after this meeting.

Parish Council Information can be found on the internet at –
www.anslowparishcouncil.org.uk

Signed by the Chairman of the Parish Council

Name:

Date: