

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
CARDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON
Tuesday 1st May 2018 at 8pm**

Present: C’Ilr C Tonks (Chairman); C’Ilr T Barker (Vice Chairman); C’Ilr A Seabury; C’Ilr R Davies; C’Ilr S Pennington; C’Ilr V Rogers; C’Ilr J Norris; C’Ilr Maydew, C’Ilr McMillan

Members of the public present: No members of the public were present

1. Public Session. Limited to 15 minutes

No comments as no members of public present at the meeting.

Acceptance of Apologies

Shropshire C’Ilr Dan Morris who had provided a report for Item 12.

2. Election of Chairman

The Clerk apologised that she had not circulated the Agenda for the Annual Meeting. This will now be held at 7.30pm prior to the Parish Council meeting on 3rd July.

The Chairman had prepared his annual Report which he read out to the meeting. See Appendix A.

Following The Chairman’s report the Clerk explained that Councillors could not vote for dissolution of the Parish Council. This could only be done through a Governance Review which is a long process. Community Councils only exist in Wales. Parish Meetings would still be covered by Data Protection.

The Clerk then called for nominations for Chairman to serve until the Annual General Meeting in May 2019.

No nominations were received. C’Ilr Tonks agreed to act as Chairman for this meeting and the election of Chairman would be placed on the Agenda for the July meeting.

Election of Vice Chairman

It was agreed that this would be deferred until the July meeting.

Election of Footpath Warden

A member of the public had indicated that he may be willing to serve as Footpath Warden for the Parish. The Chairman agreed to speak to him and if he was willing to take on this role the Clerk would notify Shropshire Council.

Election of Councillors to form Planning Sub Committee

It was agreed that C’Ilr Seabury, C’Ilr Norris, C’Ilr Tonks and C’Ilr Rogers would be given delegated powers to carry out site visits and comment on planning applications between meetings.

Election of Councillor with responsibility for Churchyard.

It was agreed that C’Ilr Norris would continue as the Councillors with responsibility for the Churchyard.

Election of Representative to attend Shropshire Council Emergency Planning Meetings.

It was agreed that C’Ilr Maydew would continue as the representative to attend Shropshire Council Emergency

Election of Parish Council representative on Local Joint Committee

It was agreed that C’Ilr Pennington would act as the Parish Council representative on the Local Joint Committee

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6th March 2018

It was proposed by C’Ilr Barker, seconded by C’Ilr Pennington and unanimously agreed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th March provided a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5. Phone Kiosk update

C’llr McMillan had provided details of literature to be displayed in the box. C’llr Rogers and a member of the Public had attempted to clean the phone box. However, C’llr Rogers told the meeting that the box needed preparation and repainting before anything further could be done. Two members of the public had expressed their willingness to paint the box. It was agreed that an approach would be made to see if they were willing to carry out this work and C’llr McMillan and C’llr Rogers would liaise with the Chairman. Progress would be reported back to the July meeting.

6. Churchyard – Update

(a) Church Wall repairs

C’llr Norris told the meeting that this work would now be completed in the summer. C’llr Norris also told the meeting that the two free Cherry trees were growing and starting to flower and would be a welcome feature in the Churchyard. C’llr Norris also told the meeting that Mr D Hall had agreed to cut the grass again this year.

(b) Plan of churchyard

The Church have agreed to supply a plan of the burial ground owned by the Parish Council which will indicate the individual burial plots.

7. Shropshire Council Local Joint Committee

A meeting had taken place at Acton Scott and the main topic discussed was GDPR. The date has yet to be arranged for the next Local Joint Committee Meeting.

8. Membership of SALC

The Clerk asked Councillors to consider joining SALC as they have provided training and a great deal of help to ensure that member Parish Councils are working towards being GDPR Compliant and are available to give help and assistance. This was discussed and it was proposed by C’llr Norris, seconded by C’llr Seabury that Cardington Parish Council join SALC. A vote was taken 6 Councillors voted in favour and 3 Councillors voted against. The proposal was therefore carried.

9. Planning:

a. Decisions on previously discussed applications:

- 17/05575/FUL Southmere, Cardington Erection of stable building and installation of ménage – Parish Council had no objection. This application was refused on 22.3.18
- 18/00505/TCA St James Cottage, Brook House junction Cardington to Rose Cottage junction – reduce by 25% 1 No Walnut tree within conservation area – forwarded to all Councillors 3.2.18 – PC had No objection. Consent given 13.3.18
- 18/00275/FUL Barn at Grove Farm, Cardington – erection of an extension to barn conversion – forwarded to all Councillors 1.2.18 – PC had no objection. Granted 27.3.18

b. considered between meetings using delegated powers:

- 18/00970/LBC Manor Farm, Cardington – installation of an external black flue pipe affecting a grade II listed building. This was discussed at the March meeting when it was unanimously agreed that the Parish Council had no objection to this application. Consent given 16.4.18
- 18/01240/FUL 2 Cardington – erection of single storey rear extension and detached workshop/store. Forwarded to all Councillors. Site visit held. Comments given. PC did not object but made observations that this may be overpowering on this site. Shown as awaiting a decision.

c. Any other planning matters including any new planning applications received just before the meeting:

No other applications have been received.

10. Finance:

(a) Invoices to pay:

- Clerk salary –April £206.33 less £41.20 tax plus £9.90 postage paid. Cheque No. 00258 was prepared in the sum of £175.03
- HMRC Tax due on Clerk’s salary. £41.20 Paid cheque 100259
- SALC Annual Membership Fee £193.27. paid cheque 100260
- L Pardoe, Internal Audit Fee £50. Paid cheque 100261

It was proposed by C’lr Barker, seconded by C’lr Rogers and unanimously agreed that the above accounts be paid.

It was agreed that C’lr Norris would be added as a signatory to the Parish Council Bank Account. The Clerk would collect the necessary forms and C’lr Norris agreed to complete and take these to Barclays Bank in Church Stretton.

(b) Approve 2017/18 Accounts

The Clerk presented the 2017/18 Accounts. It was proposed by C’lr Seabury, seconded by C’lr Barker and unanimously agreed that the 2017/18 Accounts were a true and accurate record of the Parish Council’s financial transactions for the year 2017/18.

The Chairman then signed the Annual Governance Statement for the External Auditor and the Bank Statement showing the year-end balance.

(c) Balance held at Bank

The balance held at bank at the end of March 2018, as shown in the accounts was £14,724.85. The precept of £4,500 had now been paid into the Bank less payments agreed above resulted in a balance of £18,765.35. The Clerk told the meeting that she had completed the VAT return to recover £108.26 VAT paid in 2017/18 but this had not yet been paid.

11. Data Protection

The Clerk told the meeting that an Amendment to the Data Protection Bill was being considered. It was hoped that, if agreed, this would release Parish Councils from the burden of appointing a Data Protection Officer.

At this time it was sufficient for the Parish Council to appoint a Data compliance Officer. It was unanimously agreed that the Clerk would act as the Data Compliance Officer.

The Clerk had templates for the following Data Protection Policies as supplied by SALC:-

Personal Data management and Audit Policy April 2018

Privacy Policy

Subject Access Policy

It was agreed that the Parish Council would adopt the above three policies and the chairman signed the three policies, which would be placed on the Parish Council website

The Clerk had prepared a spreadsheet to show how the Parish Council were working towards compliance and would be continuously updated as work progressed towards compliance.

To be compliant the Clerk had to have a dedicated computer and external hard drive solely for Parish Council use and this must be password protected. £300 is available in the transparency fund and this was granted for the purchase of computer equipment and the provision of the web site. It was agreed the Clerk would obtain costs for a laptop and external hard drive and the Chairman would sign the cheque for these to be obtained.

14. Shropshire Council Report.

C’lr Dan Morris had supplied the following report, which the Chairman read out to the meeting:-

Budgetary Pressures

It is now accepted both locally and nationally that Adult Social Care and Looked After Children create major pressures on Council’s available budgets. Over 50% of Shropshire Council’s annual net budget is spent on Adult Social Care and this figure continues to rise by an average of £8m year on year. In addition to this, the increased costs (on average £4m year on year) of Looked After Children presents Shropshire Council with a major budgetary problem. This is not just an issue for Shropshire Council. Representatives from Shropshire council (and councils across the UK), along with our MPs are lobbying government to find a formula as we have for schools so that adult social care is funded on a national rather than local basis.

The current administration of the Council has forecast a balanced budget for the years 2018/19 and 2019/20 but to balance the budget over a five-year term, 2022/23 there is a current budget deficit of £43m.

The Administration of the Council has altered its focus to concentrate on increasing income both within

commercial and trading services, but it is inevitable that there will need to be further cuts.

Adult Social Care

Adult Social Care (ASC) has had a year of challenges and changes. In June we welcomed a sector led improvement peer challenge. The Peer Review team were complimentary about the work of ASC and noted the enthusiasm of the ASC workforce and all stakeholders they engaged with. The Peer Review saw a clear commitment to making a positive difference to the lives of Shropshire residents and achievement was recognised in the Council's approach to partnership and engagement.

Adult Services net budget has increased by £5.8m from 2016/17 to 2017/18, due to the combination of a growing and ageing population, increasingly complex care needs, and increases in care costs. It is well evidenced that the demographic pressures on adult social care will increase further in the longer-term. Shropshire Council's expenditure on adult social care is forecast to increase by £7m next year, and by an average of £8.3m per year over the next 5 years.

Adult social care continues to flex and adapt to an ever-changing landscape of challenges; more people with more complex needs, care providers struggling to recruit staff in rural areas and of National Living Wages, and healthcare colleagues working to reorganise hospital-based services. There are considerable uncertainties around future funding initiatives from Government in relation to Adult Social Care and the across the wider health & social care economy. Short term funding initiatives such as the Improved Better Care Fund have brought in welcome funding and enabled a number of exciting initiatives such as 2 carers in a car, but the concern does remain that this is not long-term funding and ASC cannot rely upon it.

Local Plan Review

Shropshire is in the fortunate position of having a sound local plan and a six-year land supply. The current adopted Local Plan covers the period 2006 to 2026. Consultation took place in late 2017 on the first review of our plan covering the period 2016 – 2036 (an extra 10 years). The Planning Policy Team consulted on the Preferred Scale and Distribution of Growth as part of the ongoing Local Plan Review. Around 650 responses were received including many responses from Town and Parish Councils, local organisations, land owners and developers. The Policy Team are currently reviewing these responses and a Summary document is being prepared and will form part of a Cabinet Report for the 2nd May. This Cabinet Report will also clarify the future timetable for the Local Plan Review.

The next Key stage of the Local Plan Review is a public consultation on Preferred Site Allocations in October 2018. This will set out the proposed sites in Shrewsbury, Market Towns, Key Centres and, if necessary, Community Hubs. To inform the choice of preferred sites the Policy Team are currently preparing a number of supporting documents, including the Green Belt Review and a new Landscape Capacity Assessment. We have also started the conversations with the Town and Parish Councils where we are proposing development, and these discussions will help inform the eventual choice of preferred sites. Cardington will remain as open countryside.

Environmental Maintenance Grant

After pressure from rural councillors Cabinet have agreed to reinstate Environmental Maintenance Grants. You should soon receive a letter containing the details of the revised scheme and will be asked to comment. The scheme is limited to a maximum of £1,500 per parish and will need to be match funded 100%. For example, to receive the full grant you will have to spend £3,000 on eligible schemes within your parish. The activity eligible for funding by the Environmental Maintenance Grant will be undertaken on Shropshire Council owned land and assets only.

Kier Contract

A new partnership responsible for delivering a wide range of highways maintenance and environmental maintenance services in Shropshire began work on 1 April 2018.

The Shropshire Highways Alliance is made up of Shropshire Council, WSP – the council's engineering consultant, and Kier – the council's new highways maintenance contractor. From 1 April 2018 Kier will be responsible for highways projects and schemes, pothole repair, gritting, bridge maintenance, grass cutting, drainage, street lighting, emergency responses, vehicle maintenance and more. It was disappointing that the start of the new contract coincided with further bad weather, however Kier have already employed an additional number of work teams to reduce the backlog of work that was left by the previous contractor (who were disappointing to say the least). The new contract has also seen an additional £1.85m from national government to specifically deal with the many potholes on our roads.

Local Matters

Locally, planning issues, highway matters are still hot topics for my inbox and I am hopeful that we will be able to find resolutions to some of these matters over the coming months.

As Clive knows I'm very disappointed with the 'customer service' that the Highways department are providing. Cardington is not alone, in fact within the space of a week 3 out of my 6 Parishes expressed deep disappointment, something that I have arranged a meeting with Peter Nutting and Steve Davenport (portfolio holder for transport) about. I have facilitated a meeting for Clive with Ian Walshaw I think Friday this week. Daniel Kawczynski, Tim Barker and I had a good wander around Cardington a couple of weeks ago and met a good many people, of course Highways was the main topic! I would like to express my thanks and admiration for all that Tim Barker has done for both Shropshire Council and Cardington Parish. His standing has been a constant source of knowledge and support for me. I wish him all the best in his upcoming move away, but am glad that he will continue to visit Gods own County of Shropshire!

I've very much enjoyed working with you and I will continue to work on your behalf throughout the next year

13. Highways

(a) Maintenance scheme: update.

C'Ilr Norris told the March meeting that the planned work to improve laybys to be paid from the Highways Maintenance Grant had been discussed with Jonathon Ingolby who was reluctant to agree that the Parish Council should carry out this work. To date an order had not been placed with the contractor to carry out this work. C'Ilr Norris told the May meeting that he had still not heard from Jonathon Ingolby. It was agreed that this will be discussed during a site visit with Ian Walshaw to be held later in May.

(b) Highway Matters reported: update

The Clerk had prepared a spreadsheet showing all outstanding highway matters report.

Highways issues reported at the May meeting were added to the spreadsheet and this would be used when the Chairman and other Councillors meet Ian Walshaw from Shropshire council Highways Department later in the month.

14. Correspondence.

C'Ilr Tim Barker had e-mailed the Clerk and the Chairman to say that reluctantly he had decided to resign as a Parish Councillor as he would shortly be moving away from the village. The Clerk would notify the Elections Office at Shropshire Council to enable the process of electing a replacement Councillor to serve until the next Parish Council elections.

The Clerk told the meeting that she had stepped in as a temporary Clerk in July 2017. She asked the Parish Council if they wished to advertise a vacancy as she would like them to "test the market". The parish council agreed that they wished to appoint the Clerk on a permanent basis. The Clerk agreed to forward a copy of the model contract to the Chairman for approval.

15. Date of next scheduled meeting

Tuesday 3rd July at 8pm. This will be preceded by the Annual Meeting to commence at 7.30pm.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.25pm

CARDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2017-18

Following the election in May 2017 the PC welcomed our former SC Cllr., Tim Barker, John McMillan and Victoria Stokes as new Cllrs. and said farewell to Ippy Blenkins, Eileen Burgess and Barry Pinches who did not stand for re-election.

At our first meeting Tim Barker was elected to the Chair but later in the year stood down for personal reasons and has more recently indicated his intention to sadly leave the area and would therefore withdraw from the PC completely. Having been appointed as Deputy Chairman I found myself re-elected to the Chair for in effect a fifth year.

Tim's first task had been to receive the resignation of the Clerk but fortunately we were able to quickly find a very experienced and personable clerk, Mrs. Jennie Griffiths, as a replacement. Jennie continues in post and the PC is very grateful for her commitment, professionalism and guidance.

We have been pleased to welcome our new SC Cllr., Mr. Dan Morris, to most of our meetings and also for his support on a number of issues.

I am pleased to report that after much earlier debate and previously awarding a contract refurbishment of the worst part of the wall surrounding the churchyard was commenced in the autumn and is scheduled for completion in the summer.

The PC decided to purchase the "Red Telephone Box" for a nominal fee. It was generally thought this landmark should be preserved as a feature and could serve useful purpose as an information Centre and as a location for a book exchange. Cllr. John McMillan has prepared a fascinating and comprehensive document as a starting point.

The website (www.cardingtonparishcouncilshropshire.co.uk) was trialed and then launched and now contains all Parish Council documents which are therefore available to anyone. By agreement the website will at a date to be agreed supersede the version that David Elliott voluntarily designed many years ago and ran on behalf of the community but which uses now outdated software.

Complying with a previous commitment when felling 2 conifers, one of which had been badly damaged in a storm, the PC planted 2 ornamental cherry trees in the churchyard. It is hoped that these will enhance the appeal of the area and give much pleasure to residents and visitors.

During the year SC Cllr. confirmed that it was very unlikely that BT Open reach would bring fibre optic cable to the Parish and therefore the services of companies such as SWS and Airband would remain imperative for those wishing to access faster broadband. Despite meetings between Shropshire MP's and mobile telephony companies there is no progress on improving such communications. There may be a ray of hope in the C of E have announced a commercial

tie up whereby churches might host the much more discrete transmission equipment now available and help solve the problem of isolated rural areas.

Throughout the year the PC has studied a range of planning applications, discussed the proposals with immediate neighbours and have not found cause to object although have made comments on occasions.

We have all just endured a very long and hard winter which has propelled certain matters to unwelcome prominence. Requests to refill grit bins in Cardington and Gretton from January onwards have not met with any action by the SC. One reason given was that the teams were too busy repairing potholes but that was less than convincing as no work was undertaken in this area despite reports and complaints about the deteriorating conditions of many roads. Parts of the road between Wall and Church Stretton have clearly been “unfit for purpose” for many weeks and it is only in recent days that some yellow marker has been applied to indicate they have been officially noted. It is recognized that this issue is nationwide and that CC’s have had restrained budgets but questions must arise about those who are managing the outsourced contracts as to whether value for money is being achieved. Clearly the situation locally has become intolerable. Damage to vehicles is routine and lives especially of cyclists and motor-cyclist are being put at risk. Kier has replaced Ringway as the main contractor from April 1st and it must be hoped this new contractor will be well managed and proved effective.

From time to time Cllrs. including myself express frustration that PC’s have virtually no power and are merely consultative bodies. Even when the PC has minor resources through CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) or special grants such as Highway Maintenance there is an inordinate amount of bureaucratic legislation that has to be complied with but limited clarity as to its interpretation. A new piece of legislation (General Data Protection Regulation) is to be enacted on May 25th which is arguably a belated attempt to protect the exploitation of personal information by global sources. GDPR is also scheduled to be applied to PC’s without any regard to the limitations of their size or scale. It is believed the legislation will

- require the clerk to have a separate computer solely dedicated to her work for this PC
- Clerk and Cllrs will need to ensure all documents are kept in a locked cupboard
- a separate E address for each Cllr. will need to be purchased
- minutes will no longer be able to mention names such as an employed contractor
- a Data Controller to be appointed
- The PC Chairman will be ultimately responsible and not the employed clerk for ensuring compliance
- Joining SALC to obtain templates & support
- Companies are offering services to ensure PC compliance

Given the amount of personal data held by the PC is almost negligible and certain requirements for privacy would see antagonistic to our desire for transparency this legislation is the proverbial “Sledgehammer”. Representations are being made to bring common sense to bear as enforcing the above could prove a death knell of a large number of smaller Parish Councils. Around 75% of the

income currently raised as precept only meets the cost of administration and requirements of running a democratic PC. Full details can be found in the accounts but included are insurance, room hire for meetings, annual audit, clerks' salary, stationery, website, and elections.

Gone are the days when willing volunteers could represent their community using someone to merely publish agendas and take minutes. The PC has to comply with a growing level of legislation including H&S, Employment, Taxation, appointment and control of contractors, use of grants and indeed risk litigation which necessitates the appointment of an experienced clerk. If GDPR is applied as currently anticipated even more of our precept will have to be devoted to the cost of merely running the process rather doing anything of material benefit for the community. It could be felt that is the worthwhile price of local democracy. I however would wish to stimulate wider debate by proposing the dissolution of the PC and its replacement by a community based action group that might achieve as much in terms of representation and local improvement without enduring increasing bureaucratic burdens as if it was a National or even International company.

I would wish to conclude by thanking my fellow Cllrs and our new clerk for their support and moreover for all their efforts on behalf of the community throughout the past year.

Clive E. Tonks April 23rd 2018