



## Astley Village Parish Council

2 September 2020 at 7pm

Present

Councillor Laura Lennox (Chair) (In the Chair); Councillors Arnold Almond, Jennifer Dawson, Rod Fraser, Chris Lennox, John McAndrew Gillian Sharples and Chris Sheldon.

### **294.01 Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Ann Pryce.

### **294.02 Declarations of Interest**

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

### **294.03 Public Engagement**

At 7.01 pm it was:

RESOLVED - That Standing Order 70 be suspended, and the meeting be adjourned to allow members of the public to address the meeting.

No issues were raised.

At 7.02 pm the meeting resumed.

### **294.04 Minutes**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 1 July and extraordinary meeting held on 28 July 2020 (copies of which had been circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the deletion of "Councillor K Robinson" from those members present at the meeting on 1 July 2020.

### **294.05 Clerk report and Appointment of Parish Council Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer**

The Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) reporting upon issues since the last Parish Council Meeting.

The Parish Council also considered a report of the Chair of the Personnel Committee (copies of which had been circulated) recommending the appointment of Mr Craig Ainsworth as Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer with immediate effect.

RESOLVED – (1) That the reports be noted.

(2) That Craig Ainsworth be appointed as Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer to Astley Village Parish Council with immediate effect (2 September 2020).

(3) That in view of the work undertaken by Mr Ainsworth as Parish Clerk (designate) in ensuring a smooth handover, he be remunerated on the salary scale point agreed with him from 1 August 2020.

(3) That the thanks of the Parish Council be extended to Ms Debra Platt for her service as Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

## **294.06 Statutory Business**

### **i. Co-option to the Parish Council Vacancy**

The Parish Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) reminding members that Councillor Susan Crook had resigned as a Parish Councillor at the Parish Council Meeting on 4 March 2020. At the Parish Council Meeting on 1 July 2020, it had been reported that in accordance with the provisions of Section 87(2) of the Local Government Act, 1972, notice of the vacancy had been posted on the website and parish council notice boards and that the deadline to request an election to fill the vacancy by ten electors had passed. A notice had therefore been posted on the website and notice boards inviting expression of interest in relation to the vacancy.

In addition, following the resignation of Councillor Keith Robinson on 28 July 2020, notice of the vacancy had been placed on the website and parish council notice boards and it had been confirmed by the Returning Officer that a request for an election for the vacancy had not been received by the deadline of 19 August 2020 and therefore under the provisions of Section 87(2) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Parish Council could now fill the vacancy by co-option.

Two applications have been received and these have been circulated to Parish Councillors as confidential appendices.

## **294.07 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED – Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, Part 1 sub sections 3 and 4 the press and public are excluded from to discuss the applications received for the position of Parish Councillor.

The press and public were readmitted to the meeting

RESOLVED – (1) (Unanimously) - That Miss Gillian Sharples be co-opted on to the Council.

Councillor Miss Gillian Sharples signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

(2) That consideration of the remaining vacancy be deferred, and the second applicant be invited to attend the next meeting of the Parish Council on 4 November 2020.

Councillor Jennifer Dawson reported that she would be moving out of the Parish and therefore would unfortunately be resigning as a Parish Councillor in the near future.

(3) That Councillor Jennifer Dawson be thanked for her service as a Parish Councillor and be wished all the best for the future and the Parish Clerk be requested to advertise the vacancy in due course.

ii. Planning Issues Relevant to the Village

The Council considered the following planning application:

(a) Two storey rear extension, including partial first floor over existing ground floor accommodation with pitched roof at 11 Foxcote Astley Village Chorley PR7 1XE.

The planning application had been circulated to Councillors on 4 August 2020.

(b) Change of use from cafe (Use Class A3) to mixed cafe/public house use (Use Classes A3 and A4) (retrospective) at the Little Inn On The Park 4 Hallgate Astley Village Chorley PR7 1XA.

The Notice of the Appeal had been circulated to Councillors on 24 August 2020

It was noted that his year's Planning in Practice would focus on the recent government consultations on 'Changes to the Current Planning System' and 'The White Paper – Planning for the Future'. The sessions would provide an opportunity to look at the consultations in more detail with officers, ask any questions and provide feedback. It is important that feedback is received so any views can be incorporated into the overall consultation responses.

Councillors Arnold Almond and Chris Sheldon had indicated that they would be attending the virtual sessions via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 3 September 2020.

RESOLVED – (1) That the planning application and Notice of Appeal be noted, and no representations be made.

(2) That the Parish Clerk be requested to circulate the presentation slides from the Planning in Practice session to all Parish Councillors in due course.

## 294.08 Financial Matters

i. Financial Position

The Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) showing the financial position as at 30 June 2020 and including a list of invoices to be paid between 1 August and 31 October 2020 as follows:

Date	Payment to	Description	Payment Method	Total	Vat	Net
01/08/20	Easy Web Sites	Monthly rental	SO	24.00	4.00	20.00
01/09/20	Easy Web Sites	Monthly rental	SO	24.00	4.00	20.00
01/10/20	Easy Web Sites	Monthly rental	SO	24.00	4.00	20.00
19/08/20	Employee 1	Reimbursements	EB	115.90	14.47	101.43
19/08/20	Employee 1	Salary August 2020	EB	279.06		279.06

19/08/20	Employee 2	Salary August 2020	EB	94.47		94.47
19/08/20	Employee 4	Salary August 2020	EB	257.74		257.74
19/08/20	HMRC	Tax & NI August 2020	1576	134.20		134.20
18/09/20	Employee 1	Salary Sept 2020	EB	278.86		278.86
18/09/20	Employee 2	Salary Sept 2020	EB	94.47		94.47
18/09/20	Employee 4	Salary Sept 2020	EB	257.74		257.74
18/09/20	HMRC	Tax & NI Sept 2020	1578	134.00		134.00
16/10/20	Employee 2	Salary October 2020	EB	94.47		94.47
16/10/20	Employee 4	Salary October 2020	EB	257.47		257.47
16/10/20	HMRC	Tax October 2020	1579	64.40		64.40

The Parish Clerk was asked to clarify the expenditure of £225 shown under “Room Hire” and it was suggested that this expenditure had been incorrectly allocated and should be under “Office/Sundry”.

RESOLVED – (1) That approval be given to the payments as detailed above.

(2) That the financial position be noted, and the former Parish Clerk be requested to confirm that the expenditure shown under “Room Hire” has been correctly allocated and should not be shown under “Office/Sundry”.

### **294.09 Staffing Updates**

The Parish Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing the Parish Council with an update on staffing matters and the handover process between Parish Clerks.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the following expenditure be approved:

- Mobile Filing Trolley at a cost of up to £100 (excluding VAT).
- Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration Twelfth edition at a cost of £149.99.
- HP LaserJet Pro M479fdw Printer at a cost of £252.40 (excluding VAT).

(3) That the Mobile Filing Trolley and Laser Printer be added to the Asset Register.

(4) That the Responsible Financial Officer be requested to make an application for a business debit card as suggested in the report on the basis that the card can only be used to pay for expenditure approved by the Parish Council.

### **294.10 Financial Matters (Continued)**

#### ii. Meeting the Accessibility Requirements for Public Sector Bodies and the Use of Personal Email Addresses

The Parish Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) recommending proposals to ensure that the current Parish Council website was compliant with the new Accessibility Regulations and in view of advice issued by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) inviting the Parish Council to review whether Councillors should be provided with ‘avpc.org.uk’ email addresses.

RESOLVED – (1) That Easy Web Sites be commissioned to ensure that the current Parish Council website is compliant with the new Accessibility Regulations at a cost of £300 (excluding VAT).

(2) (5 for, 2 against, 1 abstention) - That all Parish Councillors be provided with 'avpc.org.uk' email addresses which should be used for all Parish Council business for the reasons detailed in the report and that the cost (£30 a month excluding VAT) be approved.

(3) That a review be undertaken in 12 months in relation to all Parish Councillors be provided with 'avpc.org.uk' email addresses.

iii. Changes to Budget Heading and Movements for New Projects.

RESOLVED – That the following changes to budget headings be approved, and the increases be funded from General Reserves (£1,150):

- 01-2 Office/Sundry be increased from £1,000 to £1,500.
- 01-8 IT/Websites be increased from £350 to £1,000.
- 03-1 Christmas be reduced from £2,500 to £500 and this amount be transferred to General Reserves.
- 03-3 SPID – delete the budget (£7,000) and this amount be transferred to General Reserves.

iv. Reimbursement Policy for the Clerk

RESOLVED – That the Policy be approved.

v. Internal Audit and Internal Audit Plan

RESOLVED – That the Internal Audit and Internal Audit Plan be approved.

vi. Financial Risk Assessment Review

RESOLVED – That the Parish Clerk be requested to review the Financial Risk Assessment Review including making specific reference to online banking, the new debit card, compliance with the new Website Accessibility Regulations and Parish Councillor email addresses and submit a revised version to the Parish Council meeting on 4 November 2020.

## **294.11 Village Development Plan**

The Parish Council reviewed the current two-year Village Development Plan and the following comments were made:

- The Christmas Carol Service event would need to be cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Under “New Lighting Scheme for the Christmas Tree” the new lights had now been purchased but there was a need to consider how the lights will be installed each year.
- Under the heading “Improve Village Centre & Enhance Village Green”, remove reference to “Replacement of hedge in front of shops” as this had now been achieved.
- Under “Litter Bins” replace the word “new” for “additional” and add the words “especially around the park” to the end of the sentence.
- Under “Road Safety”, the new Solar-Powered Speed Indicator Devices (SPIDs) had now been purchased but there was a need to amend the action to include the monitoring of the data.

- Discussions should take place with Chorley Borough Council in relation to enhancing the play facilities in the Parish with the possibility of the Parish Council contributing to potential improvements.
- There was an opportunity to extend the Wildflower Meadow Project introduced at 'The Farthings' to other areas of the Parish should be explored in conjunction with Chorley Borough Council.
- That the Village Development Plan should make specific reference to 'Improving Community Engagement and Raising the Profile of the Parish Council' through communications.

RESOLVED – (1) That Councillor Chris Lennox should continue to be responsible for the preparation of the Village Development Plan and be requested to review the existing plan taking into account the comments made above and recommend the allocation of appropriate budgets to each project.

(2) That the revised Village Development Plan be considered at the next meeting of the Parish Council on 4 November 2020.

## **294.12 Newsletter**

The Parish Council discussed potential articles for the winter edition of the Parish Council Newsletter and the following articles were suggested:

- Annual Report depicted by photographs – Chair.
- Councillor Resignations/Appointments – Chair/New Councillors to introduce themselves
- New Parish Clerk – Parish Clerk to introduce himself
- An explanation as to why the Christmas Carol Service had been cancelled – Chair
- Tree Planting – Chair.
- Knee Rail – Chair.
- Wildflower Meadow Project– Chair.
- 2 Year Village Development Plan– Councillor Chris Lennox.
- New Solar-Powered Speed Indicator Devices (SPIDs) – Councillor Chris Lennox.
- Update from the Friends of Astley Park – Councillor John McAndrew
- Events held in Astley Park during August 2020, including the reopening of the Coach House Gallery and the unveiling of a sculpture of Susannah Knight – Councillors Gillian Sharples/John McAndrew
- Footpaths and steps -Chair
- New shop advert – Councillor Arnold Almond.
- Update on Westway Playing Fields – Chair
- To include the Parish Map showing footpaths in the newsletter – Parish Clerk.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Parish Clerk be requested to circulate details of the suggested articles for inclusion in the Winter Newsletter by 14 September and Parish Councillors be requested to confirm that they would submit the article(s) allocated to them to the Parish Clerk by Friday 23 October 2020.

(2) That the Winter Newsletter be published at the end of November for the Parish Clerk be requested to confirm with 1<sup>st</sup> Euxton (ROF) Scout Group that the newsletter would be delivered during the first week of December.

(3) That the Parish Clerk be requested to obtain three tenders for the printing of the Newsletter.

### **294.13 Environment Reports**

The following issues were raised:

- It was confirmed that the trees recently planted appeared to have survived despite the wet weather.
- The condition of the paving in the Village Centre and at a number of bus stops was in need of attention including the removal of weeds.
- There remained ongoing issues with the barrier to the Community Centre/Astley Park car park, which was, exacerbated the parking issues associated with Oliver House School.
- It was noted that it had been difficult to walk along the footpaths from Merefield to Astley Park and from The Farthings to Tesco and that, the frequency of cutting the hedges needed to be increased.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Parish Clerk be requested to contact Chorley Borough Council regarding the condition of the paving in the Village Centre and at a number of bus stops was in need of attention including the removal of weeds.

(2) That the Parish Clerk be requested to contact Chorley Borough Council regarding the ongoing issues with the barrier to the Community Centre/Astley Park car park, which was, exacerbated the parking issues associated with Oliver House School.

### **294.14 Reports from Parish Council representatives on Other Bodies**

The following confirmed that there were no updates to report:

- Chorley Liaison – Councillor Laura Lennox.
- Neighbourhood Working Group – Councillor Rod Fraser.
- Friends of Astley Park – Councillor John McAndrew.

### **294.15 Matters for information**

No matters were raised.

### **294.16 Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Wednesday 4 November 2020.

The meeting concluded at 9.04 pm

Chair