Askerswell Parish Meeting

Thursday 4th May 2023 at 7.30p.m.

In attendance: Harry Coutts (Chair), David Altree (Dep. Chair), Peter Ballard (Clerk), John Mahoney, Tim Boden, Liz and Nigel Guard, Gill Reypert, Lara Altree, Godfrey Lancashire, Antony and Jessamy Wilsdon, Peter Gilmour, Elaine Ballard, David and Rose Wintle, Don Allcock, William Harding, Maggie and Geoff Barrett, Graham and Gillian Fowler and Michael Sinclair. Councillor Anthony Alford also attended.

Item 1/23: Chairman's opening remarks. Harry welcomed everyone to the Meeting, thanked them for their attendance, asked that everyone sign in and noted that Parish Meetings are the smallest form of local governance – and that when he was researching the powers and functions of a Meeting, much of the legal precedent comes from Askerswell itself. He noted that turnout is often very low (Chideock Parish Council election received only a 32% turnout) and that many bigger parishes get fewer attendees and praised the Askerswellian spirit. Finally, he welcomed our local councillor Tony Alford and thanked him.

Item 2/23: Apologies for absence. Mandy and Graham Hall, Mike Green, Kathy Hince, Alison Lancashire, Dinks Boden, Michael Dyson and Janet Thomasson, Gill Foot and Eileen Bryan.

Item 3/23: Minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2022. There were no comments or amendments, and the Meeting approved the minutes, which were subsequently signed by the Chairman.
Proposed by Godfrey, seconded by Tim.
12 in favour, 0 against, 7 abstentions.

Item 4/23: Matters arising not covered below: None were noted.

Item 5/23: Correspondence: Harry noted that we had received notifications of two Tree Preservation Orders for Candida Cottage and Oaklea, but no other noteworthy correspondence.

Item 6/23: Chair's update: Harry said the following "There have been a number of incidents of fly tipping and car break-ins at Eggardon Hill. I spoke with the PC for Dorset earlier. Through the Government drive we now have 174 extra Police officers in Dorset, which is now 6th safest (up from 10th) in the country. The rural crime team has also been increased and Dorset has been selected as an area to benefit from the 'instant justice' programme which will force those found to have fly-tipped, littered or vandalised property to tidy up their mess within 48 hours.
The River Asker is presently being represented by Howard at MP Clean Rivers of West Dorset action group to collate data to hold water companies to account over their environmental record. We are also undergoing trials to spot mink as well as continued 'citizen science' monitoring of water quality. Consistently ranked as some of the best water catchments in the area. Always great to see more people getting involved in the monitoring so more volunteers will be welcome."

Item 7/23: Finance Update (Clerk) Peter noted that the increase in Precept to build a reserve for the Defibrillator had been accepted and the first tranche paid. He showed the Finance report, Internal Audit report, Annual Governance statement and Accounting statement and commented that the reduced expenditure in FY22 was due to the delay in adding the current officers to the TSB account, and that this issue is expected to be

resolved soon (see AOB). Nigel suggested that the Meeting approve a resolution to allow the existing signatories sign such cheques as may be required to make the donations to the Village Hall and Church, and thus the Proposal "This Meeting hereby authorises the former signatories to sign the cheques in favour of the Church and Village Hall without further recourse to the Parish meeting, in the case that the new signatories are not authorised in a timely manner" was accepted.
Proposed by Nigel, seconded by David
18 in favour, 0 against, one abstention.
The Meeting then approved the Finance report.
Proposed John Mahoney, Seconded by Graham Fowler,
19 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

These documents will now be published as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 for a period of 14 days and will be displayed on the Village Noticeboard. The Chair also noted that that Parish residents have the legal right of access to the Parish's financial records. Requests can be made within 30 days from the Meeting until June 3rd 2023.

Peter thanked Nigel for acting as Internal Auditor and he kindly agreed to continue in this position for FY23, with the grateful thanks of the Meeting.

Item 8/22: Washingpool Fund update The Clerk noted that the balance has not changed and remains £627.94. It was noted that the Parish Meeting Executives still needed to be added to the Natwest account as signatories and John kindly agreed to assist.

Item 9/23: Budget plan for 2023/24 The Clerk noted the Plan that had been circulated and asked if there were any questions. There being none, the plan was accepted.
Proposed Gillian, Seconded by Jessamy,
19 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

Item 10/23: Summary of Planning Applications and Highways work: Harry noted that the application for one Shepherd's hut at Medway had been rejected and the renovations at Oaklea approved. He then led a discussion on a recent application for a BOAT (Byway Open to All Traffic) near the top of Eggardon. It was agreed that we should oppose the application and suggest that adoption as a Bridleway would be acceptable. (Post meeting note – this has now been actioned and our objection sent to DC)

Item 11/23: Mid-term review of Neighbourhood Plan Harry explained that advice from DC was that a formal review would require the reformation of the Forum. There being no appetite for this it was agreed that as there are still uncompleted developments permitted within the scope of the existing plan, there is no case for review and that we will ensure that we will have a replacement plan in place for 2028, once the broader National and County plans are crystallised.

Item 12/23: Local Reports and Acknowledgements (verbal) Harry welcomed Councillor Alford to address the Meeting. He commended the excellent attendance and supported our decision on the neighbourhood Plan. He also agreed with our concerns over the BOAT application and noted the problems that West Compton experienced with Trials bikers. He noted that there has been a reshuffle within the Cabinet and it works to ten Key Strategic Objectives which he briefly outlined. These can be found at https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/3284687/Dorset+Councils+Plan+2022+to+2024+v2+FINAL+VERSION+%28Dec+22%29.pdf/3879463e-6393-faa3-639c-70828eb0c4bd?t=1671006492486&download=true

Harry thanked Councillor Alford for his attendance and moved on to the local reports..

Village Hall (Geoff) Nothing much to report on the Village Hall. Just a general thank you to everyone who has supported the various events, both by helping out and by attending, and thanks to the VEG committee and Trustees for making it all possible. There is always a need for additional volunteers to be committee members or trustees, so please let Geoff know that you wish to help. Please note that the AGM is on June 21st.

Good neighbours Scheme / 4WD Drivers Godfrey advised that the Good Neighbour Scheme continues without fuss behind the scenes, quietly helping where needed.
For newcomers who may not be aware, every household has a postcard with three ‘phone numbers to ring should anyone need help - e.g. with transport to hospital or doctor’s appointments, shopping etc.
He gave thanks to Liz for all of her efforts and to all the volunteers who help from time to time.
As a Post-Covid refresher he felt it would be good to “wipe the slate clean” and for all those willing to assist out let him or Liz know .
Finally he noted the list of 4x4 drivers who are on standby in the event of snow or ice in the winter. Again, if anyone with a 4x4 vehicle not on the list would like to offer to help in emergency to contact him or Liz.

Washingpool maintenance and nature report Harry advised that Dave has repaired the mower and thanked Tim for helping out while it was inoperable. He thanked all those that assisted with mowing and hedge cutting. He noted that we had planned to line the pond but recent deluges have kept it full, so it may not be possible until the summer.

Flower Tubs Harry thanked Mandy and Graham for all their work over many years, keeping the tubs at the Village Hall and the Square so beautifully and the meeting expressed its great support and thanks as they step down from this vital role. (post meeting note – our thanks go to David and Rose who have very kindly agreed to take over care of the tubs in the Square and to Lara Altree for taking on the tubs at the Village Hall.)

Website Harry noted that the website received an average of 340 hits per month (up from 250 last year) and that it a useful source of information about events – and thanked Maggie for keeping the Village Hall calendar updated. Some areas may need attention as practise has changes since Covid and some pages may need an overhaul.

Parish Lands charities update Antony updated the Meeting and explained that the Parish Lands are two fields – the Fuel allotment and Gravel allotment, both of which are rented by Medway farm, the income from which is used to provides grants for education or support hardship in the Parish. The Trustees, Antony along with Graham Hall and Richard Hobbs have only approved one grant this year, of £100 (£50 from each fund), hence the balances now stand at: i) Askerswell Fuel Allotment: £768.39, and ii) Askerswell Gravel Allotment: £768.38. As previously advised, a Grant application form is available from Antony
(wilsdon@tiscali.co.uk); 01308 485780). Harry thanked Antony for his report and the Trustees for their efforts.

Rights of Way Antony reported that he had walked all of the paths recently and had kept them unencumbered, adding that, having been RoWLO since April 2017, he had begun the handover process with Peter and this would be completed in the next few weeks.

Village Clean-Up day Harry noted that the optimum time for this may have passed, Maggie agreed and commented that many people go for local walks “tooled up” with litter pickers and bags – which keeps everywhere generally tidy, hence a clean-up day is much easier when the verges and hedges are easier to get to. Whether one in the Autumn is required and can be reviewed then.

Marquee / Sandbags Harry reiterated that more sandbags could be obtained if needed and that we received 50 at the end of last year. He noted that the Marquee was still at the farm, is 8m x 4m and in excellent condition, is free to use by any of the villagers, £50 for others (reduced to £25 for charity events).

Item 13/23: Defibrillator update Harry enthusiastically thanked Antony and the committee for their excellent work on getting the Defibrillator installed within a year from the inception of the project. Godfrey echoed this as a triumphant achievement adding that in typical Askerswell fashion, the request for funding was exceeded within 48 hours and that the Fund now holds a substantial surplus which will go towards the cost for renewing the lease in four years’ time. He added that in due course (subject to a Transfer of Powers?) control of the Defibrillator account and all responsibility for ongoing upkeep will transfer to the Parish Meeting. It was agreed that signage in the Square and on the signpost to Medway farm would be arranged.

Item 14/23: Election of Officers. The Meeting approved Harry Coutts, David Altree and Peter Ballard remaining in their positions.
Proposed by Maggie, Seconded by Antony
19 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

Item 15/23: Any Other Business. Godfrey noted that all six Bells will be rung at 9.30 on Saturday in celebration of the Coronation. God Save the King!
Peter displayed and read out a Board Resolution required by TSB to allow the addition of signatories to the Meeting account (attached at Annexe 1) and this was approved.
Proposed by Gillian, Seconded by Nigel
19 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

Item 16/23: Date of next Parish Meeting was agreed as 19th October 2023. Maggie confirmed the availability of the Village hall.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 20.35.

Annexe 1.

BOARD RESOLUTION

Name of Organisation: .....Askerswell Parish Meeting.....

Sort Code: .....30 – 91 – 21 .....

Account No: .....00017043 .....

At a meeting of the Trustees held on the 4th May, 2023 it was agreed in accordance with the Constitution and Rules that John Mahoney, Frank Hemmings and Margaret Barrett are to be removed as signatories from the above account held with TSB Bank PLC.

We confirm that Harry Coutts, David Altree and Peter Ballard are to be added as a signatories.

We hereby certify that the above resolution is in accordance with the Constitution and Rules of the Organisation.

Signed by: ..... Name(printed): HARRY COUTTS

(If section 9 is signed by an existing signatory, then they should sign here, however if they are unavailable (i.e. deceased, abroad, illness) then a new signatory can sign here)

Witnessed*: ..... Name(printed): T. B. SINCLAIR

Address: Middlemore House, Askerswell, DT2 9EL

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*A party to an agreement cannot act as a witness; e.g. existing signatory on account, employee, spouse, close, relative, Minors (i.e. under 18) are excluded from acting as a witness.

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