Askerswell Parish Meeting

Thursday 20th October 2022 at 7.30p.m.

In attendance: Harry Coutts (Chair), Dave Altree (Dep. Chair), Peter Ballard (Clerk), John Mahoney, Tim and Dinks Boden, Liz Guard, Mia Lewis, Gill Reypert, Gill Evans, Lara Altree, Godfrey Lancashire, Frank Hemmings, Mike Green, Antony and Jessamy Wilsdon.

Item 18/22: Chairman's opening remarks. Harry welcomed everyone to the Meeting, thanked them for their attendance, asked that everyone sign in and noted that full reports (circulated before the meeting) were not available as hard copy (as a Covid / environmental measure), but could be provided should anyone want them. He added that our local councillor Tony Alford hoped to be able to attend but may be unavailable due to a clash with a full Council meeting.

Item 19/22: Apologies for absence. Mandy and Graham Hall, Romaine and Laurie Deards, Kathy Hince, Nigel Guard, Richard and Anne Hobbs, Mike Dyson, Janet Thomasson, Michael Sinclair, Sara Gay, Alison Lancashire, Geoff and Maggie Barrett, and Eileen Bryan.

Item 20/22: Minutes of the meeting held on 5th May 2022. There were no comments or amendments and the Meeting approved the minutes, which were subsequently signed by the Chairman.

Item 21/22: Matters arising not covered below: None were noted.

Item 22/22: Correspondence: Harry received a letter from Dorset Council (DC) (as part of their Annual Check on flood preparedness) requesting an update on quantity and location of sandbags. He asked that everyone check how many they have, advise him of their location and whether they would be able to take more, if so, how many.

Action (All) BY 1.11.22 Email Harry with the quantity of sandbags held, their location and the number of new / replacements required.

Item 23/22: Chair's update: The Chair paid tribute to all those who organised the Jubilee activities and Frank Hemmings, noting that all of the Jubilee trees all found a home.

Also tributes for the response to London Bridge. Flowers from the village were laid at Buckingham Palace and the floral tributes in Church were excellent – thanks to Liz and all who were involved.

He stated that it was nice to see new faces settling into the village and a pleasure to have met so many at the village Cream Tea and Harvest Supper, adding that it was great to meet the Ukrainian family, recently rehomed in Askerswell, during the regular Thursday night table tennis. No doubt at all that our community will have made them feel very welcome and gave thanks to all for their efforts with all the events.

He noted that the Askerswell Post has been given a makeover and requested anyone that does not yet receive it to sign up as it is useful tool for communicating fast moving events and event reminders.

Item 24/22: Finance Update (Clerk) Peter began with an apology for sending the first

(erroneous) financial statement out and thanked John for his assistance with the corrections. He commented that year end projection (including fairly generous allowances for items due over winter) expect to leave us with a carry-over of £46.40.

Item 25/22: Washingpool Fund update The Clerk noted that the balance has not changed and remains £627.94. The Chair added that additional works will need to be carried out in line with the 2020-25 management plan for the Green. Much work such as coppicing can be done by volunteers, with chippings and recycled materials used where possible.

Item 26/22: Budget plan for 2022/23 The Clerk led a brief discussion about the potential to increase the Reserves as per the paper (inexpertly adapted from a former working document) circulated. Tim Boden asked if this would be additional funding as well as what may be required to pay for the defibrillator (item 30/22) and it was agreed to suspend the discussion until after any decisions on the defibrillator were made.

Item 27/22: Summary of Planning Applications and Highways work: Harry noted there had been very little activity, with the application for one Shepherd's hut at Medway denied on 13.7.22 and the plan for two safari tents at Medway Farm granted on 26.7.22. On 17.10.22 the Meeting received notification that the Shepherd's hut application had been amended and resubmitted. A formal response from the meeting may be submitted until 7.11.22 and Harry agreed to circulate details to everyone so that comments can be fed back and a response agreed.

Action: (Chair) BY 27.10.22 Circulate details of the application and request timely responses, then follow up as necessary.

Item 28/22: Mid-term review of Neighbourhood Plan (erroneously labelled Local Plan) There was brief discussion that the plan, which runs to 2028, is due a "mid-term" review and Harry agreed to ask for volunteers to form a small group to undertake a review and suggest any updates, to report at the next meeting.

Action: (Chair) BY 4.11.22 Request volunteers to perform a review of the Neighbourhood Plan and make any recommendations at the next Meeting.

Item 29/22: Local Reports and Acknowledgements (verbal) Harry thanked those who had submitted reports and read out those which had been submitted in advance.

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. Also please keep an eye out for future events.

Good neighbours Scheme / 4WD Drivers Godfrey gave his update in person from this note submitted in advance "I am pleased to say the Good Neighbour Scheme continues without fuss behind the scenes, quietly helping where needed.
For newcomers who may not know, every household has a postcard with three 'phone numbers to ring should anyone need help eg with taking to hospital or doctor's appointments, shopping etc.
My thanks to Liz Guard, Kathy Hince and Gill Evans the coordinators and to all the volunteers who help from time to time.
If anyone would like to volunteer please let me or Liz know .
Finally we do have a 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, please let us know."

Washingpool maintenance and nature report Harry apologised that his report could be as detailed or fulsome as Howard's and thanked him for all his previous efforts, adding that Washingpool Green continued to be well maintained and the Grass cutting rota has had no issues - but please contact him should there be any problems or should anyone wish to join or retire from the rota.

No major tree work has been carried out in last six months but we expect some tree surgery may be required over winter, and we have a provision in the accounts to allow for this.
A Washingpool Green taskforce will be required for spring – action days of volunteer assistance with a number of tasks – coppicing, clearance and potential re-establishment of previous pathway and seating area as well as wildflower encouragement through tackling invasive shrubs such as nettles and scattering wildflower seeds.

The Village Pond dried up over last year and whilst originally a pond liner was not considered necessary, Harry and colleagues on the committee believe a liner is now required to safeguard pond life through any future drought events, along with remedial action to encourage wildlife - planting, stocking of pond area, maintenance of bridge etc.

Flower Tubs (Mandy) Harry read out the following "We plan to continue to maintain the tubs in the square and have bought bulbs and compost, but the polyanthus were not available when we were last in Groves. It is important to get polyanthus as the deer don't eat them... they love pansies! Hopefully we will plant them up soon after we get back."

Website (Mandy) Harry added "The web master has put a lot of time and effort into the website recently and has updated both the Parish Meeting and Village Hall sections. I would like to thank him for his efforts because without him there wouldn't be a village website.
A plea I wish to make is for people to keep me (Mandy) updated about future events that they are organising so that I can put the information onto the website."

Parish Lands charities update (Antony) The Chair read the following from the report previously circulated "At the May Parish Meeting Graham Hall and Richard Hobbs were elected for a four-year term as Trustees of both charities in place of the departing Howard Atkinson and John Mahoney. The change of Trustees has been notified to the Charity Commission. The Trustees met on 22 September.

There has been no financial activity in respect of either charity since the May meeting (rental income for both parcels of land is received in March and there have been no grants made under the small grants scheme).

Therefore, the current funds of the Parish Lands remain as: i) Askerswell Fuel Allotment: £778.39, and ii) Askerswell Gravel Allotment: £778.38.

With regard to the small grant scheme, the Parish Meeting is reminded that the two charities can support inhabitants by providing one off payments to: a) counter hardship, b) meet a defined educational need (e.g. text books), c) support for the elderly or infirm or d) other purposes within the object of the Charities at the Trustees' discretion. An application form is available from me (wilsdon@tiscali.co.uk); 01308 485780).

Rights of Way Antony reported that he had walked all of the paths recently and had kept them unencumbered, adding that he felt it was time to plan for retirement and hand over this role at the next meeting. Peter volunteered to step forward and so a process of training and semi-violent weed management will soon commence.

Councillor Alford's report Harry noted that as it was now unlikely Tony would now attend, he would give extracts from the advance submission and circulate the full document after the meeting. He mentioned events planned in Adult Social care, increased local funding for electric vehicle (eV) charging points and an upcoming consultation on Library services – and asked if anyone wishes to respond to the consultation, to let him know. He added that the Local Plan has been delayed and that the initial draft in 2021 received 9,000 responses and subsequently the timetable to have the plan adopted has been pushed back to 2026.He also mentioned the Budget for Dorset Council and the expressions of interest in Investment Zones in Dorset (Weymouth, Portland and Wool), as well as the potential for project and event funding of between £1,000 and £5,000 aimed at community support events.

Village Clean-Up day Harry asked if the Meeting felt that this would be necessary and it was clear that there was support. It was agreed that a Saturday near the end of March would be best and the conclusion was that Maggie would be asked to circulate a date

Action (Harry / Maggie) BY 1.1.23 Discuss, agree and notify the villagers of a date for Wombling.

Marquee / Sandbags Harry reiterated the request for information on sandbags (reported in 22/22) and reported that the Marquee would henceforth be looked after by Dave. It dates from 2005, is 8 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 30/22: Defibrillator update Antony recapped the history of the project and gave a brief overview of the situation elegantly described in the paper circulated. He summarised that the Committee has approved the Village Hall to be the location of the unit, that a transfer of powers may be necessary to permit this, and that the Committee would undertake the fund raising to pay the initial cost, with a provision for replacement and ongoing costs to be met as the Meeting decided. Godfrey suggested that it may be easier to vote to agree the initial funding in the knowledge that ongoing costs would be met by the increase in Precept had already been decided, a point which received palpable support. Liz added that the whole project may be delayed due to the global shortage of chips and semiconductors and it may not be possible to have the unit installed until next year – and it was noted that the sooner we can place the order (given the long lead-time) the better.

Tim asked if the unit would be changed after four years, and Antony and Godfrey explained that the initial cost, training and replacement of any pads (if used) was all part of the arrangement and that a new unit would be provided every four years. John questioned if the suggested "approximately £8.50 per household" addition the precept, hypothecated to raise £2,700 over the four years, would be sufficient, given inflation, and suggested it may be better to overprovide than risk a shortfall, hence it was suggested that a £10 per household increase may be safer and more appropriate. Sensing sufficient debate had been allowed, Harry moved to vote on the points in the order given in Antony's report.

VOTE 1: that a fundraising campaign should be undertaken, by means of

individually addressed letters to every household in Askerswell, to raise the sum for the initial acquisition of a defibrillator. (A separate bank account to receive any donated funds would be set up) – **Agreed nem con.**

VOTE 2: that a defibrillator should be acquired from the South West Ambulance Service NHS Trust together with a package of maintenance and training, at the cost of £2,160 (including VAT*)* for a four year period. Ownership of the defibrillator will remain with SWAST. (SWAST will supply the best model of defibrillator currently available). – **Agreed nem con.**

VOTE 3: that the defibrillator shall be located at the Village Hall, and suitable signage placed at the Square, at the School Lane turning to the Village Hall, and at the Hall car-park. – **Agreed unanimously**

VOTE 4: That the ongoing funding of the defibrillator should be achieved by:

a) repeated fundraising campaigns, as for the initial purchase – **Rejected unanimously**

OR b) an increase in the annual precept of £750, (i.e. approximately £9.50 / <£10) per household per year, in order to build up a fund of over £2,700 to meet ongoing funding of the defibrillator. **– agreed nem con.**

VOTE 5: that an application should be made to Dorset Council for the necessary transfer of powers to spend on the upkeep of a defibrillator. - **agreed unanimously**

VOTE 6: that, subject to the above being agreed by Dorset Council, the annual precept should be raised by £750*,* (i.e. approximately £9.50 / <£10 per household per year), from 1 April 2023. - **agreed nem con.**

Making the conclusion of the Budget review (Item 26/22) that Option E, no change in overall precept and accepting the risk incumbent in only a £1,000 carry over alongside maintenance of equal funding of £500 for both the Village Hall and Church to continue, was agreed.

Item 31/22: Election of Officers. The Chair noted that this was an opportunity for anyone wishing to take up a formal role within the Parish Meeting may do so – though he stated his dedication to the position as long as necessary and with no wish to leave the Meeting at risk of dissolution.

Item 32/22: Any Other Business. Mia raised the Broadband speed at Henbury farm, a matter that has been raised previously, and Harry suggested that they should discuss the matter separately and that he may be able to help.

Ideas for Village events was briefly discussed – Godfrey noted that there is already a committee, and hence a forum, for making suggestions. Peter suggested that an "Escape room" evening – with groups solving clues and puzzles "against the clock" might be fun – and was asked if he would therefore be willing to organise such a thing… to which he gave agreement *to assist* with the organisation and it was agreed that this could be further investigated.

AONB Tree survey - Dorset AONB Community Tree Scheme - Survey Harry suggested that it would be good if everyone could complete the Survey (found at Dorset AONB Community Tree Scheme - Survey

Item 33/22: Date of next Parish Meeting was suggested as 11.5.23 at 19.30**,** but was subsequently found to clash with Table tennis, so **4.5.23 at 19.30** is proposed.

Godfrey then thanked Harry and the team for their efforts, which Harry echoed and added his thanks to the attendees for their contributions and for the support of Deputy Chair Dave and Clerk Peter.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 20.33.