

HAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF QUARTERLY MEETING

A quarterly meeting of Ham Parish Council took place on
TUESDAY AUGUST 12TH at 6.30pm in Ham Village Hall

Present: Mr R Buchanan-Dunlop (Chairman), Mr D Bicknell, Mr C Dean, Mr R Miller, Lady Walker, Mrs J Barnwell (Clerk)
Plus two members of the public

1. Apologies

Mrs S Eldridge (Vice Chair)

2. Minutes of the Parish AGM held Friday 9th May 2014

These were approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising

(a) Councillor Dean showed the Council an inscribed plaque, which had been ordered for the village green bench to commemorate the fallen of the two World Wars. He said he would secure it to the bench in the coming days.

(b) The Chairman updated the meeting on the First World War Exhibition that took place in the Village Hall on the weekend of 26-27th July. It was attended by some 400 people and was a great success. Professor Sir Michael Howard had given a short talk after the commemorative Church service at All Saints on the Sunday morning which had been very well received. From the floor Mr N Baring commented that the exhibition had indeed been excellent and praised Mrs Eldridge and Mr Buchanan-Dunlop for all their hard work. The Chairman thanked everyone who had helped to make it a success. The Parish Council donated £50 towards the exhibition's outgoings; the pub raffle fund also contributed £50; and there were other personal donations. Lady Walker added that visitors had contributed around £135 towards Village Hall funds during the course of the exhibition. She later suggested that it would be a good idea to repeat the exhibition, perhaps in the autumn when it could be made available to school parties. It was also suggested that a booklet might be produced to record the exhibits.

4. FINANCES

The Clerk told the meeting that the Annual Audit was in the hands of External Auditors and she was expecting to hear back by September. The Chairman thanked Mr N Hawley for once again acting as Internal Auditor.

Cheques were signed for the interim costs of the village green cuts (£410.40 to AMT Services), also for the renewal of the Parish Council's annual insurance premium (£166.84).

5. HAM RELIEF FUND

The Parish Council noted that Mr N Baring and Mrs B Stevens had stepped down from their roles of trustees of the Ham Relief Fund and had been replaced by Mr Buchanan-Dunlop and Lady Walker, and that Mrs L Holford remained the treasurer.

6. FLOODING

The Chairman raised the issue of the overgrown ditch, which runs in the front of Porch cottages. He said he would approach Mrs Loseley-Williams to ask for it to be cleared. He reported that the Highways gully dredger had visited Ham recently and had apparently cleared the drain, which runs from Tudor cottage across the road to Manor Cottage, however, this had become subsequently blocked again. The Clerk said that the owner of Candlemas Cottage had also flagged this up with Mr S Matthews the Highways Co-ordinator. The Chairman commented that Mr Matthews was due to visit Ham on 20 August and that this would be followed by a visit by the Community Steward on 28 August.

7. ROADS & SIGNS

In respect of the planned extension of the 30mph limit, the Chairman said there was no update to report. He said that Wiltshire Council had been informed that the Parish Council now had the funds in place to cover the costs of the extension. In the meantime, Wiltshire Council was in the process of updating road signage. The Chairman also told the meeting that the road from Ham village green towards Manor Farm was due to be resurfaced. The Chairman said that he had reminded Mr Matthews of the outstanding list itemising the pot-holes currently in need of repair. Mrs Barnwell said she had reported two large pot-holes outside The Old Malthouse, adjacent to the green. She also said that she had put in a request to have the salt bin replaced on Ham Hill.

8. BRIDLEWAYS & FOOTPATHS

It was agreed that the bridleway/footpath along Field Lane was in very bad condition and that Councillor Bicknell and the Chairman would both pursue this with Wiltshire Council. The Chairman said he had taken photographs of it. Councillor Bicknell said that he had ordered some new footpath signs so he can renew any missing or in a bad state of repair. The Chairman told the meeting that one of the wooden signs to the church was rotten and would need replacing. Mr A Peace thought that this probably came under the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council and offered to look into the matter.

9. HAM HILL NATURE RESERVE

Mr N Baring reported that he was in the process of handing over as Warden of the Ham Hill Nature Reserve to Mr A Melsom.

10. SUPER FAST BROADBAND

The Chairman explained that Ham would not be included in the BT survey to determine whether it would receive Super Fast Broadband as part of the

Wiltshire roll-out until 2015 or 2016. He had already flagged up the fact that Ham was connected to the Inkpen telephone cable system to Wiltshire Council via Councillor Stewart Wheeler. The Parish Council agreed that no useful action could be taken until the result of the survey was known.

11. GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY FRANCHISE CONSULTATION

The Chairman said that following correspondence from Pewsey Community Area Partnership (PCAP) alerting the Parish Council to the Great Western Railway Franchise Consultation questionnaire, parishioners had responded individually and the Clerk had forwarded on the views of those who had emailed to her directly. The Chairman added that Devizes MP Claire Perry had written a spirited letter to the Under Secretary of State for Transport Stephen Hammond, expressing her horror at the possibility that there would be no direct trains from Great Bedwyn to Paddington in the future and petitioning for the electrification of the line to be continued on from Newbury.

12. MOBILE PHONE RECEPTION

Councillor Bicknell outlined his research into improving mobile phone reception in the village.

- (a) It was unlikely that the signal to the centre of the village could be radically improved because the village lay in a dip, which was screened by both higher ground and trees. Nevertheless, as an employee of Vodafone he had arranged for an Optimisation Engineer to test the signal from the mast on Doves Farm Mill. (After-Note: Tests by the engineer have shown that the signal to the centre of the village cannot be improved from the Doves Farm Mill mast. However, the Inkpen mast is due to be upgraded and this may improve coverage to Ham.)
- (b) He emphasized that the best way to get the mobile phone operators to improve their reception was by customers complaining. This could be done by calling Vodafone on 191 and O2 on 202 on handsets.
- (c) He also suggested that parishioners could improve their mobile signal with the use of the Vodafone *Sure Signal* device, which plugs into the wall and attaches to the wi-fi router via an Ethernet cable to create a 3G signal. However, this device requires a minimum broadband speed of 1MB. Mrs Barnwell added that she had purchased one despite not having 1MB of broadband speed. Although the *Sure Signal* worked, enabling her to have 3G on her family's mobile phones, it used so much broadband width that it rendered connection to the Internet impossible. Councillor Bicknell said that if householders had 1MB, it was well worth using as it is very effective.
- (d) He confirmed that a system known as *Rural Open Sure Signal* was not an option for the village, as it required a minimum of 4MB of broadband.
- (e) Councillor Bicknell assured the meeting that he was on the case and would keep the Council abreast of any progress he makes. The Chairman thanked him for all his efforts to date.

13. CPRE BEST-KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

The Chairman reported that Ham had come only sixth in the Kennet division of the competition. The judges' report praised the excellent presentation of the Crown & Anchor, in particular the hanging baskets and said

that the village green and surroundings were very attractive and neat and that the churchyard was lovely, well mown and in very good trim. But the judges found fault with weeds in the BT phone box and the fact that there was no dialing tone either, also noting that some of the notices in the noticeboard were out of date and some discarded rubbish had been spotted around that area. A discussion took place amongst the Council about the BT phone box and it was decided that it should be retained and that the fault needed to be reported to BT. The Clerk said that she was in possession of a document, which entitled the Parish to 10 bags of compost from Hills in Calne, which was awarded because Ham's entry was one of the first received into the competition. It was agreed that any member of the village might have two bags but the bags would have to be collected from Calne; anyone interested should contact the Clerk first.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman informed the meeting that although Ham had not been formally consulted by Wiltshire Council, in the light of a planning application (Ref: 14/05864/FUL) from the new owners of the Ballyack Estate to build a large equestrian centre in Buttermere, he had written on behalf of Ham Parish Council objecting on the grounds of traffic disturbance. He said that without an imposed traffic plan, the journeys from and to the site by 12m-long horseboxes would place an intolerable strain on an already acute traffic problem for Ham.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A provisional date of November 18th was set for the next Quarterly meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm