

# HAM PARISH COUNCIL

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## MINUTES OF QUARTERLY MEETING

A quarterly meeting of Ham Parish Council took place on  
**Friday NOVEMBER 13<sup>th</sup> 2015 at 7.30pm in Ham Village Hall**

**Present:** Mr R Buchanan-Dunlop (Chairman), Mrs S Eldridge (Vice Chair), Mr D Bicknell, Mr C Dean, Mr R Miller, Lady Walker, Mrs J Barnwell (Clerk) and three members of the public

**1. APOLOGIES**

None

**2. MINUTES OF QUARTERLY PARISH MEETING HELD 4<sup>th</sup> AUG 2015**

The Council approved the minutes and the Chairman signed them.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

None

**4. POLICING**

i) Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Jonathan Mills sent his apologies that he was unable to attend. Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had spoken to him, so she updated those present on recent policing activities in the area. Fortunately, there had be no crime directly affecting Ham in recent months, but several incidents had occurred at Henley, Buttermere and Shalbourne including the theft of a trailer and a quad bike – there had also been an act of arson on a tractor.

ii) A member of the Parish at the meeting expressed concern that her household repeatedly suffered from unwanted cold callers. The Clerk said that the advice given by PCSO Mills was that householders should always alert the police to cold callers by reporting them immediately on the 101 number.

**5. FLOODING**

Councillor Eldridge reported that she had received no update from Highways Community Co-ordinator Mr D Arnup, having sent him a drawing of suggested drainage works required outside Littlefield Cottage (see 6(c) below).

**6. ROADS & SIGNS**

**a) Church sign**

With regards to the damaged sign for the church, Councillor Eldridge said she now had a carpenter lined up who would be able to repair it.

**b) 30 mph signs**

Councillor Bicknell said that the new 30mph sign into the village at the point of Acorn Cottages had become obscured by overgrown hedgerow. Councillor Eldridge advised him to report it using the MyWiltshire App, despite the fact that she believed it should have been routinely kept visible via the Highways maintenance programme. It was noted that the Parish Stewardship scheme was still not up and running, so the Parish was without a Parish Steward. The Clerk said that there was supposed to be a reinstatement of the scheme in Spring 2016.

**c) Road resurfacing**

There was still no progress to report on the proposed resurfacing of the section of road from Hayfield to Littlefield Cottage (Kew Road). Councillor Eldridge said she had not had any feedback from Mr Arnup since her last correspondence, in which she sent him a copy of a suggested drainage improvement (drawn up by the owner of Littlefield Cottage) under the road, outside Littlefield Cottage. Councillor Eldridge confirmed that, according to Mr Arnup, a full drainage survey would take place ahead of any resurfacing.

**7. BRIDLEWAYS & FOOTPATHS**

There was nothing to report.

**8. FINANCE**

**a) External Audit**

The Clerk informed those present that the Annual Parish Audit had been approved by the External Auditors. She explained that she had been advised that the figure for so called 'village assets' (village bench, litter bin and noticeboards) should be recorded on next year's audit form at their 'cost' value rather than at their 'insured value'.

**b) Forecast**

The meeting discussed the financial forecast for the forthcoming tax year, as presented by the Clerk. The Council decided that a contingency of £250 rather than £500 would suffice.

**c) Precept**

Looking at the balance of accounts, the Council agreed to set the precept for 2016/2017 at £1,500. The Chairman explained the Precept had been raised during 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 to make provision for the unknown costs involved in extending the village 30mph signs. As these works had now been carried out – and paid for – it was prudent to revert to the usual amount of £1,500. He commented that annual expenditure was in fact now in excess of £1,500, but in the shorter term any shortfall could be met from the reserves, which were in excess of normal requirements. However, there was no haste to reduce the sum now held in reserves, as contingencies such as Broadband could easily arise.

**d) AMT Services** The Clerk confirmed that AMT Services would not be increasing the cost of their service for the forthcoming year -the price would remain at £38 per visit. A cheque for £228 was approved and signed for the last of the year's village green cuts.

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**a) Broadband**

The Chairman told the meeting that Ham was still included in the Phase 2 roll-out programme of Superfast Broadband by Wiltshire Council was subject to survey which was due to be carried out next year. He added that BT had stated that the local exchange serving Ham had been upgraded and according to BT this should lead to an improvement in Broadband speeds. He had also ascertained that the line from Inkpen to Ham was, at least, ducted, which in theory would allow fibre optic cabling to be installed, if and when it happened. He said he had written to Wiltshire Council and to MP Claire Perry to express parishioners' concerns over unacceptably slow Broadband speed and that he would be attending a 'discussion forum' organised by Ms Perry, due to be held in Marlborough on Jan 15<sup>th</sup> 2016, which had Broadband service on the agenda; the consensus was that the service remains unsatisfactory and that parishioners continue to be perplexed and frustrated by the inconvenience this causes them. It was noted that several parishioners, who are served by the Bedwyn Exchange (01672 numbers), had recently been upgraded to fibre optic superfast, in line with the Shalbourne switchover.

**b) Clerk appointment**

The Chairman advised the Council that they would be looking for a new Clerk to replace Mrs Barnwell, who tendered her resignation at the AGM in May and who would be stepping down at the end of the financial year in March 2016.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next Quarterly Meeting was provisionally set for Friday February 12<sup>th</sup> 2016 at 7pm.

**The meeting closed at 7.55pm**

Ham Parish Council  
November 2015