

# HAM PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of Ham Parish Council took place on **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015** at **7pm** 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)  
**Plus 15 members of the public**

### 1. Apologies

None

### 2. Minutes of Quarterly Meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> February 2015

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

### 3. Matters Arising

The Chairman told those in the meeting that although the topic of broadband was not on the agenda and had been raised and discussed at length at the previous quarterly meeting, he did have a fairly positive update. Although he had not been notified in person by Wiltshire Council, despite having been corresponding with Deputy Leader, Councillor J Thomson over this matter, he had been on the *wiltshireonline.org.uk* website, and having inputted his postcode on the 'Broadband Rollout' page, ascertained that Ham was apparently in line to have fibre broadband installed. He cautioned that this did not necessarily mean that Ham had been picked up for Superfast Broadband under Phase 2 and it was unclear which postcodes would be covered, and he would be checking this with Wiltshire Council and reporting back. In the meantime his advice for residents was to keep abreast of any progress by using the postcode checker.

### 4. Election of Chairman and Vice Chair

Councillor Lady Walker proposed existing Chairman Mr Buchanan-Dunlop for re-election. This was seconded by Councillor Dean. Councillor Eldridge was likewise re-elected as Vice-Chair; she was proposed by Councillor Miller and seconded by Councillor Bicknell.

### 5. Policing

PC Teresa Herbert (Community Beat Manager) addressed those gathered and outlined the police activities in the area for the last 12 months. She distributed a written report detailing crimes, attempted crimes, police actions and outcomes (attached). She reiterated her request to the public to call the police if they see suspicious activities, or individuals behaving suspiciously. She said that the information, no matter how insignificant it might seem, all helped to build up a profile in the event of that person or persons being involved in a criminal activity. Crime for the last 12 months was down from

previous years, but Ham and the surrounding area still suffered from non-dwelling burglaries, where garden machinery and quad bikes etc are often targeted. She stressed the importance of those in ownership of such vehicles to invest in trackers or immobilisers. She also said that implementing ditching, fencing etc to prevent thieves making a get-away across fields and farmland was a very effective deterrent. She stressed that security lighting, good locks and padlocks all helped to deter thieves attempting robbery from outhouses, garages etc.

**NB. The emergency number to call remains 999, but PC Herbert reminded parishioners to call 101 to report non-urgent crimes and incidents of cold calling etc.**

Finally, she urged parishioners to sign up for the free 'Community Messaging' service operated by the The Pewsey Neighbourhood Police Team, which sends alerts about policing and crime matters relating to our area as they happen. The link is:

<https://www.wiltsmessaging.co.uk/>

It was agreed details would also be circulated via HamNet.

PC Herbert thanked residents for all the help and continued co-operation she receives.

## **6. Finances**

The Clerk had prepared the Annual Accounts, for the year ending March 31 2015, ahead of the Annual External Audit. The Accounts were approved by the Council. (See attached) Summing up, the Chairman told the floor that last year the general expenditure was around £1650; which was after taking into account the 'exceptional' expenditure i.e. the cost incurred putting on the First World Exhibition, the purchase of a new village bench, Xmas tree lights and a new defibrillator battery etc. He said that this was beyond the Parish Council's usual expenditure, but that there was nothing profligate about this, as it was largely due to general increasing costs. He told the meeting that, as explained, the Precept had been raised from £1500 to £3000 in 2014/2015 to cover the anticipated expense of the extension of the 30mph zone. In January this year, this was decreased to £2500 for the 2015/2016 Precept. He explained that having settled the £831.35 cost of the 30mph extension works, which was invoiced by Wiltshire Council last month, the reserves would remain at over £4000, which was twice what was actually required. The Council agreed that this reserve sum would stand the Parish in good stead, should any unexpected eventuality arise.

A Parishioner suggested that perhaps the Parish Council might look into funding the purchase of some sort of illuminated speed display device, which would serve as a traffic-calming measure. After a discussion, in which it was apparent that the cost was likely to be prohibitive, and a show of hands, it was concluded that, at the moment, the consensus of opinion was that such a measure was not called for.

The Clerk added that Mr N Hawley had once again kindly confirmed that he would volunteer his services as the Parish Council's Internal Auditor.

## **7. Flooding**

There were no incidents of flooding to report. It was noted that surface rainwater was running more quickly since the recent road re-surfacing. It was also noted that new, larger ditches on the road up towards Buttermere had been dug. A parishioner pointed out that new flood ditches have been dug either side of Little Field on the Shalbourne Road, but that the two ditches needed connecting by a gulley and that the Parish Council, if it were able, should flag this up when the road there, which is in dire need of repair, is eventually resurfaced by Wiltshire Council.

## **8. Roads & Signs**

Councillor Eldridge remarked that the recent re-surfacing works on Ham's roads had taken three years to come into fruition and that disappointingly, the responsive Mr S Matthews, in charge of co-ordinating such works, had since left Wiltshire Council. The Clerk confirmed that she had not been informed whether or not his position had been filled since his departure last month. The Chairman and Councillor Eldridge said they would be doing their usual inspection of the Parish's roads this August. On the subject of signs, Councillor Eldridge said that all the road signage had recently been renewed where necessary, including 30mph repeater signs.

## **9. Bridleways & Footpaths**

Councillor Bicknell reported that, with the exception of Field Lane, all footpaths and bridleways were in relatively good condition. On the subject of Field Lane, the Chairman said that unfortunately a Parishioner had had a fall, due to the impassable nature of some parts of this bridleway. He said that having spent the best part of six weeks trying to make contact with the relevant personnel at Wiltshire Council, he had been informed that should a bridleway or footpath be deemed to be unsafe then Wiltshire Council would be liable. The Chairman said that he was trying to arrange for the Wiltshire Council warden or assistant warden responsible for Ham to meet him at Field Lane in the near future.

## **10. Correspondence**

The Clerk had received a letter from Wiltshire Council requesting a delegated member of the Parish who could be a point of contact in a flood emergency or in severe cold weather. The scheme is called Parish Emergency Assistance Scheme (PEAS). Councillor Eldridge confirmed that she was indeed already this point of contact. The Clerk said she would pass the letter and form on to her, so she could update her details.

**11. Any other business**

Councillor Miller said it had been brought to his attention that the ceiling light in the BT public phone booth had been smashed and was not working. After a discussion, it was agreed that due to previous failed attempts to find the appropriate authority responsible for Ham's booth, the Clerk would contact District Councillor Wheeler to ask how the Council should go about getting the phone booth removed.

**12. Date of next meeting**

The next quarterly meeting of the Parish Council will take place in August. The Clerk agreed to circulate a choice of dates to Councillors.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm - The Parish Assembly followed directly on from it.