

PITSTONE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 18 May 2023
at Pitstone Pavilion, starting at 7.30pm and concluding at 9.30pm

PRESENT: Parish Councillors: Cllr Nicholls (Chairman), Cllr Saintey (Vice Chairman), Cllr Blunt, Cllr McCarthy, Cllr Mitra, Cllr Mrs Crutchfield, Cllr Mrs Nash, Cllr Hawkins and Cllr Dr Frearson.
Parish Staff: Laurie Eagling (Clerk) and Dave Burton (Facilities Manager).
Buckinghamshire Councillor: Peter Brazier.
Mark Robinson representing the Town Lands Charity.
Alex Razak representing the Ivinghoe & Pitstone Repair Café.
Babs Byron representing the Ivinghoe & Pitstone Foodbank.
PCSOs M Dean and T Hobson.
Plus 29 members of the public.

APOLOGIES: Parish Councillors: Cllr Heyman, Cllr Weber and Buckinghamshire Councillor Town.

AA1/23 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

See above. The Chairman officially opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. He explained that an 'Annual Parish Meeting' is a local community meeting, and not a constituted meeting of either the Parish Council, Buckinghamshire Council, or the other bodies presenting. So whilst no resolutions could be passed, any issues that were raised during the evening would be taken back to the respective bodies for consideration.

AA2/23 REPORT FROM THAMES VALLEY POLICE

PCSO Megan Dean presented the annual crime figures. 94 incidents were reported to TVP for the Pitstone area in the last 12 months. Included in this figure were incidents such as concerns for welfare or domestic incidents. The 'incidents of note' included:

Burglary dwellings and business - 5
Theft from/of Motor vehicles - 10
Other thefts - 6

A member of the public raised questions with TVP regarding anti-social motoring offences within the business park at night. TVP advised that they did attend when a response unit was available and encouraged residents to report any incidents in an attempt to build intelligence eg if there was a regular day/time, or supply photographs of the vehicles involved, that might enable them to target patrols better or identify any regular culprits.

A member of the public raised questions with TVP relating to speeding along Westfield Road. It was confirmed that the speed enforcement van did now attend on a regular basis, in rotation with the other approved sites. The resident asked if the van could be located closer to the village gates where the speed limit changes and TVP agreed to ask the question, but the van does need to be located a set distance from any speed limit change as the data is collected at the point that the vehicle comes into its vision field (so the whole of that distance needs to be a straight line of sight inside the 30mph zone) rather than when the vehicle passes the van.

TVP explained that accident rates were the main criteria for physical changes to highways. There had been no accidents, relating to highway design, along the section of Westfield Road near the gates.

If the community felt that speeding was a high priority, they encouraged residents to volunteer to set up a Community Speed watch program. The parish council explained that it had tried to encourage volunteers to come forward on several occasions but not received sufficient interest, however the information could be published again.

Two residents raised concerns relating to parking close to junctions, both in Old Farm and Rushendon Furlong. TVP agreed to try and include these locations within their patrols, and they can leave advisory notices on the windscreens of any offending vehicles. TVP encouraged residents to report any continuation of the problem, so they can build intelligence on the vehicles/dates/times etc, to more effectively target patrols.

A resident asked if funding was available for permanent speed cameras on Westfield Road. It was explained that neither TVP nor BC supported the installation of speed enforcement cameras at this location. The parish council already owns 2 mobile vehicle activated signs (which flash when vehicles are speeding) and these rotate around the 4 village through-roads (when in Westfield Road it alternates between monitoring the Warwick Road junction and monitoring closer to Bolebec End) providing all residents with equal access (6 weeks on and 6 weeks off) to the benefits. The latest data reports showed that the average speed in Cheddington Road was actually slightly higher (30.49mph) than by the Warwick Road speed limit change (30.28mph). For the 85th percentile, the sites are reversed, with 85% of vehicles passing Warwick Road under 37.7mph and travelling along Cheddington Road at under 36.9mph, so speed of vehicles in the village was a universal problem. Buckinghamshire Councillor Brazier confirmed it was a UK wide problem, and the same issues were felt in the other villages. There are upsides to the flashing units rotating, as they lose their benefit when static and drivers become used to their locations, neither are the mVAS approved for permanent/static use. The parish council had considered the purchase of additional flashing speed units (mVAS or SID), but this was not being progressed at present, as it would remove the ability to rotate.

No further questions were put forward for TVP. The Chairman thanked PCSO Dean and Hobson for attending and they departed to continue their patrols.

AA3/23 MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY held on 19 May 2022

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes were a true and accurate record, and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as such.

AA4/23 PRESENTATION OF PITSTONE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2023

The Chairman presented Mr Mick Pilkington with the Volunteer of the Year Award 2023 for the huge volumes of litter that he has voluntarily collected from around the village over the years, for participating with the Keep Britain Tidy campaigns and for co-ordinating the website for other local volunteers to sign up and help with litter picking. Mick was presented with a framed certificate and card.

Normally the Volunteer of the Year would also receive a cheque for £50.00 but Mick had generously requested that this was donated to the Ivinghoe & Pitstone Foodbank. Babs Byron, representing the Foodbank, thanked Mick for his very kind donation and talked to those assembled about the work of the Foodbank, how many families they support, and how people can donate goods or provide financial contributions.

The Parish Council runs the Volunteer of the Year scheme to celebrate the unsung heroes within our community. If you know someone who goes that extra mile and provides an outstanding voluntary service to the residents of Pitstone, please submit your nominations to the parish clerk so that they can be taken into consideration for the 2024 award.

No questions were tendered in relation to the scheme nor the Foodbank. Babs was thanked for attending the meeting and departed.

AA5/23 PRESENTATION BY DAVE ROLLINS ON PITSTONE YOUTH CAFE

Sadly, the Youth Café Manager was detained at another site and unable to attend the Annual Assembly. A written report will be obtained and uploaded to the website for information.

AA6/23 PRESENTATION BY ALEX RAZAK ON THE IVINGHOE & PITSTONE REPAIR CAFE

Alex talked through a fascinating presentation explaining what Repair Cafés are, how the scheme works, the type of repairs that can be undertaken, how much carbon can be saved and how many tons of goods are saved from landfill by the scheme.

Visits to the Repair Café have increased each month, with 19 items repaired at the first café in February, 26 in March and 40 in April. The café alternates between Ivinghoe Hub and Pitstone Pavilion. The next café would be in Ivinghoe on 27/5/23 and then Pitstone on 24/6/23. Residents were encouraged to pop along with any items that needed fixing, or just to see the scheme in operation and have some refreshments from the café. There are no fixed charges for repairs or refreshments, but donations are welcome to cover running costs.

A question was raised regarding Men in Sheds, and the differences were explained. Alex confirmed that the scheme welcomed more volunteers either as skilled repairers or helping with the coordination or refreshments and residents were encouraged to get in touch if they'd like to join.

Alex was thanked for attending and her presentation.

AA7/23 UNITARY COUNCILLOR PETER BRAZIER

Cllr Brazier offered to take questions from those assembled relating to Buckinghamshire Council delivered services, and a number of questions were raised:

- **potholes** – Cllr Brazier provided some background information on the contract change from Transport for Bucks & Ringway Jacobs to Buckinghamshire Highways & Balfour Beatty, and the extra funding that has now been released to try and tackle the backlog of potholes arising from the wet winter conditions. Residents were encouraged to report any potholes identified via Fix my Street so that they could be added to the appropriate works list. If there are 2 potholes, report them both. Category 1 potholes will be fixed quicker than those that are less severe.
- **Westfield Road speeding** – Cllr Brazier provided information about the measures already installed at Westfield Road and offered to speak to the resident separately.
- **Weed killing** – it was confirmed that Buckinghamshire Council would not be spraying any weeds this year due to concerns about chemicals and lack of funding. Only noxious weeds would be treated. The parish council is already liaising with Buckinghamshire Council to identify therefore how problem areas such as the pedestrian refuges can be cleared of weeds. Residents were encouraged to report any incidents of noxious weeds or issues that raised safety concerns to BC via Fix my Street.
- **Road sweeper** – this is funded & organised via the BC Street Scenes division rather than highways. BC are hoping that sufficient sweeping will eradicate the need for the weed killing. The road sweeper had made its first routine visit to Pitstone recently. It was suspected that the residential roads adopted by BC last year had been missed by the operatives and the parish council was working with BC to identify the issues and put resolutions into place.
- **Resurfacing** – Marsworth Road and the Cheddington Road bridge were raised as two particular areas of concern for residents. BC were already aware of both issues and remedials would be forthcoming eventually, but roads were prioritised for funding on a county wide level and there were several other highways across the county in a worse state of repair that would be addressed first. It had taken many years to get the side roads in Pitstone resurfaced. No estimated timescale could be provided.
- **Carbon targets** – it was confirmed that BC were ahead of their carbon neutral targets.
- **Fix my Street** – Cllr Brazier encouraged residents to report all highways issues they identify to BC via Fix my Street.
- **Alley from Ivinghoe High Street to Windmill Preschool** – cuttings from recent hedge works at Brookmead school left in the alley making access difficult for pushchairs and wheelchairs. Cllr Brazier to follow through as lies within the parish of Ivinghoe, not Pitstone.
- **Pedestrian crossings** - questions were raised whether zebra crossings could be installed to replace the pedestrian refuge crossings by the village green roundabout, or installed by Brookmead, or along Westfield Road. Such a crossing by Brookmead had been considered by BC as part of last years safety scheme installation at the site and eventually not included as a lack of properties on the other side of the road to require a crossing. A zebra crossing had been requested by the parish council should the developer have been granted planning permission for the retail supermarket at Portland House, however the planning had been refused by BC. BC had also re-assessed the crossing at the end of Vicarage Road and the crossing by the Pavilion in the past, but zebra crossings had not been approved. However, the issue could potentially be raised with the Community Board and a review of all potential sites in Pitstone requested to see if any comply with the criteria required.

No further questions were raised, and Councillor Brazier was thanked for his presentation.

There then followed a refreshment break, with the opportunity for the members of the public to browse all the local Big Help Out volunteering opportunities, purchase a Hedgehog Highway Surround, speak to any of the parish/unitary councillors or any of the other guest speakers, and view the Pavilion facilities if they weren't already familiar with the new building.

AA8/23 REPORT FROM, AND QUESTIONS TO, PITSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr Nicholls introduced the parish councillors and explained the changes in membership since last years' assembly, along with the various committees and external bodies that members undertake. A report was provided on the activities undertaken during the previous 12-months in relation to core parish council services including: additional litter bins, the completion of the LED street lighting roll-out, play area repairs and vandalism, the skate park 12-month inspection, two new memorial seats and a memorial tree installed in conjunction with the respective families, the new format PPP, BCs extension to the previous devolved service agreement (which enables the parish council to deliver a higher level of service than would be provided by Bucks Council), the youth café bouncing back after covid, and ongoing management of the parish councils other services.

A number of special projects were also undertaken during the year including: the Ivinghoe & Pitstone Safety Scheme near Brookmead school (a joint project between BC, IPC and PPC, with Pitstone's contribution almost £6k), working on the procurement of new double lane cricket practice nets for the Recreation Ground with I&PUC (due for installation this summer), supporting community groups & events with funding (including staging for Party in the Park and an outdoor sandpit for Brookmead school) and running a children's anti-litter competition.

The parish council collected support for Full Fibre Broadband for the village and submitted almost 400 addresses to Openreach. We are now waiting for the results of their investigations and are also aware the Trooli have been working in the village and their website currently shows Pitstone as 'coming soon'.

We continue to push Nicholas King Homes to resolve the issues with the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). Sadly, they have not been very cooperative, and they currently have an active planning application to retrospectively confirm the existing design. Buckinghamshire Council continues to work with Taylor Wimpey, Croudace and Bellway regarding the adoption of these developments, and the parish council will hopefully be able to adopt the streetlights and play/open space facilities in Tun Furlong in due course.

We are aware of the proposal for the restoration of the Pitstone hill quarry and are monitoring the situation. The proposal would provide public access for walking and wild swimming, but it also involves importing large amounts of inert waste to partially restore the hillside. No formal planning application has been submitted. We will make residents aware when this changes.

The village has also marked the two major Royal events. The death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and the coronation of King Charles III. Both brought the village together in different ways and we would like to thank all those who worked to make the events a success. The council would like to particularly thank CuriosiTea for agreeing to manage the Council's Coronation Trail for children, which involved them handing out nearly 200 water bottles to youngsters who'd completed the trail.

The council produces a budget intended to fund our normal activities, as well as accruing funds for specific purposes. This budget is used to calculate the amount of the precept that is collected on our behalf as part of your council tax bills. This year our total expenditure budget was set at £284,345 and the precept was set at £166,500, which equates to £119.82 per year for a band D property (approximately £2.30 per week). This is 2.93% increase, or about £4 per household per year.

The following questions were raised:

- **Nicholas King Homes community sites** – Could the parish council please ask NKH to tidy and improve the appearance of the two vacant sites within the Ravensmoor development. The difficulties with this developer were explained, but the parish council can certainly pass the request along.
- **Recreation Ground roundabout** – Could anything be done to improve the appearance of the roundabout? Cllr Nicholls responded to advise about the ongoing efforts with both Buckinghamshire Council and Marketingforce, who run BC's roundabout sponsorship scheme. BC had declined the requests to plant the roundabout. Marketingforce had agreed to include the roundabout within the sponsorship scheme, but only on an 'as is' basis ie with no planting / planters. The parish council was still working with Buckinghamshire Councillors to seek permission for planters instead, but this was proving extraordinarily difficult to obtain permission for so was taking longer than hoped.
- **Marsworth Road lighting** – several lanterns have been out for a number of months. These lanterns are owned and maintained by Buckinghamshire Council (not the Parish

Council) and outages had been reported. Residents can monitor progress via Fix my Street and report any new issues via the same portal.

No further questions were raised for the Parish Council.

AA9/23 REPORT FROM, AND QUESTIONS TO, PITSTONE TOWN LANDS CHARITY AND WILLIAMSON TRUST

Mark Robinson, trustee for the charity, explained the history and purpose of the two local charities and how they were supporting the local community. The Williamson Trust had been able to make payments to those of retirement age during the winter. The Town Lands Charity had now extended its remit and was supporting residents of all ages (eg by working with Brookmead school), by reaching out to organisations supporting residents (eg the foodbank) and working with local charities that support local people (eg Rennie Grove).

Mark explained that requests for assistance had surprisingly fallen despite covid and the cost-of-living crisis, and explained how people could contact them, in complete confidence, if they were in need of assistance.

No questions were tabled for the charities. Mark was thanked for his attendance and presentation.

AA10/23 REPORT FROM, AND QUESTIONS TO, PITSTONE PARISH CHARITY

Dave Nicholls provided an update on the history and purpose of the Parish Charity including how it was in the process of being restructured to provide assistance to those in need, hardship or distress, but would be differentiated from the two above charities. Once the charity investments started to generate a revenue and the charity was in a position to offer assistance, it would be formally launched to the community.

No questions were tabled for the charity.

AA11/23 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No further questions were tabled, but Windmill Preschool wished to extend their thanks to the Parish Council for all their support during the year.

AA12/23 CLOSURE OF MEETING

The chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting, especially the guest speakers for their contributions. There being no further business to be transacted, the chairman closed the meeting at 9.30pm.

D Nicholls

16/5/24

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairman