



AUSTREY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held at Austrey Village Hall on
Wednesday 8th November 2023 at 7.30pm

1 – Present: Tony Treadwell (TT), Tristan Fraser, vice-chair (TF), Sam Goldney (SG), Heather Swan (HS), Neil Hayward (NH), Terry Webb (TW) and parish clerk Lynsey Treadwell (LT). Apologies received from Richard Nield (RN).
6 members of the public were in attendance.

2 - Declarations of interest: Nothing arising

3 - Minutes: the minutes of the last Austrey Parish Council (APC) meeting which took place on 11th October 2023, were approved by the council as a true record as signed by the chair.

4 - Presentation from Jeff Morris (Client Services Manager) **from WCC Highways:** Jeff gave us some insight into the County Highways teams, what each team does, their statutory duties and how to contact them. Clerk to share the details of how to report highways issues. Members of the public were then invited to ask questions, the main topic being about the state of the footpaths in Orchard Close and the possible safety implications of the uneven surface.

5 – Clerk’s Update:

5.1: NWBC is proposing to introduce a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to prevent anti-social behaviour arising from dog fouling within North Warwickshire, but first a public consultation must take place. The information, consultation & a short survey have been shared on our social media platforms.

5.2: The APC post-box outside Austrey Stores can no longer be unlocked due to rust and age. A replacement has been delivered and will be put in place within the week.

5.3: A VAT claim has been processed for the first half of the financial year and a refund of VAT paid has been received for the amount of £737.68.

5.4: Beeline Community Transport have emailed asking APC to consider making a donation to help keep the service running Councillors would like it adding to the next agenda.

5.5: The clerk reminded members that the budget and precept requirement will need to be finalised by January’s meeting.

6: Open Forum: Re planning application PAP/2023/0243, to change a parcel of land from agricultural land to a store for business vehicles, the applicant attended the meeting to discuss amendments to the plan before it is resubmitted (It was originally refused in August). APC had some questions and concerns about the application, which the applicant hopes to address before resubmission.

*One resident from the Wulfric estate attended to ask about the viability of homeowners there appointing legal representation to oppose the resubmitted planning application for up to 10 houses being built on land adjoining the estate. APC is unable to make this call.

7: Discussions & updates on recent or regular items:

7.1: Christmas Event 2023: The Christmas trees have been ordered and all plans are in place for the event to take place on 1st December. LT to ask on social media for donations of mince pies to serve on the night. Letters to be sent to residents to advise of the road closure, and a few posters to be made for those not on Facebook.

7.2: Internal Audit Provision: SG has been reviewing our internal audit provision & has sought quotes for an auditor specialising in Parish Councils. There are increasingly tight measures surrounding the external audit process, and the need required by law to ensure that the correct governance measures are in place and are checked throughout the year. Members all agreed to instructing a new internal auditor: SG to instruct them to proceed.

7.3: Neighbourhood Plan (NDP): The steering committee is still busy working behind the scenes and meeting monthly to progress the updated NDP. Specifying Design Codes is the next undertaking. SG has also tasked residents with taking photos from various village locations, which will be used in the plan.

*In relation to the NDP, TW has sent a survey out to families of pupils at the village school to gauge opinions on starting a 'Walking Bus' to ease congestion around St Nicholas Close at drop off times. There were only 13 responses and the majority said that they didn't want this and couldn't help with running it. Full results to follow.

7.4: Newsletter: SG is aiming to publish a newsletter by the end of the month and is awaiting a response from the printers about costs and timeframes. Locals have been approached for content and adverts for the newsletter.

7.5: Playing Fields: The field is currently very wet! Bonfire night went very well, considering the recent wet weather on the night and in the run up to the event. The committee were commended by the chair on the marvellous job they did in organising it.

7.6: Village Maintenance: Nothing to report

8 – Planning: 2 applications since the last meeting, as per the appendix. The council decided that it will once again oppose planning application PAP/2021/0707 (Land to the west of Wulfric Avenue), which is being appealed, one the same grounds as before. Clerk to lodge the objection.

9 - Correspondence: as per the Appendix.

10 – Financial & insurance matters: 4 payments as per the appendix.

11 – Councillors matters & items for the next agenda: NH’s recent application for LED speed signs was unsuccessful as Main Road is deemed low risk and police accident statistics do not warrant it. Cllr Humphries (WCC) suggested positioning rumble strips on Main Road to see if this illustrates a need. NH to investigate.

*HS informed us that she has reported a tree on Cinders Lane which is potentially dangerous. APC would also like to add an item to December’s agenda relating to the possibility of an orchard being planted on an area of green space off Orchard Close.

12 – Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 13th December 2023.

13 - Clerk’s Annual Performance Review: NALC have announced new pay rates applicable from 1 April 2023 which will be implemented for APC from December. *SG discovered that the clerk has been underpaid by various amounts since April 2021 and that her salary is not in line with NALC SCP benchmarks. Backpay to be awarded in December, along with December’s salary. *The council was very pleased with the clerk’s standard of work and the support given to both members and residents.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed _____ Date_____

Produced by Lynsey Treadwell November 2023