

WHITSBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF ANNUAL ASSEMBLY AT 7.00PM ON WEDNESDAY 15TH MAY 2024 IN WHITSBURY VILLAGE HALL

1. Attendance Register, Apologies and Declarations of Interest.

Present: Cllr G Thompson (Chair), Cllr C Harper, Cllr H Sutton, Cllr G Dominey, Cllr S Husher

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Cllr J Richards (NFDC), Mrs J Kinsey, Mrs C Manning, Mr E Hale (Clerk)

No Declarations of Interest

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Assembly

2. Previous Minutes

The Chairman asked for approval of the Minutes from 24th May 2023. Councillors approved these and the Chairman signed the Minutes

3. Annual Report by Chairman

Annual Report by the Chairman to the Whitsbury Annual Parish Assembly

1. I would like to start my report, as last year, by saying a few thank yous. Firstly I would like to thank our elected representatives on the County and District Councils - Edward Heron and Janet Richards. Janet, you in particular have taken a close interest in our village and we really appreciate that. Edward Hale has been our Parish Clerk for many years and quite frankly, Edward, we could not do without you

2. Secondly I would like to thank all of those in the Village who give their time to help make our village the special place it is. I have counted at least 10 groups of volunteers - from church key holders to Village Hall trustees - who freely give their time to enable our village to function as well as it does. I make no apology for singling out Whitsbury Farm & Stud and the Harper family for special mention. None of us know the full extent of all you, Chris, and your family do for this village but I can assure you that it is hugely appreciated. Thank you

3. For the second year in succession your Parish Council has been able to draw on the Village Plan to guide us on where to focus our efforts. These fall into four main areas: traffic and speeding, broadband quality, mobile connectivity and village events. Significant progress has been made on most of these and those will be reported on in our parish meeting which follows. In addition to these we have dealt with our usual diet of planning, roads and other issues. I would like to make special mention of Geoff Dominey's persistence in progressing our traffic management plan and to the Village Social committee under Liz Dominey for so many excellent village events

4. Our village pub, The Cartwheel, continues to go from strength to strength thanks to the efforts of Paul & Annette - how lucky we are to have them. Shortly, I believe, you will not only be able to book a table but also a room for the night

5. Communication within the Village - a combination of WhatsApp, the website and the seasonal newsletter - have all helped to keep us informed and connected and that is mostly down to the work of Steve and Elaine Husher

6. Lastly, and in the context of the Village Plan, I believe we as a Parish Council have a duty to look ahead and try to anticipate those issues that sooner or later might impact our community so that, where possible, we might be able to influence the outcome. I mentioned some of these last year. I stress these are personal views and I'm not offering any prescription for them

These are

- Firstly - How we should manage the effect of wider development around us in Fordingbridge, Sandleheath etc and its impact on infrastructure? We are hoping to learn from Sandleheath's excellent Traffic Management Working Group. Time will tell how the significant amount of new housing in Fordingbridge will impact - presumably a lot more recreational use of our footpaths and gallops.
- Secondly - What steps we as a community can take to increase our resilience in the face of the Climate Crisis. Scientists are telling us we are in crisis - our elected politicians are not prepared to provide leadership, we as individuals can take steps to reduce our impact but what can we as a community do?
- Lastly - like many small country villages we have a church that is struggling to maintain relevance in an increasingly secular society and while there may be few who attend services many more would miss it hugely when weddings, baptisms and funerals were wanted. How do we ensure our church is preserved and relevant for future generations? I am glad to say that a small group is being formed to have discussions with Salisbury Diocese about how we can proactively manage the future of the four churches in the Western Downland benefice

4. Annual Financial Statement by Clerk

The balance in the Council Accounts has increased by £649.67 overall during the financial year
The Parish Council had £13,053.46 at the start of the year and now has £13,703.13.

The income for the year was £2,226.58 in total comprising £2,200.00 from the precept and £26.58 of interest on the bank accounts.

The expenditure for the year was £1,576.91 in total which includes £165.92 for insurance, £169.55 for printing, £105.44 for the website, £540.00 for grass cutting, and £396.00 for Clerk duties.

The Parish Council has only issued 11 cheques during the year, which are listed in the Accounts

Edward Hale. 19.05.24