

# Avebury Parish Council

## Annual Parish Meeting

Draft: minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 16 April 2019 at the Social Centre, High Street, Avebury SN8 1RF.

In these minutes, ACC stands for Avebury Cricket Club, AONB for North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, APC for Avebury Parish Council, ASC for Avebury Social Centre, ASSC for Avebury Sports and Social Club, ASSF for Avebury Sacred Sites Forum, CATG for Community Area Transport Group, ECB for England and Wales Cricket Board, EH for English Heritage, FWO for Fyfield and West Overton Parish Council, MAB for Marlborough Area Board, NT for the National Trust, OUV for Outstanding Universal Value, PCSO for Police Community Support Officer, SSEN for Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, TTRO for Temporary Traffic Regulation Order, UNESCO for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, WC for Wiltshire Council and WHS for World Heritage Site.

Time Started: 19:06

**Present:** Councillors Mr Stephen Stacey (Chairman), Dr Mike Bedford (Vice-Chair), Mrs Maggie Lewis (Vice-Chair), Mr Ben Butler, Mrs Lynzey Paradise, Ms Zandria Service and Mr Andrew Williamson, together with five guest speakers and 12 members of the public who were present for all or part of the meeting.

**Apologies:** Councillor Mr Terence O'Connor, Wiltshire Councillor Jane Davies, Tony Farthing, Judy Farthing (Civil Emergency Officer), Kate Fry, Michele Lomas (Chair of Avebury Community Shop), Sarah Simmonds (WHS Partnership Manager), Rev Maria Shepherdson, Emily Sykes (PCSO) and Jan Tomlin of the National Trust.

**In attendance:** Simon Brooks (Head Gardener NT), Dominic Fry (Chair of ACC), Chris Gater (Avebury Community Shop), Melanie Grace (SSEN Customer and Community Advisor), Catherine Hosie (Wiltshire Countryside Estate Manager NT), Helen Miah (WHS Partnership Officer), Jan Polack (Chair of Orchard Group), Helen Vass (SSEN Customer and Community Advisor) and Miss Liz Moore, Clerk to APC.

- Welcome and introductions:** The Chairman opened the meeting by warmly welcoming everyone. He explained that Jane Davies (Wiltshire Councillor) was at another meeting involving a planning dispute but he hoped that she would be able to join the meeting later. A special welcome was extended to the meeting's guests: Helen Miah from the World Heritage Site Partnership Unit; Simon Brooks and Catherine Hosie from the National Trust; Helen Vass and her colleague Mel from Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks. The Chairman then introduced himself and his colleagues on the Parish Council who were present at the meeting that night including the two Vice-Chairs Maggie Lewis and Mike Bedford, Ben Butler, Lynzey Paradise, Zandria Service, Andrew Williamson and Liz Moore (Parish Clerk). Thanks were expressed to Kate Fry, who worked on the PC's website throughout the year, David Throup, the editor of the Upper Kennet News, who published headlines from the PC's meetings every month, John Giles, who expertly repaired parish property, and the Parish Steward, Will Lee, who spent half a day each month carrying out highway related work in the Village but did

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much more than a half-day's work. The Chairman explained that various people would be asked to speak during the meeting and that he would be grateful if everyone could restrict their presentation to 10 minutes. He said that input from the public on tasks for the PC over the next 12 months would be welcome.

2. **Minutes of the annual Parish meeting held on 24 April 2018.** (Draft minutes published on Parish Council web site <http://aveburyparishcouncil.org>). The Chairman asked if the draft minutes were accurate and it was unanimously agreed that they were an accurate record. The Chairman to sign the minutes.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes:** there were none.
4. **Report on the work of the Parish Council and local organizations** in the past year:
  - a. **Elections and membership:** the Chairman explained that one member of the Parish Council had recently resigned; Paul Ryder Morris had re-joined the PC last year but soon after had moved away from the parish. Mr Andrew Williamson was about to resign and that his last meeting on the council would be next month. The Chairman said that Andrew's service to the community over many years had been remarkable and invited members of the public to show their appreciation for his dedication and service, and there was vigorous applause. It was noted that as an election had not been called for the first vacancy, the PC could now co-opt a new member to the PC and the Chairman encouraged applications for the role. A notice for the second vacancy would be published in due course.
  - b. **Wiltshire Council:** an update was not available as Jane Davies (Wiltshire Councillor) was not present.
  - c. **World Heritage Site Partnership Unit:** the Chairman thanked Helen Miah for attending the meeting. Mrs Miah provided the following report:
    - The WHS Partnership Unit was looking at whether it could become an independent Charity by exploring setting up an independent Trust - grant funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund.
    - They would be commenting on work on the A303 as part of the Development Consent Order process as it developed in relation to the WHS Management Plan and OUV.
    - Funding from Highways England legacy designated funds might be used for exploring the WHS and Beyond - Landscape Access, Sustainable Tourism and Sustainable Transport strategies, Avebury would be involved and they would work via the Committees to ensure engagement.
    - Ridgeway TRO and repairs were planned from 1 May 2019 for 6 months.
    - World Heritage Day 2019 was taking place on the 18 April and they had been working with two schools, Kennet Valley C of E VA Primary School and Chiseldon Primary School on a project using film and photos to raise awareness of the WHS with the children. Mrs Miah expressed thanks to the Avebury World Heritage Site Charity for providing funding for the project so that they could commission Create Studios (Swindon) to help the children make animated storyboards depicting some of the key issues concerned with managing the monuments at Avebury. See the following link for Chiseldon Primary School's Avebury Wall Time Lapse video.
    - The Science Museum in London had hosted a Virtual Avebury installation comprising of 3D, fully immersive simulation of Avebury Stone Circle, as it may have appeared circa 2,300 BCE. The evening event had been for adults only and had involved research staff from Bournemouth University

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including Liz Falconer (Academic Learning Advisor). The technology had also been set up at the Great Barn in Avebury on various days in 2018. See the following link for further details.

- Megalith 2018 and 19: residents were invited to take copies of 2018 Megalith magazine; the Visions and Values document and encouraged to contribute to the magazine by sharing their stories for a new article about 'Living inside the World Heritage Site'.
- Transport: signage throughout the village was being refreshed, replaced and updated including improvements to accessing the NT car park, verges, yellow lines and improvements to the B4003.

**Mrs Miah invited questions from members from the public.** A member of the public expressed interest in the augmented reality view of Avebury and was astounded that the technology had not been more heavily promoted. He asked how it might be possible to bring the installation to Avebury on a more permanent basis. Ms Hosie (Wiltshire Countryside Estate Manager NT) reported that a number of Universities were using the technology but it was expensive and more likely that people would get to access a virtual tour of Avebury Stone Circle on a screen. The Chairman thanked Mrs Miah and Ms Hosie for their presentation and advice respectively.

- d. **National Trust:** see appendix 1 for the NT's update and leaflets. Simon Brooks (Head Gardener) gave a talk about restoring the gardens at Avebury to full health, looking after the wildlife and the challenges. The challenges included: limiting the spread of box blight, managing the effects of climate change; controlling pests and diseases; invasive species and visitor numbers. He described several measures being used to manage the challenges such as: (i) temporarily restricting access by visitors to parts of the garden using hurdle barriers (ii) using natural materials for composting to help make plants more resilient, using organic fertilizers and leaf mould (iii) planting a wild flower meadow to encourage insects and wildlife (iv) collecting plant seeds and propagating plants in the greenhouse for use in the NT's garden and elsewhere and (v) following a quarantine process when introducing new plants. Mr Brooks reported that Avebury had recently achieved the NT award for plant health standards. He added that plants were recovering and there had been an increase in insect numbers. In addition, the team had removed 60% of the silt in the pond and seen a re-emergence of amphibians and large prehistoric beetles. Other work and new ideas at Avebury involved him working with schools on a growing project, setting up an Easter Trail and hedgehog hotel, making the compost bins more visible to the public, setting up the 50 Things Activity Sessions for kids and producing cut flowers in the kitchen garden. **Mr Brooks invited questions from members from the public.** A question was asked about whether the NT sold the cut flowers they produced and Mr Brooks confirmed that the flowers were available for purchase and flowers including produce could be selected and bought from the bench area in the kitchen garden. A member of the public reported that they had very much enjoyed the Sculptor in the Garden Exhibition. There were no further questions and the Chairman thanked Mr Brooks for his presentation.
- e. **SSEN Ridgeway Region:** SSEN's Customer and Community Advisors, Melanie Grace and Helen Vass introduced the network operator's free Priority Services Register (PSR) that provides extra help and support for customers who might feel vulnerable during power cuts. Registration forms were tabled; see appendix 2 - for

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further information please call T. 0800 294 3259. The Community Advisors were keen for people to form a community working group of four to five people to help promote the service and distribute free safety lightsticks. Furthermore, SSEN had established a Resilient Communities Fund ([www.ssen.co.uk/resiliencefund](http://www.ssen.co.uk/resiliencefund)) to support communities in their power distribution network area to improve local resilience. £220,000 was available for South Central England SSEN area and community groups could apply for funding from £1,000 up to a maximum of £20,000. Examples were given for what the grants could be used for and included: purchasing a snow plough, kitting out a Village Hall or purchasing a generator. Members of the public were reminded that the new government number for power cuts was 105 or people could use the online Power track Application for mobile telephones. Thanks were expressed to the ladies for introducing SSEN's new service.

- f. **Community Orchard:** Jan Polack (Chair of Orchard Group) explained that the Community Orchard had been set up as a permanent reminder of the Queen's Jubilee and that since the 1950's huge numbers of orchards had disappeared from the UK. The Orchard Group had planted 17 fruit trees and with the help of local volunteers had rejuvenated the hedge on the eastern boundary of the Sports Field. She said that it was difficult to find parcels of land to plant fruit trees and so the group had started the 'foster a tree scheme' and had already provided 10 trees to local people for their gardens. Mrs Polack said that she was very grateful to ACC and especially to Bruce and Greg for cutting the grass around the Community Orchard and looking after the trees. In the past year the Orchard Group had focused on supporting Space For Nature and had carried out Autumn bulb planting in the Community Shop's garden and along the periphery of the Sports Field. They would also have a stall at the plant fair taking place on Sunday 28 April at the Sports Field in aid of the new Pavilion and would welcome any donations of plants or books. The Chairman thanked Jan for her report.
- g. **Avebury Sports and Social Club:** Mr Dominic Fry (Chair, ACC) introduced the fundraising work that was being carried out by ASSC, ACC and the Sports Field Committee and explained that costs for building a new Pavilion had increased from £73,000.00 to up to £115,000.00. Ancillary costs included needing to install a septic tank and a three-phase electric power supply. He said that the organizations were very grateful to private funding from individuals (£24,000.00), MAB (£5,000.00), APC (£1,000.00), The Community Shop (£5,000.00), Sustainable Development Fund (£18,000.00), a loan provided by the ECB and several other sources of financial assistance. Thanks were also expressed to Ms Hosie (Wiltshire Countryside Estate Manager NT) for her assistance and for being such a great communicator and thanks expressed to all.
- h. **Avebury Social Centre:** the Chairman read out the report provided by Mrs Farthing: 'Avebury Social Centre has had an interesting year. The committee had a reorganization of roles, so that meant Judith Farthing became the Secretary and other members took on minor roles to ensure a more even distribution of responsibilities. We implemented a new booking and payment system thanks to Di Gater with a key box access which after some teething problems seems to be working well. Maintenance has been ongoing both in the garden, wasp nest, repairs to shed, hall gutters, and internal decoration. Thanks to Mark and Keith Paradise for altering the hatch doors which are now much safer. We have also hung the Reynell picture thanks to Pascale Stacey for framing it. That said we had some concerns with bookings as initially there were worries about the number of outside bookings (craft fairs etc.) we were taking to the detriment of locals wanting

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to use the hall. In an effort to address this we have tried to limit this by only allowing outside bookings up to 6 months in advance and reserving space for the Panto dates. Unfortunately this had an impact on income and the Social Centre will definitely be facing a considerable loss this year. It has to be said that if you want to keep the hall it has to be used by the locals!

- i. **Police Community Support Officer:** the Chairman explained that Emily Sykes was not present as she was off duty and in the process of becoming a Police Constable and that her successor would be in place in due course.
- j. **Community Shop:** Chris Gater introduced the work of the Community Shop and highlighted three items of importance **1)** The shop's year end had been at the end of February and it had had been a very profitable year hence why the shop had been able to donate £5,000.00 to the Avebury Pavilion Appeal **2)** The 10th Anniversary of the Community Shop had been celebrated at the end of February **3)** He wished to thank staff and volunteers for their hard work during the year and especially in keeping the shop open during the snowy period.
- k. **Transport Group: local road and footpath schemes:** Dr Bedford reported:
  - Beckhampton and West Kennett traffic calming projects continued to progress and the PC was extending activities with other surrounding Parish Councils.
  - Two requests to the Community Area Transport Group (CATG) were pending **1)** for renewing and extending the yellow lines and rebuilding and diminishing the informal layby on the B4003 and **2)** for a 40mph restriction on the Beckhampton Road between the roundabout and the 30mph restriction.
  - Agreement would hopefully be finalised the following day for renewing white and yellow lines on the High Street and Green Street and on the A4361 through the village and to replace brown and other signs in the village.
- l. Wiltshire Council had made the resurfacing FP22 and FP21 the top priority project for rights of way in the area for the current financial year. **The Chairman invited questions from members of the public.** A question was asked about how the work on FP22 and FP21 would be managed. Dr Bedford said that it would probably be done one section at a time. A question was asked about whether the stonework would be repaired as it should be level with the tarmac and that in previous years the overflow to the river (at Juggins Meadow) had been blocked up by the NT resulting in the water level increasing by 4-6 inches by Big Arch Bridge. The Clerk said that the PC would pass the information to WC and the design consultants so that they might consider re-installing a pipe to channel the water away from the footpath. There were no further questions and thanks were expressed to Dr Bedford for his report.
- m. **Community High Speed Broadband:** the Chairman stated that the PC was carrying out research on high speed broadband because it was important to future proof Avebury. Members of the public were encouraged to fill in an on-line survey located on the PC's web site to enable the PC to collect statistics and gauge interest.
- n. **Community Play Area:** Mrs Paradise gave a slide presentation to show the existing Play Area, results of a community survey and ball park figures from one supplier. Survey results found that 54 responses had been received, 45% of

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respondents hadn't used the Play Area in the last 12 months, 65% rated the equipment as poor; 2% good, 80% would use the Play Area if improvements were made and 70% felt the Play Area was in the correct location. The largest group of potential users was going to be 4-7 year old but older children too. Future proofing the equipment and selecting play equipment that fitted the sensitive rural setting was of importance. Ball park figures suggested that designing a new Play Area could cost in the region of £57,000.00; including new surfacing and that using timber product was £1,000.00 cheaper. Mrs Paradise said that she would continue to meet with representatives from play equipment specialists, source funding and set up a final consultation with the community. **Mrs Paradise invited questions from members of the public.** A question was asked about whether the timber used would be from sustainable resources and length of guarantee. Mrs Paradise said that any timber products used would be treated and feet put in steel holders to prolong longevity and that play equipment might be guaranteed for 20-25 years. The Chairman thanked Mrs Paradise for her report.

- o. **Planning decisions:** the Chairman explained that an important task for the Parish Council was to respond to requests from Wiltshire Council asking the PC to express an opinion about planning applications. There had been 21 of these during the past 12 months. The first was to install photovoltaic panels on a grain store; the most recent was for work to trees in the Rectory. The PC approved or did not object to 18 of the 21 applications and in some cases asked for conditions to be applied. WC approved 2 of the 3 to which the PC objected. The last one was an application to build a large house on South Street; the PC objected to the original application and to the re-application. The Chairman stressed that PC planning meetings had also included site meetings and that they were one of the most important jobs the PC did to express the views of the community. In addition, the PC had agreed a policy on trees that ask applicants seeking approval for work involving the felling of trees to consider planting replacements either on their own land or elsewhere.
- p. **Civil Emergency Plan:** Mrs Lewis reported that each Parish had an Emergency Plan and that she would like to have someone in each area of Avebury to act as a local contact. The current Emergency Plan for Avebury had been recently updated and included a list of skilled local people who could be called upon in an emergency. A copy of the plan was held by WC, APC and Rev Maria Shepherdson. Mrs Lewis, Mrs Farthing and WC also held a list of vulnerable people.
- q. **Arrangements for Summer Solstice:** Mrs Paradise reported that the TTRO covering the Parish would be the same as the previous year and that those households that needed permits for parking or access to the High Street would need to collect them from a drop in session. Dates and times for the drop in sessions would be confirmed in due course and residents were advised that they would need to bring proof that they lived in the Parish. Mrs Paradise confirmed that WC had been asked to put Community Support Officers at Avebury Trusloe and Green Street and they would be informing her about the costs. **Members of the public were asked if they had any questions.** A question was asked about whether the funding was for Police. Mrs Paradise clarified that extra funding was for WC Community Support Officers (CSOs). A question was asked about

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whether the Ridgeway would be closed during Solstice. Mrs Paradise said that a TTRO was in place from 1 May 2019 but people would still be able to park on the first part of the Ridgeway (accessed from the A4 only). Thanks were expressed to Mrs Paradise for her report.

- r. **Precept, finance and admin, data protection and improvements to Parish Council website:** the Chairman stated that given all the work the PC undertook, some of which would require significant sums to implement, the PC had agreed a modest increase in the precept. Last year the PC spent about £14,000 and received about £12,000 and so had to draw on its reserves. The PC's books and accounts were available for anybody who wanted to look at them via the Clerk. The PC had reviewed the information it kept in line with the General Data Protection Regulation and was confident that it was compliant. The Chairman said that he was glad to say that, with many thanks to Kate Fry, the website was in good order.
- **Local issues from the Parish Council:** the past year and for the next 12 months: The Chairman reported that over the past 12 months the PC had:
    - Installed a defibrillator in the 'phone kiosk in Avebury Trusloe and repainted the kiosk.
    - Replaced chain link fencing around the Play Area at Avebury Trusloe.
    - Re-installed the baby swing at the Play Area.
    - Cleaned two bus shelters and restored electric light in them, and repaired glazing.
    - Repainted the bus shelter close to the Waggon and Horses. Thanks were expressed to Dave Brotheridge for carrying out the work.
    - Repaired one bench, replaced another, and restored all the others for which the PC was responsible. Thanks were expressed to Mark Paradise for his help.
    - Put back into service the street light on the gable wall of the building occupied by the post office in the High Street.
    - Provided donations to local charities including UKN and the Pavilion Appeal. In addition, the Parish Steward had been asked to repaint the railings on Big Arch Bridge and work was scheduled to take place in the next few months. Plans for the next 12 months included upgrading the Play Area and delivering high speed broadband which, funds permitting, the PC would try to deliver that year. The PC also wanted to push ahead with the Transport Group projects and was working hard to enable a speed restriction on the Beckhampton Road to be implemented. The Chairman explained that he had a monthly meeting with the National Trust and that he was very grateful to Jan Tomlin for giving so generously of her time for that purpose. The PC now had ample opportunity to discuss issues of common concern and to align thinking.

Finally the Chairman thanked everybody involved in making the community the special place that it was:

The litter-pickers

The police, the National Trust, the World Heritage Site, and Wiltshire Council

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Councillor Davies

Colleagues on the Parish Council

Very many others who unobtrusively and anonymously swept up, put things back, and helped generally

And members of the public, for coming to the Village meeting that night and enduring a long meeting.

- **Local issues from the public:** The Chairman asked if there were any requests for tasks for the PC over the next 12 months. A member of the public requested that the PC might look into residents' concerns about smart meters. The Chairman said that he would endeavour to help.
- **Any other business:** there was none.

The meeting closed at 20:34

**Appendices** (included in the book of Parish Council papers):

1. National Trust update - Spring 2019 and the following leaflets:
  - What's on in 2019 at Avebury and Avebury Manor
  - fundraising to re-thatch the Avebury Manor church wall
2. SSEN's Priority Services Registration Form

Documents available for inspection were the APC's minute book, audit reports, bank statements and books of account. The accounts were not inspected.