

IDRIDGEHAY ALTON AND ASHLEYHAY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 8 May 2019 at 6.30pm St James' Church Idridgehay

Chair: Councillor Robert Tatler
Clerk: Mrs Ros Hallam (Responsible Financial Officer)
Present: 11 members of the public
No apologies received

1. Chair's Overview of the Year

Cllr Tatler welcomed those present to the Annual Parish Meeting and presented his annual report:

The composition of the council remains as before, with two members representing Ashleyhay and five members Idridgehay and Alton. Councillor Hempshall, who represents Idridgehay and Alton, was co-opted onto the council at our September meeting, filling the vacancy caused by the death of Councillor White. I must congratulate my colleagues on our unopposed election to the council on 2nd May and we are now due to serve for the next four years.

Congratulations also to Councillor David Taylor on being re-elected to Amber Valley District Council for Alport Ward. David also serves on the County Council and we are all very grateful for how active he is on our behalf. The council has followed its customary pattern of meeting bi-monthly on the second Wednesday, normally at the village Corn Store. Members of the public are very welcome to attend to observe and there is fifteen minutes available for public speaking at the start of each meeting. Councillor David Taylor regularly attends in his capacity as our District and County Councillor and the Community Police Officer, Paula Bennett, also attends on occasion. Again this year, planning matters have figured largely on our agenda. Amber Valley District Council notifies our parish clerk of all planning applications in the parishes and the council then considers each one on its merits, and if necessary comments appropriately. Without going into the details of individual applications, I think it would be fair to say that we often disagree very strongly with some of the decisions Amber Valley reach and it is quite apparent that whilst we are most anxious to uphold and protect the integrity of the Special Landscape Area, which covers most of the parishes, and likewise the Conservation Area in Idridgehay, the same cannot always be said for Amber Valley. We are attempting to monitor how Amber Valley implements our Neighbourhood Plan and it has been referred to by them in some of their decisions and apparently ignored in others. In particular the non-implementation of the landscaping scheme at the pig farm off Wirksworth Road where the farmer appears to have been successfully running rings around the council has caused us great concern. Notwithstanding that, it is heartening to report that Amber Valley have just refused the two latest applications for the pig farm and state that our Neighbourhood Plan and the Special Landscape Area were both taken into consideration when reaching their decisions. This has to be good news and hopefully bodes well for the future. In the meantime we have great sympathy with the frustration expressed by Crich Parish Council over a recent decision by Amber Valley's Planning Department and have written to them expressing our support as they attempt to get the matter referred for a judicial review.

A first, and a very unwelcome one for Idridgehay, was the arrival one Thursday evening in late August of a number of travellers' caravans on the playing field. Local residents expressed concern and the police notified and two caravans were moved on straight away. On the Friday morning both Amber Valley and the county council were contacted to ask what assistance they could give and for advice as to what to do. The Parish Council is not the owner of the playing field, which is leased from Fields in Trust, but is responsible for its maintenance and upkeep. Neither Amber Valley or the county council would offer any official assistance but Councillor Taylor was able to put our parish clerk in touch with a helpful Amber Valley official who suggested we contact a local legal firm who specialise in these matters. Derbyshire Legal Services were duly approached and for the sum of £420 plus vat served a notice to quit on the group. Much to our relief they moved away on the following Tuesday, saving the council a further charge for employing bailiffs. The four days they had occupied the site had not resulted in too much mess, and they had bagged most of it up themselves, so with the help of my colleagues on the council we were able to clean up and take the bags of waste to the tip at no cost to the council.

This left us with the problem of how to prevent a re-occurrence. After some discussion amongst ourselves and with Steven Bowler who maintains the field for us we settled on blocking the entrance to the field with about a dozen very heavy lumps of limestone from Longcliffe Quarries for £520 plus vat. Steven Bowler then positioned them to deny access to any more travellers and their caravans but in such a way that he can still get on the field with a tractor and trailer. Hopefully this will be the end of the matter. I must gratefully acknowledge the receipt of a grant of £200 from Councillor Taylor's DCC Leadership scheme which was used to partly defray this expenditure.

After a couple of quite successful sessions our Community Speed Watch scheme was suspended last summer, due to irregularities elsewhere, and we are still awaiting for its reinstatement. In February there was a free refresher training session for local residents in the use of the defibrillators. During the year two parish newsletters have been produced and distributed and the parish website has been updated. We are very grateful to Councillor Ibbett for editing and creating the newsletters and for the work he does in tending the website. We have a smart new grit bin on the bend on Cliffash Lane and the snow warden scheme remained in operation, many thanks to Hazel and Michael Haslam who again volunteered as wardens, and the free supply of grit was once more received. Luckily this winter was virtually free of snow.

I must, as always, thank our excellent Parish Clerk, Ros Hallam, for the highly efficient and enthusiastic way she does her job! We are very fortunate to have her and she is a real asset to the council and the whole community. It is encouraging to note that there is definitely more of a community spirit about than a few years ago. More fund-raising and social events happen and they are generally well supported. We had a highly successful Village Fete in July with a profit of nearly £3,200 (we were again blessed with excellent weather). The Quiz Night in the

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autumn in the Church and the Christmas Social at the Black Swan went very well, as did the Beetle Drive – I think another first for Idridgehay. I am not claiming that these events are organised by the Parish Council, indeed most are organised by and run mainly in aid of the Church. But the Council and its individual members work closely together with the church to support community events, as do the group of volunteers who maintain the church and churchyard and others the millennium garden. I have certainly said this before, but it does bear repeating, we may be only a very small and spread out community, but at least we are all singing, with some enthusiasm, from the same hymn sheet!

2. Finance Report for the year ended 31 March 2019

Mrs Hallam, as Responsible Financial Officer, presented the annual financial report:

The council bank accounts started the year at £9,296.31 including £1,239.97 on behalf of the Idridgehay Defibrillator Fund. At the end of March they amounted to £9,491.87 with £1,009.97 held on behalf of the Idridgehay Defibrillator Fund. After deducting set aside accounts for potential election costs, contingency, and IDF funds, the year ended with reserves of £3,831.19 some £49.37 less than the year before. The council's main source of income remains the Parish Precept having no rental income that other parishes have from say a village hall or allotments. This precept is collected by Amber Valley as part of the Council Tax and paid in 2 equal instalments in April and September. For the year ending 31 March 2019 the precept amounted to £4,853. The council received its usual grant of £495 from DCC to help maintain the parishes' footpaths and a further £200 from Cllr Taylor's DCC Community Leadership Scheme which helped towards the costs of securing the Idridgehay Playing Field after the eviction of the travellers last summer. As usual, half of all expenditure consisted of the clerk's salary and costs associated with parish upkeep. Other fees and overheads were not as large as budgetted despite the unanticipated costs associated with the eviction of the travellers, and as a result income exceeded expenditure for the year by £195.56. However costs and unavoidable overheads are expected to increase over the next 12 months. As the government still threatens to extend the 2% limit in increases in council tax to parish councils, in January the council approved a 5% increase in the Precept for 2019/20 amounting to an additional £243. The Internal Audit for the year to 31 March 2019 has been successfully completed. The completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return is here for signature at the Annual Parish Council meeting that follows and will then be published on the council's website together with Statutory Notice showing when the council's accounts are available for public inspection.

3. **Derbyshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, Hardyal Dhindsa**, gave a short presentation on his role and responsibilities which can be found on the parish council's website at www.iaa-pc.org.uk under Parish Council Agendas and Minutes.

4. PCC Dhindsa then agreed to answer questions from the public:

Cllr Taylor asked how the 120 new police staff would be deployed and the Commissioner said they would include increases in the Safer Neighbourhood, and 22 Investigators and 11 Neighbourhood Investigation Officers. Cllr Taylor also asked why the County Council is opposed to the installation of vehicle activated signs (VAS) in villages. To which the commissioner said that this is no longer the case. Cllr Taylor finally asked if the Commissioner's Office represented value for money. PCC Dhindsa replied by saying that replacing the previous policing committee (consisting of delegates) with an elected commissioner had led to an overall saving of £100,000 in costs whilst retaining the same civil service support team and increasing availability to 24hours 7 days a week. Alan Hickling said that it seemed like the police now had less power over other authorities such as Severn Trent and by using CCTV and technology, remote policing could be more effective in recording crime in a cost effective manner, for speeding traffic for example. The Commissioner acknowledged that there was a lack of coordination between local authorities leading to lack of clarity over responsibilities but he is working on this. He also stated that he will support requests for VAS's as an effective speed awareness tool and valued the work done by Community Speed Watch schemes. John Bennett pointed out that VAS units record speed and time which provide useful information needed to justify introducing speed restrictions, etc. Val Taylor asked what was being done about the lights at Alport Heights during the night. The Commissioner was unaware of any problem and said that anything of concern should be reported on 101.

5. Summing up and closure of the meeting

As there were no further comments from the members of the public, Councillor Tatler thanked those members of the public for their attendance and contributions closing the meeting at 19.40pm.

Signed **Chair** **Date`**