

MINUTES OF MEETING OF ASSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
Held in Assington Village Hall on Monday 27th January 2014

Present: Councillors S Thorogood (Chairman), C Heseltine, S King, B Stacey, J Symons and K Tatum.

Attending: J Jenkins (Babergh District Councillor), J Finch (Suffolk County Councillor), PC Marshall, D Crimmin (Clerk) and one resident.

14/001 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Symonds (appointment) sent her apologies.

14/002 Declaration of Interest

Cllr Heseltine declared a pecuniary interest in Item 14/009a as he is a recipient of a payment and left the meeting while this item was discussed.

14/003 Requests for Dispensation

None received.

14/004 General Power of Competence

The councillors resolved that as APC met the criteria for the Clerk's qualification and the number of councillors that stood at the 2011 Parish Council Election, that APC would adopt the General Power of Competence.

14/005 Minutes of Meeting held on 16th December 2013

The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

14/006 Public Forum

Concerns were raised by a resident on the speed of traffic in the 30mph zone through the village with particular reference to the dangers that this presented to children disembarking the bus services. James Finch is to arrange a speed survey of the village as well as ensuring that speed activated signs are positioned in the village for a period during 2014. The Police will conduct random speed checks in the village and administer appropriate enforcement action. APC will review the results of these initiatives before seeing if a priority for the Police's Safer Neighbourhood Team should be requested. The remaining issues raised in the public forum are contained in Appendix A

14/007 Routine Correspondence (Appendix B)

After reviewing the Routine Correspondence and the emails circulated by the Clerk since the last scheduled meeting the councillors noted the concerns raised by an Edwardstone resident over the proposed Solar Farm in Newton.

14/008 Clerk's Report (Appendix C)

After reviewing the Clerk's Report the councillors agreed that in relation to Item 13/146 that Cllr King prepare a proposal for sign(s) at the entrance to the Vicary Estate and the Clerk to check with Babergh if the signs needed planning permission.

14/009 Finance

- a. All cheques signed and due for signing, as itemised in Appendix D, were authorised by the councillors. The councillors also noted the income received since the last meeting, the reconciliation of bank accounts against the bank statements, and the Statement of

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Accounts against the Budget.

- b. Following a review of the agreed Expenditure budget and proposed reserves (Appendix E) the councillors resolved to set a Precept of £7,362.96 for 2014 / 2015 which will mean a 0% increase in the Band D Council Tax. The councillors further resolved that if the Government introduces a Precept Cap on APC for 2014 / 2015, then the Precept is to be set so that the Band D Council Tax is 0.05% below the threshold of the referendum criteria so avoiding a referendum.

14/010 Planning

- a. The councillors reviewed **Planning Application Solar Farm, Further Street** - Erection of 1 No. detached bungalow for an agricultural worker, replacing a mobile home (with an agricultural occupancy condition) and resolved to object as, in the councillors' opinion, the application did not meet the criteria of Babergh's Local Policy CR12. In particular:
- i. The applicant does not work solely in Assington
 - ii. The scale of the proposed dwelling and the needs of the agricultural worker.
- b. A further planning application had been received since the agenda was posted. The councillors reviewed **Planning Application B/13/01490 Church Hill Barn, The Street** - Application for Listed Building Consent - Conversion of barn to form 1 No. dwelling. Amendments to existing approvals ref: B/12/01347/FUL and B/12/01413/LBC and resolved that they supported the application.
- c. The status of planning applications previously reviewed by APC are as follows:

BDC Ref	Application	APC Ref	Date of Response	APC Response	BDC Response
B/08/00316	Enforcement Reference following APC's question re vehicular access at 8 The Gurdons			Raised	
	Heritage enquiry re Bambridge Hall	12/115			
B/13/01060	Hill Farm, Brick Kiln Lane - Construction of an anaerobic digestion plant, 500kW combined heat and power plant and associated infrastructure.	13/129	26/11/13	Support	Approved 18/12/2013
B/13/01424	Hill Farm, The Street - Erection of new windows and single storey extension.	13/144	26/11/13	Support	Approved 15/01/2014
B/13/01425	Hill Farm, The Street - Application for Listed Building Consent - Insertion of new windows. Erection of single-storey extension. Internal alterations comprising of replacement floor; Insulations to ceilings and walls in kitchen; New internal doors; Works to fireplace; New stud wall.	13/144	26/11/13	Support	Approved 15/01/2014

14/011 Licensed Path, Footpaths and Assets

- a. Cllr Heseltine has now supplied the necessary agreement from the 3 landowners so that SCC can now start the work on the licences.
- b. Footpath Cutting contract deferred to next meeting.

14/012 National Grid Power Line

National Grid has announced that the project is deferred with the likelihood the Community Forums will re-commence in 2 years' time.

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14/013 Affordable Housing

Orwell Housing Association has indicated the development of the dwellings will commence in mid February 2014.

14/014 Allotments and conservation area

The councillors' requests with regard to the two draft leases are being considered by BDC.

14/015 Tree Planting

The tree to commemorate the QDJ has now been planted. Ceremony to install plaque to be discussed at next meeting.

14/016 BDC Consultation on Draft Statement of Community Involvement

After reviewing the draft SCI document the councillors did not have any comments.

14/017 Effectiveness of Internal Audit and Internal Control processes

The councillors reviewed the current system of APC's internal audit and internal controls and resolved that they were satisfied:

- With the review of the Internal Audit as per Appendix F
- That the scope of the audit is in accordance with The Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England and Wales, A Practitioners Guide 2010 and the guidelines issued by BDO LLP and by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils
- With the report provided by the internal auditor at the conclusion of audit for review by APC.
- The councillors further resolved that Mr White's scope of internal audit work was in accordance with the role required to be undertaken by the internal auditor for APC
- With the Internal Control processes undertaken by the council.

The councillors resolved that a small gift should be given to the Internal Auditor as a thank you for his work at the last year end.

14/018 Risk Management Register

Following a review of APC's Risk Management Register the councillors considered the register appropriate for APC's level of operations.

14/019 Question to the Chair

Cllr Stacey will liaise with SALC on the subject of the Clerk's Gratuity.

14/020 Dates of next meeting

The next scheduled meeting of APC will take place on the 31st March 2014 starting at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

Appendix A Public Forum

Jennie Jenkins updated councillors on the Council Tax, Core Strategy, Community Achievement Awards and Babergh's proposed role in promoting Apprenticeships in Schools. James Finch reported on Better Broadband in Suffolk, Budget proposals, Adoption, Apprenticeships, Rail Services and the increase in chimney fires.

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PC Marshall gave the following Police Report. This report covers the period from **24/12/2013 to 22/01/2014**. During this time there has been 0 crimes recorded within the parish, this compares to 2 crimes for the same period last year.

Appendix B Routine Correspondence

Cores Log Ref	Date Received	Raised by	Regarding	Agenda	Routine	Clerk Notes
CA13017		Newsletters	Clerk & Councils Direct / The Local Councillor		√	TLC is in the meeting pack.

Appendix C Clerk's Report

Minute	Action	Complete ✓
13/110	SCC has started process of drawing up new agreements for permissive footpath.	
13/110	Footpath Map under development	
13/117	Assington website has now been developed as far as information provided allows.	✓
13/117	Damaged grit bin reported to SCC.	
13/124	Notes sent to Assington Magazine and placed on website.	✓
13/128	Suppliers paid.	✓
13/129	Planning Application response sent to SCC.	✓
13/130	Awaiting price of dog bags from Sudbury Town Council.	
13/135	Dates sent to SCC , BDC councillors and Police.	✓
13/136	Issue regarding lighting at Pump Farm referred to BDC Enforcement.	✓
13/144	Planning Application responses sent to BDC.	✓
13/145	Proposed amendments to leases sent to Babergh	✓
13/146	Issue raised with SCC regarding bus turning into Vicary Estate. Cllr King now communicating with SCC.	✓
Date	Other Issues	
	Clerk Hours to 29th December - Worked 144.25 Paid 156	

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Appendix D RFO Report

Receipts & Payments

Date	Details	Ref	Power	Receipts	Payments
02/12/13	Interest 2 Sept to 1 Dec	BS185		1.26	0.00
27/01/14	CR Heseltine - P3 cutting	664	Highways Act 1980 ss 43, 50	0.00	118.80
27/01/14	CR Heseltine - Permitted Footpath Maint	664	Highways Act 1980 ss 43, 50	0.00	180.48
27/01/14	Chris Mortimer - Dog Bin installation	665	Litter Act 1983 ss 5, 6	0.00	38.40
27/01/14	BDC - Dog Bin	666	Litter Act 1983 ss 5, 6	0.00	76.70
27/01/14	PWLB - Loan Repayment	D/Dr		0.00	786.66

Reconciliation

	Statement Date	Statement Balance	Actual Balance	Unpresented Cheques	Credits not shown	Difference
Community Premium Accounts	31/12/13 31/12/13	£100.00 £9,722.33	£8,621.29	£1,201.04	£0.00	£0.00
Cash	31/12/13	£0.00	£0.00			£0.00
		£9,822.33	£8,621.29	£1,201.04	£0.00	

Statement of Accounts vs Budget

	Budget	Actual		Reserves	Budget	Actual
Assets B/Forward		£4,468.28				
Income			Expenditure			
Precept	£7,000.00	£7,000.00	Clerks Salary		£2,007.00	£1,346.31
Grants	£322.30	£255.80	Admin	£150.00	£1,020.00	£635.36
Bank Interest	£5.00	£3.48	Donations		£600.00	£350.00
Loan	£0.00	£0.00	Street Lighting		£620.00	£0.00
Other	£0.00	£661.00	Street Lighting Upgrade		£0.00	£0.00
VAT Repayment	£0.00	£1,146.62	Insurance		£350.00	£317.42
			Inspection		£100.00	£100.00
			P3 Scheme		£250.00	£207.00
			Licensed Footpaths		£150.00	£150.40
			Contingency		£500.00	£108.70
			Maintenance		£200.00	£0.00
			Loan Repayment		£1,392.66	£1,423.34
			Loan Interest		£180.66	£149.98
			VAT Paid		£0.00	£125.38
Total	£7,327.30	£9,066.90	Total	£150.00	£7,370.32	£4,913.89
Total		£13,535.18	Assets C/Forward			£8,621.29
			Total			£13,535.18

Unclaimed VAT = £ 125.38

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Appendix E Precept 2014 / 2015

At the November meeting you agreed an expenditure budget of £8,005.32 for 2014 / 15.

	2012 / 13		2013 / 14			2014 / 15
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual to Date	To year end	Budget
Income						
Grants	1,000.00	322.30	322.30	255.80	255.80	255.80
Bank Interest	5.00	7.48	5.00	2.22	5.00	5.00
Loan	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other	0.00	30.00	0.00	661.00	661.00	0.00
VAT Repayment	0.00	387.31	0.00	1,146.62	1,146.62	0.00
Total Income	1,005.00	747.09	327.30	2,065.64	2,068.42	260.80
Precept		7,000.00			7,000.00	
Expenditure						
Clerks Salary	1,957.00	1,948.22	2,007.00	1,346.31	1,967.67	2,007.00
Admin	1,000.00	858.56	1,020.00	475.36	1,000.00	1,100.00
Donations	600.00	600.00	600.00	350.00	600.00	600.00
Street Lighting	570.00	478.94	620.00	0.00	620.00	650.00
Street Lighting Upgrade	5,000.00	15,323.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Insurance	346.97	346.97	350.00	317.42	317.42	355.00
Inspection	135.00	135.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
P3 Scheme	250.00	225.00	250.00	108.00	250.00	275.00
Licensed Footpaths	150.00	343.40	150.00	0.00	150.00	175.00
Allotments / Conservation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	375.00
Contingency	408.03	0.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00
Maintenance	160.00	160.28	200.00	0.00	200.00	295.00
Loan Repayment	1,600.00	1,398.76	1,392.66	708.57	1,417.14	1,417.14
Loan Interest	0.00	174.56	180.66	78.09	156.18	156.18
VAT Paid	0.00	1,146.62	0.00	69.10	250.00	0.00
Total Expenditure	12,177.00	23,139.68	7,370.32	3,552.85	7,528.41	8,005.32

Reserves held by APC

I am proposing that £750 be set aside to cover set-up and legal costs for the new allotments and conservation area and only a nominal increase in the reserve for Asset Replacement. The increase in the Clerk's Gratuity reserve is in accordance to his contract.

	2012 / 13		2013 / 14		2014 / 15	
	Start of year	End of year	Start of year	End of year	Start of year	End of year
Asset Replacement	500.00	600.00	600.00	700.00	700.00	800.00
Street Light Replacement	14,323.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Allotments / Conservation	0.00	0.00	0.00	750.00	750.00	0.00
Village Hall Hire	120.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Election Costs	1,100.00	1,100.00	1,100.00	1,100.00	1,100.00	1,100.00
Grants not spent	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Clerk Gratuity Fund	320.64	388.64	388.64	457.64	457.64	528.64
Total Earmarked Reserves	17,363.64	2,238.64	2,238.64	3,007.64	3,007.64	2,428.64
General Reserves	2,497.23	2,229.64	2,229.64	3,000.65	3,000.65	?

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Precept for 2014 / 2015

Barry Hunter, Babergh's Corporate Manager for Financial Services, has written to APC regarding the setting of the Precept for 2014 /2015:

Dear Parish Clerk/Chairman

PRECEPTS, TAXBASE AND GRANTS

I'm very sorry not to have got back to you sooner on this.

Firstly, there was nothing in the Autumn Statement about Council Tax threshold increases ('capping') or in the Government's financial settlement announcement on the 18 December - so we still await any details on this.

Mr Pickles has indicated that there will be an announcement on whether the existing 2% threshold will be changed (reduced) but no suggestions on whether this might or might not apply to Town and Parish Councils from April 2015.

Secondly, a reminder and clarification that we do not need your precept return for 2014/15 until the 31 January 2014. (The Form to complete is attached).

Now onto the taxbase and grants position, which is as follows:

- (a) Your 2014/15 taxbase and how this compares with 2013/14 is set out in the attached table
- (b) Some parishes are increasing and some reducing. This is partly as a result of reviewing the methodology and data used for both years, specifically in relation to the new Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR) scheme
- (c) As a result, we have decided to increase the grant payable in future years for some Town and Parish Councils and reduce some others (due to the methodology change on LCTR) in order to compensate and equalise income and produce what we see as a fair and equitable outcome
- (d) The table also sets out these grant changes.

This new amount of grant will be paid to you in addition to your precept.

I appreciate that you will need a little time to digest and understand these changes. Can I emphasise that a lot of careful thought has been given to the position as there are significant percentage increases and reductions to individual taxbases. We could clearly not leave individual Towns and Parishes with either significant taxbase reductions or 'windfall' increases, which would be unacceptable and unfair.

Overall, the Council will be paying out more grant in 2014/15 than we previously agreed.

We believe that the result of these changes should not, therefore, impact detrimentally on any individual Town or Parish.

Should you require any further clarification or wish to discuss the position for your council, please do not hesitate to contact either Sue Palmer or myself.

The information that Barry has supplied is as follows:

Babergh District Council		Taxbase and Grants				
Parish	2013/14 Taxbase	2014/15 Taxbase	% Change	2014/15 Original Grant Due	Grant Adjustment	Total New Grant
	No.	No.	%	£	£	£
Assington	158.91	167.15	5.19%	£495.75	-£223.00	£272.75

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Using the projections for income, expenditure and earmarked reserves, APC will also need to consider the level it wishes to maintain its General Reserves. Best practice would suggest that the level of General Reserves should be somewhere between 50 -100% of main income.

The 3 examples I give below show:

Example 1 Increase the Precept by £200 to £7,200

Example 2 Increase the Precept but keeping the Band D Council Tax the same as in 2013/14

Example 3 If a referendum is applicable to APC then increase Example 2 by 1.95%.

The Council Tax that a Band D household in Assington pays is the Precept demanded by APC divided by the Taxbase for that year.

	2012 / 13	2013 / 14	2014 / 15	2014 / 15	2014 / 15
			Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
START OF YEAR					
Earmarked Reserves	17,363.64	2,238.64	3,007.64	3,007.64	3,007.64
General Reserves	2,497.23	2,229.64	3,000.65	3,000.65	3,000.65
Total Reserves	19,860.87	4,468.28	6,008.29	6,008.29	6,008.29
Income ex Precept	747.09	2,068.42	260.80	260.80	260.80
Precept	7,000.00	7,000.00	7,200.00	7,362.96	7,506.54
Total Income	7,747.09	9,068.42	7,460.80	7,623.76	7,767.34
Expenditure	23,139.68	7,528.41	8,005.32	8,005.32	8,005.32
END OF YEAR					
Earmarked Reserves	2,238.64	3,007.64	2,428.64	2,428.64	2,428.64
General Reserves	2,229.64	3,000.65	3,035.13	3,198.09	3,341.67
Total Reserves	4,468.28	6,008.29	5,463.77	5,626.73	5,770.31
Tax Base	172.68	158.91	167.15	167.15	167.15
Band D Council Tax	£40.54	£44.05	£43.08	£44.05	£44.91

As APC may not be aware of the Government's decision on Town & Parish Council Precept referendums when it meets nor the threshold that may be set then, unless you wish to have another meeting to finally resolve a Precept once the decision is made, the following could be added to your Precept decision and the Precept Upon Charging Authority form completed accordingly and returned to Babergh.

"If the Government introduces a Precept Cap on APC then the Band D Council Tax be set at 0.05% below the threshold of the referendum criteria."

This would ensure that a referendum would not be necessary for the Precept set by APC.

Finally, I would again recommend that the grant being given to APC by BDC in relation to the Precept is not taken into account when resolving the Precept and is treated as an unbudgeted grant for 2014/15.

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Appendix F Internal Audit

Expected Standard	Evidence of Achievement	Yes or No	If the answer is 'no', state the action to be taken
Scope of internal audit	Has the Council approved the scope of audit work? Is the Council satisfied with what the internal audit work covers or do you require any additional work?	Yes Yes	
Independence	Is the internal auditor independent from the management of the council?	Yes	
Competence	Is the internal audit work carried out with integrity, objectivity and a good understanding of local council legislation and procedures?	Yes	
Relationships	Is the Clerk/RFO consulted on the internal audit plan and the scope of each audit? Is the Clerk/RFO and the internal auditor aware of their responsibilities in relation to internal control? <i>(Refer to your councils risk management policies e.g. risk assessments, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations)</i> Do councillors understand their responsibilities for financial management? <i>(It is the council as a whole that is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control for all the activities and services that they undertake and provide, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.- Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide 2008)</i>	Yes Yes Yes	
Audit Planning and reporting	Does this audit plan take account of all the risks facing the council? Has this audit plan been approved by the council? Have you received an internal audit report following each audit?	Yes Yes Yes	

End of Appendices