

Ashbrittle Parish Council
Meeting 13/1/25

Present:

Charles Doble
Jeremy Robbins
Philip Wilson
Paul Leyland
Charlotte Westcott

1. Welcome to new councillor Charlotte
2. Previous minutes and any matters arising:

The minutes were approved.

PW confirmed the outstanding issue over the Heartbeat Trust invoice has been satisfactorily resolved.

3. Planning

JR confirmed all councillors were all responsible for their feedback on planning applications, and that APC only has an advisory role in planning.

CD said he thought the planning applications might now be going to PW. PW was unaware of this but said he would check.

4. Highways

CD asked if APC would fund the clearing of a roadside ditch near Heniton Hill. The contractor charges £350 per day and it was thought it would be easily achieved in less than a day.
Everyone agreed this should be fine.

PW shared concerns that the budget could be over-stretched if this was one of many payments. This led to a discussion that the county council has implied that parish councils will become increasingly responsible for the maintenance of highways - PW to contact the County Council for more exact information.

PL said there was a page on the County Councils site for reporting potholes and said he would share it on the Parish Council facebook page and parish mag.

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/potholes-and-road-damage/>

5. Finances

- 5.1 24-25

PW Reported on the finances for 24-25, prior expenditure and budgeted items.

There is still money itemised for repair and possible replacement of finger posts.

It was agreed the the best solution was to simply repaint those posts in reasonable condition and leave the more modern plastic and aluminium posts.

PL advertise for a contractor on Facebook.

5.2 Precept 25-26

The application for the new precept must be submitted by the end of the January. PW said our current spending exceeded the current precept due to support of the local shop provided by APC and other relevant PCs . It was discussed whether APC should consider raising the amount requested for 25-26 in light of the county Councils withdrawal of various annual grants and inflation. Two scenarios were looked into which would have a minimum impact on the council tax payments in the the parish. After discussion about rising costs and the role of the APC it was agreed by all that we should increase the precept in line with the 25-26 increase in State Pension of 4.1% to £2,395.00 and there there was a need to develop a future plan for the APC over the coming year so next year's precept could be judged more accurately and set accordingly.

Everyone agreed that some form of parish plan was needed. JR to explore the historic record of such planning. CW will also look into what might be involved

PL said that he had looked into the legalities of the council funding the church. He thought that the funding might be restricted to the churchyard and the clock as these are seen as community assets. CD disagreed with this and said it was dependant on interpretation.

CD suggested that a 'Friends of the Church' could be created to help with future funding etc. Councillors were supportive of this idea. JR said there was already various friends of the church including flower arrangers and clock winders to consult along with others in the community. As one of the clock winders PL indicated that he would not want any broader responsibility.

PL noted it had been mentioned at the last meeting to bring together various community groups such as APC, The Village Hall Committee, Ashbrittle Arts etc to consider how best to support the Church.

6. Date of next meeting

April 14th 2025 was agreed an appropriate time to sign off the 24-25 balance sheet.