

Aldham Annual Parish Assembly held on Tuesday, 4th April 2023
at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Aldham

Present: Cllr Jackie Daines (Chairman), Cllr Chris Hall, Cllr Brenda Brown,
Cllr Mike Lambert & Cllr Andrew D'Angibau, ECC Lewis Barber,
CBC Dennis Willetts and 1 resident & the Clerk, Mr G. Walkingshaw,

Apologies: Cllr Stuart Simpson & Cllr Adam Scott

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly Meeting 2022

The minutes of the above meeting were agreed as a true record.

The Chairman signed the minutes.

Proposed: Cllr Chris Hall

Seconded: Cllr Andrew D'Angibau

Chairman's Report 2023

At the start of 2022 there were two things uppermost on our minds at Aldham Parish Council.

The future of the current playing field and the problem with speeding vehicles both through Ford Street along the A1124 and through the village along New Road and Brook Road.

To start with the playing field – over the last few months I have had several communications with the Holme Family and a few weeks ago myself along with Grahame Walkingshaw, our Clerk had a zoom meeting with Pippa and Henry Holme.

Our lease runs out in June of this year but we have now been given an extension to this so the date we will have to vacate the field will be June next year.

As has been reported previously, at various parish council meetings, we did contact several local landowners with regard to obtaining an alternative site for a new play area. However, at the time, no one was able to accommodate our requirements.

However, Ben Hughes at Corvettes did subsequently offer us a piece of land that abuts the Village Hall car park, but after many discussions within the Parish Council it was decided, by a majority, that we did not pursue this offer. An offer that was going to be a gift to the village. This offer still stands, and we are very grateful to Ben for keeping the door open should we wish to reconsider.

So, the search continues and should there be future developments within the curtilage of the village then it is hoped that any such development will include a play area.

Speeding traffic continues to be a problem in all parts of the village.

Approximately 15 months ago we started negotiations to have a Vehicle Activated Sign installed in two sites within the village.

These signs are very expensive and after communication through Lewis Barber (Our Ward and County Councillor) it was agreed that we would enter into an agreement with both Fordham and Wormingford Parish Councils whereby we would jointly purchase and jointly own one of these VAS units.

Getting the necessary paperwork for this sign has been a challenge to put it mildly.

We need a licence from the Highways Authority and whilst this is almost completed the work to install the necessary poles to accommodate the VAS is ongoing.

We have an existing pole on the village green in Ford Street and this will need to be shortened slightly in order to accommodate an extension piece to facilitate the installation of the VAS unit and, at the same time, to have the current defunct sign removed.

The company carrying out the pole installations for Fordham and Wormingford would require close on £3,000.00 to carry out this work for us.

Needless to say, we are in the process of seeking an alternative quote.

We are still in possession of a speed gun and prior to Covid we did have an active Speedwatch Team, but this seems to have dwindled over the last couple of years, but is something we are looking to reinstate as soon as possible.

Another change that is now in place is the need to pre-book if you wish to offload rubbish at the Shrub End tip.

Blue Badge holders can still turn up at any time however.

I did question the necessity for this new regime as one would hope that this would not lead to more fly tipping. However, I am assured by our ward councillor (Dennis Willetts) that this has not been the case in other areas where the scheme has been trialled.

New planning applications are coming through all the time with various schemes centering mainly on extending and or improving the various dwellings.

Following a survey carried out by the Rural Community Council of Essex on our behalf it would appear that we do not have a pressing need for new development within our village.

It is understood that one or two landowners may be wishing to submit suggested housing schemes to Colchester City Council, so we will wait to see if and when any such applications are made.

This year sees Aldham Parish Council up for re-election.

We are a council of 7 members and if no more than seven submit their election forms then those seven will automatically be reinstated on to the Council.

More than seven applications then we will go to an actual election.

So, it now leaves me to say my usual thank yous.

To my fellow 6 Councillors who support and guide me when needed and to Grahame Walkingshaw our Parish Clerk who keeps our team well informed and supported.

Thank you one and all – its true to say that I couldn't do my job without you all.

Finance Report - 2022/ 2023

The Accounts for 2022/23 are in the process of being compiled before being forwarded to the Internal Auditor on the 15th April 2023.

The accounts will be approved at the Parish Council AGM on Tuesday 9th May 2023.

The accounts are exempt from External Auditors, as Parish Council's with revenue of less than 25k are no longer required to have them externally reviewed.

Total balances held by Aldham Parish Council as at 31 March 2023 are £7,513.26

This is around £3,000 down due to paying for a VAS sign (covered by the locality budget) & 2 VAS Posts (£541.73) (along with Fordham & Wormingford). We have also paid out rental on the playing field for 2023/2024, a new defibrillator (£752.40) & a street lighting repair of £308.20.

We will receive £1,290.71 on our VAT return for 2022/2023 – this will come into our account in April.

Matters raised by Residents

A resident informed the meeting that a drain outside the village hall has been causing flooding. ECC Lewis Barber would look into this on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Parish Clerk reported that the VAS sign had now been purchased by Aldham, Fordham & Wormingford Parish Council's.

An agreement between the three council's had now been completed by all three Parish Council's and would involve rotation of the VAS sign on a three-monthly basis.

The Parish Council recorded the agreement between Aldham, Fordham & Wormingford for the minutes of the meeting.

Proposed: Cllr Chris Hall

Seconded: Cllr Brenda Brown

Signed.....Chairman

Date.....

The meeting closed at 8.02 p.m.