



ALBRIGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Thursday 27th April at 7.30 pm in the St. Mary's Church Hall

PRESENT:

Cllr. P Harrison, Chairman of Albrighton Parish Council,
Mr M Ward, Parish Clerk for Albrighton Parish Council,
Mr J Campion, West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner,
31 members of the public.

1. Welcome and opening remarks by Cllr. Phil Harrison, Chairman of Albrighton Parish Council.

Cllr. Harrison welcomed everyone to the meeting which was the last of the four-year cycle prior to elections on the 4th May. The purpose of the meeting was to receive the Chairman's report and the Parish Clerk's financial statement and give members of the public the opportunity to ask questions and comment on both presentations. Mr John Campion, the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, would also be making a presentation on the latest developments in policing in the area.

2. Presentation of the Chairman of Albrighton Parish Council's Annual Report 2016/17.

Cllr. Harrison said that this was a difficult time for the Council as it came to terms with the county's policy of devolving services to town and parish councils in order to cope with budget cuts. It had already taken on extra responsibilities and it was likely that more would be coming in the next few years.

Cllr. Harrison spoke of the contribution of Cllr. Sue Pate who had died recently and who had made a significant contribution to the Council's work. The main hall in the Red House had been renamed in her honour.

Recent developments had included the establishment of the Team Shifnal/Albrighton to deal with low level issues of social disruption involving the police, Councils and local representatives and the takeover of Albrighton Library by the Parish Council. This had obviously led to an increase in staffing, new responsibilities and an increased workload but after one year progress had been good although the position after 2019, when the Shropshire subsidy is to be reviewed, is unclear.

A new Albrighton Flyer is to be delivered in the summer, bought on a leased basis, and the Chairman thanked the Clerk for the support of the parish office and thanked Donington with Boscobel Parish Council for their cooperation and support during the previous year.

3. Questions and comments on the Annual Report by members of the public.

There were no questions or comments on the Chairman's annual report.

4. Presentation of the annual accounts 2016/17 of Albrighton Parish Council by Mr Michael Ward, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

The Parish Clerk presented his unaudited report to the meeting which showed an overall balance on the Council's five accounts of £126,308.30. The opening balance at the beginning of the financial year was £113,776 and the Council had received £174,900 in receipts during the year and made payments totalling £162,368. The precept had increased substantially in 2016 from £84,870 in 2015/16 to £100,123 in 2016/17 to take account of the acquisition of the library. The 2017/18 precept would increase again to £106,000 in order to cope with further asset transfers, particularly of open spaces, and in order to prepare for a substantial reduction in library support from Shropshire Council in 2019.

5. Questions and comments on the annual accounts by members of the public.

The Clerk was asked whether the receipts and payments were available for scrutiny by a member of the public and he stated that details were on the website and available as part of the audit process once the accounts had been passed by the external auditor in July.

6. To formally accept the annual report and council accounts.

Mr. Beechey proposed that the meeting should accept the Chairman of Albrighton Parish Council's report which was seconded by Mr Griffin and unanimously agreed by the meeting.

Mrs Kirkland proposed that the meeting should accept the Parish Clerk's report which was seconded by Mrs Pledger and unanimously agreed by the meeting with two abstentions.

7. Report and presentation by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, Mr John Campion, on the latest developments and challenges facing the police service with particular reference to east Shropshire.

Mr Campion stressed that he was not a policeman and he had four areas of responsibility including finance, property and possessions, the hiring of senior officers and the management of the police service including the 101 service. The Commissioner has to produce a plan and hold to account the Chief Constable. The current plan provides details of how to deal with victims of crime, how to secure the borders of West Mercia and the reform of the West Mercia service. The current budget is £212m and one of the main priorities is

the modernisation of the service which urgently needs updating in terms of equipment and the use of modern technology.

Mr Campion said that the West Mercia area is a safe part of the country with low crime figures although crime still happens and some people still feel unsafe. One of the priorities was to reassure people and convince them that they are secure in their homes and their local community.

8. Questions and comments on the West Mercia Police report by members of the public.

Mr Campion was asked about the issuing of gun licences and he said that the process needed to improve by the use of modern technology. He was looking to improve performance monitoring and using it to reduce crime. He was also asked about community involvement with the service and Mr Campion stated that Shropshire has a community involvement model but it is not imposed by the commissioner and he needs reassurance that it represents value for money. Mr Illes said that older people were sometimes worried about cyber-crime and the Commissioner said that he wished to focus on cyber security. Often, the criminals involved worked outside of local jurisdictions and he was happy to hear of any new schemes for tackling various scams and details of combatting these problems could be circulated on Facebook.

The Chairman thanked Mr Campion for his time and for making the effort to come to Albrighton and discuss the various issues raised by members.

9. Any other business.

A member of the public asked about the status of the CCTV equipment and the possible installation of new equipment in the library. Mr Campion said that he was supporter of the use of CCTV cameras which had played a major part in the reduction of crime nationwide.

Another member of the public asked about a possible update on the proposed station ramp and the use of the swimming pool at Albrighton Primary School. The Chairman stated that neither of the initiatives were the direct responsibility of the Council although a Councillor representative was attached to both groups and progress reports should be addressed directly to the two group committees.

10. Final thanks and future action by Cllr. Phil Harrison.

Cllr. Harrison thanked everyone who attended the meeting for their time and interest, in particular the West Mercia Police Commissioner, Mr John Campion for his presentation and the Church for making the hall available. He wished the new Council every success after the election on 4th May.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.32 pm.

