

ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 9th DECEMBER 2024

Present

Councillors Mr S Hoskins (Chair), Mr J Sunley, Mr J Woodford, Mrs K Parker and Mr K Rhatigan and the Clerk, Mr S Marshall.

Members of the public were also present.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllr Mellor, Cllr Bound, Cllr Morrow, Cllr Saunders and Cllr Dunn.

2. Declaration of interest

Cllr Hoskins declared an interest in a quote received from HES Ltd.

3. Minutes of previous meeting for approval

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11th November 2024 were approved and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising & Outstanding Action Points

Cllr Sunley had compiled a questionnaire to be distributed to residents of both Ashford Hill and Headley which posed questions relating to a potential site for allotments in Ashford Hill. Cllr Sunley would collate the results of the questionnaires and report back to the Parish Council in the new year. *

Cllr Sunley was yet to arrange a trial run of the new APNR equipment in conjunction with Cllr Parker. *

Cllr Woodford reported that Borough Cllr Morrow had kindly agreed to further investigate the issues of concern regarding the sewerage system for the new housing development in Ashford Hill with the Borough Council. *

An external lighting scheme for the Headley Pavilion could be funded from S106 funding and therefore the quote received from HES Ltd would be revised to include the option of solar bollard lighting. *

Cllr Hoskins and Cllr Parker agreed to discuss the options available to advertise the underutilised use of the Headley Pavilion. *

Cllr Rhatigan had met with the Leader of BDBC to discuss the new housing allocations that would be allocated to each borough in the country by central government in order to meet the new homes targets. Further discussion would take place once the new allocations were known but Cllr Rhatigan predicted that the new allocations would impact on the number of new homes that potentially could be constructed within the parish.

Cllr Rhatigan raised the issue of the outstanding letter to the housing developer in Ashford Hill who had promised to provide a link path from the new car park that leads to the main road and used primarily by parents dropping off school children. Whilst there was now an absence of the company's representatives onsite, Cllr Rhatigan would draw up a draft letter to be sent to the company's Head Office by the Clerk from the Chair of the Parish Council requesting the company to undertake their promise of a link path. *

Cllr Woodford raised the prospect of the Parish Council funding the cost of a new path possibly through CIL funding. The Clerk commented that as the Parish Council had minuted the issue as a matter of concern given the health and safety implications of not having a safe route for pedestrians from the car park to the main road, it was important to have the work undertaken by either party as a matter of urgency. The Clerk would ascertain the cost of such a path and present that as an option to Councillors at the January 2025 meeting. *

From the October minutes, the Clerk requested a proposer and a seconder for the proposal to increase the hire charges of the Headley Pavilion to £10 per hour and £55 for 'parties'. Cllr Parker proposed the hire charge increases which was seconded by Cllr Sunley. The Chair requested that the Clerk inform the Parish Magazine of the new hire charges.

5. Adoption of the Budget & Precept 2025/2026

The Clerk had previously circulated a draft proposal for next year's budget to Councillors which included the recommendation to freeze the level of Precept at the current level, given the fact that many residents are still having to confront the cost-of-living crisis.

The General Reserve would absorb the inevitable increase in operational costs for next year and a year-end deficit level of ca. £4k was therefore predicted.

Cllr Woodford proposed the adoption of the budget for 2025/2026 which was seconded by Cllr Rhatigan and supported by all other Councillors present by a show of hands. The Chair, Cllr Woodford, Cllr Rhatigan and the Clerk duly authorised the request form to BDBC for the setting of the Precept for 2025/2026.

Cllr Woodford raised the potential additional cost of managing the allotments if the project was to be agreed upon. The Clerk confirmed that whilst there would be some rental income to offset some of the additional operational cost, the contingency for 2025/2026 had been increased to help cover some if not all of the potential additional operational cost, while recognising that it was understood that enabling costs for any allotment project would be met by the Borough Council as per other examples of such projects in the borough.

6. **Highways**

There were no new highways issues to be reported.

7. **Planning Applications**

24/02542/ROC – Catts Farm, Newbury Road, Headley

- Variation of conditions to planning application 20/03597/FUL
No objection

24/02690/ROC - Headley Common Farm, Common Road, Headley

- Variation of condition to planning application 23/00263/TDC
Reiteration of original objection

24/02548/HSE – Orchard Barn, Thornford Road, Headley

- Installation of a swimming pool
No objection

24/02693/AGPD – Scarletts Farm, Plastow Green, Headley

- Erection of a steel portal framed apex lean to building
No objection

8. **Reports;**

Borough Councillors

Cllr Bound had previously sent a report through to the members of the Parish Council which had been safely received and appreciated.

Chair of the Parish Council's report

The Chair reported that a 'noise assessment' report for the MUGA project had been commissioned which establishes the current noise levels within the vicinity of the proposed site of the MUGA project to benchmark against in the event of complaints being received of an alleged increase in the volume of noise since the installation.

Cllr Woodford kindly offered to assist Cllr Rhatigan with his ongoing problems with his Parish Council email account following concern from the Chair that the account was not being used. *

The Chair reported on the kind invitation of the Leader and Chief Executive of BDBC to visit the Parish Council to provide an update on several topics. The Parish Councillors welcomed this opportunity and felt that the meeting scheduled in Headley Village Hall on Monday 9th June 2025 would be suitable for Cllr Harvey and colleagues to attend. *

The Chair expressed his continuing appreciation to Mrs Caroline Hellings for her ongoing support in the monitoring stages of the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan which were being undertaken in conjunction with the Borough Council.

Parish Councillors

Cllr Rhatigan expressed his concern over what appeared to be a collection of 'camouflaged' cars parked in a field near to Ram Alley in Ashford Hill. The Clerk would report the situation to Enforcement Officers of the Borough Council. *

Cllr Parker had raised the condition of the noticeboard in Headley which needed refurbishment and had received a request for it be used by residents to advertise local events. Discussion also ensued as to the ownership of the noticeboard outside Ashford Hill Village Hall. The Clerk had received information from Kingsclere Parish Council as to the cost of their new wooden noticeboards which would be in keeping with the rural environment (£1600 net). The Chair would review the condition of the existing noticeboard in Headley to determine if it should be repaired or a new noticeboard purchased, and Cllr Sunley would consult with Ashford Hill Village Hall's Management Committee as to the ownership of the noticeboard outside the Village Hall. *

Cllr Parker had expressed the Parish Council's appreciation to the residents who had knitted/crocheted post box 'tops'.

Expressing concern regarding having recently witnessed a horse rider riding in the dusk without the appropriate fluorescent clothing, Cllr Parker would visit the local stables to express her concerns for the safety of riders without the appropriate fluorescent clothing. *

Cllr Woodford raised a staffing matter which would be dealt with by the Clerk. *

Cllr Woodford expressed his appreciation to Cllr Rhatigan for undertaking duties on the Oakfield Lane development which should be the responsibility of a Management Committee which has not yet been established.

Clerk to the Parish Council

The Clerk officially recognised his appreciation to Cllr Sunley for his Acting Clerk role at the November meeting and for the excellent set of minutes that he had produced so skilfully.

Cllr Dunn had previously expressed concern over the cost of electricity for the Headley Pavilion and therefore the Clerk had contacted Utility Aid; an organisation designed for charities and local government which sources alternative energy suppliers at more competitive rates. The Clerk had commissioned Utility Aid to procure an alternative supplier offering cheaper rates if possible.

The Clerk sought permission from Councillors prior to the next meeting of the Parish Council to expend the necessary funds to manage two issues relating to health and safety concerns. Pending a second quote and confirmation that the offending tree was on recreation ground in Ashford Hill, that a tree be appropriately pruned to prevent any risk to residents. This course of action was proposed by Cllr Sunley and seconded by Cllr Parker.

The second issue related to repair works required on the flat seated swings in Ashford Hill playground for which the Clerk had sought a quote from a contractor. Once received and within 'value for money' criteria, the Clerk would approve the repair work. This course of action was proposed by Cllr Sunley and seconded by Cllr Rhatigan.

The Chair and the Clerk had attended a meeting with BDBC Officers at the two playgrounds to discuss the options available to the Parish Council to utilise its S106 funds from housing developers to improve 'open spaces' and 'play areas'. A substantial amount was available to be spent only within the current financial year and it had been decided that this was best spent on new and additional seating on both recreation grounds.

Headley Parish Councillors had identified a need for an additional 7 benches and 1 additional picnic table for the recreation ground. Ashford Hil Councillors were asked to provide the Clerk with their new seating requirements for the Ashford Hill recreation ground. *

In addition to this request Ashford Hill Councillors were requested to consider ideas that match the S106 funding criteria to provide 'improvements to the existing kickabout provision' on the recreation ground where there was funding of ca. £6k available. *

In addition to these funds there is an amount totalling ca. £2200 which could be spent on playground items for children who are on the autistic spectrum. Cllr Parker had kindly agreed to investigate through two websites how the funding available only for the current financial year could be spent on such items as finger mazes and communications boards. *

Capital expenditure not yet allocated to a specific financial year but totalling ca. £46k has been assigned for 'play area improvements' on Ashford Hill recreation ground. It was decided that such a potentially multifaceted project which could include several play area improvements currently used required the co-ordination of a subcommittee of the Parish Council. Ashford Hill Parish Councillors would be ex officio members of the subcommittee which would be joined by Cllr Parker and Mr Geoff Allwright as a lay member.

Post meeting note

At the request of the Chair, Cllr Rhatigan has agreed to undertake the role of Chair of the Ashford Hill Play Areas Project Subcommittee. (APAPS).

9. **Recess**

Following a request from the Editor of the Parish Magazine for the Parish Council to guarantee a grant of £800 for 2025/2026, the Chair could not undertake such a financial commitment. However, the Chair assured Mr Taylor that the requested amount of grant had been included in the budget for next year and that the Parish Council truly valued the Parish Magazine. Mr Taylor confirmed his retirement as Editor next year and reiterated that the Parish Council's continuing financial support was vital for the Parish Magazine's future survival.

10. **Financial statement**

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stood at £498.17
The Lloyds TSB deposit account of the Parish Council stood at £52,844.28

11. **Accounts for approval & payment**

Mr S Marshall – Clerk's salary Jan-Mar 2025 & Expenses - £6392.46

Mr J Kirkby – Litter Warden's salary Jan-Mar 2025 - £527.90

Mr P Kemp – Litter Warden's salary Jan-Mar 2025 - £807.13

Hann Tucker Associates – Noise survey for MUGA project - £1500.00 – PAID

Surfacing Standards Ltd – Biodiversity assessment for MUGA project - £1800.00

Ashford Hill with Headley PCC – Grant for Parish Magazine - £800.00

Bramley Business Services Ltd – Employee tax contributions - £1050.20

Bramley Business Services Ltd – PAYE administration - £105.00

Southern Water – Headley Pavilion water charges - £20.63

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.41pm.