

ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 9th SEPTEMBER 2024

Present

Councillors Mr S Hoskins (Chair), Mrs K Saunders (Vice Chair), Mrs K Parker, Mr J Sunley, Mr P Clark and the Clerk, Mr S Marshall.

Cllr Mellor, Cllr Morrow and Cllr Conquest were also present together with members of the public.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllr Woodford and Cllr Dunn.

2. Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of previous meeting for approval

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 10th June 2024 were approved and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising & Outstanding Action Points

The Clerk confirmed that he had been pursuing Universal Services, Hampshire County Council, about the remedial work required to address the flooding of the A339 near to Thornford Road in Headley.

The Clerk confirmed that he had written an article about the cleaning and repair of the war memorials for inclusion on the Parish Council's website and the next edition of the Parish Magazine.

Outstanding action points included;

- Potential allotments site in Ashford Hill. **September Update:** Cllr Morrow confirmed that BDBC had granted permission for the land to be used as allotments if the Parish Council felt it would be a good facility for residents to have.
- Use of new APNR equipment **September Update:** Cllr Sunley confirmed that he would be organising a 'trial run' of the new equipment with volunteers before the October meeting of the Parish Council.

- Insurance cover for ROW Wardens **September Update:** In conjunction with the adopted 'Volunteers policy', the Clerk would be devising a series of individual risk assessments covering tasks undertaken by the RoW volunteers which used power tools which would be used in conjunction with written procedures through the 'Co-ordinator' of the scheme for which Cllr Parker had previously volunteered to undertake with the Clerk.

5. **Highways**

The Chair would be reporting a sunken manhole cover on the A339, and Cllr Clark would be reporting the 'crumbling' condition of the road surface towards Holt Cottages in Ashford Hill.

Cllr Saunders reported on behalf of some residents their concern about the continuing parking of vehicles on the land adjacent to the recreation ground on the Ashford Hill Road in Headley. The Chair suggested that photographs be taken of the vehicles to build a better idea of the problem.

6. **Planning Applications**

24/01258/HSE & 24/01430/LDPO– Orchard Barn, Thornford Road, Headley

- Single storey extension to rear, first floor extension to side over existing ground floor
- Certificate of Lawfulness for the change from agricultural to office use
- *No Objection*

24/01426/TDC – Land adjacent to A339, Newbury Road, Headley

- Erection of 2 no. detached dwellings together with garages
- *Reiteration of original objection*

24/01405/FUL – Plum Tree Farm, Galley Lane, Headley

- Erection of 4 no. dwellings following the demolition of existing dwelling and agricultural buildings
- *Reiteration of original partial objection*

24/01046/ROC – Riddings Farm, The White House, Riddings Lane, Goose Hill

- Variation of previous condition by amending plans to add a first-floor front extension
- *No objection*

24/01831/HSE – 1 Tanhouse Cottages, Ashford Hill Road, Headley

- Alterations to roof including construction of dormer windows to create first floor study/store
- Erection of single storey side extension to existing garage
- *No objection*

24/01833/HSE – Old Malt House, Wheathold, Ashford Hill

- Internal alterations and erection of an extension to the rear of existing outbuilding
- *No objection*

24/01411/OOBC – Oaktree Farm, B3051, Brimpton Common

- Erection of extension to existing dwelling following demolition of existing workshop
- *No objection*

24/01248/HSE – 11 Oakfield Lane, Ashford Hill

- Replacement of oak framed porch to front elevation
- *No objection*

24/00519/FUL – Hill View, Chapel Lane, Ashford Hill

- Partial replacement of boundary wall and associated enlargement of existing vehicular access to former chapel
- Replacement of chapel by a 2-storey garage/studio
- *Reiteration of original objection*

24/01572/RET – The Cottage, Woodlands Court, Ram Alley, Ashford Hill

- Use of the cottage as a separate one-bedroom dwelling with associated parking
- *No objection*

7. **Reports**

County Councillor's verbatim report

Cllr Mellor congratulated the Parish Council volunteers on their work undertaken to maintain rural footpaths. There was now county wide reliance upon volunteers to clear the network of footpaths.

"Highways

The past year has seen HCC break records in respect of the pothole fixing with over 150000 covered, albeit some by temporary methods where there will be a few repeat actions required following the wet weather and of course the resurfacing of several kilometres of road under our Operation Resilience programme. While this is a solid performance aided by the extra 'HS2' money most 'Upper Tier' authorities received (for HCC, £13.2M per annum for the next 10 years only for road maintenance), there are still areas where considerable improvement is required, notably the rural roads with their haunches.

It is (almost) a pleasure to receive comments re the amount of road closures- some partial- caused by the likes of the Operation Resilience work on Brimpton Road and the B3051. No complacency: HCC is aware that some of the interim work carried out earlier in the year when it was very wet, will need some additional work and that along with a start on the haunches will be part of the winter programme.

The 'report a problem' section of the HCC website which is the main online reporting method has now been split into 36 sections so that the problem can be actioned more quickly. Worth having a look first as e.g. the hedges are separate from the trees and there are different aspects of drainage in different sections. The Highways Ops Centre that handles all incoming work has now accommodated in a more user-friendly way the 'Fix My Street' queries that are raised. However, for better monitoring, the use of an HCC reference number is still the key.

'Claims' for damage to tyres etc has declined to less than 80 per month right across the County; and again, HCC is sticking to the guidelines given re liability on such.

Emergency calls are back to being handled within 24 hours; routine pothole responses can be still up to 8 weeks as planning the work efficiently in remote areas is a consideration. I would also suggest that all Parish Cllrs sign on to One Network as that does advise of all the utility company-and HCC- work being undertaken. The work of the water and media (5G) companies continues to annoy as some work planned by Highways must be deferred when we establish that those utility companies are planning on work. Similarly, we have had through our Streetworks Management, applications by the utility companies submitted on a Friday afternoon only to find out that the work has started on the following Monday morning; try Heath End Village Hall as an example. HCC can fine the companies when pre advice is insufficient but of course the response is usually that it was an emergency!!

Electric Vehicle Charging; HCC has been given a grant of £6.66M for the installation of EV charge points in areas where on street parking (i.e. no access to off street charging is evident and it is expected that such work will start later in 2025. I have little idea as to the planned locations or indeed the systems to be used but should any of the Parishes really feel in need where the criteria are met, let me know.

Children's Services

As verbally reported in July, Ofsted- with or without the one-word classification! - has classified all aspects of Children's Services in HCC territory as outstanding; unaware as to any other Authority with that 'claim'. Of course, this was covering not just the schools but also the likes of the Children's Homes, SEN matters, and reflected well on the County. The management of the Holiday Activity Fund which was used to provide some activity for the less well-off parents /children was cited as a success and despite the cuts in funding. Since that announcement, the provision of the school meals has come under review as the amount of subsidy per child given by the Govt is insufficient to cover the cost. Matter out for consultation.

Schools in Hampshire have generally performed well in the summer exams- I do not have the precise performance figure for Tadley and Basingstoke children- those over 11 of course do find education outside the division and there are appeals etc. Suffice to say, as far as I am aware, 98% of the children in my division are attending the school of choice. We are blessed with good Heads /parents etc in NW Hampshire. The programme of building 12 new schools in the County continues; in Basingstoke, Hounsom Fields is due next year. Closer to home we have schools planned for Manydown and hope very soon to hear from Basingstoke and Deane as to when the 28 years wait for the development to start.

One weak note is that the absence ratio has been slow in recovery from COVID days; still too high often linked with parents who are WFH or indeed not returned to work. There is some campaigning planned to get the kids back to school.

Planning

Parish and Town Councils are not the place for political activity and in the past 8 years I have not ventured into that area. However, some outrageous statements by the new DPM cause serious concern in respect of increasing housing quotas and overcoming objections to new developments which is a major matter in rural Hampshire; cancelling some major Highway activity such as the A27 and other National routes nearby and of course we have now seemingly lost the new hospital planned for the Junction 7 area. Will Neighbourhood Plans still have some effect? The clamour by some local politicians for mass social housing (but perhaps not in their back yard !!) will be monitored. The County is affected in respect of Developer contributions and ensuring that Hampshire is still a great place to live is the dominant factor.

Finally- County Deal reborn- the 3 Unitary Councils (Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight with HCC) have had several discussions as to becoming one Authority as Devolution is very much part of the new Govt's strategy. 'Mayoralty' as with the mayors in all the major Metropolitan areas is seen as the way forward and of course it would ease the current financial plight of the Local Authorities. The County is dominant Conservative, the Unitaries more under the Labour wing but a common letter of interest has now gone into the DHLUC with a view to moving forward. It will mean that the County would not have to continually be submitting bids for support on major projects.

Finally, as for my role, as Chair of the Audit, the County's adherence to CIPFA rules necessitates more inspection of books and working with the Auditors. At the same time every division within the County is undertaking major review of all expenditure under what is called SP25 as we look to save more than £100M by '26. Review of buildings as well as looking for more operational expediency. Committee work level is high.

The highways department had undertaken an expansive programme of repairs in the county with the additional funding from central government. However, the County Council was receiving several complaints regarding the number of road closures due to the work of utility companies. The public consultation regarding the required cuts in the County Council's budgets from 2026 onwards was continuing but a large percentage of the County Council's budget was formed from statutory services which had to be maintained. Discussions were still ongoing regarding the potential amalgamation with cities in the region to form a larger County Council from which efficiency gains could be made. There were concerns about the new government's plans on planning regulations and how that would affect the S106 funding formulae in place to assist with funding the infrastructure for new housing developments."

Borough Councillors

Cllr Morrow explained a new scheme being introduced by BDBC from October 2025 which would provide a service to collect food waste from households. The collection cycles would also change with the ambition to vastly improve the recycling percentage of household waste. Cllr Morrow referenced the Local Plan and the new government's plans to increase the number of new homes within the borough.

Cllr David Conquest introduced himself to the Parish Council in both his capacity as a Borough Councillor as well as Vice Chair of Kingsclere Parish Council.

Chair of the Parish Council's report

The Chair's report covered several outstanding issues dealt with by matters arising and outstanding action points from previous meetings.

The Chair reported that the Parish Council was proposing to decrease the charges paid by Kingsclere Football Club to £55 per match, leaving the Club responsible for the white lining of the football pitch. The Kingsclere women's team are currently being charged the full fee with a view to making the Headley pitch their 'home pitch' when their fee could be reduced accordingly.

BDBC are planning to undertake a monitoring exercise regarding the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan and Caroline Hellings, who had been the Chair of the Parish Council's steering group, which had compiled the Neighbourhood Plan, had kindly agreed to be the Parish Council's point of contact whilst the monitoring report was being compiled by BDBC.

The Chair reported on the decision of Cllr Paul Clark to resign from his office of Parish Councillor and thanked Paul on behalf of the Parish Council for his hard work and commitment over the last couple of years. The Chair reported that a Notice of Vacancy for the office of Parish Councillor had been advertised and was pleased to report that Mr Ken Rhatigan had expressed an interest in becoming a Parish Councillor and therefore Mr Rhatigan would be co-opted as a Parish Councillor at the October meeting.

Parish Councillors

Cllr Clark expressed his appreciation to fellow Councillors over the months for their support and expressed his satisfaction whilst undertaking the role of a Parish Councillor which was no longer possible due to his other commitments.

Cllr Sunley recommended to other Councillors to join the application 'Hampshire Alert' recommended during the recent police authority presentation which provides alerts to crimes in the area.

8. Recess

Concern was expressed regarding the perceived lack of consultation from the Parish Council with residents that could be affected by the proposed Multi Use Games Area project and the Chair agreed to provide further information to residents regarding the project.

Further to a criticism surrounding the perceived unfairness of some planning applications being approved and some not being approved, Cllr Conquest kindly agreed to discuss the planning application in question with the applicant.

The lack of consultation with residents was raised as a concern insofar as the land that had been identified in Ashford Hill as a possible location for allotments. Councillors confirmed to the concerned resident that it had only been recently confirmed who in fact owned the land in question and subsequently permission granted by BDBC for the land to be used as allotments if the Parish Council wished to consider using the land in such a way. The Chair reiterated that there had been no decision made by the Parish Council as to the potential future use of the land.

Mr Ken Rhatigan again raised his concern over the pavements in Ashford Hill which are very overgrown with vegetation, which are not only aesthetically unappealing but pose a serious slip hazard for pedestrians particularly when the vegetation is wet. Whilst Borough Councillors accepted that it was the responsibility of the Borough Council and weed killer spraying was applied twice per year, the problem still exists.

9. Financial statement

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stood at £4,422.46

The Lloyds TSB deposit account of the Parish Council stood at £28,273.63

10. **Accounts for approval & payment**

Mr S Marshall – Clerk’s salary October - December 2024 & Expenses – £5406.72

Mr P Kemp – Litter Warden’s salary – October - December 2024 - £807.13

Mr J Kirkby – Litter Warden’s salary – October - December 2024 - £527.70

BBS Ltd – PAYE administration – October - December 2024 - £105.00

Mr J Sunley – Android tablet for speed monitoring equipment - £59.99

Mr A Miles – Drain replacement at Ashford Hill car park - £320.00

Mr A Miles – Replacement of wooden bollards – Ashford Hill car park - £2435.85 –
PAID

BDBC – Underpayment of playground inspections fee - £212.18

M H Goals Ltd – Goal post sockets for Headley recreation ground - £208.20

Scofell – Goalmouth renovations – Headley recreation ground - £746.98

Grave Concerns – War memorial cleaning & painting - £240.00

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.33pm.