

ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 10th JANUARY 2022

Present

Mr J Woodford (Chairman), Mrs K Saunders (Vice Chair), Mr S Hoskins, Mr A Saunders and the Clerk.

Cllr Rhatigan and Cllr Mellor were also present.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Stewart and Dunn.

2. Declaration of interest

None declared.

3. Minutes of previous meeting for approval

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 8th November 2021 were approved.

4. Matters arising

The Clerk had written to the Cricket Club regarding the condition of the surrounding grounds following the cesspool works and had received confirmation that the current weather conditions prohibited any further remedial work to restore the ground effected by the works.

The Chairman had been able to supply Councillors with bespoke email addresses which are to be used in conjunction with matters related to the work of the Parish Council.

5. Precept & Budget 2022/2023

The Chairman explained that further to discussion with Councillors and the Financial Responsible Officer, it had been agreed that a 3% increase in the Precept was required in order to ensure a balanced budget was achievable and given the fact that there had been a freeze in the level of Precept last year. Cllr A Saunders queried the fact that the proposed budget indicated a deficit forecast and expressed concern with that potential outturn eroding the level of reserves. The Chairman explained that specific cost centres, namely the Contingency and Equipment Maintenance had both received significant increases in their level of budgeted expenditure due to the need to address foreseen and unforeseen issues. It was not to be considered an opportunity to spend those full amounts if such expenditure were not necessary, but such provision was regarded as a measure of prudent financial management.

The Chairman commented on the fact that an advantage of the additional housing will allow the increase in the Precept to have a diluted effect on the costs borne by the average tax band household.

The Chairman asked for a proposer and seconder to adopt the 2022/2023 budget and Cllr K Saunders proposed and Cllr A Saunders seconded the adoption of the new budget.

6. **Highways**

Cllr Hoskins reported on the fact that the reported request on 1st November 2021 to remove vegetation encroaching on pavements on the A339 in Headley had not yet been undertaken.

7. **Planning Applications**

21/03501/HSE – 3 St Peters Close, Headley

- Erection of single storey side extension – ***No objection***

21/03521/FUL – Land adjacent to Knightsbridge Lodge, Newbury Road, Headley

- Erection of 8 no. dwellings – ***Objected to***

21/03572 / 03573 / FUL - Catts Farm House, Newbury Road, Headley

- Erection of dwelling & associated cart shed, following demolition of existing dwelling and associated outbuildings – ***No objection***

21/03596/PIP – Land northwest of Little Knowl Hill, Ashford Hill

- Residential development of 1 no. and maximum of 4 no. dwellings – ***Objected to***

21/03656/FUL – Land north of The Chalet, Newbury Road, Headley

- Erection of 15 no. dwellings and associated works – ***Objected to***

21/03661/FUL – Wheathold House, Wheathold, Wolverton

- Erection of new (replacement) dwelling – ***No objection***

Antler Homes, developers of the second housing development site in Ashford Hill, had enquired with the Parish Council as to the feasibility of a small village shop as part of the new development. After discussion at the meeting, the majority view was that such a shop would not be financially viable as previous commercial outlets had proved and that the Headley Community Shop should be fully supported by as many residents as possible in order to improve upon its own financial status.

8. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Hoskins reported that further to the Borough's Principal Planning Officer's (PPO) comments on the plan, a meeting had been organised to discuss matters further. Cllr Hoskins also commented on the need to ascertain advice from the PPO regarding the appointment of an independent advisor.

9. Reports

County Councillor's report

Borough Councillor

Cllr Rhatigan reported on the continued suspension of the garden waste service due to staff shortages. Residents would be compensated for the suspension as it was a separately charged service.

The Local Plan process was continuing a pace whereby sites were being identified for development but with a clear view that the development of any green field sites would be opposed by the Borough Council.

The original planning application for the Sawmill housing development was rejected on the grounds that it offered no affordable housing due to its limited scale. The latest planning application has a proposed increase in the number of dwellings which qualifies the scheme for a compulsory allocation of social housing. With this vitally important element of much needed housing (4000 + people on the affordable housing waiting list) the Borough Council would be supporting such a development.

The Borough Council's financial situation was in a good position with a £2m surplus to be maintained in reserves as a result of prudent spending by the Council. The CIL funding that was available needed to be used by the Parish Council to offset the need for increases in the Precept.

Cllr Rhatigan supported the Parish Council's view that there was not a need for a second shop on the new housing development in Ashford Hill.

The Chairman's verbatim report:

"Councillor email addresses

We have set-up new emails for the Clerk and the Councillors, and I will be changing the contact details on our web site to reflect this.

AH recreational grounds in poor state

Due to the very wet weather the area where the newly installed cesspool is, the grounds are in a very poor and waterlogged state. We will need to see how things are when it dries out, but it is not looking good now. This area must not be walked on or crossed to access the play park from Chapel Lane, to allow it to recover.

Play Park repairs

As we now have access to the on-line report, we can see what minor or major issues are needing attention. I have shared with the Cllrs and the Clerk an excel sheet of the works I have carried out in Ashford Hill; I believe Cllr Hoskins is looking into the minor issues in Headley. I would ask the Clerk to report back to the BDBC play park inspectors of all the works we have carried out by the end of January so they can see we have completed some of them.

S106 funding

The Parish will have access to some significant funding throughout 2022/23. Unfortunately, the way S106 money is allocated it is quite prescriptive as to what it can be spent on. We have asked for our Borough Councillor to help us with enquires on how the allocations could be better purposed. We really need support on this otherwise we are likely to lose the use of this money. This assistance is now most important, as losing such funding will be disappointing.

Headley Multifunction Room – replacement for the old changing rooms

This year we hope to start preparing for the removal of the old football changing rooms to replace it with a dual-purpose multifunction building offering a changing room, WC, a kitchen and seating area. We hope initially to use CIL funding but would also welcome any donations from local business to this project to help kit out the facility and its construction.

Grants

We will again be offering a grant for the Parish Magazine and cleaning of the Headley village hall.

A grant award has been made to the owner of Great Haughurst Copse to carry out repairs to the bridleway.

Benches around the Oakfield Lane development ‘pond’

A few people have asked me if the Parish Council paid for and installed benches around the pond of the Oakfield Lane development. These and the bin have not been provided by the Parish Council and I believe were part of the original developer’s scheme.”

Parish Councillors

Cllr Hoskin’s reported on the planning approval for a replacement modular sports facility on the Headley recreation ground. Cllr Hoskins had received renewed interest from Cold Ash Junior Football Club in November 2021 but had not been communicated with since.

Cllr Hoskins reported on the fact that there were now 8 volunteer Rights of Way volunteers for Headley and in the absence of volunteers from Ashford Hill work has started to include footpaths in Ashford Hill although volunteers from Ashford Hill would still be very welcomed. Further to the purchase of a brush cutter and hedge trimmer equipment, training for such equipment would be taking place in January. Cllr Hoskins further reported on the list of minor remedial works required on play equipment in the Headley recreation ground which had either been completed or were in hand with assistance from fellow Councillor Steve Dunn. A significant cost would be incurred to replace the perimeter fence of the play area and an allocation within next year's budget had been made for such potential expenditure.

Clerk to the Council

The Clerk reported on the email from the Clerk of Kingsclere Charities to request permission from the Council to have Mrs Penny Stewart continue to act as a Parish Council trustee for Kingsclere Charities for the next 4 years period. The nomination was approved by all Councillors present.

10. Financial Statement

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stood at £2,534.58

The Lloyds TSB deposit account of the Parish Council stood at £20,976.37

11. Accounts approval & payment

Mr J Kirkby – Litter Warden salary – Jan-Mar 2022 - £482.70

Mr S Marshall – Clerk's salary – Jan-Mar 2022 & Expenses - £4578.55

Ashford Hill with Headey PCC – Parish Magazine grant - £750.00

R.A & M.D Butler – Brush cutter - £746.00

Headley Village Hall – Room hires - £30.00

HMRC – Tax & employee NI contributions - £307.71

The Friends of Haughurst Copse – Regeneration grant - £500.00

BBS Ltd – PAYE administration - £75.00

Poppy Appeal – Remembrance wreaths - £34.00

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.21pm.