

ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 12th JULY 2021

HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present

Mrs K Saunders (Vice Chair), Mr G Stewart, Mr S Dunn, Mr S Hoskins and Mr A Saunders
Cllr Rhatigan and Cllr Mellor and a number of members of the public were also present.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from the Clerk, Mr S Marshall, Mr J Woodford and Mrs K Cochrane.

2. Declaration of interest

None declared.

3. Minutes of previous meeting for approval

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14th June 2021 were approved.

4. Matters arising

Cllr Hoskins confirmed that the nettles, etc around the playpark have now been cut back/removed.

Cllr A Saunders confirmed that Cllr Rhatigan had been involved in the clean-up of the algae/mud on the pavement of the C111/B3051.

5. Highways

The Chairman via a written report, informed the meeting that the drainage problem by the Oakfield Lane estate on the B3051 had been resolved, however a problem occurred a few days later down by Chapel Lane and Old Lane. Hampshire Highways attended as it was gushing out of the manhole cover and placed flood signs on the pavement. The problem was not resolved so Thames Water were contacted directly, and they attended within 2 hours. They spent several hours working to clear the blockage. It is hoped that this has finally fixed the problem in the village.

6. Planning Applications

The Yard, Common Road – no objection.

Land at Broad Acres – objection on the basis of “greenfield site”.

Neat’s House, Common Road - objection on the basis of “greenfield site”.

The Willows, Headley – continued objection to this development.

Land on the A339 – notification received that this application has now gone to appeal.

7. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Hoskins confirmed that leaflets had been distributed to all residents and drop-in sessions would be held on Monday 19 July in Ashford Hill Village Hall and Tuesday 20 July at Headley Community Shop between 2pm – 8pm for residents to come and see the plans and give their views.

The Clerk had received an update from Mrs Caroline Hellings, Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan subcommittee of the Parish Council; the subcommittee were engaged in the Regulation 14 requirement for public consultation which closes on 6 August 2021 and comments from residents were being received. Drop-in sessions had been arranged in July in both Ashford Hill and Headley.

8. Reports

County Councillor’s verbatim report;

“HWRC; Current interim agreement with West Berks expires July 31. Interim agreement formulated last year involved not just the continuity of access but also for HCC to consider another 'tip' within the permit area. Latter was done; Cottismore was not feasible and although the consultants retained to look at another alternative- the former Wolverton Quarry, found some positives the costs involved were very high and also there would have been some fierce arguments against it as and when it came up for Planning approval. Nobody is very keen on having MRF's ERF's, incinerators or even HWRC's in their 'back yard'. Additionally, due to Manydown and the other activities planned West of Basingstoke in the next decade, there would be need for another tip in an appropriate part of that area. Hence, we expect a charge per visit to be levied by West Berks on a reciprocal basis; expecting finalisation of the HCC/WB agreement any day now; quite clearly the existing arrangement with years old permits, no financial information as to usage with HCC and B & D just paying out a flat fee for access was not right. I fought for the retention of the facility in 2017 and 2018/9 but really no option this time. The new deal should have a wider benefit. At all 24 HCC tips the successful booking system will be maintained, increase in availability with less social distancing require and summer hours.

School; The Hurst and some of the primaries continue to have COVID related problems with many pupils on isolation; to the end of term this "sensitive" test and trace system will continue to cause excessive absence. Additionally, affecting a small number of 'users' in Ashford Hill and Headley. The Hurst has decided to withdraw from its Leisure Centre members midweek access to the premises as it intends to use them for PE teaching; of course, the losses incurred by the school on running the Leisure Centre have mounted to an unsustainable level. However, the Leisure Centre since its opening by HCC has received substantial monies from HCC, Basingstoke and Deane and Sport England for Community Leisure and this has led to ongoing debate as to the future. Unfortunately, the membership has dropped substantially over the past few years, and this is a concern in terms of the future. Talks ongoing.

Noted the volume of planning applications 'cashing in' on B & D not meeting the 5-year land supply; the impact on education, lack of facilities, access etc certainly come under HCC consideration and adds to the normal "Technical Consultee" status we have on the smaller residential applications. B & D commitment to fight inappropriate applications in the Parish is noted. Of interest is the issue raised by some of your residents re traffic volumes on the A339; with 4 kingdoms and Darling Buds of May expanding plus some speculative plans for residential building in the area, then the traffic becomes a part of the application.

County wise, the £700M capital expenditure programme on infrastructure, "Green Recovery" continues. Revenue Budgets had to be trimmed after the past year but some late input into Highways hopefully means good improvement in past year on Maintenance will be maintained. Our long-term partners in Highways - Skanska- decide two years ago not to continue on a global basis on maintenance and hence have effectively transferred to a UK company - Milestone- to continue. On the subject of Infrastructure, commitment on Superfast Broad band is ongoing with the successful Gigabit Voucher scheme being revitalised. Details online.

Climate Change; Just about everything we do is seemingly tested on environmental grounds reflecting the importance of the Climate Change agenda. We now have a dedicated Councillor on the Cabinet on this topic. Current activity continues to be the EV charge points where some 10000 are now installed in Hampshire; very few considering we have some 486000 car commuters every day but there again only 14% of car sales are electric. Solarisation of Public Buildings including schools is now scheduled. On public transport we now have the first electric buses operating more than complementing the low emission fleets operated by Stagecoach. Debatable and contentious are the schemes to develop wildflowers by adjusting the schedule on rural verge cutting. The plan to plant more than 1M trees before we reach net zero is on target. On the new housing developments space must be provided for walking and cycle lanes. Thankfully, the news that Hampshire secured its first Freeport in the Solent augurs well for future economic development locally.

Fly tipping- and I note yesterday there was another regrettable commercial waste incident at the local church car park - is almost entirely commercial waste and has little bearing on HWRC disposal. Even the household element of that, be it old kitchenware/whites etc is such that few ever take that to the tip. Strong court action is required to stop this activity. Similarly, the recent plague of surplus bottles owing to overcrowded /often restricted access bottle banks and probably due to pub closures and high street off licence sales during the pandemic is a temporary annoyance.

Finances- as supposedly one of the best financially run Tier One authorities- we still struggle as our budgets reflect a shortfall on Revenue Budgets of £72M over the next 30 months. We do have reserves of £600M+ but try not to use those as no chance of recovering them! Some small adjustments in areas, many not familiar to Ashford hill such as 'lollipop ladies' are under review; school nurses also but therein there is an increase in school mental health provision and an ever-expanding Social Care establishment committed.”

Borough Councillor

Cllr Rhatigan informed the meeting that the fly tipping incident in the church car park at Ashford Hill had been quickly dealt with following his involvement.

Cllr Rhatigan advised that the planning application appeal for the second field in Ashford Hill has been heard and the outcome is expected in the next couple of weeks.

Cllr Rhatigan confirmed that a decision regarding the Household Waste recycling Centre would be announced shortly but that we should expect changes to the current arrangements.

Cllr Rhatigan advised that he is in discussions with the owner of the site adjacent to the A339 that is currently requesting planning permission for a traveller site regarding other arrangement that could be made and other purposes for which the site could be used, such as permanent housing.

Chairman

The Chairman's verbatim report;

“Broken Footpaths signs

Having placed several ‘footpaths only’ signs throughout the Ashford Hill woods in February/March, I have reported in the past some of these had been vandalised. Yet another one has been snapped off between the bridleway and the path leading to Axmansford. These are blatant acts of vandalism and surprising that a person should feel they have the right to damage them. I have now backed the sign with ply and repaired it. I have noticed the footpath has been used by horse riders and bikes (the evidence is obvious) so I can only assume it was someone who is very aware they should not be using the route!

Bollard for the Ashford Hill Car Park

Both the Clerk and I have repeatedly been in contact with Reading Asphalt in person about completing the job we had asked them to do since April. I have asked the Clerk if the bollard has not been installed last week, we contact them and inform them we will no longer require them to fix it and will not pay for the bollard or work they have carried out to prepare the area for one. I am very frustrated that this contract was not concluded as we had asked. We know the car park has been recently used by revellers from outside the village used very late at night and into the early hours of the morning. I have requested our Borough Cllr Ken Rhatigan, speak with the local police chief to add this to their regular rounds.

Cricket Club

The Cricket Club have been asked that they place sandbags on the white signs as a couple of years ago one of them blow over due to high winds. Also, we have asked they get moved off the outfield and onto the pitch when not in to use to permit our grounds contractors to cut the grass. Last week the Club had some bore hole tests carried out for the proposed cesspool and I have asked they check with BDBC Planning about their proposed location for the tanks. If residents have any concerns, please speak with the Cricket Club.

Open Councillor Position

Ashford Hill has unfortunately another Councillor position as Cllr Katie Cochrane will be stepping down due to moving out of the area. She feels a Councillor from the village would be more advantageous to the Parish. We would like to thank Katie for all her efforts especially on the Planning front which has been challenging of late. If a resident of Ashford Hill is interested and would like to get involved with local matters such as planning, we would be pleased to hear from you.

Neighbourhood Plan

We are getting to an important time with the Neighbourhood Plan namely the public open consultation period. Might I encourage all residents of the Parish to take the time to review the information being provided. Please seek clarification on any points of interest or concern and if possible, attend the public open meetings to find out more. The draft Neighbourhood Plan and further information can be found from links on the Parish Council web pages or on the flier circulated a few weeks ago”.

Parish Councillors

Cllr Dunn noted that there will be temporary power cuts in Headley on 21 July and 23 July.

Cllr Hoskins provided an update on discussions with Cold Ash Junior football team. The current sticking points are the provision of parking and securing the entrance to the old changing rooms on the Headley recreation ground. Cllr Hoskins is investigating a replacement door to secure the building. Cllr Hoskins also requests input from other Councillors regarding the agreement for the use of the recreation ground.*

Cllr Stewart again noted the poor state of repair of the A339 and queried whether this would ever be repaired. He also noted that the SID on Thornford Road was not working correctly/accurately and requested that the Clerk investigate having the device repaired.*

Cllr K Saunders queried the nature of the next meeting (September) and whether this would be held in person or would remain as a virtual meeting.

9. Recess

A brief discussion regarding the nature of planning applications within the Parish was held with the Vice Chair and new residents were welcomed into the Parish.

10. Financial Statement

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stood at £1,293.04.

The Lloyds TSB deposit account of the Parish Council stood at £29,423.40.

11. Accounts approved & paid

AP&C – Neighbourhood Plan (NP) printing - £410.00

Groundwork UK – refund of partial funding 2020/21 for NP - £4682.00

HMRC – Tax & employee NI July/August/September - £2502.93

Scofell Landscapes Ltd – grounds maintenance – May & June 2021 - £2718.14

Scofell Landscapes Ltd – ditch clearance for car park project - £732.00

The Vice Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.58pm.