

**ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 13<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2022**

**Present**

Mr J Woodford (Chair), Mrs K Saunders (Vice Chair), Mr G Stewart, Mr P Clark, Mr S Dunn, Mr J Sunley and the Clerk, Mr S Marshall.

Members of the public were also present.

**In attendance**

Mrs Caroline Hellings was in attendance in the capacity of Chair of the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan subcommittee.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Mellor and Hoskins.

**2. Declaration of interest**

None declared.

**3. Minutes of previous meeting for approval**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were approved.

**4. Matters arising**

The Chair confirmed that access details of the playground inspection reports available online had been passed to Cllr Hoskins and it had been further agreed as to the remedial actions needing to be undertaken by Councillors.

The Chair requested that the long grass obscuring the 'white gates' in Ashford Hill be cut back as part of the works to be undertaken by the Lengthman's scheme together with the cutting back of shrubbery from the C111 sign which is located virtually opposite Butlers Garage in Ashford Hill.\*

**5. Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2021/2022**

The Chair reminded Councillors that the Clerk had sent a copy of the Return and an explanatory note to Councillors ahead of the meeting. The Chair explained that the internal auditor had undertaken a financial review and had certified the appropriate section of the Return.

The Chair asked for a proposer and seconder to adopt the Financial Statement. The Statement was proposed by Cllr Clark and seconded by Cllr Sunley with all other Councillors present in favour of the proposal by a show of hands. The Chair and the Clerk as the Responsible Financial Officer signed the Statement which would be sent to the Audit Commission together with the Return for ratification.

## 6. Highways

Cllr Clark would report the long grass on the verge at the end of Holt Cottages on the County Council's website. \*

Cllr Stewart would obtain 2 quotations for the repair to the layby in Thornford Road; one to apply a quantity of scalpings and the other to install a matting with the addition of scalpings for Councillors to consider the cost of both options. \*

## 7. Planning Applications

22/01301/FUL – The Glade, Common Road, Headley

- Erection of 3 no. detached dwellings with associated parking and amenity space - **Objection**

22/01131/FUL – Springfield, Newbury Road, Headley

- Change of use of detached building from agricultural barn to garage and garden store with home office in roof space
- Change of use of associated land from agricultural to residential curtilage
- New vehicular access, new entrance gates and drive/parking area (Partially retrospective) - **Objection**

22/01504/PIP – Land adjacent to A339, Newbury Road, Headley

- Permission in principle for the erection of a minimum of 1 no. and maximum of 4 no. residential dwellings – **Objection**

22/01486/OOBC – Foxhold House, Thornford Road, Crookham Common, Thatcham

- West Berkshire Council consultation - **No objection**

## 8. Neighbourhood Plan

Mrs Caroline Hellings, Chair of the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan subcommittee, joined the meeting to give an update to the Councillors regarding the Neighbourhood Plan. The final report with amendments had been received from the Examiner, who had concluded that the Plan had met the satisfactory levels and therefore the Examiner would be recommending moving forward to the referendum stage of the process.

The Examiner had praised the quality of the report which was pleasing for all those involved in its compilation.

The drafting amendments were not substantial and Mrs Hellings gave several examples of such amendments.

It was anticipated that the referendum would take place in early September 2022. The Chair asked for a proposer and a seconder to propose a resolution by the Parish Council to approve the Plan advancing to the referendum stage of the process. The resolution was proposed by Cllr Saunders and seconded by Cllr Clark with all other Councillors present in favour of the resolution by a show of hands.

## **9. Reports**

### **County Councillor's report**

Cllr Mellor kindly forwarded the following report post the meeting;

“1. Although the County Council has no elections until 2025, the decision of the long-time leader, Keith Mans, to step down has led to some Cabinet restructuring and subsequent changes.

I still have 3 years to go until the next election and in addition to being the Councillor, I also have the Chair of the Economy, Transport and Environment Select Cttee and Chair of Governance on the HIOW Fire Authority to attend to. Tom Thacker and self also sit on the Hampshire Pension Fund Board.

2. Ukrainian Update; the VISA problems have largely dissipated and arrivals continue-c.2500 of the c63000 arrivals in the UK have headed to Hampshire at a time when we have not yet dispatched some of the Afghans who arrived last Autumn. Still the Ukrainians are settling in quickly, well financed etc and pleased to report that we have already some working in the hospitality sector at a nearby golf course. No problems with schooling although this being monitored closely with the new school year entrants in September. Additional facilities such as free school meals, settlement grants, and even short term bus travel being made available to ensure they settle in. Should the Parish feel they have enough Ukraine visitors to warrant some dedicated local authority expenditure as we have now in a few areas, then HCC does have funds to disperse to develop the local community.

3. Grants. The County Council Grant Scheme is now open and already approvals pending in the Parish. I have to say that this is not just to assist in the operating costs of say a Village Hall; it is paramount for new projects and I make no apology for focussing on the youth with my funds. Purchase of sports kit etc. being one example of supporting a charitable cause. On a bigger scale and considering that there are many less fortunate suffering in the current financial situation, HCC is party to the Household Support Fund to assist those with real problems on energy bills – although to date this does not include Liquid Gas or Oil. HCC is working with Citizens Advice in respect of hardship monies and also with the schools directly.

On the subject of Energy, if there are any community projects developing energy, then there are now Grants for this under the Climate Change banner.

4. Consultations; as requested before, I would repeat the invitation for the PC to respond to the consultations on 'HCC's Local transport Plan 4 ' currently on the website through June/July as this sets out the plans for the 2029 to 2050 period. The eco warriors dominate. One area I continue to be annoyed about is the slow progress in respect of the North South Road Connectivity programme which started over two years ago with input from West Berks, Reading BC, HCC and Basingstoke. Of course COVID has not helped but the lack of certainty over housing plans- be they e.g. at Manydown off the A339 or on the A33 at Sherfield on Loddon, at M3/J7 what with new hospital plans , at West Berks with Sandleford and the moves along the A33 into Reading has stalled any effort. Of course draft ideas for a station in Oakley which would prevent road construction to a certain extent, the current developments on the A34 etc. mean a lot has to be considered. I had to fight hard to get the A339 area included in the programme and hope to resume battle shortly.

5. Hampshire Libraries has been celebrated for all its efforts during COVID- phenomenal response to the E Library operation and its other innovations. Have not got the details from Kingsclere as yet which of course is run in a different way to the impressive Tadley location; do visit."

#### **Borough Councillor's report**

There was no report from the Borough Councillor.

#### **Chair's verbatim report:**

##### **"Open Councillor Position for Headley**

Graham Stewart has just informed me that after several decades being on the Parish Council representing the various Parish's interests, he will be stepping down. I'm hoping that he will remain as a Councillor until our September meeting where we can properly acknowledge his many achievements serving the Parish and I hope to invite members of the Parish to thank him. This will mean we have an open position from September and I'm hoping we will get interest from candidates in Headley between now and then. To help balance the Parish Council I do hope we will receive interest from the female members of our community, so we get a balanced view and representation of the Parish's interests. Can I encourage all Headley Councillors to spread the word!

#### **Ashford Hill Primary School**

As many local primary school parents may know the Ashford Hill primary school has been put into 'special measures'. This is a real shame as it went from 'Good' standing in 2011 to now 'Inadequate'. This has implications to the school as it will now be handed to a private company to run. We hope any new arrangement turns the tide on this situation so that it returns to a 'Good' status or better soon. The primary school is a key part to the Parish and the surrounding area and has a long history with many residents of our villages having attended it, including myself!

So we would be extremely disappointed if it should ever eventually close. In fact for many who move to the Parish it is to send their children to this charming rural school. The school sits within land given over from Common Land and if for any reason the school should close the land should revert to this status. Which was a major issue with Greenham Common after the closer of the airbase in the 90's.

### **Village fetes**

When I moved back to the area in 2003 the annual village fetes rotated between the two villages. It would seem there is renewed interest in returning to having such an arrangement. It has been proposed for 2023 that the village fete takes place in Ashford Hill. If any residents would like to get involved please contact our Clerk who can then pass on the names to the event organisers in due course.

### **Lengthsman's Scheme**

With Graham Stewart stepping down from the Parish Council I have asked the Clerk if he could take up the responsibility of liaising with the scheme organisers. A job which we would ask of them now is to cut back the areas around white gates and sign posts obscured by the growth of the hedges this year.

*Note from the Clerk: Post meeting Cllr Dunn expressed an interest in managing the Lengthman's Scheme.*

### **Headley Pavilion project**

On the Thursday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June at the Headley Jubilee Picnic the Headley Pavilion was opened by Sir Timothy and Lady Sainsbury, who without their kind and substantial donation we would have been unable to realise the project so quickly. I must also commend Graham Stewart for his tireless work in bring this project into existence. As Chair this was one of the key projects I wished to see the Parish Council deliver and without Graham we would not have been able to achieve this due to funding short falls. I must also commend Cllr Stephen Hoskins for his superb project management of the Pavilion scheme and Cllr Steve Dunn with all the behind scenes activities and labour efforts. To all of you we owe a big debt of thanks!

### **Jubilee Celebrations**

I must congratulate the team working on the Headley Jubilee Picnic, there was a great atmosphere and lots of entertainment for all. Speaking with the Bird of Prey display owner we had a real movie star in our midst; the "Barn owl" on show who had a lead role in the Witcher Series on Netflix working alongside Henry Cavill, for those who know the Witcher series, it was a real treat!!

Throughout the weekend many localised street parties and private garden parties were arranged, bring together many from within and outside of the communities, in Hollycroft we hosted over 70 people!

## **Recreational grounds**

For many months I have spoken about the possibility of the recreational grounds being used by a local Junior Football Club. No formal arrangements have been made yet but Aldermaston Junior FC have been looking for a new location having lost their training grounds. We are in discussions with them about future arrangements. We have made the organisers aware that parking in the area is very restrictive, so for parking in Ashford Hill they have been asked to use the parking opposite the school and for Headley we are looking into suitable arrangements but I would ask that residents in Headley who have used areas on the Parish Council recreational ground to leave these clear for such usage. Thus minimising any parking issues in the future, we may place a polite note on the cars to forewarn them to move their vehicles.

## **Some general news**

- The barrier height in Ashford Hill has been raised to 2m again thanks to Able Steel, a local company, for doing this!
- Goal posts in Ashford Hill will be moved to their secondary position to allow the goal mouths to recover. Jules and Paul have offered to help me locate and move the goals this week.
- Plan to meet with Aldermaston Junior FC to discuss arrangements.
- We now need to look at landscaping the pavilion area and finishing of the internal fitting.
- Recruitment of a new Headley Councillor.
- Look into ordering new picnic tables for Headley and Ashford Hill to use up some additional S106 monies.
- I have not had any reply to an email sent to the developers of land opposite the school, who were asking for clarification points to the comments the Parish Council made to their latest application.
- Jubilee benches – a resident of Ashford Hill has suggested a replacement for the old bench along the C111. Maybe we could consider one for Ashford Hill and the second for Headley to be placed on the corner of the C111 and Thornford Road.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on September 12<sup>th</sup> as there will not be a meeting in July and August.”

The meeting subsequently discussed the frequency of Parish Council meetings going forward and it was agreed that due to holiday commitments, it would be a good idea for there not to be meetings in July and August of each year.

*Note from Clerk: This resolution or similar should be voted on at the September 2022 meeting of the Parish Council to ratify the Parish Council's decision.*

## **Parish Councillors**

Cllr Stewart asked the Clerk to enquire with the Borough Council as to the provision of refuse bins for the new Headley pavilion.

*Note: It was subsequently decided to require the post of Pavilion Cleaner to dispose of any event waste through their household rubbish as is the practice of the Litter Wardens and their responsibilities.*

Cllr Clark had identified a piece of land adjacent to Holt Cottages which may be suitable to be used for allotments. Cllr Clark would enquire with Cllr Rhatigan as to the ownership of the land and its potential use. \*

### **10. Recess**

It was reported that the pavement on the A339 as the 4 Kingdoms is approached is heavily overgrown with vegetation forcing pedestrians into the road. The Clerk would report the serious health and safety risk to the County Council's Highways department. \*

### **11. Financial Statement**

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stood at £33,160.45 due to the receipt of the Precept and Borough Council grants.

The Lloyds TSB deposit account of the Parish Council stood at £13,368.63.

### **12. Accounts for approval & payment**

Mr S Marshall – Clerk's salary July – September 2022 & Expenses - £4108.13

Mr J Kirkby – Litter Warden's salary – July – September 2022 - £523.02

Mr P Kemp – Litter Warden's salary – July – September 2022 - £676.02

HM Revenue & Customs – Tax and Employer NIC - £326.37

Mr J Woodford – Website domain payments - £193.96

Groundwork UK – Partial refund of grant for NP - £376.49

Headley Village Hall – Room hires for meetings - £30.00

Bramley Business Services Ltd – Internal audit - £377.90

Bramley Business Services Ltd – PAYE administration - £90.00

Scofell – Grounds maintenance - £1359.07

K.Miles – Works relating to the new Headley Pavilion - £600.00

A.Miles – Works relating to the new Headley Pavilion - £1412.13

Mr N Haynes – Invoices associated with the Headley Jubilee Party offset against BDBC grant - £494.00

Mr S Hoskins – Reimbursements reference new Headley Pavilion - £87.71

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.56pm.

**Note: A \* in the minutes denotes an action point required.**