

ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 8th MARCH 2021

HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present

Mr J Woodford (Chairman), Mrs K Cochrane, Mrs K Saunders, Mr G Stewart and the Clerk, Mr S Marshall.

Cllrs Rhatigan and Kinnear were also present and a number of the general public.

The meeting started at the earlier time of 7.00pm which will be the new start time of all Parish Council meetings conducted virtually.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllr Mellor.

2. Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of previous meeting for approval

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

4. Matters arising

The Chairman asked for the matter relating to the footpath query be brought forward to the next meeting for Cllr Mellor's attention.

The Clerk had been referred to Persimmon Homes by the Street Cleansing department of the Borough Council regarding the request for a litter bin to be located on the Oakfield development.

Clltr Rhatigan had communicated with the developers at the old sawmill housing development who had assured him that heavy goods vehicles are not allowed to reverse into the development from the main road.

5. Co-option of Parish Councillors

Following a successful recruitment campaign for new Parish Councillors, the Parish Council was in a position to co-opt three new Councillors; 2 representing the village of Headley and 1 representing the village of Ashford Hill, although the Chairman reminded the meeting that all Councillors represent the entire ward of Ashford Hill with Headley.

The Chairman proposed the co-option of Mr Stephen Hoskins of Newbury Road in Headley. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Stewart and Cllr Hoskins was duly elected as a co-opted Councillor.

The Chairman proposed the co-option of Mr Stephen Dunn of Thornford Road in Headley. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Saunders and Cllr Dunn was duly elected as a co-opted Councillor.

The Chairman proposed the co-option of Mr Adrian Saunders of Oakfield Lane in Ashford Hill. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Cochrane and Cllr A Saunders was duly elected as a co-opted Councillor.

6. Highways

The Chairman reported that there was still what appeared to be a problem with the manhole covers and water coming up from the drain from the swell pond off the Oakfield Lane estate. Even after several days of dry weather, water was still emerging from the covers so there was definitely some blockage in the pipework run off down the hill. The water is however causing carriageway damage in that area.

Cllr Saunders reported the further deterioration of the red asphaltting on parts of the A339. Cllr Stewart added to this issue by explaining that he had received complaints from residents regarding the deterioration of the 'rumble strips' on the stretch of the A339 between the Ashford Hill Road junction and the 'Four Kingdoms' attraction. The deterioration causes significant noise vibration in adjacent properties particularly when heavy good vehicles pass over the strips at speed. Residents had also reported that further along the A339 near to the church, 'rumble strips' had been removed during previous resurfacing works and the speed limit painted onto the road. It was felt that this course of action was now required at the stated location that was causing the noise pollution.

Cllr Stewart reported his concerns regarding tree trunks that had been positioned on the grass verge of the A339 adjacent to a dwelling. Cllr Rhatigan agreed that he would discuss the matter with the resident concerned with a view to having the trunks removed from HCC land.*

Cllr Hoskins was requested by the Chairman to report potholes and sunken drain covers to HCC's website in order for the request to be officially recorded.*

Cllr A Saunders had reported a number of traffic signs in need of attention to HCC's website.

7. Planning Applications

The Parish Council would be objecting to the following planning applications based on the associated comment;

Application ; Land south of former saw mill, Newbury Road, Headley – Permission in principle for the erection of 9 no. dwellings

Comment; Over urbanization of a rural setting, lack of amenities, nature conservation issues, highways concerns and contradiction of the Neighbourhood Plan

Application; Land at Galley Lane Farm, off Common Road, Galley Lane, Headley – Erection of a detached chalet bungalow

Comment: Prohibited development on a ‘green field’ site

Application; Felling a strip of woodland adjacent to the A339 in Headley

Comment: Regarded as unnecessary removal of some trees

The Chairman commented on the need for the Parish Council to continue to oppose the development of ‘green field’ sites as an unnecessary aspect of increasing the housing stock.

8. Neighbourhood Plan

Nothing to report.

9. Reports

Borough Councillors

It was reported that there would be a resubmission of the Thornford Road housing development and the Borough Council would be lodging its objections to such a development.

The appeal process for the rejected planning application for a housing development on the second field in Ashford Hill would take 6-8 weeks and Cllr Rhatigan was confident of a positive outcome whereby the appeal would be rejected by the Inspectorate.

The tree felling planning application on a strip of woodland on the A339 had been resubmitted as the original application was not clear as to the exact locations of trees that were to be felled if planning permission were to be granted.

The Borough Council were planning to partially fund the cost of recycling permits to allow local residents to use the West Berkshire Council facility as it continued to research potential sites for such a facility within the Borough.

The meeting was reminded that the Census information had recently been sent out which required completion and return by residents.

Cllr Rhatigan confirmed that the Borough Council were not attempting to circumnavigate the due process for any potential planning application for a solar panel farm at Riddings Farm in Headley. Despite the number of objections to any such potential planning application, Cllr Rhatigan confirmed that the planning application would automatically revert to the Planning Committee for a decision.

Cllr Rhatigan made a case for the excellent value for money that the level of the Borough's Council Tax represented when compared to different Borough Councils in the county which were claimed to be significantly higher. Cllr Rhatigan and the Borough Council were constantly reminded of the fact that it was spending tax payers' money.

Chairman

The Chairman's verbatim report;

“ Appreciation

The Parish Council would like to thank Mr Paul Wyatt for his time on the Parish Council and wish him well on his travels!

Riddings Farm – Solar Farm EIS report

Please can we ask the Borough Council to remove from its documentation that the Parish Council had not made any comments concerning the EIS report. The reason we had not made comment is we had not been consulted. If we had we would have recommended an EIS should be a requirement due to the size and the impact of such a construction to the surrounding areas and environment. The Enborne River is a highly important water way which has to handle annual flood waters. Any large scale construction which might impact surrounding land and its ability to absorb rainwater is of great concern as the Enborne feeds into the River Kennet. I'm not sure if the Borough considers visual impact an important consideration factor, the construction will undoubtedly have a significant impact to the landscape.

Car park resurfacing

The resurfacing of the Ashford Hill car park will start on Monday 22 March and all users had been informed.

Headley Football Pitches

I have spoken to the Cold Ash Junior football club to say we would be happy to host their training and matches on a Sunday. I plan to meet them this week to review their needs.

Village tidy ups in 2021

We had great turn out in both villages and we probably had some of the youngest litter pickers in history to join us this year. It was so nice to see the villages coming together (socially distanced!) helping to clear up those areas where our Litter Wardens do not go to. I request for those who took their pick sticks home could they please be returned.

Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Parish Council

I have been in contact with the Chair of Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Parish Council about our Neighbourhood Plan as they are looking to develop something similar. The Chair also mentioned that there is a speculative development of **400 houses** in their Parish as Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council have issue with their Local Plan fulfilments of housing stock which is exerting pressure in all areas of the Borough.

Footpath Wardens

Hampshire County Council's Rural Rangers are interested in recruiting some volunteers from Ashford Hill and Headley to help review the footpaths to help keep local footpaths and bridleways accessible and enjoyable for the community. Speaking with Gemma Clinch – Community Engagement Ranger, North Access Team, Countryside Service; she would be very happy to support these recruits! If there is interest from anyone please drop me an email jrwoodford_1@btinternet.com and I will connect you to her. Typical activities are the following, including in the welcome pack are some secateurs to help with minor trimming while on duty !

Typical tasks and duties:

- Inspecting
- Waymarking
- Reporting and recording
- Talking to members of the public
- Quarterly checks of chosen routes

Parish Councillors

Cllr Stewart reported on the continuing noise from a builders' yard in Thorford Road which was due to end on the 15 March 2021 when it was hoped a renewal of permission to continue such work would not be allowed to continue due to the nature of the work causing significant disturbance to local residents. Cllr Rhatigan confirmed the noise had continued for 5 years as West Berkshire Council had failed to address the noise pollution. The Borough had lodged its objection to the renewal of planning permission for such activity.

Cllr Stewart reiterated the offer of dialogue from the owner of Headley Stud with walkers using an unadopted footpath that crossed land belonging to the stud. Cllr Stewart suggested that this was a better course of action rather than attempting to have a footpath relocated.

Cllr Stewart confirmed that the planning application for a new 'social venue' facility on Headley recreation ground would be submitted to the Borough Council very soon. Cllr Hoskins requested sight of the proposed plan, hopeful that it would be a larger facility than the previous construction. Cllr Stewart agreed to facilitate Cllr Hoskin's request.

Cllr Cochrane reported on complaints from horseriders on bridleway 726 who had been confronted by walkers arguing that horses were not allowed on a footpath.

Clerk to the Council

The Clerk reminded the Chairman of the Parish Magazine's request for a grant from the Parish Council to the value of £750 to assist in the reduction in the difference between advertising revenue and printing costs. The awarding of the grant was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr Cochrane.

The potential purchase of equipment capable of monitoring the speed of drivers without the need for a Community Speed Watch, comprised of volunteers, would be discussed at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

10. Recess

Concern was expressed regarding the lack of consultation with local residents and the proposal for a solar panel farm at Riddings Farm. Whilst it was accepted that the application to date had only been made with reference to the determination for an environmental impact assessment which forms no part of the planning application process itself, it was argued that the Borough Council should have judged that such an assessment was required instead of determining that an assessment was not required in order to illustrate to the company proposing such a development that the Borough Council would be adopting a stance indicative of its opposition to a planning application for such a proposal.

11. Financial Statement

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stood at £26,285.

The Lloyds TSB deposit account of the Parish Council stood at £10,843.

12. Accounts approved & paid

Hampshire County Council – Application fee for ‘white gates’ project - £250.00

Mr J Woodford – SLR battery - £59.99

Community Shop – Room hire – Inv.no.035 – re-issuing of cheque - £18.00

April – June 2021 – 2021/2022

Mr S Marshall – Clerk’s salary & previous expenses – April-June 2021 - £3287.49

Mr C Butler – Litter Warden’s salary – April-June 2021 - £602.91

Mr J Kirkby – Litter Warden’s salary – April-June 2021 - £482.70

HMRC – Tax & Employer NI - £1847.91

BBS Ltd – PAYE administration - £75.00

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.07pm.