

ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 12th OCTOBER 2020

HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present

Mr J Woodford (Chairman), Mr S Hiscock, Mrs K Cochrane, Mrs L Grist, Mrs K Saunders, Mr G Stewart and Mr P Wyatt.

Cllrs Mellor and Rhatigan were also present together with 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 Councillor Kinnear.

2. Declaration of interest

Cllr Hiscock declared an interest as the grounds' contractor for the Parish Council.

3. Minutes of previous meeting for approval

The minutes of the last full meeting held on Monday 14th September 2020 were approved.

4. Matters arising

The Chairman had responded to Cllr Stewart's request to Councillors to identify more work for the Lengthman's scheme.

Cllr Hiscock had pursued the quotations from contractors for the surface of the recreation ground car park in Ashford Hill.

The Chairman had provided the Parish Magazine with an article and schematic of the layout of the new car park that serves the primary school in Ashford Hill.

5. Highways

The Chairman reported that there was localised flooding again following heavy downpours over the past few weeks; by the Old Malthouse across the B3051 towards Fair Oak Grange. Whilst this posed no threat to property, the Chairman hoped that the County Council would review the problem in due course. The water coming from the swell pond into the road drain was bubbling up and causing flooding across the B3051 and in to the house opposite. Highways drains were blocked and unable to cope with the volume of water. Cllr Rhatigan was out with rods to help clear some of the blockages.

6. Planning Applications

- Woodlands Farm, Woodlands Lane, Ashford Hill – replacement house & garage – No objection
- Land north west of Ram Alley, Ashford Hill – erection of a dwelling – Objected to based on location in open countryside, accessibility & lack of drainage
- 8 Hollycroft, Ashford Hill – new bi-fold doors to replace existing rear windows & new porch – No objection
- Orchard Barn, Thornford Road, Headley – erection of single storey & two storey side extension – Objected to based on overdevelopment of the site & indicative plans suggesting a separate dwelling
- Beech House, Newbury Road, Headley – certificate of lawfulness for replacement of ground floor window – No Objection
- 1 Beenham Court, Newbury Road, Headley – erection of a single storey rear extension - No objection

7. Neighbourhood Plan

Mrs Caroline Hellings reported on the progress being made with the Neighbourhood Plan. It was reported that the steering group were moving towards the final stage which was the public consultation which would be difficult given the current restrictions caused by the pandemic. The steering group had achieved a great deal and due to fatigue, it was proving difficult to galvanise interest and activity for the final stage.

8. Reports

County Councillor

Cllr Mellor's verbatim report;

“COVID-19

Whilst the HCC is fully prepared for any second spike and encourages all preventative measures, as at yesterday (12 October) there were just 2 cases in B &NH Hospital and the current R rate per 100k population is very low by even Tier 1 standards. I should add that the additional work, still ongoing, in Adult Social Care has cost the HCC some £103M over budget in the past 6 months. We continue to invest in Care Homes, additional Social workers/carers; we still have some 11000 vulnerable adults receiving direct assistance in the County; indeed we still have nearly all office staff working from home. In respect of this, some of the non emergency HCC telephone contact lines e.g Highways reporting, were stopped as interacting with contact staff at home was not efficient.

Children's Services

In respect of Children's Services, on a County basis, there has been an increase in **Children in Care (Looked After)** during the pandemic that causes concern. Fostering in particular is on a big demand curve.

Highways

There is now a major study (**Thames Valley/North Hampshire Connectivity**) incorporating participation of B & D, Reading BC, West Berks DC, Wokingham etc which is looking to improve traffic conditions on the North South roads in the area. Primarily focussed on the problems of the A33, I was surprised to see the first draft of the area of study did not cover any area west of the A340; lodged a long letter, attended the first meeting and a subsequent one with the Director and am pleased to say that the study will now incorporate the area from the A339 east. This is of relevance to Ashford Hill as undoubtedly the knock on effect of more traffic on the A roads - be it through Manydown and other developments, normal growth and the link between the M4/M3 and key A roads will dramatically affect the traffic on e.g B3051 and this problem has to be incorporated. There is now a TfSE group of home counties coordinating all major transport improvements. In the past 4 years there has been tremendous infrastructure improvement at the bottom of the A339 at Crockfords, Thorneycroft, Black Dam and now, with Manydown and other developments along the A339 and A33, it is right that we look to improving the roads to/from Basingstoke.

Highways Maintenance

As this note is written just after several days of amber warnings caused by Storm Alex and a wet October to date, there is always a hike in drainage issues and damage to the road, but the 'flags' on Highways map are still few and far between. The Highways maintenance report dispatched the Parish reflected a substantial amount of drainage /gully clearance (facilitated by the lack of traffic on the roads) . Locally the issues on the A339 by Crabbs Hill caused problems with TTRO's and of course where as the routings caused problems for Wolverton and Baughurst residents on this occasion, to the future new projects may cause problems for other Parish residents. The shortest route suitable for all vehicles is generally adopted. Diversion signage is being looked at. On Highways, the A339 will be the site for a quarry by the Ramsdell turn off; this follows the exhaustion of the current site at Monk Sherborne which will return to agriculture.

Active Spaces

The HCC brand name for the **Cycling and Walking** programme is being launched on October 19th with a full strategy document.

Household Waste Recycling Centres

The issues of Wade Road have been abated to a certain extent with a better slot system, longer hours in the summer and of course as B & D has now re introduced a full kerbside collection programme.

Planning

At the time of writing , the Parishes, the local authorities with planning responsibility and HCC are all preparing responses to the government's White Paper Consultation. The ETE Cttee, on which I sit (along with several people who are local authority leaders/ councillors as well) has sent in their comments/ contribution to the Leaders responses only on what was in the paper but what alarmingly was left out of it. The loss of any input by local residents is undemocratic especially with those who have long term well thought out approved local Neighbourhood Plans; the loss of S106/CIL etc not at all well compensated by the Infrastructure Levy proposals and all in all, general response is 'Think Again'.

Climate Change

We now have a comprehensive 237 page document covering all aspects of Climate Change in the County. We continue to progress to meet the net zero carbon objective by 2050. Highways contribution is considerable....electrification, recycled materials being used in Highways Maintenance etc and , as with any other plan, a structured timescale.

Local economy

Of course, a major concern as we move out of furlough this month (Hampshire had c 300k residents on such schemes;) is the growth in unemployment. The claimant count has locally grown regrettably to c.5% and HCC is now investing in training programmes to counter this and the COVID rules prevent a resurgence of any activity in the important tourism sector.

Borough Councillors

Cllr Rhatigan's report centred on the opposition being compiled by the Borough Council against central government's 'white paper' on future planning legislation. Cllr Rhatigan reassured the meeting that the Borough's argument against the diminution of local influence and decision making regarding local planning applications would be forcefully opposed. The submission to central government from the local authority would include many aspects that needed to be drawn to the government's attention and would include the government's intention of ignoring the vast amount of work undertaken by local communities in compiling their Neighbourhood Plans which would be ignoring a basic principal of democracy.

On a more positive note, Cllr Rhatigan was pleased to report on the government's announcement of a new hospital for Basingstoke where three potential sites are being considered. The development would also potentially include a medical centre for rare treatments and would be at the cutting edge of medical advancements.

Cllr Rhatigan reported on the opening of a new coronavirus testing facility located at the Anvil theatre complex in Basingstoke.

Cllr Rhatigan reported that a new Chief Executive, a Russell O'Keefe, had been appointed, currently employed by the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead as their Executive Director of Place. The new Chief Executive had made a commitment to visit local rural areas which made up 75% of the Borough of Basingstoke & Deane.

Chairman

The Chairman's verbatim report;

“New Government Planning White Paper

Having had a chance to review some of the ‘white paper’ on future planning legislation, I would like to air grave concerns about the way it will remove much of the consultation and decision making powers away from our local authorities. Though the Parish Council has limited weight in such matters it does have the ability to air housing needs or development concerns. Having access to S106, CIL and LIF funding permits the Parish to invest locally on schemes and projects to support such developments and their impact to our community and the removal of such funding is not welcome. To our Borough Councillors, we would like to know how best to air these concerns, should we hold a meeting with our local MP? Recommendation would be welcome, as removing our involvement in these matters begs the question, what is the point of a Parish Council or developing a robust Neighbourhood Plan?

CIL Funding

I have spoken with BDBC about CIL funding and how it will work. Simply it is based on tax levied on the developer to support local projects outside of the requirements of the older S106 funding which stipulate a particular area to invest in. CIL is collected 60 days after the commencement of the development in staged payments and is paid to the Town or Parish Council through our Precept payments twice per year. It came into effect from 2018 and as such no monies have been collected yet for the use within the Parish. Out of the funds collected if the Parish has an in place Neighbourhood Plan then they will receive up to 25% of the funds collected. If one is not in place then this is reduced down to 15%. We had hoped that the ‘White Gates’ project for Ashford Hill could be funded this way, unfortunately as no funds have been collected as the Oakfield development was commenced before 2018, we are unable to raise the necessary finances this way. The S106 money from that development also can not legally be reallocated for a different project.

Oakfield Lane Development

I received correspondence about the Oakfield Lane development and the present state of the Public Open Space (POS). The letter was from a resident to Persimmon Homes outlining their frustration with the development and the lack of completion of the site and the POS. I await news from the same person as to what Persimmon homes have suggested to them.

November 2020 meeting

For the foreseeable future we will be holding virtual meetings. New web links will be issued per meeting per month. As we will not need to travel we have suggested the start time is 7pm.”

Parish Councillors’ reports & Clerk’s comment

Cllr Hiscock reported a potentially dangerous tree in Knightsbridge Drive which Cllr Wyatt* agreed to talk to the landowner about. Cllr Hiscock reported on inappropriate parking on the C111 which was obscuring drivers’ sight lines. This was regarded as a police matter which needed reporting as such.

Cllr Stewart reported on the additional work planned for the Lengthman’s scheme which was to be completed later in the week. Cllr Stewart requested assistance with work required for the new changing rooms project in Thornford Road together with a proposal to install astro turf adjacent to the playground in Headley. Cllr Stewart reported on the timings of when the Parish Council meetings’ minutes and the publication dates of the Parish Magazine. The Clerk confirmed that he could not issue minutes to the magazine ahead of them being approved by Councillors. Cllr Stewart suggested that the minutes could be approved ahead of the Parish Council meetings in order to meet the magazine publication deadlines. The Clerk confirmed that this was a decision for the Chairman to make.

Offline, Cllr Grist asked the meeting to confirm its acceptance of a chain across the vehicular entrance to the car park in Chapel Lane. It was agreed in principal and Cllr Grist* was asked to provide a costing to be considered at the next meeting.

Cllr Cochrane reported on her concern regarding the safety of the children when dropped off at the new car park that serves the primary school in Ashford Hill. Cllr Rhatigan* kindly agreed to consult with the housing developer and to look into the funding of a gravel path. Following a number of ideas to prevent the problem as well as the potentially muddy verges, the Chairman reminded the meeting that the Parish Council does not own the car park or the land upon which it sits.

The Clerk reminded Councillors that commemorative wreaths needed to be purchased in readiness for Remembrance Sunday next month.

9. Recess

Following a question from the general public about the proposed housing development in Thornford Road in Headley, Cllr Rhatigan commented on the fact that a decision regarding planning would not be forthcoming until December 2020 and he was confident that the application would be rejected by the Borough Council.

10. Financial Statement

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stood at £33,759.25.
The Lloyds TSB deposit account of the Parish Council stood at £10,842.39.

11. Accounts for approval & payment

Externiture – repair to vandalised bus shelter A339 - £54.00

Headley Village Hall Trust – grant to partially cover hall cleaner cost - £360.00

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.05pm.