

ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 11th OCTOBER 2021

Present

Mr J Woodford (Chairman), 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 Cllr K Saunders and the Clerk.

2. Declaration of interest

None declared.

3. Minutes of previous meeting for approval

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13th September 2021 were approved.

4. Matters arising

It was reported that the nettles on the pavement from the church car park had now been removed. The Clerk had reported the Ashford Hill traffic signs that were pointing in the incorrect direction.

Cllr Hoskins would be pursuing the purchase of a brush cutter as previously agreed and Cllr Mellor had suggested a source of funding for such equipment from the Rural Fund.

The updating of the Councillors' contact information on noticeboards was being delayed until a decision regarding the future use of Parish Council dedicated email addresses.

The Headley playground fencing had been made safe and accessible and future long-term repairs would be considered in the new financial year.

5. Highways

Cllr Saunders reported that parents from the school were concerned about the potential danger of children running in to the road adjacent to the school car park as the track had no pedestrian gate together with concerns about the edge of the road and pathway which had intrusive banks of mud. Cllr Rhatigan reported that discussions with the landowner were ongoing regarding this matter.

The Chairman reported that a tree had fallen across a main bridleway between Wheathold and Haughurst Hill, which had been reported to the gamekeeper.

6. Planning Applications

It was unanimously agreed by all Councillors present that they were opposed to the planning application for an additional 45 houses on land opposite Holt Cottages in Ashford Hill.

7. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Hoskins reported on the progress of the consultative stage of the Neighbourhood Plan and informed the meeting that recent responses from residents and businesses had been reviewed. The Parish Council would need to determine if a local referendum would be appropriate.

8. Reports

County Councillor's verbatim report:

“1. Finances of course control our ability to continually increase services especially when we now spend c£1billion per year on Adult Social Care. Currently on yet another savings exercise through to March 2023 as we need to cut back on £80M. However, although we lost the Revenue Support Grant from HMG some 4 years ago, there are now performance-based incentives/assistance on some projects to minimize the cut.

2. Highways; monthly performance newsletter dispatched to the Clerk; few outstanding road surface issues in the area and generally what there is can be handled within the 8-week period. As per 1, Highways has comparatively performed well vis a vis other shires and hence will now qualify for some financial /incentive assistance from Dft. Capital programmes unaffected although the North South ‘Connectivity’ work with the Berkshire authorities has not progressed during COVID. The Highways Ops online system is undergoing a major revamp with more updated reports/progress; will be ready early 2022.

3. Waste/Recycling; Newtown Road has now implemented the charging system. Wade Road is now operating normally with a continuation of the time slot booking arrangement. Interesting that where the majority of residential waste dumped at Newtown Road was green- as it is at Wade Road, the loss of the B & D green waste collection service albeit in Autumn, will now become the big issue. There is at present a complete review of the Joint Waste Management agreement involving all the local collecting authorities. Focus on food waste and the need to separate this at kerbside and reduce the contamination is needed and hence one can expect a fourth bin!

4. Countryside; there has been an increase in activity on clearing of some of the hundreds of footpaths under the Countryside Access banner. Predominantly supported by the returning local volunteers, HCC has put another £500,000 on to the budget; seems most will be spent on the ‘promoted footpaths’ in need of repair. Promoted Routes tend to be those used extensively by the likes of the Ramblers Assoc /National Trust who support Hampshire CC. Still the local representative responds quickly where she can to resident claims with a good response. A local Headley involvement certainly helps.

5. Climate Change. October will see the publication of the HCC Climate Change strategy document. The 130 pages cover all aspects of the ‘Emergency’ and what HCC strategy is and can be accessed through the website.

6. Bus Back Better; in an effort to secure a share of the government’s funding, a complete review of bus services including Community Transport is underway to be finalised by the end December. Have urged the areas in the northern ‘corner’ of the County to input any recommendations. There is a lack of demand for Community Transport- with a very high degree of car ownership- and perhaps the time is right for the local community to push for more. Hampshire is a County – possibly pre COVID the only one- that year on year improved bus passenger uplift and only by continual upgrading of the products can this continue. HCC will continue to subsidize some of the loss-making routes for social/medical/connect reasons. Smaller buses with more regularity. Ideas always welcome.

7. Schools; Annual review for Councillors was undertaken in September. All 7 schools in my ward are Ofsted rated as Good- of course exam results were not taken into consideration in the past year. It appears to be the case that most are performing above the national average. The interim Head at Ashford Hill, Sharon Pole, has strong local connections as she is also the Head at Ecchinswell. The Hurst is focussed on building its establishment. The Hurst Leisure Centre has seen a decline in membership unlikely to turn around with the midweek daytime closure of the hall. Seemingly the wellbeing staff are now secure; new young staff man the establishment, mainly in the evenings and at weekend but of course several mainly of the older fraternity have now lost a very cheap keep fit location and although the likes of Tadley Swimming Pool are attractive, not seen as a replacement and also twice the price. However, the School could not go on effectively subsidizing the Leisure Centre

The Schools will be making a big contribution to Climate Change and the start will be the phasing in of a £29M solarisation scheme across the County in an effort for more energy efficiency.

8. The COUNTY DEAL. HCC is working on this having been invited by the Ministry to be a 'Pilot' County and high frequency discussion with the Unitaries and other District/Borough DC's continue as the submission to the Minister must be in December. Cost efficiencies is the focus."

Borough Councillor

Cllr Rhatigan reported that the green garden waste bins had been suspended as there wasn't sufficient staff to run this service but the bins should be collected shortly. This was addressed by a small pay rise in that sector and also because of DVLA not processing licences as efficiently as before.

Cllr Rhatigan further reported that 50% of all household waste collected is surprisingly food waste and BDBC are exploring ways to educate people about the amount of food waste produced.

The recent planning application for 45 houses is opposed by BDBC as it will alter the dynamics of the village, as this is not in the urban centre as it's on the outskirts of the village. The next steps to oppose such a housing development are to be discussed.

The Chairman's verbatim report:

"Councillors' Email addresses

In the age of cyber security and personal data attacks I would like to suggest that we give each Cllr a new email address so that they and anyone can correspond with them through this. It will also help with any current or future GDPR concerns. Our web site provider can offer this at £4.60 per person per month, which would be about £442 per year. There are alternatives like Ionos, for 10 emails at £30 inc VAT or £360 per year. Alternatively, we look at something like GMAIL etc

AH play park repairs

I have carried out some of the minor repairs and one major repair with the help of Cllr Dunn which was the basketball hoop top two bolts replacement. The other outstanding and major concern are the brambles at the back of the park. *Please could Cllr Stewart update us on the Lengthsman situation to attend to these as I believe we have some time available to us for this. We await parts to be ordered by the Clerk to complete some of the additional minor repairs.

Access to Parish owned land

A polite reminder to residents of Ashford Hill and Headley that it is the responsibility of the home owner to seek permission from the Parish Council if they wish contractors to gain access to a property or use Parish Council land to carry out repairs, tree felling or any other remedial works. We have no issue to permit such access but may require evidence of insurance, a risk assessment and public liability cover documentation.

Overnight parking in Ashford Hill recreational grounds

It has been commented to me by various people in the area that a car has been parked and left for several days in the car park and remained unmoved - Reg KV58VOP. Just a reminder to all that this car park is not intended for overnight parking, as stated on the notice board. We of course have no issues with the odd short stay of a vehicle if residents from Ashford Hill are carrying out construction works which prevents them using their own driveways. However, I would ask that if a resident is intending to do so that they email the Clerk to make the Parish Council aware who the vehicle belongs to and the intended time it might be there. This is not a long-term residential car parking area, as it's for the use of visitors to the recreational ground's facilities.

Request for funding

Residents around Great Haughurst Copse are carrying out repairs to the area and seeking funding. They have approached the PC over the summer to see if we are able to support them. This we will need financial advice from the Clerk. In the meantime here is their funding group <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/great-haughurst-footpath-and-bridleway-restoration> and anyone interested can find out more through www.ghcopse.co.uk."

Parish Councillors

Cllr Dunn reported that whilst metal doors were not available to secure the old pavilion on Headley recreation ground, the building would be made secure shortly.

Cllr Hoskins reported that there had been an absence of volunteers for the work co-ordinated by the Community Engagement Ranger from the Countryside Service, following a recent appeal.

9. Recess

There was nothing to report.

10. Financial Statement

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stood at £2534.54

The Lloyds TSB deposit account of the Parish Council stood at £31,758.84

11. Accounts approval & payment

Scofell – Grounds maintenance – September 2021 - £1359.07

Community Shop – Room hires – Neighbourhood Plan (NP) - £21.00

Mrs C Rhatigan – Refreshment costs for NP drop-in sessions - £87.51

Mr J Morshead – Land Registry searches & Postage for NP - £200.00

BDBC – Play inspections – partial year - £1000.80