

**ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 13<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021**

**Present**

Mrs K Saunders (Vice Chair), Mr G Stewart, Mr S Dunn, Mr S Hoskins and the Clerk, Mr S Marshall

Cllr Rhatigan and Cllr Mellor and a number of members of the public were also present.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from the Chairman, Mr J Woodford and Mr Saunders.

**2. Declaration of interest**

None declared.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021 were approved.

**4. Matters arising**

Cllr Hoskins was led to believe that there was no longer an interest in the renting of the recreation ground at Headley by the Cold Ash Football Team.

The Clerk pending approval of the meeting would be ordering new batteries for the SIDs which Cllr Stewart had raised was an issue at the July meeting. Following approval from Councillors to expend ca.£900 on new batteries via email communications with Councillors over the summer holidays, which were having to be made specifically for the equipment, the Clerk confirmed that the order would take several weeks to complete and dispatch due to the specific requirements of the batteries.

**5. Highways**

Cllr Stewart expressed his appreciation to Cllr Mellor for arranging works to undertake repairs to significant potholes on the C111 and at the top of Ashford Hill.

The Chairman's report in his absence included reference to nettles on the pavement from the church car park to the school which the Vice Chair would be addressing. \* The white lines on the B3051 which had not been reinstated when reported in 2019 were not regarded as a priority by the Highways department, the Clerk reported but would register the work request again. \*

The Chairman reported on the manhole cover repair on the B3051 during the summer which had been repaired. A similar 'noisy' manhole cover causes annoyance to local residents living in or near to Jubilee Cottage in Ashford Hill.

The traffic signs serving the Oakfield Lane estate are being obscured by overgrown hedges and traffic signs from Kingsclere to Tadley on entering Ashford Hill are pointing in the incorrect direction and are positioned halfway down the display poles. \*

## **6. Planning Applications**

The Parish council would be objecting to the following planning applications;

Oakwood, Ashford Hill Road, Headley – Outline planning permission for the erection of 3 no. detached 4 bed dwellings – as previously objected to on the grounds of an overdevelopment of the site and loss of privacy to existing dwellings

Land adjoining Glen Shira, Common Road, Headley – Erection of 1 no. dwelling following demolition of existing building – as previously objected to on the grounds of an overdevelopment of the site and a development on a greenfield site.

Rosetree House, Ashford Hill Road, Goose Hill – Erection of 1 no. dwelling – objected to on the grounds of it being on a greenfield site

Land adjacent to Broadacres, Newbury Road, Headley – TDC for erection of 1 no. dwelling – objected to on grounds of it being on a greenfield site

## **7. Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr Hoskins reported on the progress of the consultative stage of the Neighbourhood Plan compilation. Comments had been received from parishioners via the questionnaires as well as the open days designed to consult and inform local residents. Cllr Rhatigan commented on the importance of public involvement in the compilation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **8. Reports**

### **County Councillor's verbatim report;**

“Report this month focus on the following;

- a. Waste- Less Waste; recycling issues; HWRC
- b. Cycle /Walking update
- c. Climate Change
- d. 'Bus back Better'

e. Finances - post pandemic

f. Traffic / Councillors 'outside bodies' /committee activity.

g. The Hurst Leisure Centre

- a. Waste; in August, the arrangements of access to West Berkshire 'tips- notably, only two, at Newtown Road and Padworth were finalised. For 4 years HCC had been offering reciprocity to West Berks to suit our residents who do not wish to travel to one of the 24 tips under HCC management. HCC could not continue to pay for access at £200k per annum for less than 1% of the county population who were in possession of permits. Net outcome is that WB will charge £7 per visit by Hampshire residents at both Newbury and Padworth. HCC is assisting in the provision of ANPR and other equipment so that WB can establish usage. (All residents previously utilising the permits were written to with explanation-. The booking system in place at Wade Road will be maintained as it has reduced queues- if any- to literally a handful of vehicles and now, with social distancing no longer a requirement, booking slots are being increased substantially. Often forgotten, the waste from all the tips has to be treated/recycled and it is a concern that HCC efforts to increase the incinerators by extending the Material/Energy Recycling Facilities at e.g. Alton are being opposed by local residents with letters to the Secretary of State. Some residents may recall that about 20 years ago, a similar reaction from some local residents to the ERF at Chineham was evident. What is burned there now contributes to the supply of electricity to some 10000 households, and nobody adversely comments. All part of the waste disposal system. Additionally, in the joint waste management programme, there is creeping evidence that a fourth 'kerbside' bin will be required to handle waste food to ensure better recycling. Currently in train is a revised Joint Waste Management policy being finalised with the 14 local Authorities.
- b. Cycling/Walking Update; LCWIP programme.

Since last report there has been progress as we move to finalising the cycling and walking lanes- less so in the rural areas where safety is less of an issue. Additional government funding is now in place and workshops involving local interests were undertaken. I am grateful for the local participation of Tadley Environmental Group and B & D Cllrs. The "Active Spaces" programme introduced during the traffic light pandemic and mainly for High Streets is being re shaped owing to unpopularity with retailers, drivers etc. The School Streets programme to facilitate the access to schools near or on main roads is now on trial. Expect full plans in the Autumn; a student/parent consultation aimed at contributing to what is to be proposed for the Hurst School access to /from Tadley was undertaken in July/August.

c. Climate Change.

Perhaps the easiest way to report all the initiatives is to refer to our dedicated website; [https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/ climate change](https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/climate-change). Literally everything we do has to be assessed on climate change grounds. At the moment, there is a focus on finalising the **EV charging point** programme; the **flood prevention** and now the effect of the plant life schedules on the verges.

The very wet/very warm summer has accelerated green growth and some hedgerows/verges are precariously close to narrowing the rural roads; matter being reviewed.

In respect of EV charging, at present utilisation of public placed charging points is low as most drivers recharge at home. Public vehicles are all catered for in Hampshire and adjacent counties. At a time when Planning is seeing a large volume of affordable housing, just what are the options. Of course, the likes of e.g. BP will invest in some 50000 points nationwide; Tesco to install ev charge points at 400 stores etc but how we overcome the residential issues with cabling or points built into lampposts etc is the matter to be finalised; limited off street parking on some estates is a real concern. Rurally in AHH, not a problem. Additional activity has been a review of all investment portfolios in the Hampshire Pension Fund Board so that they are "Responsible Investments"; expansion of solarisation programmes is another activity as the govt contributes to our schools solarization programme. The website is extensive. One area of conflict is the CPRE approach of seeking a withdrawal of road construction or repair and to put the resultant saved monies into Climate Change schemes. Well, electric cars will need good road surfaces .....

d. 'Bus Back Better'

Increased use of public transport is part of the reduced emissions effort. Approach to this is dependent on where one lives. Tadley and Baughurst have an adequate, non-subsidised, bus operation- low emission modern Stagecoach equipment and will move to electric as are several of the bus services in Hampshire. Ashford Hill has no service; Headley is well served by The Link twixt Basingstoke and Newbury. The key is how we get more people on to the buses from the less populated areas. A review of community transport is part of the Bus Back Better scheme.

e. Finances; we are now in the midst of "SP23" with a savings programme aimed at saving some £80M by 2023 caused by withdrawal of some of the Govt grants. Not easy and mainly looking to efficiency programmes. Public Consultation has taken place on this. Economy and Transport will suffer although Highways Maintenance should be Ok with C Govt top up. 6 Traffic; return to normal working hours is slow and the roads still well below pre-pandemic norms. Noticeable that the Police have been deploying speed cameras/vans on "Strategic roads", notably the A340. Of interest was an August edition of the Basingstoke Gazette where all the cases of Court Reporting referred to traffic offences. I have deployed an HCC Speedcheck on Baughurst Road eff 13 September; if the evidence is there then the matter will be pursued with the Police. Of course, 'enforcement' is the key. The monthly Highways performance email has been dispatched to all the Town /Parish Clerks. Generally, a good performance on maintenance. 7 'Outside Bodies'. Apart from the HCC Committees I attend- Vice Chair of Economy and Transport Cttee, Audit Committee and Member of the Hampshire Pension Fund Board, - the outside bodies I sit on for the County include the Hampshire IOW Fire and Rescue Authority, I observe for the County the activities of the Tadley CA, and attend some Educational Trusts. I have other responsibilities at B & D as a Borough Councillor.

f. Local Issues. I do urge the Parish to look at the grants available- e.g. Rural Fund to assist with their own countryside efforts where they can augment the volunteer activities coordinated by HCC Countryside Access Team. AHH rarely seeks support from such. The County Councillors Grant scheme for one off project is available too.

g. The issue of the weekday closure of the Hurst Leisure Centre has annoyed several of the long-term users; the continuation of the evening and weekend opening is seen as a compromise; suffice to say, the early closure of the School, summer break and discussions with HCC Education Directorate have stalled progress. The new Head has ambitions and drive that have to be admired as the School needs to up its game to be consistently rated as 'Good'; Still, the Community use has to be protected as the facility was intended for them. More news next month.

Issues with Thames Water re the drains on the B3051 continue; although all seem happy with the interim work on the pipe and yet another re surface by Chapel Lane.”

### **Borough Councillor**

Cllr Rhatigan expressed his disquiet regarding the failure of the planning application appeal against the second field housing development. Cllr Rhatigan described the failure to overturn the planning appeal was a ‘tragedy’ for the local area and totally disagreed with the Inspector’s comments that went to support the decision to overturn the appeal.

However, the Borough Council would be doing all within its spheres of influence to ensure that the development was discreet and well built.

Cllr Rhatigan expressed a desire to have the recreation grounds fully utilised by members of the local community in order to help prevent anti-social behaviour.

New control bollards had been installed into the school car park to encourage more sensible parking and manoeuvring.

Funding had been given to Borough Councillors to allow for small amounts of money to be given for worthwhile causes in the local areas.

Cllr Rhatigan would be proposing to the Borough Council, with ideally the support of the Parish Council, the use of Community Infrastructure Levy funding for Chapel Lane access improvements.

### **Chairman**

#### **The Chairman’s verbatim report;**

#### **“Shocking news about the field opposite the Primary school**

It saddens me to have to report that the planning appeal carried out by the Bristol Inspectorate went in favour of the developer. This will forever change the outlook of Ashford Hill village with a further 27 new houses next to the other new estate of Oakfield Lane (35 houses).

I met with Ken Rhatigan to discuss the appeal, enquiring as to what will happen next and asked if the Borough can make every effort to ensure the style of the houses, including brick colours and street scene to better reflect the village's wider designs. Many have commented to me how disappointed they are with the outlook of the Oakfield Lane estate and how it dominates the street scene along the B3051 and does not reflect the local housing stock. I strongly encourage the Borough to work with the developer and reference to the Parish's Village Design Statement documents to guide them in this area. Now more than ever does the Parish need to rally around the Neighbourhood Plan, as this document again was referenced as not having been completed and therefore was not a consideration of merit. Our Neighbourhood Plan will direct both our local planning authority and any Inspectorate on any future largescale green/brown field or infill site developments. When we do take the plan to referendum I hope people will recognise its importance to our Parish and support it positively.

### **Raising the barrier height in AH car park**

Temporarily, following the sign being knocked off by a car with a top box, the height number has been lowered to 1.95M. I have been speaking with Able Steel, Ridding Farm, who after visiting the site with me has very kindly offered to adjust the height so that it is 2.1M. I would like to thank Ian Theodore for his generous offer to support the local community as they will not be charging for the adjustment.

### **White gate project**

One of our other major projects was realised during the summer break, the white gates into and out of Ashford Hill on the B3051. According to Hampshire Highways, this concludes the full extent of the traffic calming measures we can do along the B3051. The issue being the B3051 is a main access route towards AWE and we are told techniques such as road narrowing will not be permitted. These gates were part funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the rest paid for with reserve funds from the Parish Council which have built up over several years.

### **Headley Recreational Grounds**

We are still in discussion with Cold Ash Junior girls FC. Stephen Hoskins along with Steve Dunn have been handling these conversations over the summer. We are focusing on the parking and may permit access to the Headley grounds to alleviate local parking pressure. It will mean any land owned by the Parish Council will be required to be used. So the White Van parked at the entrance of the grounds off the C111 will be asked to be move, once fixtures take place. The changing room door needs attention. Maybe Cllrs can discuss this tonight if repairs have not yet been carried out?

### **Item in need of repair**

I have been informed that several areas of the Ashford Hill play park need attention. Once we have the inspectors report we will tackle these. Most just need a socket set and a bit of free time.

## **Playpark tidy up working party?**

In my June report I had asked for Cllrs to help with setting up a tidying up party to attend to the play park in Ashford Hill, sadly no one has. We have now had a warning about the brambles and nettles at the back of the play area. These need attending to. If we can get a working party together this will be our cheapest option, otherwise we will need to pay for this.

## **Solar Farm by Ridding Farm**

I have been advised that it is very unlikely that the suggested Solar farm will proceed. Intelligent Alternatives have confirmed that the proposal cannot proceed because they cannot get a connection to the grid. They explained the grid was not designed for so many inputs/outputs from a solar farm and would essentially overload the grid in this area. Unless major grid updates take place, a solar farm in this location is not feasible to proceed. Such an upgrade investment is not something National Grid is considering.

## **Parish Councillors**

Cllr Hoskins reported on a number of issues including the installation of two combination locks to secure the Headley recreation ground. Cllr Hoskins further reported on the Footpath Wardens initiative. The Parish Magazine had provided articles explaining the work of the Headley volunteers which were reaching 8 in number. However, the volunteer work only covered the Headley area but as far as Ram Alley and Ashford Hill had no such volunteer Wardens which were urgently required in order to cover the requests and enquiries received from the Community Engagement Ranger for North Hampshire. Whilst an appeal for Ashford Hill focused volunteers would be appearing in the next edition of the Parish Magazine, Cllr Hoskins requested that anyone interested in such work to contact him for further information. Cllr Hoskins further reported on an initiative entitled the 'Countryside Access Parish Delivery Partnership' which is a scheme to assist Parish and Town Councils deliver access improvements on rights of way in the county. The scheme includes path surfacing, replacing stiles with gates and installing boardwalks and bridges. The scheme also covers financial contributions towards the cost of tools, equipment and training. Cllr Hoskins sought and gained approval from the Parish Council to seek such funding for a brush cutter which could be used in the parish by the volunteers. \*

The Clerk would supply Cllr Hoskins with an updated list of Parish Councillors' contact details in order for the notices to be displayed in a number of public places. \*

Cllr Stewart would ensure the correct details were being displayed in the parish magazine as far as contact details for Parish Councillors. \*

Whilst it was inadvisable to demolish the pavilion building on the Headley recreation ground prior to planning permission being granted, it had been decided that it was important to secure the building. To this effect, it was proposed by Cllr Stewart and seconded by Cllr Dunn to purchase and self-install a metal door which required funding of ca.£200.

The ongoing problem of inappropriate parking on the Headley recreation ground perimeter would be resolved by the current perimeter barrier being moved several metres towards the roadside to prevent inappropriate parking. \*

The Headley playground perimeter fencing needed repair by a contractor and it was agreed that Cllr Stewart would obtain competitive quotations for such work for consideration at the next meeting of the Parish Council. \*

Cllr Stewart commented on the level of litter to be found in the villages which was a concern. After some discussion, it was agreed to wait until the last hedge cutting of the year was completed and then to consider an additional litter pick to deal with the problem of accumulated litter within the parish.

Cllr Saunders informed the meeting that she and the Chairman had met with BDBC to discuss the Local Plan. In that meeting, the proposal to reclassify Headley as a small settlement was discussed which in turn would create a known settlement 'boundary' as well as provide less stringent planning regulations. Pursuant to an in-depth discussion amongst Councillors and with Cllr Rhatigan, it was concluded that the Parish Council would not be supporting such a proposal.

## **9. Recess**

The issue of having future meetings as 'hybrid' meetings whereby the meetings could be 'virtually' attended was discussed. The connectivity problems were discussed as far the Headley Village Hall but it was agreed that the Clerk would investigate the suggestion that there could be advertised sponsorship available from one of the service providers such as Vodaphone. \*

## **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 £20,915.26.

## **11. Accounts approval & payment**

Mr S Marshall - Clerk's salary Oct-Dec 2021 & expenses - £2394.04

Mr S Marshall - Clerk's expenses – Payment by credit card for SID batteries - £992.40

Mr J Kirkby – Litter Warden's salary – Oct-Dec 2021 - £482.90

Mr C Butler – Litter Warden's salary – Oct-Dec 2021 - £602.31

Scofell – Grounds maintenance – July & August 2021 - £2718.14

Mr J Woodford – Purchase of misc. items - £38.14

Mr S Hoskins – Purchase of padlocks - £62.00

BBS Limited – PAYE administration - £75.00

HMRC – Tax & Employee NIC – Oct-Dec 2021 - £1846.91

The Vice Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.47pm