

ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 11th DECEMBER 2017

AT ASHFORD HILL VILLAGE HALL

Present

Mr J Woodford (Chairman), Mrs C Hellings (Vice Chairman), Mr S Hiscock, Mr S Lideatt, Mr G Stewart, Mr R Tucker and the Clerk, Mr S Marshall.

Cllrs Mellor and Rhatigan and members of the public were also present.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Wilson and Sherlock.

2. Declaration of interest

Cllr Hiscock declared an interest in the maintenance of the recreation grounds as the Council's nominated contractor.

3. Minutes of previous meeting for approval

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13 November 2017 were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising

The Clerk and Cllr Rhatigan both confirmed that their understanding was that a management company would be formed once the new Ashford Hill housing development was occupied which amongst other issues would be responsible for the maintenance of the common space areas of the new development. Cllr Rhatigan confirmed that the Parish Council may be asked to have an input into the design of the common space areas.

Cllr Lideatt confirmed that the aesthetics of the perimeter fencing at 'The Retreat' had been improved.

Cllr Tucker confirmed that a tree that had fallen across the road near to the Headley ford had been removed.

The Clerk confirmed that the water coming up through the road surface in Thornford Road had been reported again to Southern Water. Cllr Hiscock reported that engineers had attended site and reported it to be surface water. Cllr Stewart confirmed the theory that the blocked drains were causing the localised flooding and work to clear the drains would be undertaken.

Cllr Tucker had presented to the Clerk a quotation from BP Murduck for £290 + VAT for flail mowing the woodland area at Headley recreation ground. It was recommended to delay the work until next spring once the daffodils had finished flowering.

5. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Hellings reported on the progress regarding the compilation of the Neighbourhood Scheme. Approval had been received from BDBC for the Parish Council's formal application. The draft questionnaire for residents was almost finalised.

6. Highways

The Chairman explained the incident at the ford in Headley where it was discovered that a person had illegally padlocked the crossing gate which prevented vehicles crossing from the West Berkshire side of the ford. The Parish Council considers this an illegal act and such an act threatens the lives of drivers and passengers attempting to cross the ford.

The Chairman further reported that drains along the B3051 had been deep cleaned and if the flooding problem persisted it may be as a result of blockages underground. The Chairman encourages residents to report further problems directly to Hampshire County Council.

The Chairman reported on the exploration pits that had been dug along the B3051 and noted that the repairs to the highway by Persimmon Homes were starting to break up and the Clerk was requested to inform them of the situation. *

The Chairman reported that the new concrete panelled fencing being erected along the roadside at the top of Ashford Hill along the perimeter of a dwelling known as 'The Retreat' has been re-sited further from the roadside and had been covered in wood panelling which has improved the aesthetics of the perimeter.

The Chairman further reported a large pothole reported by a resident by St Paul's Church layby outside the wrought iron gate. The Chairman reminded parishioners that they can report road defects directly to Hampshire County Council by using the link provided on the 'Contact us' page. Reporting such matters directly to the Parish Council delays the work being registered with the County Council as Councillors work is voluntary and only part time.

It was reported by Cllr Stewart that the Lengthman's scheme work would soon start and would include work covering the clearance of pavements and sight lines, the cleaning and turning of road signs and the cutting of hedges. The Chairman asked what the cost of such work would be and Cllr Stewart assumed that all the work would be within the £1000 grant available.

Cllr Stewart also reported on the progress being made to resolve the traffic turning problem into Cheam School on the A339. The proposal to use Cheam School owned land to create a filter lane was being discussed together with funding from the Highways department.

Cllr Stewart would also be meeting with the Highways department to discuss the installation of road safety signage for Thornford Road.

Cllr Hiscock reported on a vehicular accident that had knocked down the crash barrier on Huntsmoor Hill. The Councillor also reported on the illegal installation of a padlock on the Thornford Road ford gates which he had removed following consultation with other Headley Parish Councillors

7. Planning Applications

The Parish Council would be objecting to the recent planning applications received regarding land adjoining The Chalet, Broadacres, Newbury Road in Headley. The objection would be based on the difficulty in accessing the site from the busy Newbury Road. The planning application relates to the erection of 5 no. dwellings following the demolition of the existing sawmill.

8. Fibre Optic Broadband presentation

Hampshire County Council's Superfast Broadband Programme Manager and an Openreach engineer made a presentation to the meeting regarding the investment plans being made by the County Council in Wave 2 for Hampshire. The County Council's representative would make available to the Parish Council the information currently available regarding central government funding and the delivery to the county of Superfast Broadband. Once this information is available the Parish Council will make it available via their website. The general public had an opportunity to question the County Council's representative as to when and if Ashford Hill would become part of Wave 2. No factual commitments were made but the Openreach representative did make reference to plans being drawn up for 'Fibre to the Premises' for both Headley and Ashford Hill but no official timeline was offered.

Following the presentation and a Q&A session, the meeting was addressed by Cllr Martin Slatford from Baughurst & Wolverton Common Parish Council about the Baughurst community project which has identified over 300 homes for which no BT or County Council plans to deliver faster broadband are envisaged. The project has plans to bring a Fibre Optic solution to the area during 2018 which would allow for faster connection speeds. Cllr Slatford asked for interested local residents to contact him mail@hampshirebroadband.uk

9. Reports

County Councillor

Cllr Mellor recapped on several issues that he had been dealing with over the year which included the ford crossing project and resident permits to use the local recycling centre for another year.

Borough Councillor

Cllr Rhatigan recapped on the resident permit issue for the local recycling centre. The Persimmon Homes breach of conditions relating to the Ashford Hill housing development were explained as well as the Local Infrastructure Fund where it was recommended the Parish Council could apply for funding.

Chairman's report:

Development by B3051 & C111 The Chairman expressed his concern over large puddles forming on the lower eastern edge of the new housing development close to the B3051 in Ashford Hill. After the heavy rains, they had formed quickly and become quite large. Residents should be mindful to watch the puddles and report to BDBC's planning department if flooding should occur.

Footpaths 725 & 724 in Sleepers Copse The Chairman had spoken to Hampshire County Council's footpaths ranger and had it confirmed that contact had been made with the landowner regarding the ongoing problems. The Chairman felt that the local gamekeeper appeared not to be interested in supporting the local community of walkers and recreational runs by keeping the footpaths clear.

The Chairman felt disappointed by this lack of involvement and highlighted the previous incident of the locked gate at Butler's Copse which was an obstruction to a public right of way and therefore an unlawful act. The Chairman felt that it was local residents who suffered as a result of such petty acts.

The Chairman confirmed the next meeting as Monday 8 January 2018 in Headley Village Hall. The Chairman wished everyone in the Parish a joyful and safe festive holiday this Christmas and invited the audience to join Councillors for a drinks reception provided by Parish Councillors at the end of the meeting.

Parish Councillors

Cllr Lideatt reported the ongoing problem of dog fouling on Ashford Hill recreation ground including the cricket pitch.

Cllr Stewart had made Councillors aware of the quote for a modular structure proposal for the new changing rooms on Headley recreation ground. Cllr Stewart reported that the modular units were fit for purpose and vandal proof and recommended them to the Parish Council. Cllr Stewart added that funding from Sport for England may be available for the changing room project. Cllr Stewart also reported on an alternative cheaper quotation for a new playground surface for the Headley playground which uses a different material.

Cllr Hellings raised the issue of whether or not the Parish Council had a process for complaining to Sovereign Housing about the antisocial behaviour of their chosen tenants for the affordable housing element of the Hollybush development. In the absence of such a process, Cllr Hellings agreed to follow up the issue with Sovereign Housing. *

Clerk to the Council

The Clerk had no issues to report.

10. Recess

There were no issues raised.

11. Precept Level Proposal 2018/2019

The Clerk commented on the fact that a draft budget for 2018/2019 had been presented to Councillors at the November meeting. The Clerk was proposing to increase the Precept by £2500 to £29000. Cllr Hellings understood the statutory need to pay the Litter Wardens the National Living Wage of £7.83 with effect from April 2018. Cllr Hellings explained that she would prefer a Grounds Maintenance budget to be reflective of the actual number of grass cuts required per year which had increased in recent years due to the extended growing season. Cllr Hellings proposed that the budget reflect an increase in the set number of grass cuts of both recreation grounds i.e. 19 grass cuts per recreation ground.

The Clerk confirmed that the proposed increase in the Precept would cover both the additional labour cost for the Litter Wardens and the cost of the additional 3 grass cuts of the recreation grounds.

The Chairman asked for a proposer to accept the 2018/2019 Precept level proposal and the budget for 2018/2019. Such was proposed by Cllr Lideatt and seconded by Cllr Stewart. The 2018/2019 Precept Request form was duly signed by the Chairman, Cllrs Lideatt & Stewart and the Clerk as Responsible Finance Officer.

12. Receipts & Payments – April-December 2017

The Clerk had previously sent Councillors a financial statement for the period April to December 2017. The Clerk confirmed that there were no exceptional items of expenditure not budgeted for and income was at budgeted levels. The surplus for the period was higher than predicted but not as high as the indicative £10,000 as £4000 of the amount related to the residual VAT refund from the Ashford Hill Playground project and therefore belonged to that account of the Parish Council.

13. Financial Statement

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stood at £970.35 credit.

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stood at £22,277.10 and the Ashford Hill Playground Project stood at £3999.86.

14. Accounts for approval and payment

Mr J Kirkby – Litter Warden's salary – Jan-Mar 2018 - £427.23

Mr C Butler – Litter Warden's salary – Jan-Mar 2018 - £565.40

Mr S Marshall – Clerk's salary & expenses – Jan-Mar 2018 - £2606.70

HMRC – PAYE & Tax contributions – Jan-Mar 2018 - £1518.10

Bramley Business Services Ltd – PAYE administration - £37.50

Mr S Hiscock – Grounds Maintenance 3/3 annual payments & additional cuts - £2473.00

15. Correspondence received

No other correspondence had been received which warranted Councillors' attention.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.05 pm.