

ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 8th FEBRUARY
2016

AT ASHFORD HILL VILLAGE HALL

Present

Mr J Woodford (Chairman), Mrs R Wilson (Vice Chairman), Mrs L Austin, Mrs C Hellings, Mr G Stewart and Mrs H Taylor.

Councillors Chapman, Osselton and Sherlock and members of the public were also present.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillor Chapman.

2. Declaration of interest

None were declared.

3. Minutes of previous meeting for approval

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11th January 2016 were approved by all Councillors present and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4. Matters arising

The management of the barrier lock on Headley recreation ground was discussed at some length, concluding with the idea of having a large laminated notice produced to explain what to do in an emergency situation i.e. contact Cllr Hellings or Simon Hiscock on the mobile telephone numbers given.

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5. Co-option of Parish Councillor

The Chairman requested a nomination for the co-option of a Parish Councillor. Cllr Hellings proposed Mr Richard Tucker as a Parish Councillor, which was seconded by Cllr Stewart. Mr Tucker joined the meeting and expressed his appreciation to the Parish Council for his co-option to become a Parish Councillor for the ward of Headley.

6. Highways

It was reported that the pedestrian pavement on the A339 from Knightsbridge required clearing.

Cllr Wilson expressed her concern regarding the ongoing problem of car loader vehicles still obstructing the highway when arriving and departing from Sascron on the B3051. The practice was in total contravention of Sascron's conditions of planning approval. (Cllr Osselton later reported that the matter was being investigated by the Borough Council and would update the Clerk accordingly)

Cllr Austin reported on an incident involving a heavy goods vehicle and the vehicle driver's unsuccessful attempt to traverse the ford at Headley. Cllr Austin would be following up the incident with both local authorities.

The Chairman reported that the road drains on the A339 in the direction of Newbury were blocked and causing large amounts of surface water to run over the road and being responsible for the continuing erosion of the road.

The Chairman further reported that the pothole previously reported outside Sascron on the B3051 was further deteriorating.

The Chairman further reported that the flooding by Pam's Bridge in Ashford Hill had been reported as being caused by a blocked roadside drain. The Chairman has reported the matter again to the Highway's department with photographic evidence.

The Chairman reported that a road sweeper had passed through Ashford Hill. However the layby and pavement outside the Old Forge (junction of C111 and B3051), where there was still a lot of dead leaf material, which was causing the pavement to be slippery, had not been dealt with by the road sweeper. The Clerk was requested to report the matter again.

Cllr Austin reported that a new SID had been ordered by AWE for use in the parish and would be available within a few weeks.

Cllr Stewart reported on the number of potholes appearing at the Galley Lane turn off from the A339.

Cllr Taylor reported that she had successfully been able to turn round signage that had been displaced as a result of hedge cutting and the Chairman conformed that he had been able to do the same and we needed to adopt a self-help approach to the problem.

7. Planning Applications

The Parish Council would be objecting to a planning application on land to the south of Ashford Hill Road on Ashford Hill, known as Fernwood Far, for the siting of a temporary accommodation for an agricultural worker. The objection is based on the view that the business case is not sustainable financially nor is it based on sound agricultural principles.

8. Adoption of policies

Following a number of comments from Cllr Hellings regarding the draft policies for Safeguarding Children, Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity, the Clerk would be making certain amendments to the drafts and resubmitting them for Councillors' consideration at a future meeting.

9. Reports

County Councillor

Cllr Chapman reported on the on-going financial constraints that the County Council was having to operate within which had resulted in very limited funds being available for road repairs. The level of Council Tax was likely to increase by 4% in order to match the required level of spending. There is a future prospect that government spending will be reduced by a further 19% in the forthcoming financial year. Therefore there is still an urgent need to find significant savings in future years. The Local Enterprise Partnership scheme was allowing capital road scheme projects to proceed. The Parish Lengthsman scheme had the potential of allowing local authorities to undertake their own road repairs.

Borough Councillors

Cllr Osselton commented on a number of subject areas she was currently working on.

Chairman

The Chairman reported on the fact that the Borough Council's Planning Committee had approved the housing development for Ashford Hill in January despite strong local opposition. The justifiable concerns about drainage and the bland architectural design of the proposed development had been disregarded. The situation was a deplorable situation for the village to have to face, which will significantly alter the village by the development's density. The 'street scene' will be altering, as the style of the development does not reflect any of the sympathetic developments

within the village in the past decade. The situation made worse by Cllr Donald Sherlock casting his deciding vote in favour of the development on a second voting.

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The implication of the local drainage situation has not been explained to a satisfactory level and the Parish Council will continue its dialogue with the Borough Councillors and the Borough's Planning Department. The 'Grampian Clause' would apply to the development insofar as imposing a restriction on the development until all parties were satisfied that the bio digester systems for the development can be demonstrated as a long term sustainable solution. In theory the 'Grampian Clause' will prevent the developer from starting work on the development until their proposed sewage system is proved to be a workable and sustainable solution. The Parish Council has further requested a meeting with the Planning Officer, as key points previously raised in objection to the development have not been addressed. These points include the Parish Council's involvement in the selection of tenants for the rentable affordable housing element of the development, who should be chosen from the local communities or have connections with the local communities of Ashford Hill and Headley. The other key point, which needs clarity, is the Parish Council's insistence that all S106 funds received from the developer should be spent on improvements within both villages and not spent on improvements outside of the village boundaries.

The Chairman continued to urge local residents to keep the Parish Council informed of any planned actions for further opposition of the development in order to combine efforts to ensure a unified message of opposition is delivered. The Parish Council was determined to ensure that its concerns were taken into full account and it would continue its efforts in pursuit of that objective.

The Chairman went on to extend a warm welcome to the new vicar Ben, his wife Bethan and their young family Cara and Chloe. The Parish Council looks forward to the new Vicar addressing it on a future occasion.

The Chairman updated the meeting regarding the work of the Ashford Hill Playground Regeneration Project Committee. The Committee would

welcome the volunteer involvement of local parents and grandparents in attempts to raise funds through a variety of activities. The Committee would also welcome any local philanthropists, company donations and sponsorships to assist with fund raising particularly as the current financial year draws to a close.

The Chairman concluded by reminding the meeting of the Parish's annual litter pick to be held on Sunday 20 March 2016 and recently advertised in the Parish Magazine. It was hoped to see more volunteers in order to lighten the load of Councillors and the regular helpers.

Parish Councillors

Cllr Taylor shared with the meeting a new opportunity being presented to local farmers by the 'Countryside Stewardship' scheme called 'Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF)'. CSF works to deliver practical solutions and targeted support to enable farmers to take voluntary action to reduce water pollution from agriculture to protect water bodies and the environment. Ashford Hill is in the area of catchment for sensitive farming as designated by DEFRA and Cllr Taylor was very conscious of ensuring that the Baughurst Brook is not polluted.

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Cllr Tucker informed the meeting that Cheam School had kindly agreed to relocate the football goal posts to a more practical situation on Headley recreation ground. Furthermore, Cllr Stewart would be contacting the contractor used to manage the mole population who were making their presence known.

Cllr Austin would be making enquiries as to the legitimacy of a local resident in Thornford Road, next to Thornfields, who was extending the property's garden into an adjacent field.

Cllr Stewart updated the meeting on the subject of the installation of an additional car parking area to serve the Community Shop in Thornford Road in Headley. It had been revealed that it would be illegal under the bylaws of the recreation ground to have permanent or temporary parking provision unless the land in question was 'de-registered' as land forming part of a public accessed recreation ground. The cost of such legal work would be prohibitive to 'de-register' the strip of land required to create a parking layby. Short-term improvements were being considered which

included the installation of ‘grasscrete’ to create a few additional parking spaces.

Cllr Austin had received a request from the AWE Local Liaison Committee to provide information regarding the demographics of the local population. The Clerk referred Cllr Austin to the Borough Council’s Electoral Services department.

10. Recess

A number of issues were raised by members of the public and discussed with the Chairman.

11. Financial Statement

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stood at £1509.21 in credit.

The Lloyds TSB deposit account of the Parish Council stood at £6009.23.

12. Accounts for approval and payment

BBS Ltd – PAYE administration - £37.50

Headley with Ashford Hill Community Shop – Interview room hire - £12.00

HMRC – NI & Tax contributions - Jan-Mar 2016 - £1398.38

13. Correspondence received

There had been no correspondence received that warranted Councillors’ attention.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.34pm.