

ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14th NOVEMBER 2016 AT HEADLEY VILLAGE HALL

Present

Mr J Woodford (Chairman), Mrs C Hellings, Mrs H Taylor, Mr G Stewart, Mrs L Austin and the Clerk, Mr S Marshall.

Councillors Sherlock and Rhatigan and members of the public were also present.

The start of the meeting was delayed and the meeting commenced at 7.40pm.

1.

Apologies had been received from Councillors Chapman, Wilson and Tucker.

1. Declaration of interest

None were declared.

1. Minutes of previous meeting for approval

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 10th October 2016 were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

1. Matters arising

The completion of the new car parking layby was discussed by Councillors and it was suggested that a maximum of only 3 cars could be parked and it was further discussed how the layby could be enlarged.

1. Neighbourhood Plan

The Chairman presented a precis of the implications of creating a Neighbourhood Plan for the local community. A Neighbourhood Plan was recommended by the Borough Council in order for local communities to influence the housing development decisions of the future by identifying in the plan suitable plots of land where housing development would be acceptable. Otherwise decisions will be made by the Planning department as to where additional housing can be built which may not be suitable. The Borough's Local Plan, a housing plan to cover the period until 2029, demonstrates a deficit of 150 housing units in the borough which will need to be accommodated elsewhere and including rural locations within village 'envelopes'.

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The Parish Council can facilitate the setting up of a Committee structure to devise the Neighbourhood Plan and have Parish Council representation but the Parish Council cannot undertake the initiative.

There is financial assistance and guidance available in order to undertake the extensive work that is required to devise a Plan. Not having a Neighbourhood Plan would also reduce the financial contribution from housing developers which is available to fund local infrastructure projects. Volunteers to join the Committee required to undertake the work could be from diverse backgrounds and do not need to have experience of planning issues. Volunteers with experience in administration and project management would be extremely helpful for the work of the Committee as would residents who had a good knowledge of the local area and its issues.

Cllr Rhatigan reiterated aspects of the Chairman's presentation and emphasised the importance of having a Neighbourhood Plan in order to avoid speculative housing developers constructing inappropriate developments within the two villages. Cllr Rhatigan emphasised that there was

assistance and guidance available from the Borough Council and Kingsclere Parish Council as well as from the Borough Councillor himself.

Ensuing questions from members of the public elicited further information regarding the Neighbourhood Plan;

- The process of devising a Neighbourhood Plan can take between 18 months and 5 years to complete at the end of which the Borough Council will approve such a Plan
- The inclusion of a local referendum as part of the local consultation could form part of the process
- The ‘compulsory purchase’ of land was not an option as to securing plots of land as the Local Plan was not set by national government
- The Neighbourhood Plan can determine what pieces of land the local community do not want developed and left as open spaces.
- The area that can be considered for development must be within the Parish Boundaries but proposed developments need to be in close proximity to local amenities
- The Parishes of Kingsclere and Whitchurch have Neighbourhood Plans in place
- The smallest development that could be considered would be a development of 10 dwellings
- The ‘Visual Design Statement’ previously commissioned by the Parish Council to determine its preference for the character and design of future housing developments would have limited use in determining the approval of future developments in the future

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The Chairman asked for expressions of interest from residents to become part of a 12-member Committee on which one Parish Councillor would serve. There would be a further presentation and discussion at the December meeting of the Parish Council.

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Cllr Stewart would be providing information via email to the Chairman regarding appropriate heavy vehicle prohibition signage for the new Thornford Road layby.

It was reported that a significant number of highway drains were flooding along the Ashford Hill Road in Headley.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Stewart for his efforts in organising the design and construction of the new layby in Thornford Road. The Chairman pointed out that the layby was not designed for heavy goods vehicles over 2.5 tonnes.

The Chairman reported that the C111 had been closed for several days for what was believed to be a problem with the main drainage.

The Chairman had enquired with the police authority as to the identity of the company vehicle that had caused verge damage on the hill outside Ashford Hill.

The Clerk reported that following a request to the Highways department to consider appropriate ‘priority’ signage for where the road narrows on the C111 near to Tanhouse Cottages, the request had been refused because of a review of the 5 year injury-accident data for the whole of the Ashford Hill Road route. The review concluded that there were no significant patterns, trends or clusters of reported collisions that would warrant funding for ‘priority’ signage.

1. Planning Applications

There were no objections to the planning applications received.

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Borough Councillors

Cllr Rhatigan reported on the ongoing discussion between the councils regarding residents' use of the recycling centre. The Environment Agency's permit criteria were being scrutinised in light of the permit application to discharge effluent by Persimmon Homes Ltd.

Chairman

The Chairman requested the Clerk to ask the Ashford Hill Cricket Club to strim the grass around the cricket pavilion and if at all possible around the goal posts on the recreation ground.

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The Chairman's verbatim report:

"We have some very exciting news about the regeneration project of the Ashford Hill play park, last week we were awarded £10,000 from the big lottery fund and Lord and Lady Sainsbury have also kindly donated £5,000. We are getting closer to our target of £90,000, so any donations welcome. We are also getting match funding grant from Greenham Trust so even £10 turns into £20!!

The second litter picking within the villages to be held this Sunday 16th October, I would like to thank all councillors and parishioners who gave up their spare time to tidy up the local areas.

Many residents of Ashford Hill close to the Baughurst brook are aware the EA has released their draft report indicating they are likely to grant Persimmon permission to discharge processed effluent. The Parish Council is disheartened to hear this as we had hoped the EA would recommend to the developer they should connect the development to the main sewer for a sum of £1.3M. This amount though not insignificant is the best long term sustainable solution and mitigates any possibility that the brook will become contaminated. I know residents are very dismayed, however there is now a public consultation period which offers further opportunity to make comment. The Parish Council will write and express our sincere disappointment that connection to the sewer is not the recommendation by the EA.

Could we ask the Cricket club to strim around the building where Simon Hiscock is not able to reach with his tractor cutting blades, and if they could also kindly strim around the goal posts or we will have to resort to weed/grass killer (something I would like to avoid).

Also Simon mentioned to me about the hedge at the back of the play park in AH, I suggest we look at this when we undertake its regeneration works.

One of our largest expenses is maintaining the recreation areas in both villages. As the growing season is extending I have asked Simon if he could quote us on the expected cuts and general work for next year based on the last couple of years' growth seasons.

I would also like to commend the voluntary workers at the shop and they have informed me they are in urgent need for more voluntary support. The shop offers an invaluable service to the community so it would be very sad to see their hours get further reduced, so if anyone can spare a few hrs it would be most welcome. As Christmas will be soon with us and holiday gifts are on our minds at the moment, thanks for John Lewis and M&S adverts, the shop will be hosting a local product taster morning on Saturday 19th November. (10am to 12:30pm)"

Parish Councillors

Cllr Austin reported on fly tipping incidents in the Headley ford.

Cllr Austin reported on the need for Speed Watch volunteers to help manage the initiative as well as the need for a Speed Watch Co-ordinator which in part involved a weekly change of the SID battery.

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Clerk to the Council

The Clerk reminded Councillors of the Lengthman's scheme grant awarded to the Parish Council which needed to be spent before the end of the current financial year.

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A variety of subjects were discussed with the Chairman and members of the public which included the urgent necessity for residents to write an objection to the Environment Agency concerning Persimmon Homes application for a permit to discharge effluent into Baughurst Brook from the new Ashford Hill housing development.

Concern was expressed regarding the continuing absence of work to address the innumerable pot holes in so many roads throughout the parish.

The Chairman requested a letter be sent to the Bursar of Cheam School regarding the cause of heavy congestion on the A339 near to the school in the mornings when parents were waiting to turn right into the school.

Concern was expressed about the number of potentially dangerous trees on Headley recreation grounds that posed a problem of a tree branch falling on recreation ground users and the need for a tree surgeon to assess any remedial works required.

The Headley ford was still officially closed and it was believed that the authority was awaiting a report regarding any water vole activity within the vicinity. It was confirmed by Cllr Austin that the proposal for the alterations included a self-closing gate for agricultural vehicles.

1. Financial Statement

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stood at £2709.30 in credit.

The Lloyds TSB deposit account of the Parish Council stood at £15,984.64.

1. Accounts for approval and payment

Miles Contruction Ltd – Thornford Road layby project - £3540.00

Mr S Hiscock – Grounds maintenance 3 of 3 annual payments - £2275.00

BDO LLP – Annual financial audit - £276.00

BBS Ltd – PAYE administration - £37.50

Mrs H Taylor – Remembrance wreaths - £37.00

12. Correspondence received

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

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.51pm.