

**ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018**

**AT HEADLEY VILLAGE HALL**

**Present**

Mr J Woodford (Chairman), Mr S Hiscock (Vice Chairman), Mr S Lideatt, Mrs K Saunders, Mr G Stewart, Mrs R Wilson 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 Councillors Tucker 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 11<sup>th</sup> June 2018 were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

**4. Matters arising**

Cllr Stewart had reported that tree stumps had been dumped in ditches ascending Huntsmoor Hill which would cause problems with the watercourse. Cllr Hiscock had made enquires with the Estate Manager and the stumps would be cleared when time allowed.

Cllr Wilson reported on the completed repair of the footbridge on footpath 707.

The quote for boarding to be installed at the Ashford Hill playground to help prevent the spread of brambles was being pursued by Cllr Hiscock. \*

**5. Neighbourhood Plan**

The following presentation was made by Mrs Hellings regarding the progress being made with the Neighbourhood Plan.

\* Councillor Tucker and Caroline Hellings had met our designated planning officer, Vashti Gooding, on Tuesday 28 August.

\* The officer answered our questions and gave us some useful information and helpful guidance on next steps. I will briefly summarise these.

\* We do not have to produce a Neighbourhood Plan (NP). There is no requirement for us to allocate land for housing as, at present, B&D are satisfied that any requirement for housing in our parish has been met by the current development in Ashford Hill. However, a NP might still be helpful as, even though we may not identify land for housing, it gives us the opportunity to specify where we would not want housing and the type of housing that we consider suitable. This would be helpful both to assist in considering any planning applications put forward and if B&D's needs change in the future and they do wish us to allocate sites for housing.

\* The first thing that we need to do is to determine whether there are sufficient people in the parish willing to help prepare the NP. If there are not, there will be no plan. It is not something that Councillor Tucker and I can do alone. We plan to write to all who expressed interest last year to see how many are still interested.

\* On the assumption that we do have sufficient numbers to form a working party, we need to establish the terms of reference for the group. These will include the relationship between the Parish Council (PC) and the working party, how the working party reports to the PC and how information is shared with the wider public. Vashti has given us examples of these. The terms of reference of the working party and minutes of all meetings must be published. We could use the PC website or consider setting up a separate website for the NP.

\* Whilst the working party will act as a team, we shall ask each member to take responsibility for specific tasks such as communications, finance etc.

\* The next step will be for the working party to begin to ascertain what is important to the people in our parish. We plan to do this by holding informal drop in sessions in both villages, daytime and evening, for people to come and tell us what they believe to be important. We will advertise these sessions using posters and notices around the parish and through a notice in the parish magazine.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Hellings for her presentation and for the work she and Cllr Tucker had committed to date in investigating the feasibility of a Neighbourhood Plan. The Chairman felt that a Neighbourhood Plan was important to devise in order to determine the style and nature of any potential housing developments but stressed that the plan should not refer to specific potential sites for development. The Chairman asked Councillors to express their views on the prospect of progressing with the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Hiscock sought clarity regarding the work that would be needed in future when the plan would need updating and revising every 5 years. Cllr Rhatigan could clarify that this would involve a minimum of additional work and the plan would not require a full revision. The Chairman confirmed a point in Mrs Hellings presentation that if there were not enough volunteers for the working party to be set up then the preparation of the plan would not proceed.

The Councillors present unanimously agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed and it was requested that Mrs Hellings proceed to investigate the continued interest from parishioners who previously had expressed an interest in becoming involved in the devising of the plan.

## 6. Highways

The Chairman reported the following issues;

“Hedges – I have been either contacted by email or stopped on a dog walk about some problem areas in the village. The first being the hedges around the development of Charles Church, it is becoming impassable to walk from the village hall to the Primary school on the pavement along the B3051, either pedestrian or with a child buggy. A number of key signage points are being obscured as well. The yew hedge on the southern corner of Benham Lane (which I believe belongs to 1 Benham Lane) is also pushing pedestrians into the main road, the owner has been asked a couple of times to attend to this but so far it has not been tackled. With Parents with young children walking to the Jiminy Cricket’s on these routes this not safe situation, please can letters be sent to both. Speeding - Speed within both villages is excessive again – During the road closer residents of Ashford Hill and I’m sure Headley resident along the C111 noticed how tranquil and pleasant the villages are without large amounts of rushing through-traffic, with just the occasional local traffic passing it was joy to be sat in the garden. It is the noise which was most noticeable and the air quality once the route was reopened. As a result, many residents along the B3051 have stopped me to ask why we do not have more substantive traffic calming measures when entering the village; to help knock back the traffic speed. In the past AWE has been stated as the reason this was not possible, however with the road being fully closed for a full 2 months with not detrimental impact or concerns expressed by AWE these seem superficial reasons now. I have reviewed various Government generated documents, from the likes of TRL, and they indicate a number of methods can be designed to help reduce speeding, offering demonstrable results, without limiting access to agricultural machinery and emergency services. I would like to open up a dialogue with HCC Highways about potential traffic calming solutions and I look for the support of these discussions from our County Councillor; who I’m sure would agree we have a speeding issue within the village; as I have shared emails from concerned Primary School parents walking their children from the Church to the Primary School. So I’m hopeful he is supportive, willing to get involved to help plicate the situation.

White lines – As the contractor Blaze had to “make good” any white lines after their works this has illuminated the general state of the whites and red high grip areas around junctions and entering in the villages. Many of these are almost rubbed off. Maybe the County Council could make enquires with HCC Highways when they might be looking to refresh these areas, as white lines are an integral safety feature of the road network.

Drainage – Email message received from County Council remaindering all land owners they need to clear out drainage ditches before the winter rains.”

Cllr Lideatt also expressed his concern about excessive speed through the village of Ashford Hill at a particularly dangerous time of the day when children were waiting for the school bus. Cllr Wilson expressed a view to re-introduce the Speed Watch scheme to the villages but realised this was solely dependent upon recruiting enough volunteers. The Chairman suggested that a paid employee may be an option available to the Council in order for the scheme to be re-introduced.

Cllr Stewart reported that a number of potholes were still evident despite an effort to repair some potholes but in a 'patch work' fashion. Cllr Stewart was pleased to report that signage was in place to alert drivers of the presence of a children's playground in Thornford Road.

Cllr Stewart raised the issue of having traffic calming measures in place at critical points which the Parish Council would need to fund and hopefully would obtain some assistance with such schemes from the County Council.

Cllr Hiscock reported on the ongoing erosion of the road verges near to the new entrance to Plaistow Green Farm which was making the passing of two vehicles virtually impossible. Cllr Hiscock warned that with adverse weather conditions the situation was predicted to become worse, exacerbated by the current potholes which would cause potential damage and injury to vehicles and pedestrians. Cllr Hiscock also reported on a similar situation on the Broadcroft Farm road.

## **7. Planning Applications**

Objections were raised against the following planning applications based on the precedent that would be set regarding the overdevelopment of residential accommodation being established;

Jacaranda, Common Road, Headley

Old Camps, Newbury Road, Headley

Objection to the Old Saw Mill planning application was also raised due to the potential safety issues regarding the vehicular access to the property.

## **8. Reports**

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

"HCC continues to focus its efforts on Adult Social Care, Schools as they dictate the vast majority of expenditure. HCC will by 2020 be working on budgets some £500m lower than in 2016 owing to government grants reduction/ disappearance. With aging population (in Hampshire an additional 1000 people reach 85 every year). Capital budgets have not been affected in respect of the plans for more wardened flats rather than residential care homes and at the same time fulfilling the schools building programme.

Ashford Hill's localised issues were focussed on three items; C111, the diversion off the B3051, and the delay in upgrading to Superfast in areas of a village. At the outset of the Persimmon repair project, I had several conversations with residents affected by drivers ignoring the diversions as they knew that roads such as Woodhouse Lane and Hockford were not closed despite signage placed by the contractor saying Road Closed. Problems were minimised in AH but were very evident in Wolverton as the commuters developed a rat run resulting in collisions. In the light of forthcoming resurfacing and bridge structure work in Wolverton that may could for a few days add traffic in AH, we are looking at the diversion routings.

C111- with interjections! - DM outlined what had been looked at on the section of road effectively from the Church to the school at the request of individual residents earlier in 2018 whose main issues were the speed at commuter times in particular that cars came up the hill and the visibility problem that made accessing and leaving the Council Houses very difficult. At the time there was also the impasse with Persimmon re access, future development of housing along the stretch of the AH Road, school parking to be considered before auctioning. In May, after a meeting with Traffic Management, it was agreed that we will get a Police speed measurement which will drive the decision.

Still not done. Since then there has been the issue of the hedgerows blocking wide prams etc. It does appear that the common viewpoint is the need to place the 30mph signage nearer the Church rather than approaching the apex of the Hill. Whether this provides a solution of course with little enforcement is a different matter.

To the future, the knock on effect of the Manydown project will realise some structural changes to the A339 and of note for consultation will be improvements in traffic flow at Little Knowl Hill, Kingsclere/Union Lane and Ashford Hill Road. Additionally, in view of Greenham Common, Thatcham population expansion there will be joint activity with WEST Berks. I understand that the former will run in tandem with the first tranche of Manydown residents in 2021 so we are talking long term.”

Full highway report had been dispatched to Parish Clerk highlighting some 1 million square metres had been pothole fixed or resurfaced in year to date. It was with regret that the only outstanding non drainage problem was the hi friction surface on the A339 at Ashford Hill Road. Explanation given of the technical problems therein on such a surface. Trying to resolve. Unaware of any other (reported) highway issues. In May we did get additional funding from central government and this has been invested in additional Dragon Blasters which will accelerate pothole fixing substantially. “

Finally, I spent a day with Hampshire Response Police to understand their focus.”

### **Borough Councillor's report**

Cllr Rhatigan reported that as a cost saving exercise the number of Borough Councillors was being reduced from 60 to 54. Cllr Rhatigan expressed the importance of specifying the ‘spacial standards’ of potential dwellings in the Neighbourhood Plan. There were certain aspects of the Kingsclere Neighbourhood Plan that could be incorporated into the Ashford Hill with Headley plan.

Due to the advanced stage of the drainage system installation of the new housing development at Ashford Hill, the discharge into the brook would be closely monitored when the properties started to be occupied. Cllr Rhatigan explained that there were a number of enforcement orders on the developers at Ashford Hill which were intent on preventing further nuisance to the local residents. Following a question from Cllr Hiscock, Cllr Rhatigan assured the meeting that all appropriate safety measures would be taken to ensure the safety of the balancing pond within the development.

Cllr Rhatigan expressed his opposition for further development towards St Paul's Church. Cllr Rhatigan emphasised that there was sufficient land that had been identified for development elsewhere that would satisfy the need for further housing development. Cllr Rhatigan explained that there was a sizeable amount of Community Infrastructure Levy funding available for projects and the Borough Council would assist communities with pursuing their project ideas.

### **Chairman's verbatim report**

“Charles Church Development –The state of the development over the very dry hot summer meant many residents opposite experienced large dust clouds coming off the site, now the weather had changed we hope this does not repeat but the developers from discussions with residents seemed highly confrontational and less than sympathetic when asked if they could suppress it.

This leads me to the new “Olympic Size Pond”, it is huge and much deeper than the suggested original plans. What safety measures will the new development provide as the new footpath cutting the corner seems exceptionally close to the northern corner of the pond. Householders opposite have asked for assurances that it will not flood over, can we get a statement Charles Church on its capacity, the longer term safety aspect of the pond. I also note a lot of builders' rubbish has also managed to make its way into the pond already, as this pond discharges into the Baughurst Brook; an SSSI area; this needs to be monitored closely so no contaminants enter the waterways something I know Cllr Rhatigan is passionate about!

I would like to arrange for a Cllr visit of the site during October so we may understand a number of matters that concern the site, such as the waste water treatment plant, common ground maintenance including paths and hedges as well as social housing. Is this something Cllr Rhatigan can help arrange?

### **Recreational Ground – Headley**

Basketball hoop replacement for both has been acquired, new net was offered to Simon Hiscock who informed me he fixed the other net. So we have a spare for Headley in the future.

We are also slowing tackling the undergrowth in the wooded areas to open up this space to encourage native flora and fauna to flourish.

### **Recreational Ground Ashford Hill**

In evening on Wednesday 13th June a small work party made up of AH Councillors and locals residents helped to tidy up behind the play park, clearing brambles and cutting back hedging. I would like to thank Alan McDermot, John Young and Katie Warrington for the help. The playground was also blown over to remove detritus. I think next year we need to include the hedge to be cut at the rear of park in the general maintenance schedule.

The Basket Ball hoop net has been replaced as well with a new stainless steel American sourced net which I hope will last a long while. Plus, the back board washed!

Fibre Optic in the village – Ultra-Fast Broadband but not for all?

After much eagerly awaited expectations at the end of July various parts of Ashford Hill found it was possible to place orders with BT for their new Fibre To The Premises service (FTTP), following the installation of the new fibre network into the village in April.

It was only then once BT released information about these upgrades through Openreach's web site and using their Fibre Optic Checker link that it became clear significant parts of Ashford Hill where not to be included in this at present.

On discovering this information, I have sort to collect factual confirm to the entire roll out plans, part of HCC Broadband Wave 2 funded project. These lines of enquiry started on the 1st August and have continued since.

Many deeply unhappy residents have contacted me to demand information as to why they had not been included, and I have done my level best to reply with what limited I have received. To date I have supplied HCC Broadband Team with a detailed overview of the coverage I can find from the online Openreach tools, I have identified postcodes and houses which are included and those which are not. Following these emails I have followed up those enquires as to situation and of yet not received anything which can constitute as useful facts, the last email was last Monday.

'Dear Cllr Woodford,

Apologies for the delay in responding.

The deployment has been physically built and the records and back office systems are being updated currently, however this will take some time. Until this has been completed we will review which premises have been left out.

Thank you,

Harriet'

Like many I was baffled that the Northern part of Chapel Lane gets coverage, but the Southern side does not and neither do many houses along B3051 from the Ship to The Holt or anyone down Old Lane. For the addition of maybe 5 CBTs on telegraph poles these omissions seem odd. I know for many this is the worst news but far more taxing is that the HCC Broadband team seem unwilling to explain themselves for the present coverage or their plans for any future coverage within the village.

We will continue our enquires in the hope we can uncover the facts."

## **Parish Councillors**

Cllr Stewart reported that the Council had 30 hours or so of work to be completed by the Lengthman's scheme and Councillors should identify areas of work that needed to be undertaken. The Chairman later identified the hedge cutting around the Sovereign Housing development in Headley as an example of the work that could be undertaken.

Cllr Stewart explained that until the future of the Headley Village Hall had been concluded the project to replace the changing room facility on the Headley recreation ground would be put on hold as there could be the prospect of incorporating a social element to the overall project for the recreation ground.

Cllr Stewart confirmed that there would be a village fete in 2019; the Saturday of the late May Bank Holiday weekend.

Cllr Stewart confirmed that £20,000 of funding had been secured from the Borough Council to be used in part to fund the resurfacing of the Headley playground. Despite the £1000 contribution from the Parish Council towards the overall cost of the project, there was still a net shortage of some £1250.

The proposal was to ask the Parish Council for a temporary loan to fund the difference and money generated by next year's village fete would be used to pay back the loan. The Chairman proposed this idea as a good way to fully fund the planned project. The Chairman proposed the idea to the meeting which was seconded by Cllr Stewart and all Councillors present were in favour of such a proposal.

## **9. Recess**

Mr Michael Everitt in his capacity as Chair of the Trustees of the Headley Village Hall reported on several issues;

"Thanks to Cllrs Ken Rhatigan and Donald Sherlock for supporting the S106 application. We now have access to £1440 funding for improvements to the hall security and refurbishment of the kitchen following the January break in. 'The old fellas of Headley' have completed the CUPRINOL treatment of the hall and all exterior painting and decorating is complete. This saved around £1200 and was completed for less than £200 in total. Funding of Headley Village Hall will be critical if we have any major maintenance problems or costs. Reserves approx. £3500. Have stopped paying for cleaners and are trying to keep maintenance costs to a minimum. Cleaning currently carried out by trustees. Not helped by the removal of the £500 per annum subsidy from the Parish Council. No response to requests for assistance with the hall cleaning from the community."



Mr Everitt continued to report on the potential future of the Headley Village Hall;

“1. In accordance with our Charity Commission scheme, for the past 18 months I have been inviting the local groups, including the Parish Council, to attend trustee meetings. To date I have received no response. Does the Parish Council wish to be represented at trustee meetings in the future? Suggest you appoint one of the trustee councillors!

2. I have been asked to approach the Charity Commission to enquire whether the trustees would be allowed under Charity Commission rules to dispose of the current village hall site for development purposes and use the resulting funds to provide a new facility on Headley Recreation Ground.

3. Also, whether any resulting funds from a sale could be split to provide assistance with costs for a replacement church car park.

4. I have produced a draft letter to the Charity Commission, and the pros and cons will be discussed at the next trustee meeting, in late October, and we will then decide whether or not to approach the Charity Commission. The trustees are all in agreement with this plan. This potential sale was discussed at a meeting in February and the general feeling was to dismiss the idea of seeking development permission at this time, but we will discuss this again. Any answers to my question regarding the possible clearing of the scrub from Headley Common. Or would the Parish Council prefer that the ‘old fellas’ provide no assistance in connection with the Parish Council?”

Mr Everitt continued his report with the recent Village Hall Picnic event; “Many thanks to those in the community who came to the village hall picnic on September 22nd, either by attending or providing raffle prizes and cakes. Unfortunately, the weather was pretty awful and we had to hold the event in the village hall, but those who attended seemed to enjoy themselves. The event was supported by 24 adults, 9 children, and 8 trustee and spouse helpers. The monies raised towards the village hall fund, after costs of £44-38, amounted to £149-52. Thank you all for your support.”

The Chairman thanked Mr Everitt for his fulsome report and update on the current situation of the Headley Village Hall. The Chairman responded to Mr Everitt by saying that the Parish Council would consider increasing the Precept for 2019/2020 to allow it to pay the Headley Village Hall an annual grant to assist it with its operational costs. The Chairman further concluded that the plan to install new sports changing rooms facility on Headley recreation ground was to be put on hold until the future of the Headley Village Hall was clearer. One of the options may be to have a plan to include a social facility into the new sports facility at the recreation ground.

A resident of Benham Lane in Ashford Hill expressed his concern and that of his neighbours as to why some properties in Benham Lane and elsewhere in the village were not part of the roll out programme of BT Openreach for inclusion in the broadband network. It was requested that a statement from the County Council and Openreach were sent to residents who had not been connected which explained the reasoning behind such a decision and indicated the timeline involved before such a connection was to be established.

## **10. Financial Statement**

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stands at £711.07

The Lloyds TSB deposit account of the Parish Council stands at £22,248.48

## **11. Accounts for approval and payment**

C Butler – Litter Warden salary October-December 2018 – £586.20

J Kirkby – Litter Warden salary October-December 2018 - £432.69

S Marshall – Clerk's salary October- December 2018 & Expenses - £6285.21

Headley with Ashford Hill Community Shop – Room hire - £12.00

HMRC – PAYE contributions & Tax payments - £1721.51

Bramley Business Services – PAYE administration - £50.00

Mr J Woodford – Baseball nets - £28.43

Westcotec – Battery lead for SID - £12.00

## **12. Correspondence received**

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

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.12 pm.