

ASHFORD HILL with HEADLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 11th SEPTEMBER 2017

AT HEADLEY VILLAGE HALL

Present

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

Councillors Mellor & Rhatigan and members of the public were also present.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Sherlock and Tucker.

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 12 June 2017 were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

An alteration to the accuracy of Cllr Mellor's attendance at June's meeting was made.

4. Matters arising

Cllr Rhatigan* was finalising details regarding information leaflets for dog walkers.

Cllr Tucker had concluded the issue of replacing the broken 'dragons teeth' fencing at Headley recreation ground.

Cllr Mellor had pursued the issue regarding the school bus company using the C111 outside of school hours. Mortons' Operations Manager had confirmed that the company's contracts did not specify any operational times. The ban on HGVs was acknowledged by the company but coaches had special police authority. Outside of school hours, coaches had to be positioned for later in the day and other operational requirements required the coaches to use the C11 with strict observation of the speed limits. Mortons also confirmed that Weaverway, the other school bus contractor, also had an exemption from the police authority.

Cllr Hiscock* would chase the article that was being drafted for inclusion in the Parish Magazine to outline the countryside code of conduct.

The Chairman confirmed the additional topsoil issue for the new Ashford Hill playground in order to aid the grass cutting process had been dealt with.

5. Neighbourhood Plan

The Chairman confirmed that Cllr Hellings would be project managing the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. At a recent meeting it had been decided that the whole parish would be covered by the plan as opposed to developing a plan for each village. Cllr Hellings explained that there would be a series of meetings with parishioners and the issuing of questionnaires in order to ascertain the views of local residents. The development of the plan was at an early stage but the recent meeting had revealed an interest from a number of local residents to become involved in a committee to take the plan forward. The Chairman requested that any other local residents who were interested in becoming involved in the process to contact Cllr Hellings and further information regarding the plan would be available via the Parish Council's website.

6. Ashford Hill Play Park

The Chairman explained that the Parish Council had received a VAT refund from the original playground project for Ashford Hill recreation ground. The VAT refund would allow phase 2 of the project to proceed. There was unanimous agreement from Councillors regarding the proposal by the Chairman to proceed with phase 2 of the project.

7. Highways

The Chairman reported on events relating to footpath 721 at Butler's Copse over the summer recess. Whilst the landowner had repaired the broken access gate, the said gate had been padlocked closed. Whilst access was still possible via the stile, it proved difficult for dog walkers with large dogs and walkers with limited mobility. A Countryside Ranger had visited the site in question and disclosed that HCC's records had no indication that a gate or stile had been permitted to be installed on the said footpath. Therefore the landowner has been instructed to remove both installations as permission had not previously been sought or granted.

The Chairman further reported that Thames Water had remedied ill-fitting manhole covers on the highway outside Hollycroft and Benham Lane which had been causing noise issues.

The Chairman reported that chevron signage on Huntsmoor Hill needed reinstating following a recent road accident.

The Chairman suggested that the Lengthman's Scheme included hedge cutting and foliage clearance of road signage.

The Chairman reported that the Ashford Hill Litter Warden had complained to him about speeding motorists and the Chairman had contacted the police authority regarding the problem and asked them to attend the area, particularly the area of the local school.

Cllr Wilson reported on the overgrown footpath number 707 where it runs close to the River Enborne. Cllr Wilson further reported potholes in the road near to the Ship Inn.

Cllr Stewart reported on the effect of work undertaken by the Lengthman's Scheme and confirmed that the contractor would be engaged to cut back foliage around road signage. Cllr Stewart asked Councillors for any other suggestions for work to be undertaken by the Lengthman's Scheme contractor. As far as problems with footpaths were concerned Cllr Stewart asked Councillors to report matters to HCC informing them of who the landowner is if at all possible. Cllr Stewart went on to report that he would be canvassing opinion of residents local to south of Thornford Road with reference to the option of installing 'sleeping policemen' on the road to reduce speeding vehicles. An initiative supported by the Chairman.

Lengthy conversation ensued between Cllr Hiscock and the Chairman with interjections from Cllr Mellor, regarding the current situation of the gates installed at the ford crossing in Headley. Cllr Hiscock was in favour of having the responsibility of locking the said gates shut whenever the water levels of the river warranted a risk to drivers attempting to cross the ford. The Chairman requested that Cllr Hiscock* contact HCC to discuss such a proposal.

Cllr Hiscock reported on the spoil being spread onto highways from the building development in Plastow Green, the high volume of heavy goods vehicles using the Ashford Hill Road at Headley as well as the illegal use of curtilage on properties in Thornford Road which impeded access when two vehicles were passing each other on the road.

Cllr Hellings reported on the need to have road markings on the layby outside the Community Shop to indicate to drivers not to park in that location as it prevented access to the pedestrian access to the recreation ground. The Clerk* was requested to contact the Highways department to request this work to be undertaken.

8. Planning Applications

The Parish Council would not be objecting to the recent planning applications received.

9. Sovereign Housing – Tenant application

Cllr Hellings had been contacted by Sovereign Housing regarding its legal obligation to consult with the Parish Council regarding the suitability of prospective tenants for the affordable housing element of the Hollybush development. There was a limited period of time available before the availability was advertised more widely to other interested parties. With interjection from Cllr Hiscock regarding the alleged rejection of a suitably qualified applicant, the Chairman requested that time outside of the meeting were made available to understand the full facts of the situation and to take full consideration of the prevailing facts before making a recommendation to Sovereign Housing.

10. Reports

County Councillor

Cllr Mellor's verbal report covered a number of items discussed at previous meetings including his involvement in road signage for the local Community Shop and funding for new nets for the Ashford Hill cricket Club.

Cllr Mellor had been in dialogue with the Chairman regarding the issue of the Internet 'broadband' issue for the local areas and was confident in being able to source additional County Council funding to enable the local areas to be included in phase 2 of the upgrading.

Cllr Mellor further reported that the ongoing eligibility of local residents to partake in the local recycling facility would be discussed at a meeting later in the month.

Borough Councillor

Cllr Rhatigan reported on the progress being made to produce laminated signs for the recreation grounds for the attention of dog owners. Cllr Rhatigan reported on fly tipping incidents in the village which he had personally dealt with. Cllr Rhatigan further reported on the ongoing testing of water quality on all discharges into natural water sources in the borough. Cllr Rhatigan requested that local residents be encouraged to contact him directly regarding planning application issues.

Chairman

Chairman's verbatim report;

"Newbury Recycle Centre

The topic of access for residents in North Hampshire has been raised by a number of the Parish Councils in the area. Currently the Parish Council of Newtown is taking the lead; they have kept us well informed in their progress; Newtown PC have sent a number of correspondence on our behalf to Cllr Rob Humby, Executive Member for Environment and Transport, Hampshire County Council. He is the HCC Cllr in charge of future arrangements between West Berks and North Hants residents.

There are ongoing discussion between the two counties about cross border charges, however the decision about these charges have been delayed until 2018/19. A quote from Cllr Humby states “to allow for an increased period of time to enable further discussion with neighbouring authorities to reach, if possible, a consensus on the approach to non-local resident use of HWRCs. We are hopeful that arrangements we currently enjoy will be continued into 2018 and that a long term solution is agreed by the HCC and West Berks.

Parish Council strategy meeting

Subjects covered

- Parish Council Vision – we have captured our hopes on what the Parish Council can deliver to the community. Statement to follow shortly.
- Projects for the local communities we should look into. Ideas included improvements to Headley Recreational Grounds [Outside Gym, Mountain bike trail], the future of Headley Village Hall and possible locations. Villages welcome to make recommendations also.
- Traffic calming and speed enforcement.
- Neighbourhood Plan
- Lengthsman tasks in the area

30 MPH speed limit reduction by the Pineapple public house

Mary Cowdery a Councillor for Brimpton Parish Council has been in contact with me about the speed limit around the cross road junction at Baughurst and Brimpton Common Road near the Pineapple pub. The Parish Council of Brimpton is concerned with the speed of the traffic in this area and have noted that several accidents have occurred at this junction probably due to excess speeds. Their proposal is to reduce the limit from the current 40MPH to 30MPH including the section past the pub which falls into HCC jurisdiction and our Parish. I have supported this request and suggested that the deregulated section between the Pineapple pub and Ashford Hill is reduced to 40MPH to further encourage drivers to maintain the speed. I feel if a driver has to accelerate to 60MPH and then drop to 30 MPH, the chances of them doing 30MPH or even 40MPH are limited.

Speeding within our villages

I am also in dialogue with Sgt Martin Cullis and PCSO John Dullingham (who I invited to tonight’s meeting) about the general issues with speeding motorists in the area of Ashford Hill Primary School and within the 30mph zone along the B3051. If we could re-establish the CSW groups within the two villages I’m sure this would improve matters. On Saturday afternoon there was an incident with a local farmer’s tractor jack-knifing across the Baughurst brook bridge. The video of the event was captured on CCTV and is on our web site for anyone to watch. Excess speed due to the oncoming traffic situation caused the problem.

Littering at the unofficial lay-by at the top of Ashford Hill

During the summer I took time to clear up the layby at the crest of the Ashford Hill (this is the gravel area). It seems to be a preferred place for passing traffic and local residents to stop and have snacks, this I have no issue with this other than all the litter they are leaving behind. I collected 2 blue sacks of litter on July 22th, I stopped as a black sack had been in the layby for some weeks and it was attracting more litter. During my clean up I found some of it had contact details on this I have passed on to B&D's enforcement officers.

Might I remind Cllrs and residents that if we don't keep an eye on this kind of thing there is a high probability more litter will accumulate. It is the responsibility of all village residents to report this kind of thing to B&D. It only takes few minutes, so please if you like to keep our villages looking clean and tidy, here is the page to report it: - <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/rte.aspx?id=271>

Development by B3051 and C111

It has been reported to me the ground works on the site have started without all the conditions from B&D Planning having been agreed. B&D enforcement officers are involved I wait to hear what outcome there is. Also the signage announcing the site is very dominant and unsightly for the residents of Jubilee House, I have raised this issue with B&D Planning and it is under investigation. I will report on this also.

One final topic on the development, the agent Charles Church, has decided to call the site Ramsdell at Ashford Hill, which I feel is confusing as the village of Ramsdell is 6 miles away itself from Ashford Hill. Their marketing is also most misleading: And I quote "*Ramsdell at Ashford Hill is our latest development on the outskirts of Newbury, in the small town of Thatcham, Hampshire. Offering a variety of three, four and five bedroom homes, the situation is perfect if you need to travel regularly to Newbury or Basingstoke.*

Range of 3, 4 and 5 bedroom homes

Good road links to the M3 and M4

Great choice of local amenities Ramsdell at Ashford Hill is surrounded by fantastic places to walk such as Ashford Hill Meadows Nature Reserve and Ramsdell

Woodland Trust. You'll also have everything you need for day-to-day living as the town has a good range of local amenities, including a convenience store, sporting pitches for hire, a leisure centre and an Ofsted 'Good' primary school. For your weekly shop, head to the Parkway Shopping Centre in Newbury, which is 7.5 miles away and Festival Place Shopping Centre in Basingstoke, just 10 miles away." Little of this is actually correct, in fact the Ramsdell Woodland Trust site being suggested is over 6 miles away and would take you 1hr 30mins to get there by foot. References to local services and amenities within Ashford Hill are highly misleading and you would absolutely need to drive to reference town of Thatcham, at least a 2hr walk one way!

The MAGIC Dog Poo Fairies

Guessing you have never heard of them and neither have I, but clearly some dog owners believe and offer them presents for them to collect as they leave bags of full dog poo bags out for them. Clear purpose of these FAIRIES is to collect these bags of poo up from gates, hanging in trees and being stuffed into hedges, maybe they think this will happen overnight? However, those of us who have a clear grasp on what is Real and Imaginary will understand that you need to double bag your collected dog poo if there are no close bins and put it in your coat/jacket pocket and dispose of it in a litter bin or take it home. There is NO SUCH THING as a Poo Fairy so please take you dog's mess away with you, NO ONE ELSE WILL!"

Parish Councillors

Cllr Stewart reported on the Headley recreation ground changing rooms project and suggested the need for a subcommittee to look at a design and siting for the replacement changing rooms. In addition the issue of car parking would need to be considered as part of the overall project. Cllr Stewart expressed the importance of such a project given the condition of the existing facility. A feasibility study would be looked at by Cllr Stewart and he would report back to the Parish Council*. Cllr Stewart also asked for consideration to be given to the resurfacing of the playground surface at Headley.

Cllr Wilson expressed concern over the number of alleged breaches in conditions relating to the Ashford Hill housing development and stressed the importance of keeping a watchful eye on the development as it progressed.

Cllr Wilson requested that the vegetation by the car parking ticket machine that serves the recreation car park in Ashford Hill be treated with a herbicide next year.

Cllr Hiscock reported on an incident involving a dog attacking sheep which was an example of a nationwide problem. Cllr Hiscock expressed concern regarding the allegedly intimidating signage erected by a landowner on a footpath near to the ford at Headley. The Chairman requested Cllr Hiscock to report the matter to HCC.*

Clerk to the Council

The Clerk had received a certification of audited accounts from the External Auditors for the year ending 31 March 2017 which would be publicly displayed and informed residents of their rights to examine the accounts if required.

The Clerk would pass information to the editors of the Parish Magazine regarding precautions to be taken to avoid seasonal flooding for inclusion in the next publication.

11. Recess

There were no issues raised during the recess period.

12. Financial Statement

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stood at £1269.05 in credit.

The Lloyds TSB current account of the Parish Council stood at £14,424.79.

13. Accounts for approval and payment

Mr J Kirkby – Litter Warden’s salary – Oct-Dec 2017 - £427.23

Mr C Butler – Litter Warden’s salary – Oct-Dec 2017 - £619.61

Mr S Marshall - Clerk’s salary – Oct-Dec 2017 & Expenses - £2906.74

HMRC – PAYE & Tax contributions _ Oct-Dec 2017 - £1518.10

BBS Ltd – PAYE administration - £37.50

Jane Baikie – Retirement present - £69.25

BDO LLP – Annual audit - £360.00

Community Shop – Room hire - £12.00

14. Correspondence received

There had been no correspondence that warranted Councillors’ attention. The Chairman commented on the receipt of statement from the Borough Council regarding S106 funding from construction companies as it related to building projects undertaken within the parish.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.03pm.