

AWBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

^{AS AMENDED} Minutes of the online Zoom meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 25th February 2021 at 7.30pm

Present:

Cllr Nick Adams-King (NAK)
Cllr Peter Allen (PA)
Cllr David Coggon (DC)
Cllr Grahame Jackson (Chair) (GJ)
Cllr Paul Legon (PL)
Cllr Kelly Seymour (Vice Chair) (KS)
Cllr Angela Shepherd (AS)

In attendance:

Church representative
Stratland Estates Limited representative
10 members of the public

Apologies:

TVBC Cllr Gordon Bailey
HCC Cllr Roy Perry

Clerk:

Ian Milsom

1. 14/21 **Welcome**
GJ welcomed everyone to the meeting
2. 15/21 **Apologies**
Apologies were received from Test Valley Borough Councillor (TVBC) Gordon Bailey and Hampshire County Council (HCC) Councillor Roy Perry
3. 16/21 **Declarations of interest**
AS declared an interest, as a resident of Church Lane, in agenda item 8. 21/21 A.
4. 17/21 **Reports and presentations**
NAK gave a verbal report covering the following:
Barbed wire removed from boundary of property in Combe Lane. Trying to get barbed wire removed from adjacent to footpath by nature reserve.

Kents Oak & Crofton. Drainage issues. Developer has installed bore to take away surface water. Providing a communal package treatment scheme rather than individual schemes. Environment Agency has licenced 4.95m of water displacement per day. Unclear if this is for both sites and this is being looked at. Ditch that ran along boundary of school is being reinstated. Discussions ongoing about future management of this entrance to the sites.

Stanbridge Earles. Location of asbestos on site now known. Not asbestos as such, but soil contaminated by asbestos. Environment agency satisfied that it has been dealt with effectively. TVBC Planning have rejected proposals to regularise playing field level. New application must be submitted, which will have to include proposals for drainage of surface water.

Roke Manner. Application going to HCC. Online exhibition and consultation will run for two weeks. Of concern to Awbridge as it borders properties along boundary at old Salisbury lane. Liaison meeting being chaired by NAK and it would be helpful if Awbridge PC Member could be present. **PA volunteered.**

TVBC meeting on Friday night (26/5/21) when council tax will be set. Increase required due to loss of income arising from Covid restrictions.

Nitrate neutrality. More than nine-hundred properties held as they cannot prove nitrate neutrality. This is affecting availability of housing land. TVBC establishing nitrate credit system to address this.

5. 18/21 Public observations/questions on agenda items

A member of the public reported a broken footpath fingerpost in Combe Lane. **AS** advised that this has been reported to Hampshire County Council.

6. 19/21 Minutes

It was proposed that the draft minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2021 be adopted as an accurate record of the business conducted.

RESOLVED.

7. 20/21 Matters arising from the meeting on 14th January 2021, not on the agenda or included in reports.

- Traffic calming project. Nothing further to add currently.
- Neighbourhood development plan. **NAK** advised that the Action Hampshire member of staff undertaking the housing needs survey has again been furloughed.
DC questioned whether there should be a question in the survey about mix of housing in relation to size and style. **NAK** advised that the survey is based on an established measure and scope for additions is limited. **NAK** will seek advice from Action Hampshire. If it is not possible to add further questions, perhaps the Parish Council can look at carrying out its own, limited, survey.

The clerk confirmed to **NAK** that he is not holding any information about the analysis of the original survey.

- Logo competition. This will be relaunched when schools reopen.
- Financial reports to 31 December. The clerk addressed two queries that had been raised at the January meeting.

1. The small discrepancy between the accounts and bank statements was due to the incorrect posting of bank interest, which has since been rectified.
2. The budget overspend on general administration is due to items of un-budgeted expenditure, for example monthly cost for use of the Zoom platform for Council meetings.

STANDING ITEMS

8. 21/21 Planning

- A. To further discuss application 20/01448, land west of All Saints Church, Church Lane.

DC updated on the recent meeting between Church Lane residents and representatives of All Saints Church. The purpose of this meeting was to come together to try and achieve a solution acceptable to both parties.

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Most Residents accepted the Church's need for a car park and an extension to the graveyard. The Church, in turn, was receptive to resident's concerns over the siting and size of the car park and the graveyard extension. Resident's also recognised the need to secure the land for these purposes. There was general acceptance of the need for houses on the remainder of the plot to finance the scheme and the transfer of the land to the Church.

DC reported that in a spirit of compromise, participants looked at changes that could be made to the scheme to accommodate resident's concerns. Stratland Estates Limited (SEL) had supplied details of amendments that the company was prepared to make to the plans. These were considered based on what would be best for the community if the scheme went ahead.

DC went on to say that SEL have stated that the proposed scheme would not be financially viable with less than three houses being built on the site. According to DC, SEL also stated that the scheme is not being developed for profit and that it would be willing to hand over the scheme to someone else to carry forward.

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DC then turned to an offer from a ^{PRESIDENT} developer based in church Lane, Awbridge, hereafter referred to as **Scheme B**. **Scheme B** has offered to buy out SEL's interest in the land adjacent to All Saints Church and will develop an alternative scheme that will provide what the church needs. This scheme will be financed with only one, or perhaps two houses, possibly single story, being built on the site. This will be more sympathetic to the existing street scene. DC advised that there is a level of resident support for **Scheme B**.

DC expressed the view that **Scheme B** would be more acceptable to Church Lane residents and would help meet housing needs in the village. DC suggested that the Parish Council consider delaying any decision on the Church-led scheme until SEL respond to the offer from **Scheme B** and the communities' view of the new offer is ascertained.

GJ interjected at this point to emphasise to Members that they are required tonight to focus on the application submitted by All Saints Church. Whilst the Parish Council will look at other suggestions in the future when detailed information is submitted, it cannot at this stage weigh **Scheme B** against the detailed planning application submitted by the Church. GJ also reminded Members that the Parish Council's

decision does not end the planning approval process, as the Church application will still proceed to Test Valley Borough Council's (TVBC) Panning Committee.

NAK reminded that any alternative scheme will have to meet the aspirations of the community and would be subject to the full planning application process already followed by the Church.

NAK pointed out that the original **SEL** plan was for four dwellings on the site which has been subsequently reduced to three. Additionally, a planning opinion was expressed at a public meeting held by the developer in the village hall, that smaller houses would be out of keeping with established housing in Church Lane.

PL felt that the Parish Council should hear the details of **Scheme B**. **GJ** was again at pains to clarify that there are no details for **Scheme B**, just an idea outlined in letters sent by email to **SEL**, the Parish Council and Church Lane residents.

DC again suggested deferring the Parish Council's decision, this time until **SEL** responds positively to the offer made by **Scheme B**. **DC** added that if **SEL** is not willing to step aside, this would suggest there are grounds for the Parish Council to question the developers financial motives in proposing the scheme.

NAK commented that the biggest problem with the Church scheme has been defining 'community' in terms of Policy COM9 and that care needs to be taken over what is meant by the term. Church Lane is part of the community but is not *the* community.

NAK went on to say that there has been a response from **SEL** after consultation with the community and **SEL** have done everything possible to mitigate Church Lane resident's concerns. Community consultation will be one of the measures used by TVBC when considering the Church application. As regards **Scheme B**, is this deliverable? Will **SEL** step back? Will the church be happy with what Scheme B delivers?

In response to a suggestion by **PL** that **SEL** had submitted the Church application before the requirements of Policy COM9 had been completed, **GJ** reminded that the Parish Council had delayed its response to the application by many months to ensure that the community had every opportunity to respond to the application. Additionally, **SEL** has claimed that consultation with residents has been ongoing throughout the process. Test Valley Borough Council Planning Committee will be the final arbiter as to whether the consultation requirements of Policy COM9 have been fulfilled.

GJ rejected **DC's** assertion that Members were being forced to decide only on what is currently on the table, again emphasising that there is only one scheme to consider.

As a representative of All Saints Church and **SEL** were present, **GJ** asked them if they were able and willing to give a view on **Scheme B**.

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SEL's agent, PA responded first by referring to a letter he had sent to the Parish Council on 16/10/2019 in which it was stated that owing to the sensitivities that seem to have been raised in the village, **SEL** has indicated it would rather not involve its resources directly in the process. It is, however, still prepared to contribute to the Church's planning application costs should the scheme progress. Should the Church and the Parish Council request the further involvement of **SEL** in due course, it would consider his position, but it is entirely happy for an alternative funding source to be found.

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SEL'S AGENT

PA went on to say that almost two years later, in conjunction with the church and with the involvement of the community, the scheme has been progressed at quite significant cost, time and effort. **PA** added that the scheme has evolved significantly since that time and is quite different from what it was before.

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SEL'S AGENT

PA informed that his client had received a telephone call on Sunday, 21st February 2021, when Scheme B asked to buy its property, indicating that they were thinking about erecting 1 or 2 houses on the land and could make the scheme work financially on this basis. That subsequently changed to a potential personal home for the Scheme B developer.

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SEL'S AGENT

PA stated his personal view that there is no coherent alternative scheme. No approach has been made to his client, **SEL**, about the value of the land and the costs incurred in progressing the scheme to its present form. All the development costs to date would have to be reimbursed to **SEL** in addition to the purchase of the land. **Scheme B** has no plan on paper, or a detailed viability study. In contrast, **SEL** have put forward a verified viability study and no one has questioned or raised any objection to its contents.

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SEL'S AGENT

PA confirmed that based on a telephone call from **Scheme B**, his client is not prepared to give away all its work on the scheme and would not be mindful at this stage to release its interest in the site. **SEL** remains committed to the scheme for the benefit of the Church and the wider community.

FT responded to **Scheme B** on behalf of the Church. This offer has put the Church in a difficult position. However, until detailed information is provided about crucial elements of the offer, the Church will remain with the **SEL** proposal.

GJ asked if Members wished to make further comments. Members had nothing further to say. **GJ** then indicated that there would be a move to the vote. At this point **AS** asked about the clerk's previous comments about **PA** and **AS** not voting due to predetermination, and about the position of **NAK** as a member of TVBC's Planning Committee. **GJ** informed that the written submissions made by **AS** and **PA** in their role as parish councillors did not amount to predetermination and they were eligible to take part in the vote. **GJ** advised that although **NAK** is the TVBC Member lead on planning, he does not sit on the TVBC Planning Committee and will not be involved in that body's decision. Consequently **NAK** is eligible to vote. The

clerk indicated that he did not agree with the decision relating to the voting eligibility of **AS** and **PA**.

Members were then asked to vote on **DC's** proposal that the Parish Council defer its decision until the next meeting on 25 March 2021. Immediately prior to the vote, **NAK** asked that the following conditions be added to a vote to support: "Permitted development rights should be removed from individual properties and the land. Information is needed about the security of the car park, and further details of landscaping, particularly the size of trees, is required.

Vote that the Parish Council defer its decision until its next meeting on 25 March 2021.

Three votes in favour and four votes against, with no abstentions.
NOT CARRIED.

Vote that the Parish Council support the application in its latest format (Which includes mitigation changes proposed by the developer).

Four votes in favour and three votes against, with no abstentions
RESOLVED.

- B. To consider planning applications notified to the Council
21/00498/FULLS. Danesfield, Danes Road.
Demolition/replacement of fire damage dwelling.

Following discussion it was proposed that Council's response to this application be 'No Objection'. **Resolved**

9. 22/21 Financial and Administrative

- a. Bank reconciliation.

The clerk circulated a bank reconciliation, supported by copies of bank statements and extracts from the accounts, prior to the meeting. It was proposed that the reconciliation be accepted as a true statement of the Council's finances on 10 February 2021. **Resolved**

- b. It was proposed that payment of S Nightingale's invoice of £78.95 for the January maintenance of the Speed Limit Reminder sign be approved. **Resolved.**

BUSINESS TO BE CONDUCTED

10. 23/21 Fire hydrant water pressure

The clerk advised that he had chased up by telephone a reply to Southern Water's letter of 8 January 2021, in which it was stated that the information concerning fire hydrant water pressure would be supplied to the Council in time for tonight's meeting. The clerk followed this up with an email this morning (25/02/2021) which was copied to Caroline Noakes MP. Despite a further email request to Southern Water from Caroline Noakes' office, no information has been forthcoming.

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It was agreed that if the information requested from Southern Water was not forthcoming within a period of three weeks from today's date (25/02/2021), the clerk will contact Cllr Coggon, who will submit a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to Southern Water. ^{DRAFT} ^{FOR THE CHAIRMAN} ^{1 SEND} **Action: Clerk**

11. 24/21 Risk management schedule

It was proposed that the amended schedule be adopted. **RESOLVED.**

12. 25/21 Hampshire Solar Together scheme

The clerk explained that this Hampshire County Council sponsored scheme offers homeowners the chance to buy solar panels at a highly competitive price by applying as a group buying scheme. Further details are on the News tag on the Parish Council website.

13. 26/21 Public engagement/Raising PC profile

Following discussion it was proposed that the project to place Councillor pen portraits and images on the Council website be shelved. **RESOLVED**

14. 27/21 Book exchange facilities

To discuss the provision of book exchange facilities at the red telephone box and the bus shelter and, if appropriate, commit a sum of money to this project. **PA** explained that he had begun work on converting the telephone box to a book exchange. COVID-19 restrictions have caused this to be placed on hold. **FT** advised that the Church had already created a children's book exchange facility at the bus shelter

15. Closure of meeting

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Date of next meeting, Thursday, 25th March 2021 at 7.30pm on Zoom.

Minutes AMENDED AS AGREED.



Parish clerk.

7/5/2021

APPROVED



Parish clerk

7/5/2021

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