

HIGHCLERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Highclere Parish Council Meeting held at Highclere Village Hall

Tuesday 8 December 2015 at 7.00pm

Members: Sally Izett (Chairman), John Stoker (Vice Chairman)
Councillor (also Borough Councillor) Graham Falconer, Councillor Mike Jenkins, Councillor Don Langan, Councillor Horace Mitchell

In attendance: Clerk to the Council Sue Edwards, 2 members of the public, Jane Meredith, Newbury Weekly News.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that there were protocols for members of the public attending the Parish Council meeting.

114/15 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Will Flack (work commitments), Councillor Mike York (holiday) (*LGA 1972, Sch. 12, para 40*), Borough Councillor John Izett, County Councillor Tom Thacker.

115/15 Declarations of Interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

116/15 To confirm accuracy and sign the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10 November 2015. Cllr. Langan queried a point on Westridge Studio. The Clerk advised him that this matter was covered in the October minutes when the parish council voted to consult a solicitor. The Minutes were circulated and it was unanimously resolved that the minutes be accepted as an accurate record. They were duly signed by the Chairman, Sally Izett.

117/15 To Progress Resolutions from 10 November 2015 (*Matters arising from the Minutes*).

106/15 HM the Queen 90th Birthday. Cllr. Mitchell has spoken with the Highclere Parochial Church Council organisers of the church fete. Lord Carnarvon suggested following the fete with a hog roast.

Action: Cllr Mitchell to discuss ideas with Highclere Society and the Highclere Village Hall committee. An Agenda item for January 2016.

107/15 Report on Environment

Lengthsman – Cllr. Stoker stated that the latch on the repaired stile has been fixed. There was a complaint about mud in the fields but, in Cllr. Stoker's view, straw will have no impact and stones could damage dogs' paws. He is to inspect the HCC owned bridge and will report back at the January meeting.

Cllr. Jenkins contacted the Lengthsman; he is now up-to-date with his schedule.

108/15 Report on Roads and Transport:

Speedwatch – In Cllr. Flack's absence, the Clerk reported that Cllr. Flack had advised that moving the SID around the Parish was the preferred option as the volunteers are unlikely to still be willing to take part in Speedwatch training after all the delays.

The Clerk investigated the price of SID brackets (approximately £55 + VAT) and the legal implications of post-mounted SID (HCC documents forwarded to Cllrs Flack and Langan).

The Clerk investigated HCC "slow down 30mph" stickers for wheelie bins. They now state "Slow Down." Councillors should decide which roads are to have stickers. It is not necessary sticker every wheelie bin perhaps every 3-4 houses. To be discussed at the meeting on 12 January 2016.

110/15 Financial Matters – Councillors considered the first draft precept figures, and items to be covered by reserves. The Clerk did not receive any emails from Councillors. This is an agenda item.

118/15 Public Participation – one member of the public asked about Superfast Broadband. Cllr. Mitchell said that the most up-to-date status was on the HCC website - <http://www.hampshiresuperfastbroadband.com/>. Cllr. Falconer said that Ashmansworth were investigating various technical solutions. Another member of the public had attended to hear an update on the Westridge Studio agenda item.

119/15 Reports from Borough & County Councillors

Borough Councillor Graham Falconer gave his report to the Council.

Bell's Field. Hyde Housing Association has withdrawn from the Basingstoke and Deane area following its ultimatum requiring a change to the housing mix and a contribution from BDBC. This has created an unexpected crisis as regards the future of Bells Field.

Council tax. There is likely to be an increase next year which could be £2 per Band D household. HCC's intentions are unknown.

Cllr. Falconer attended the HCC Winter Seminar on 11 November 2015. HCC covered the contingency plans for flooding, snow and ice and assured the parish councils that all is under control.

Devolution. There are ongoing discussions between the 15 councils and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Local Plan. The Inspector has confirmed that all the changes emanating from the examination in November are "minor" and therefore a completion by May 2016 is expected. There is now available a "Leader Fund" which comes via the EU and up to £50,000 is available to a rural business in order to: support micro and small businesses and farm diversification; boost rural tourism; increase farm productivity; increase forestry productivity; provide rural services; provide cultural and heritage activities. Contact details for each programme: North Wessex Downs LEADER Programme, Dawn Hamblin, Programme Manager. Email: nwdleaderprogramme@wiltshire.gov.uk Telephone: 01488 680458

Tom Thacker Hampshire County Councillor sent a report which the Chairman read out to the meeting.

Boundary Review - The local government boundary commission for England has published its recommendations for County Council boundary changes. Whitchurch and Clere Division is to be enlarged to include Kingsclere Parish, and will lose the Bishop's Green part of Ecchinswell, Sydmonton & Bishop's Green parish.

The independent LGBCE is asking residents to provide their views as part of an eight-week public consultation on recommendations, which runs until 11 January 2016. The consultation is open to anyone who wants to have their say on new County Council electoral divisions, division boundaries and division names across Hampshire.

To review the recommendations and respond to the consultation, visit the LGBCE website: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/>. I wish all in Highclere a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

120/15 Westridge Studio

Sally Izett, Chairman gave an update on progress since the last meeting. Following legal advice given at a meeting (attended by HPC Chairman, Cllr. Mike York Chairman of the Westridge Studio Working Party and the HPC Clerk, Sue Edwards) with Roger Taylor of Wellers Law Group on 13 November 2015, it was proposed that a Charitable Incorporated Organisation was the favoured option. A CIO is relatively new but it gives a clear framework for the future management of the Studio and limited liability. It also allows more people to become involved in the future. A briefing paper was circulated in advance of the meeting to all Councillors. Councillors felt that they needed more time to discuss the options and the 25 page constitution before voting. The Chairman explained that the final Constitution is a

template that has to be completed online and so it is not possible to have a completed copy for circulation at this time. Cllr. Mitchell said that the Parish Council had a duty of care to the Studio and the Chairman said that the team were aiming at achieving a structure which was fit for purpose for the long term. A meeting of councillors is to be arranged for the first week in January before the next parish council meeting. A parishioner asked when the work could start and if there was a timescale which could be communicated to interested parties to maintain enthusiasm. The Chairman expressed hope that the documents would be in place by February. Cllr. Langan asked if quotations could be gathered from builders to save time later on. The Chairman stated that a great deal of ground work had taken place including a Health & Safety audit and contacting with the BDBC free Energy Audit team.

Action – the Clerk to arrange a meeting of councillors.

121/15 Report on Planning

BDBC No.	Date sent by BDBC	Address
15/03905/LBC	25/11/15	Highclere Castle, Highclere Park
15/04103/PDPO	3/12/15	Woodbine Cottage, Andover Road

The Council had No Comment to make on either of these planning applications.

Cllr. Mitchell said that the Curridge Car Sales application was still ongoing.

A parishioner brought to the Council's attention a leaflet sent to residents in Highclere by Regis Homes. Cllr. Mitchell said that the council had not been informed and was not in a position to comment on the Regis Homes consultation. Cllr. Mitchell asked Borough Councillor Falconer to ask BDBC planning officers if they were aware of this consultation and what was happening about the Settlement Boundary Policy.

122/15 Financial Matters.

Budget Update/ Pensions – Auto Enrolment/ Precept Setting

The Clerk provided up-to-date figures for expense incurred to 30 November 2015, an estimate of year end expense and a second draft of budget (and precept) figures for 2016/17. The Chairman stated that the litter wardens were funded by BDBC, the BDBC grant was set to stay in 2016/17 but the Council Tax Support Grant had been reduced last year and this could happen again this year. The Precept must be approved and minuted at the January 2016 meeting and applied for before 31 January 2016. The Council are advised to keep 1 ¼ years precept in reserves.

There was a discussion about the compliance procedure for Auto Enrolment which all employers in the UK have to complete regardless of the size of the organisation. The HPC staging date is August 2016 and the compliance begins in February. The Chairman circulated a briefing paper in advance of the meeting. This is a time consuming procedure which will incur financial penalties for the council if it is not completed correctly or on time. It is a duty of the councillors to ensure that compliance is correctly completed as they are the employers of the Clerk and the Litter Warden. The Chairman and the Clerk attended a HALC Pensions Workshop and two specialist pensions administration organisations presented at the request of the HALC HR adviser. She has spent a year researching the requirements of Auto Enrolment and the consequences for Parish Councils. It was proposed by Cllr. S. Izett and seconded by Cllr. J. Stoker and endorsed unanimously by the council that HPC engage the services of Enrol My Staff to ensure compliance. The situation will be revisited in 18 months' time.

Resolution – Enrol my Staff to be employed to ensure compliance with Auto Enrolment.

Action: Councillors to consider the draft figures, items to be covered by reserves and email the Clerk with any comments to be incorporated in the final budget discussion before 11 January 2016 (the day before the next HPC meeting).

Accounts for payment 8 December 2015

December payments were approved by Councillors Jenkins and Stoker

Date	Expenditure	Purpose	VAT	Total	Online/
incurred					cheque
16/11/15	HALC	Chairman's Training: Chairing skills	7.00	42.00	online
19/11/15	Viking	Toner for parish printer	10.09	60.56	online
20/11/15	SLCC	Annual subscription		131.00	102013
30/11/15	Litter Warden	November Fuel Allowance		13.95	online
31/12/15	Clerk's Salary	December Salary		772.86	online
01/12/15	HMRC	Tax & NI		0.89	online
31/12/15	Litter Warden Salary	December Salary		415.40	online
03/12/15	Highclere Church Parochial Council	Cemetery grass cutting		200.00	102014
08/10/15	B. Wall	Mending lawnmower (Westridge)		72.78	102015
08/12/15	Clerk's expenses	Travel to Westridge solicitor with Chairman		60.93	online
			17.09	1,770.37	

					Ex VAT
02/12/15	BT Parish phone	Direct debit	5.28	31.68	26.40

123/15 Circulation of draft minutes

The council discussed whether to circulate the HPC minutes in draft form to the neighbouring parishes of East Woodhay and Ashmansworth.

Cllr. Falconer proposed the change to procedure and Cllr Langan seconded the proposal and the council unanimously supported the change.

Resolution – minutes to be circulated in draft form to EWPC and Ashmansworth PC.

124/15 Correspondence received

email from Jane Meredith NWN requesting a desk at HPC meetings.

HALC Transparency Fund application form – Clerk to liaise with the Chairman.

HCC Hampshire Libraries Consultation.

HALC Review of local council tax support scheme.

HALC Review of CIL – forwarded to Cllr Mitchell.

HALC Hampshire Boundary Review Consultation.

HCC Small grants scheme – forwarded to Cllr Stoker.

HCC Andover Road Footway copy of letter to residents – forwarded to all councillors and posted on HPC website.

BDBC Leader Funding applications.

HALC 1 March 2016 Parish Devolution workshop booking form – forwarded to Cllr Langan.

PCSO Abbey Carpenter last monthly update, news of her transfer and replacement.

North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty email announcement of £3billion investment to safeguard the countryside

BDBC – request for councillors to consider the equipment for Little Penwood Trim Trail in December forwarded to Cllrs Stoker & Jenkins.
HALC Christmas message from Steven Lugg.
HALC Food and Friendship newsletter.
Community Matters November newsletter – to be forwarded to Westridge Working Party members.
BDBC Community Heritage and Environment Fund – forwarded to councillors.
HIOW Devolution newsletters - to be forwarded to Cllr. Langan.

125/15 Councillors' matters to be included in the next meeting

Councillors to email the Clerk.

126/15 Date of the next Council Meeting – 12 January 2016

Adjournment: there being no further business the meeting closed at 8.42pm

Summary of Actions:

HM the Queen 90th Birthday – Cllr. Mitchell to discuss ideas with Highclere Society and the Highclere Village Hall committee. An Agenda item for January 2016

Environment – Cllr. Stoker to inspect the HCC owned bridge.

Roads and Transport:

Speedwatch – Cllrs Flack and Langan to suggest roads to receive “Slow Down” stickers and quantity. Cllrs Flack and Langan to suggest sites for the portable SID and to read the HCC advice document and advise the council on next actions.

Westridge Studio – the Clerk to arrange a meeting of councillors for the first week in January. Those councillors who wish to attend to respond to the Clerk’s email with their availability.

Planning – Cllr. Falconer to ask BDBC planning officers if they were aware of this consultation and what was happening about the Settlement Boundary Policy.

Finance – any comments on the precept to be sent to the Clerk by 11 January 2016.

Signed _____ Position _____ Date _____