

Minutes of Mersham Parish Council
Extraordinary Meeting held on Friday, 5th February 2021 via Skype

Present

Peter Turley (Chair)
 Peter Hawkins
 Kenton Stewart

Geoffrey Fletcher
 Stewart Ross
 Melanie Wells

In attendance: Borough Councillor Paul Bartlett, 1 member of the public and Tracey Block (Clerk)

To be actioned by:

<p>To receive and approve apologies for absence.</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>	
<p>To receive declarations of interest (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests). The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest to note.</p>	
<p>Public session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item.</p> <p>The member of the public had nothing additional to raise.</p>	
<p>To receive an update regarding the Broadband Project</p> <p>The broadband sub-committee met on 28th January, at this we agreed to develop a mail-drop and an article for the website/The Villager. We have since received a Sevington exchange cost and an initial estimate for the Aldington exchange. Both schemes took a step forward. The details have been circulated. The Sevington exchange is just over £900K, the Aldington exchange will be about £325K.</p> <p>This clearly means we need a large take up and we need to benefit from a top-up scheme. We have had discussions with Clair Bell and Tracey has discussed with KCC, it is hoped the top-up scheme will be in place in some form.</p> <p>The Chairman had circulated drafts of an article for The Villager and of the proposed leaflet drop. All Councillors were asked to view these and let the Chairman have comments. Cllr Wells is creating various reference materials including FAQ and links for further info that will be posted on the Parish Council website.. The sub-committee will also be a specific email for community enquiries which the sub-committee will manage.</p> <p>Looking at Sevington exchange £900K is 452 properties so we need high numbers pledging.</p> <p>Cllr Bartlett said that the KCC budget for vouchers in 2021-22 is £500,000. This would mean there must be some support for projects.</p> <p>The task for Mersham is to get the leaflets delivered once the site goes live.</p> <p>If you already have an underground feed with no ducting, this will mean digging up gardens. If there is already ducting, they will be able to use this.</p> <p>Cllr Turley explained the pledge process, an enhanced service contract would have to be taken. The benefits to residents include an improved service, future proofing, gigabit enabled connectivity and adding value to the property price.</p> <p>The Village Alliance is happy to help out.</p> <p>The cabinet is improving speeds for those in close proximity and so those in that area may not want to go ahead with the voucher scheme. If they do, this would future-proof their broadband supply and attractiveness of their houses for potential buyers.</p>	

<p>To receive an update regarding Highfield including approving expenditure as advised by Kent Wildlife Trust following sub-committee meeting on 29th January 2021</p> <p>A proposal has been received from Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT), the Parish Council sub-committee asked for a discussion with Vincent of KWT and this produced a presentation and costings. The presentation has been circulated to all Councillors. Cllr Turley explained the content of the presentation and an initial diagram has been discussed.</p> <p>If the PC goes ahead with the Highfield there are 2 avenues, one is to have some agricultural area and the other is to have no agricultural area for commercial negotiation reasons.</p> <p>The proposed costs are: £2255 +VAT, the Borough Councillor has committed to support us for £1500 next year, the County Councillor, if re-elected, will contribute £2-£3000. This will assist with on-going works.</p> <p>Further comments raised:</p> <p>Paul Bartlett relayed comments from Borough Councillors – about 1/5 of those asked said carry on farming it. 1/5 said they wanted it planted with trees for ecological benefit. 1/5 were keen to create a buffer, 1/5 wanted formal park land and 1/5 mentioned nature/wildlife. Drawing from this is that there are clearly a range of views so it would seem that the Parish Council can make a recommendation by way of a plan and it is quite likely to be accepted.</p> <p>Our designs offer buffering, bunding and tree, re-instating hedges, pond enhancement and protection of Skylark habitat. As part of the S. 106 of the IBF site, a path must be put in place, this path will be a key part of the plans for the field. We are looking to have more input going forward.</p> <p>The proposal was put forward to spend £2255 + VAT.</p> <p>GF proposed, PT seconded – the Council voted unanimously in favour of this.</p> <p>Cllr Ross is concerned that the Parish Council is not pressing the IBF regarding the moving of the spoil. Cllr Bartlett has asked Tracey Kerley (CEO of ABC) to put pressure on DfT to answer the question as to what they are to do with the soil. Hannah Burgess promised a Teams meeting to deal with the land sale. A list of questions/issues should be sent to Hannah prior to the discussion.</p> <p>Cllr Bartlett had circulated an email and it was suggested that this should be sent to Hannah.</p> <p>Action: All to respond to Tracey regarding Pauls email and TB and PT to gather and agree the detail and send with a request for a meeting to Hannah Burgess.</p>	
<p>Any Other Business (for information purposes only):</p> <p>The bridge near The Farriers is the subject of a proposed scheme. The design looks to be widening the road and straightening the road a little. This is raising a concern with the local residents. Cllr Turley had been communicating with KCC via Clair Bell and the Engineer. Once the designs are provided by KCC, the Councillors will be circulated.</p> <p>There is no currently known possibility of procuring land in the proximity.</p>	
<p>Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.</p> <p>Monday 15th February 2021 Monday 15th March 2021 Monday 19th April 2021 Monday 17th May 2021</p>	All
<p>The meeting closed at 3.45pm</p>	