

HIGHCLERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Highclere Parish Council Meeting held at

Highclere Village Hall

Tuesday 8 September 2015 at 7.00pm

Members:

Sally Izett (Chairman)

Councillor (also Borough Councillor) Graham Falconer, Councillor Will Flack, Councillor Mike Jenkins, Councillor Horace Mitchell, Councillor Mike York.

In attendance:

Clerk to the Council Sue Edwards, Borough Councillor John Izett

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that Item 12 on the Agenda, Salaries & Expenses, would be a private and confidential session.

62/15 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Don Langan (Holiday *LGA 1972, Sch. 12, para 40*, John Stoker (Vice Chairman), County Councillor Tom Thacker. The Chairman asked that the Council send good wishes to Cllr. Stoker for a speedy recovery.

63/15 Declarations of Interest. There were no Declarations of Interest.

64/15 To confirm accuracy and sign the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 14 July 2015. 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.

65/15 To Progress Resolutions from 14 July 2015 (*Matters arising from the Minutes*).

42/15 The Clerk has added information regarding Hampshire Alert to the news section of the Parish website. The Clerk forwarded a copy of the March 2015 Minutes to Jenny Moon at HCC which state that the Council supports the proposed new footway scheme on Andover Road. The work is to be undertaken in the autumn.

43/15 Community Asset Register

Cllr. Mitchell will approach the landlord of the Red House, to explain the nature of Community Assets, then the Clerk to submit the Community Asset form to BDBC and post the letter to the Red House.

47/15 Heathlands & Woodlands Improvement Project Update

Cllr. Mitchell to arrange a date for the Working Party to meet.

48/15 Report on Environment

Cllr. Stoker liaised with the Lengthsman and the land owner. The work was partially completed on 3 September and is due to be finished on 10 September. The stile is on the side nearest the cattle and a self-closing gate is on the opposite side.

66/15 Public Participation – no members of the public were present.

67/15 Helicopters landing at the Yew Tree.

The Chairman, S. Izett, has written to the Civil Aviation Authority to express HPC concern about the helicopter landings and take-offs which have been taking place at the Yew Tree Inn, Highclere. The Chairman also wrote to Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council to draw their attention to concerns that these landings may be taking place within the curtilage of the premises which should not be permitted. The noise and nuisance to residents and animals in the vicinity of the Inn was also highlighted.

Julian Thomas, Senior Compliance and Enforcement Officer BDBC replied on 13 August to confirm, that it has been established that the land which is being used by the helicopters, is not within the curtilage of The Yew Tree. *“The land whilst under the ownership of Cirrus Inns Limited is not considered to be within the curtilage of the public house and therefore can be used by the helicopters for a maximum of 28 days per calendar year. For information previous planning applications for a change of use of the land, refer to it being in agricultural use; however I am unsure as to the current lawful use of the land.”*

Also, from my discussions with the landlord it has been confirmed that the land has been used by the helicopters on seven days this year to date; furthermore the landlord is aware that the land can be used for a maximum of 28 days per calendar year. Therefore as there is no imminent breach of planning I have recommended that the file is closed, however should further information be received that the land has been used by the helicopters for in excess of 28 days then a new investigation will be undertaken”.

The Chairman also wrote to the Chief Constable for Hampshire as technically the local police should be informed of any intended flying activity and this is not happening. The Chairman received an email from Paul Pressley, Tadley Constabulary, who offered to allocate an officer from his team to assist with seeking some local agreement with the landlord of the Yew Tree if requested.

There has been email correspondence from the Landlord at the Yew Tree who has expressed a desire to work with the Parish Council and the community. He was unable to attend the meeting but has been invited to attend the Parish Council meeting on 13 October.

68/15 Reports from Borough & County Councillors

Borough Councillor, G. Falconer, expressed his support for Councillor Mitchell's letter to BDBC (see 73/15). Cllr. Falconer has been lobbying the Borough Council regarding the issue of Planning Conditions, delayed approvals and S106 refunds which have all hindered householders who have not been able to move towards commencing of their building projects. He is to meet with Karen Brimacombe and Mike Townsend of BDBC Planning.

Borough Councillor J. Izett gave an overview of the devolution initiative from Whitehall - the Combined Unitary Authority. BDBC is part of a proposal linking Hampshire with the Isle of Wight.

Hampshire County Council, Southampton County Council, the Isle of Wight, Test Valley, New Forest, Basingstoke & Deane, LEAs, and Fire & Rescue Departments are coming together. There are four themes:

- business, services, housing infrastructure, and public service.

There will be more certainty over financing. The Combined Unitary Authority will forgo the rate support grant in return for 100% of the business rates. In return, there will be a requirement to accelerate delivery of housing - delivering the Housing Plan two years early i.e. 2027 instead of 2029. There will be a need for an additional 500 homes per annum.

There will be an infrastructure guarantee for 10 years. The government will underwrite the investment. Schools will be required across the area. There is to be an area wide green-belt plan to protect strategic gaps. Local authorities will work with NHS and clinical groups. Early intervention and prevention is the aim. A key issue is the growing number of elderly people and fulfilling their needs. There is to be a full Governance review and the intention is to avoid another level of government. The aim is to devolve services to district councils who are better able to deliver. Education post-16 is also a key area - to prepare young people for the world of work. At some point, in 2017, there will be a vote. Greater Manchester is a trail blazer for the concept of unitary authorities. In this area, the economy is bigger than Wales. Cllr. Mitchell felt that greater leverage over road policy would be a good thing. Planning is staying at district level. At the current time Hampshire County Council is cutting funding and BDBC is covering the needs of the vulnerable due to its statutory responsibility.

Cllr. John Izett also stated that Plans for Identified Gypsy Pitches are being currently being formulated in BDBC.

County Councillor Tom Thacker was not present but has asked to be informed of any matters where his support is required.

69/15 Westridge Studio Proposal

A Briefing Paper was circulated to Councillors before the meeting. Highclere Parish Council discussed the Proposal at length. Councillors agreed to ensure that a significant proportion of the Studio's time continues to be dedicated to the arts as per DR's wishes, without compromising the viability of the studio to be financially self-sufficient, sustainable and productively-utilised. It was Resolved that:

The Council undertakes to assume responsibility as Custodian Trustee for Westridge Studio, subject to:

- A management committee being formed, with initial names and composition reported to the Council; the committee to include at least one hall user
- The management committee adopting an initial outline business plan
- The business plan to include provision for work on the hall and the Paddock that will make it fit for public use, meeting regulatory standards; make it attractive to new paying users on a basis to enable the Studio to cover its operating costs in the medium term; after initial works minimise the need for further capital expenditure until such time as the Studio is paying its way and able to contribute to reserves
- the management committee providing reports that reassure the Council that an appropriate level of bookings and access is being achieved
- management and accounting procedures being put in place to provide the Parish Council with assurance that the business plan is being achieved
- The Parish Council will require three monthly updates of progress against plan, including a financial statement.

In making this resolution the Council assumes that appropriate legal structures will be put in place.

The Council recommends that the Studio management committee applies for grants towards its work and stands ready to endorse and support such grants.

Concurrently with this, the Council will examine the arrangements under which it has trusteeship with regard to Highclere Village Hall, with a view to establishing a common approach to its trusteeship for the two establishments.

Cllr. Mitchell proposed the Resolution be adopted, Cllr. Flack seconded the Proposal and the Council unanimously supported the Resolution.

Cllr. York attended the Westridge Working Party meeting on 1 September 2015 and agreed to be Chairman of the Working Party. The HPC Chairman, Councillor S. Izett thanked Cllr. York for taking on this important role.

Action: Cllr. York asked the Clerk to gain quotations from solicitors for legal advice, regarding the most appropriate legal structure for the Parish Council to adopt, and to consult with BDBC Community Services who offer advice on village and community halls.

70/15 Heathlands & Woodlands Improvement Project Update

Action: Cllr. Mitchell to arrange a meeting of the working party.

71/15 Report on Environment

Little Penwood update Frank Wright, BDBC emailed the following update (8/9/15). *“The network of footpaths and open areas has been created, further footpath maintenance was not deemed necessary this year as they have remained clear.*

After Christmas we will be looking at the design and implementation of the play area whilst Gordon Wade, our Grounds Maintenance manager will be organising for the removal of waste. We will also be carrying out some more safety tree work alongside the new footpaths and looking into the possibility of removing some of the large conifer trees”.

Cllr. Mitchell suggested that an event should be organised when the walk is fully open.

Lengthsman – Cllr. Jenkins stated that the Lengthsman would be clearing the footpath on Foxs Lane. The Chairman asked that he plant the bulbs, already purchased, around the Highclere Gateway sign and along Foxs Lane by the "Penwood" signs at either end of the village.

The Lengthsman is also to quote for putting scalping at the side of the Village Hall.

Action: Cllr. Jenkins to oversee the Lengthsman's tasks.

72/15 Report on Roads & Transport

A reply (dated 31/7/15) was received from John Sorrell Principal Transport Planner, Hampshire County Council, regarding Penwood crossroads in a response to the Chairman's letter of 27 July 2015.

“Hampshire County Council has noted East Woodhay Parish Council's concerns around safety at Penwood crossroads and is happy to add these concerns to the Basingstoke Transport Statement, as an area to look at in more detail. As a direct result of the recent accident history at this junction a minor scheme that included new bollards and signing has recently been installed. This was undertaken by our Safety Engineering Team and seeks to improve safety at this junction. This will be monitored over the coming months.

Regarding developer contributions for Harwood Paddock, it was part of the planning requirements as agreed by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, that these would be used towards transport measures on the A339 north-west corridor. However, once the developer contributions have been received by the County Council, further investigation will take place regarding how it is best used to lessen the impact of the development, although this is not likely to happen until 2016/2017”.

The local MP Kit Malthouse was copied into all correspondence.

Yew Tree/Ashmansworth junction – a site meeting is to be organised with County Cllr. Tom Thacker, Cllr. A. Cox from Ashmansworth and HCC Roads department.

Action: Cllr. S. Izett to contact Cllr. Thacker.

Speedwatch – the Clerk has established that the flashing speed road sign can be used without the speed recorder.

Action: Cllr. Flack to contact PCSO Carpenter to organise bi-weekly training for the volunteers.

Proposed Safety Scheme at Penwood Crossroads - work has been completed installing bollards.

Satnav Church Lane – GPS is directing some large vehicles down Church Lane towards Highclere Castle. There is a need for a road sign at each of 3 Church Lane junctions stating “No access to Highclere Castle”

Action: Cllr. S. Izett to write to HCC

Road Signs - the Highclere Street road sign has fallen over and the left hand turn sign at the Yew Tree requires straightening.

Action – The Chairman to write to Steve Goodall, HCC.

73/15 Report on Planning

15/02615/HSE	11/8/15	Rose-Bank, Andover Road
15/02712/HSE	20/8/15	5 Mount Close
15/02885/FUL	3/9/15	Chestnuts Inc. Curridge Car Sales

Footpath 732 - Extinguishment order - now officially recorded as diverted.

Action - No Comment Rose-Bank and Mount Close.

Support for Chestnuts

On behalf of the local community Highclere Parish Council supports this application and strongly recommends that it be approved. While as always there might be aspects that could be cited as reasons for refusal, the application improves the street scene, replaces a use which is inappropriate for the semi-rural location, and contributes to the Borough's current shortfall in housing, with types of dwellings that are in high demand in this Parish. The applicant has actively consulted with neighbours, this Parish Council and local ward Councillors, has responded very effectively to issues raised by the Parish and Ward Councillors and in the Parish Council's view has responded so far as is practicable and reasonable with guidance from the LPA's officers.

In the event officers are minded to recommend refusal the Parish Council asks that Ward Councillors be informed at the earliest possible opportunity and that they in turn consult with this Council. In the event that officers recommend refusal the Council urges Ward Councillors to request that the matter be heard in Committee so that Members can understand the community's support and the reasons for recommending approval.

Given the elapsed time since redevelopment of the site was first proposed, the Council urges that unless there are overwhelming reasons for delay the planning process be completed within the standard period.

In the event of approval, the Council is aware that there could be subsequent applications for changes to design, layout etc. Given the community interest in this prominent site and interest in arriving at the present application, the Council asks that Ward Councillors request to be informed of any and all such applications so as to avoid the local community's views being set aside inadvertently.

Letter of Complaint - Councillor Mitchell has drafted a letter of complaint on behalf of the Parish Council to BDBC about the handling of a planning application by the DC Committee on 12 August 2015. The letter is to be sent from the Chairman to Mr Melbourne Barrett.

Action – The Clerk to coordinate posting of letters and copies to Councillors G. Falconer, J. Izett, and C. Sanders.

74/15 Financial Matters.

Report on Audit. The Clerk, in her position as Responsible Financial Officer, advised that The Annual Return for 2014/15, which had been returned by BDO on 20 July 2015, was to be presented to the Council. There were no matters which came to BDO's attention which required the issuing of a separate additional issues arising report. The Conclusion of Audit notice had been displayed on all three Parish noticeboards. The Annual Return was duly approved and accepted by the Council and recorded as Minute number 74/15.

Transparency Code. Key documents are now displayed on the Highclere Parish Council website.

Proposal to adopt the Gifts and Grants Policy – the revised policy had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Policy was proposed by Councillor York and seconded by Councillor Jenkins and unanimously adopted.

Action - The Clerk to post the Policy onto HPC website

75/15 Accounts for payment

August payments approved by Councillors Jenkins and Mitchell

Accounts for Payment August 2015

Date incurred	Expenditure	Purpose	VAT	Total
20/07/15	BDO	Review of the Annual Return (Audit)	20.00	100.00
24/07/15	Hampshire Association of Local Councils	Transparency Code Seminar	7.00	42.00
13/08/15	Broxap	Two litter bins	65.00	390.00
31/07/15	Litter Warden	July Fuel Allowance	0	£13.95
31/08/15	Clerk's Salary	August Salary	0	£669.50
31/08/15	Litter Warden Salary	August Salary	0	£403.00
				£1,618.45
02/08/15	BT Parish phone	Direct debit	3.97	23.85

September payments approved by Councillors Jenkins and Mitchell

Accounts for Payment 8 September 2015

Date incurred	Expenditure	Purpose	VAT	Total
20/08/15	Highclere Church Parochial Council	Cemetery grass cutting. Cheque No. 102009	0	200.00
30/08/15	Litter Warden	August Fuel Allowance	0	£13.95
30/09/15	Clerk's Salary	September Salary	0	£669.50
30/09/15	Litter Warden Salary	September Salary	0	£403.00
21/08/15	Final Charges New Parish noticeboards	Highclere Village Hall and Penwood, Foxs Lane	202.65	£1,215.90
				£2,502.35
02/09/15	BT Parish phone	Direct debit	3.80	22.78

To review Salaries & Expenses – Under the provisions of Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the Press and Public were excluded from the Meeting for the next Agenda item due to the Confidential nature of the business to be discussed – Arnold Baker Paragraph 7.6.

It was agreed that with effect from 1st October 2015 the Clerk's Salary be paid according to Scale Point 23 and that she would proceed to Scale Point 28 assuming normal progression. The Council also agreed to implement any cost of living increase that may be recommended from time to time. The hours of work was agreed at 15 per week but should the Clerk be requested to undertake additional tasks, payment will be made at the agreed hourly rate.

The Litter Warden's rate of pay to increase to £6.70 per hour from October 1 2015, in line with the national minimum wage.

76/15 HM Queen Elizabeth 90th Birthday Celebrations

Cllr. Mitchell suggested that a community event should be planned to celebrate HM the Queen's 90th birthday. Highclere Church fete is planned for the same weekend.

Action - Chairman to contact local groups to see if they would be interested to meet to consider ideas.

77/15 Correspondence received

HALC AGM invitation 10 October 2015.

HALC Service Brochure

HCC Parish Reference Guide – relevant information of rights of way, Common and Village Greens (circulated to the Parish Councillors).

78/15 Councillors' matters to be included in the next meeting – Helicopter Landings at the Yew Tree, Westridge Studio, Heathlands & Woodlands Improvement Project, HM the Queen's 90th Birthday Celebrations.

79/15 Date of the next Council Meeting – 13 October 2015

Adjournment: there being no further business the meeting closed at 9.09pm.

Summary of Actions:

Westridge Studio: The Clerk to gain quotations from solicitors for legal advice, regarding the most appropriate legal structure for the Parish Council to adopt, and to consult with BDBC Community Services who offer advice on village and community halls.

Heathlands & Woodlands Improvement Project: Cllr. Mitchell to arrange a meeting of the working party.

Environment: Cllr. Jenkins to oversee the Lengthsman's tasks.

Yew Tree/ Ashmansworth Junction: Cllr. S. Izett to contact Cllr. Thacker.

Speedwatch: Cllr. Flack to contact PCSO Carpenter to organise bi-weekly training for the volunteers.

Satnav Church Lane: Cllr. S. Izett to write to HCC.

Road Signs: The Chairman to write to Steve Goodall, HCC.

Planning: No Comment Rose-Bank and Mount Close. Support for Chestnuts.

Letter of Complaint: Clerk to coordinate posting of letters and copies to Councillors G. Falconer, J. Izett, and C. Sanders.

Gifts and Grants Policy: the Clerk to post onto the PC website.

HM the Queen's 90th Birthday Celebrations: The Chairman to write to local groups

Signed _____ Position _____ Date _____