

ST. NICHOLAS HURST PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD VIRTUALLY (VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS) ON
MONDAY 6TH OCTOBER 2020 AT 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors W. Smith (in the Chair),
Curry, Holdstock, Lyon, Mansfield, Pilgrim, I.
Smith, Stephenson and Turvey.

OFFICERS: Mrs. M. Bradshaw (Clerk).

PUBLIC: Four members of the public.

9032 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence. All those on the call were audibly clear.

9033 Prejudicial Interest

There were no prejudicial interests to declare.

9034 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 7th September 2020 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at the first available opportunity.

9035 Matters Arising

The following matter was noted:

the second waste bin has now been fitted in the community orchard.

9036 Public Forum

The Chairman welcomed Penny Clayden, Mark Usher, Suzy Watt and Maggie Sanderson to the public forum. The Clerk confirmed that she had received questions in writing from both Mrs Clayden and Mr Usher regarding the character assessments which had been submitted to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC):

Q – Why can't Hurst Parish Council send me (Mark Usher) a copy of the latest submission and provide evidence of the consultation they have undertaken prior to its submission; and

Q – Can you (Hurst Parish Council) confirm that Willowmead Field was included in the Green Space Character Assessments as mentioned in the minutes of the last meeting”.

The Chairman replied that the process was new to the Parish Council and the character assessments had been discussed at a previous meeting of the Parish Council. No members of the public had been at the meeting. The character assessments have now been passed to WBC and they have advised the Chairman that anyone wishing for any information would need to contact them directly. It is the Borough Council’s decision and the Parish Council are not at liberty to divulge. In excess of one hundred character assessments have been submitted across the Borough and WBC are looking at them all.

Mr Usher asked for clarity as to what the normal process would be. He would have expected Parish Members to be consulted and queried why he could not be given a copy of the character assessments which he believed the Parish Council was author of. He asked specifically if Willowmead Field was included in the character assessments.

The Chairman reiterated that the process is new to everyone and that is why the Parish Council had sought guidance from WBC. He suggested that Mr Usher contacted WBC, making it clear his interest in Willowmead Field, and they would be able to help him. Mr Usher said that he had already contacted them. The Chairman referred to an article produced by Savills on the matter and urged Mr Usher to read it.

Maggie Sanderson raised the issue of the two newly installed kissing gates which had recently been vandalised. She noted that they were very good installations and it was a shame that they had been damaged. The Chairman said he was aware of the vandalism and although the Parish Council and Village Society had helped fund the gates in conjunction with Loddon Valley Ramblers, the responsibility for their repair/replacement would lie with WBC.

RESOLVED: the Chairman to seek an update from the Rights of Way Officer at WBC.

9037 **Covid 19 Update**

The Chairman updated Members that WBC is purchasing Covid tests for key workers within the Borough. The Borough and Parish are poised to help in the event of further lockdowns/restrictions. The Chairman reiterated that the Hurst volunteer group is ready to help in the event of being needed. A watching brief is being kept.

9038 **Neighbourhood Planning**

The Chairman explained that the sub group of the Working Group is continuing their work on policies. The last meeting of the group was cancelled at short notice due to absenteeism and needs to be rescheduled.

9039 Church Hill Petition

The Chairman confirmed that gas works, which have commenced in Church Hill this day, are scheduled to last for approximately three weeks. Thereafter, the road calming measures on Church Hill bend are due to be installed. Highways Officers are visiting the site this week to mark out where signage will be erected. The joint works are expected to span approximately the next eight weeks. In the meantime, Church Hill/Lines Road remain closed.

Councillor Pilgrim reported her shock that approximately 100 vehicles that day had tried to access Church Hill despite the "Road Closed" signage clearly placed at each end of the road.

9040 Howard Larkin Memorial

The Chairman confirmed that he had spoken with Councillor Larkin's Wife and she was very supportive of the allotments in Tape Lane being renamed "The Howard Larkin Community Allotments". In addition, a memorial bench would be placed in the allotments along with a new and improved area where deliveries of supplies such as compost/manure are sited. Councillor Curry confirmed that the area would need some "tidying up" and potentially some new fencing.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to contact SCS with a view to them seeing the site and providing a quote for fencing/tidying works. A bench and signage to be ordered.

9041 Planning Applications

Members considered the application attached to these minutes. They had no adverse comments with regards to application 202103. However, they did make an observation should WBC be minded to approve permission.

The Chairman noted no live or pending appeals or hearings.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to communicate comments to WBC.

General discussion was had with regards to the ongoing threat of housing within the Parish and the site at Grazeley. The Chairman reiterated that the village is at very real threat and representations have been made by WBC to Ministers. No further information is available at this stage.

Councillor Turvey asked what stage the process is at with regards to Grazeley. The Chairman confirmed that this comes under the remit of West Berkshire Council. Prior to May 2020 the site was not in the designated evacuation zone. However, it now falls within it. Councillor Turvey queried whether the Ministry of Defence would consider an alternative evacuation zone elsewhere within the County – a "land swap". The Chairman explained that the zone is a scientific zone and in the event of nuclear fallout needs to be located within the physical proximity of the site. Remote sites would be of no use. Local Councils have already designated sports halls etc for use in the event of any such catastrophe.

Reporting of Potholes/Fly tipping

The Chairman reported that he had notified WBC of at least 40 issues within the Parish relating to street signage, vegetation, potholes etc. He urged members to use the "Report It" section of WBC's website to log any such incidents. This helps keep a log of what has been reported and assists WBC in resolving issues in a timely manner.

Speeding

The Chairman confirmed that the Police had undertaken speed checks within the village within the last week. Tickets had been issued to some offenders. The Chairman feels that the message is still not getting across to Parishoners as there is evidence that a high number of speeding drivers are from within the Parish community. The Chairman again urged Members to report any incidents to the Police. Councillor Lyon asked whether dashcam footage could be of use. The Chairman confirmed that the Police are trying to utilise images from CCTV to assist with their enquiries.

9044 **Information Reports**

Dinton Pastures Crossing

The Chairman notified Members that the consultation with residents will commence imminently regarding the installation of a crossing at the main entrance to Dinton Pastures. A number of suggestions have been made by WBC and the Parish Council has already informed WBC of its preference.

The virtual meeting ended at 8.52 p.m.

Signed.....

Date.....