

ST. NICHOLAS HURST PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD VIRTUALLY (VIA GOOGLE HANGOUTS) ON
MONDAY 11th May 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).

8974 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence. All those on the call were visible and audibly clear. The only exception was Councillor Holdstock who could hear the conversation but could not be heard himself due to microphone problems.

Councillor Howard Larkin

The Chairman had announced to Members, a few days prior to the meeting, the very sad news of the loss of Councillor Howard Larkin. A very special gentleman and a serving Parish Councillor for 35 years, Councillor Larkin had peacefully passed away at his family home. The Chairman's annual report paid tribute to Councillor Larkin who Members agreed would be a very sadly missed friend and colleague – his contribution to the village had been immeasurable.

The Clerk passed on the thanks of Councillor Larkin's wife to whom flowers had been sent from the Parish Council. Due to the current lockdown, Councillor Larkin's funeral would be attended by his wife and children only. The Chairman concluded that a memorial and service for Councillor Larkin would be very much wanted and welcomed after the current lockdown.

8975 Prejudicial Interest

There were no prejudicial interests to declare.

8976 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 6th April 2020 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at the first available opportunity.

8977 **Matters Arising**

The following matters were noted:

- The potential opening of the two public amenity sites is under review by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). The Police currently have concerns regarding social distancing at the sites and a solution is currently being sought to enable both facilities to open as soon as safely possible. The Chairman reported seven instances he was aware of which had been reported to WBC within the Parish; and
- WBC meet tomorrow to discuss arrangements going forward for Dinton Pastures.

8978 **Update on arrangements for Annual Parish Council Meeting**

The Chairman informed Members that, following advice from WBC, the annual parish council meeting (usually held in May) would not be in its usual format. In the same way that local council elections had been delayed until May 2021, arrangements for Parish Councils would be allowing a “roll” for a further municipal year. The Clerk informed Members that both Councillors Wayne Smith and Tony Mansfield had agreed to continue in their current roles of Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively for this municipal year.

Likewise, elections to committees would roll for a further year. Members agreed they were happy with this arrangement. Councillor Curry kindly agreed to take over responsibility for the allotments – a role managed for many years by Councillor Larkin.

8979 **Chairman’s resume of events for 2019/2020**

The Chairman’s resume for the past year had been circulated to all Members outlining events which had been undertaken within the Parish.

Public Forum

8980 There was no public forum.

8981 **Covid 19 Update**

The Chairman updated Members regarding the continuing extensive work being undertaken throughout the Borough to support residents and businesses. It would appear that Hurst has a very strong support network with only nine residents requesting immediate help. To date, no advice has been received on when playparks may reopen.

Despite the current lockdown, the Chairman was delighted to report wonderful VE Day celebrations which took place throughout the Parish. With social distancing in mind, it seemed that the celebrations were very well supported.

8982 Neighbourhood Planning

The Chairman had no update to bring to this meeting. It is hoped that virtual meetings of the Working Group can be held in the near future but this is to be arranged.

8983 Church Hill Petition

Members had been circulated the new proposals for Church Hill and the Chairman asked for their agreement to the proposed road layout/signage. Councillor Stephenson felt very strongly that signage should indicate “reduce speed now” in prominent places on the road. However, Members felt the best course of action was to implement the proposed changes with any further signage being added, in the future, if considered necessary.

RESOLVED: WBC’s proposal was agreed and the Chairman to inform WBC to proceed with works. Enhancements, at a later date, to be considered if felt necessary by the Parish Council.

8984 Planning Applications

Members considered the applications attached to these minutes. They had no adverse comments with regards to application 200130. The Chairman explained that he was seeking further clarification and legal planning advice regarding application 200947. He would advise Members as soon as he had further information. Application 200697 was currently under consideration and the Clerk would be advised of comments before the due date.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to communicate all comments to WBC.

8987 **Correspondence**

Increase in crime

The Chairman confirmed that the Parish had seen an increase in crime since lockdown with known burglaries and an increase in suspected drug dealing. A Hurst Neighbourhood Watch Group has been created. The Chairman had held discussions with the Police to ascertain the possibility of CCTV being installed in the village. Members agreed that there were a number of issues to be considered, namely the privacy and security of parishioners and the owner of any collected data.

RESOLVED: further advice to be sought from the Police and WBC Legal before any further consideration to CCTV installation be considered.

Felling of trees

The Clerk reported that she had received an early morning call last week alerting her to two large oak trees being felled in Tape Lane. The Chairman confirmed that he had immediately visited the site. It was confirmed that the felling was legitimate and that no tree preservation orders (TPO's) were on the trees concerned. The Chairman informed Members, however, that there are many old trees within the Parish which would benefit from TPO's to protect them. Currently a TPO order for 24 trees has been submitted to WBC. However, he considered that a thorough audit of the Parish would be very beneficial in the fight to preserve further trees.

Broken bollards in Davis Street

Councillor Stephenson noted that of the dozen bollards in Davis Street (just past Dinton Pastures main entrance), two had been fully broken and knocked over.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to report to WBC.

Islandstone Lane – leaking water

Councillor Pilgrim informed the Clerk of water, which looks polluted, pouring out of a large tube located in Islandstone Lane. It was unclear without investigation as to what the water was and whether it presented an environmental health issue.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to report to WBC.

8988 **Information Reports**

There were no reports to bring to this meeting.

The virtual meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.

Signed.....

Date.....