

ST. NICHOLAS HURST PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD VIRTUALLY (VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS) ON
MONDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2020 AT 7.30 p.m.

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

OFFICERS: Mrs. M. Bradshaw (Clerk).

PUBLIC: One member of the public.

PART I

9059 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pilgrim. Councillor Holdstock attempted to join the call but suffered internet failure.

9060 **Prejudicial Interest**

There were no prejudicial interests to declare.

9061 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd November 2020 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at the first available opportunity.

9062 **Matters Arising**

The following matters were noted:

- after supporting the Parish Council for many years, Haines Hill has depleted their stocks of Christmas Trees. Local parishoners, Reddy and Suzy Watt, came to the rescue and Members passed on their thanks for the support given. The tree was erected by Councillors W Smith, Holdstock and Lyon, ably assisted by Becky Lyon and James Roxburgh-Smith. Sincere thanks was given to Countrycare Services who helped with lifting gear. It was agreed that the tree looked spectacular;
- 4750 spring bulbs have been planted around the village by a team of local residents with 250 bulbs remaining for planting in Tape Lane; and

- the Chairman to chase WBC for a response to the highways queries raised at the previous Parish Council meeting by Mrs Maggie Sanderson.

9063 Public Forum

The Chairman welcomed Maggie Sanderson to the public forum.

9064 Covid 19 Update

The Chairman reported that Covid Marshalls have now been deployed in Wokingham town, Woodley and Twyford. They are designed to help the public and encourage social distancing. It was noted that the town centre was particularly busy last Saturday with high footfall.

9065 Neighbourhood Planning

The Chairman confirmed that the Neighbourhood Planning Working Group would be meeting on the 16th December 2020 to discuss policies; significant and time consuming work continues to be undertaken on these.

9066 Church Hill Petition

The Chairman confirmed that road markings have now been placed on Church Hill indicating where signage etc will be located. He had no further update regarding the scheduling of the works and would try and ascertain a start date from WBC.

9067 Allotments/Howard Larkin Memorial

Councillor Curry updated Members in her capacity as Allotment Manager. There are currently 28 individual allotment holders (some sharing plots) along with a waiting list of 6. She had met with Mr Paul Martin and Mrs Janet Larkin, both long time allotment holders, to discuss potential areas for improvement. These had been identified as:

- a replacement main gate – wider in size to accommodate delivery trucks;
- a pedestrian gate;
- further water troughs at each end of the allotments or maybe the installation of water taps;
- replacement fencing located near the Robinsons allotment which is liable to collapse;
- levelling out of the manure area;
- the planting of whips near the large spoil bank on the boundary edge;
- the installation of an allotment noticeboard; and
- asking the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor to manage the regular mowing and maintenance of the main area of the allotment site.

Councillor Lyon noted that, in his experience, water troughs are preferable to taps as they enable the quicker filling of a watering can. He did not favour taps being installed. Councillor Stephenson agreed that the installation of taps would encourage the use of hosepipes which was not favoured.

Councillor Curry concluded that she felt the allotments needed some investment and had researched the rents charged by other neighbouring Parish Councils. It was concluded that Hurst charges at the very lowest end of a scale and that a rent review needed to be considered. The Clerk reported that based upon a financial analysis over the last five years the allotments had broken even. If investment for projects was desired, further income generation would need to be considered.

The Chairman confirmed that he had spoken with Mrs Larkin who was delighted at the suggestion of a bench being placed in the allotments in memory of her late husband. Councillor Curry reported that she had heard some reports of a reluctance to change the name of the allotments to "The Howard Larkin Allotments". The Chairman queried where this had come from and said he would be happy to speak with the individuals concerned. He felt very strongly that such a long serving and valued member of the Parish Council and Hurst community should be fittingly remembered. He agreed to pursue this further and speak once more with Mrs Larkin.

RESOLVED:

- the Chairman and Councillor Curry to meet at the allotments with the Grounds Maintenance Contractor to discuss the cost of engaging with them to maintain the allotments;
- consideration be given to a rent review and the funding of the above desired enhancements to the allotments; and
- the Chairman to speak with Mrs Larkin.

9068 **Planning Applications**

Members considered the application attached to these minutes. They had no adverse comments with regards to applications 202848 and 202910. They had no comment regarding application 201515 but did make an observation. Objections were made regarding application 202656.

Members were still reviewing application 203065 and would pass comments to the Clerk when fully reviewed.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to communicate comments to WBC.

CIL Co-Funding Bids

The Clerk confirmed that she had reverted back to WBC requesting financials upon which a decision can be based. To date, she had received no further financial information.

Youth Shelter, School Road Playpark

The Chairman reported that he had been contacted by a neighbour of School Road Playpark asking for the Youth Shelter to be moved. Martineau Green had been mooted as an alternative location by the Parishoner. The Chairman said there had been increasing reports of anti-social behaviour, usually after dark by older individuals. Concern was raised regarding previous drug problems although, at this stage, there is no evidence of such occurring.

Members agreed that the relocation of the shelter would not be financially viable and would not lend itself to Martineau Green. It was noted that, over the years, the School Road Playpark had experienced spats of anti-social behaviour – this recent spike possibly fuelled by the Covid restrictions and the rules to meet outdoors rather than inside.

The Chairman noted that the Playpark does not accept admittance after sunset. However, this is difficult to monitor. Locking the playpark was not considered a viable option as people would simply climb over the low level fencing to gain access. Additional bins and signage was also discussed reminding users of the park to be courteous to our neighbours. Close working with our local PCSO's was also discussed and Councillor Lyon said it would be sensible to ask their advice.

The lighting in the shelter is on a timer so ensuring that activity of an evening is illuminated and does not encourage meeting in the dark.

Councillor Turvey asked whether the shelter would be missed if removed. Councillors agreed that it was well used.

RESOLVED: the Chairman and Vice Chairman to commission suitable signage. Police support to be sought.

9073 **Information Reports**

There were no information reports to bring to this meeting.

The public were excluded at 8.40pm to enable a Part II item to be discussed regarding enforcement.

The virtual meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.

Signed.....

Date.....