

ST. NICHOLAS HURST PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN ST NICHOLAS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
ON TUESDAY 2nd NOVEMBER AT 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors W. Smith (in the Chair),
Beauchamp, Curry, Ewart, Lyon, Palmer, Robinson,
I Smith and Stephenson.

OFFICERS: Mrs. M. Bradshaw (Clerk).

PUBLIC: Thirty Members of the Public.

9201 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Holdstock.

9202 Prejudicial Interest

Councillor Beauchamp had previously declared to the Clerk an interest in application 213264, Willow Cottage.

9203 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 4th October were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9204 Matters Arising

The following matters were noted:

- Howard Larkin's memorial bench was unveiled by his family at a quiet ceremony last month – the Chairman felt it a very fitting tribute given the time Councillor Larkin spent at the allotments;
- the Police will be present in the village in the next couple of weeks undertaking more speeding enforcement works;
- timescales for the commencement of the painting of the Village gates has not yet been confirmed and the Clerk will chase Volker for a start date;
- the Parish Council arranged defibrillator training was very well attended with 30 parishoners benefitting from the advice of Claire Page from the Lilly May Page Trust;

- The Chairman is waiting on an update as to when the weed clearing will commence at the village pond;
- The Christmas tree has been ordered for St Nicholas Night and will be delivered in approximately three weeks; and
- Feedback regarding The Hurst Word has been extremely positive. The Clerk thanked Councillors in helping distribute copies to all households within the Parish.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to seek a commencement date for the painting of the Village gates.

Public Forum

9205 The Chairman welcomed thirty members to the public forum and invited questions. He reminded Members of the Public that questions could only be raised under the public forum and that the remainder of the meeting would be for Parish Council business.

Land at Broadcommon Road

It was concluded that the large public attendance was primarily to learn about the Parish Council's intentions regarding application 213378, Land at Broadcommon Road.

A number of general questions followed:

- Q – there seems to be a number of deadline dates for comment in circulation. Can you (the Chairman) confirm what the deadline is?
- A – there is flexibility with the deadline date and I (the Chairman) will work with the Planning Officer to ensure a reasonable extension to the published date is agreed. This would typically be one to two weeks. There is a lot of paperwork to absorb and WBC will show flexibility.
- Q – what is “affordable” housing. Nothing in Hurst is affordable.
- A – guidelines say that up to 40% needs to be affordable. For this development it is 14%.
- Q – if this application was successful, would it set a precedent for village boundaries being broken?

A – in planning terms, every application is assessed on its own merits. However, I (the Chairman) believe that if permission was granted it would set a precedent, yes.

Q – can Members object as individuals? It rarely appears they do.

A – yes. They would be encouraged to do so if they live in Hurst.

Mrs Lou Robinson added that she had attended a number of appeals pertaining to applications in Hurst. It was her strong belief that if this application was refused by WBC, the developers would go to appeal. In such situations she believed that Inspectors form their views by assessing the number of objections raised by individuals. She, therefore, advised people to submit their views as it was worth doing. She also encourage Councillors to write in personally. Councillor Curry supported this view stating that people had to be prepared to put pen to paper to express their opinions. The Chairman stated that Planning Officers and Inspectors will always consider public opinion and he urged “people power” with parishioners adding their own flavour of any personal experiences.

Mr John Osborne noted a number of key issues to be considered by WBC. Namely, the development being outside of the development area, the 5 year land supply and the timetable for the emerging Local Plan.

The Chairman updated that he would be taking the Local Plan update to a meeting of the Special Executive on the 12th November 2021. Consultation period will then run from the 22nd November 2021 until the 17th January 2022. He explained how the position has been affected by “Plan A” (Grazeley Town) being squashed due to the major extension of the evacuation zone. This has resulted in a “Plan B” having to be considered and this is what will be presented on the 12th November 2021. He noted that the Borough has in excess of a 5 year land supply and this is well published. Last year, 1555 homes were delivered by WBC with most houses having been sold. Demand remains high in the Borough.

The Chairman reported a very strong team of Planning Officers at WBC, increased numbers of Enforcement Officers and a leading QC who would defend any appeal on behalf of the Borough Council. A strong team is in place which he believed the Borough was fortunate to have.

Councillor Lyon queried the large numbers in the public forum and urged parishioners to send in their views to WBC. He reminded parishioners not to rely just on the views of the Parish Council.

The Chairman asked if there were any other questions pertaining to Broadcommon Road. There were none. However, Mrs Lou Robinson asked if she could raise another matter which was unrelated.

Use of CIL monies

Mrs Robinson read from a statement. She referred to the meeting of the Parish Council on the 5th September 2021, when Mr John Osborne, representing HVS, raised a question pertaining to CIL spending priorities. He had asked whether the Parish Council would be minded to publish a list. Mrs Robinson expressed her concerns that the minutes of that meeting did not communicate “the way” in which the question had been phrased. It came across to her, and she believed other members of the public, that HVS believed large developments would be inevitable within Hurst and that the Parish Council should not only be planning for currently held CIL but additional future monies.

Mrs Robinson noted that this request had been followed up by a letter, from HVS, to the Parish Council. She noted that the letter was in the public domain and on HVS’s website. She continued to say that, in the past, she felt the community could rely on HVS to launch campaigns and fight any proposed developments on greenfield sights. As a member of HVS she stated that she had so far received no communications asking her to object to recent greenfield site applications. A fighting fund of £25k exists and she did not feel this was being used. Albeit they have written letters of objection, she felt they were keen to encourage the allocation of the potential CIL from these developments.

She noted that HVS is not a statutory body and they do not canvass their members for suggestions. To this end, they do not publish their minutes indicating how these conclusions have been reached. She had particular concerns regarding the conflicts of interest held by members of HVS who would be advantaged if planning were to be given on their sites.

In conclusion, she believed that HVS was not protecting the village from future development and if the village is not careful it is paving the way for landowners and developers to build all over Hurst’s greenfield sites. She posed the question to the Parish Council:

“Can the Parish Council ensure as much as they possibly can, that the CIL monies will not be spent on improvements that will play into the developers hands, urbanise the rural character of our village, but somehow ensure that any CIL allocation will enhance the village in such a way that the character, community and biodiversity is maintained and protected?”

Mrs Robinson ended her statement and sat down. Some applause was received from various attendees.

The Chairman responded that he would rather be in receipt of no CIL. He did not want any development in Hurst, in an ideal world. He did understand her concerns. He asked any Parish Councillors if they had any comments to add.

Councillor Curry responded that it was great to see so many people in attendance that evening. In the last 15 years very few, if any, parishoners have attended Parish Council meetings. She noted that people are often very happy to criticise but will rarely say “well done”. It is irritating when there is criticism. She noted also that HVS do not publish their accounts and as an HVS members she felt they needed to get their house in order.

Mr Osborne responded that he found Mrs Robinson’s comments outrageous and put on record his concern that they had gained applause. He had hoped that she may have said her comments to his face ahead of presenting them in a public forum. He believed the minutes of the 5th September 2021 fairly accurately reflected the discussion which had been held. He stated that HVS was simply trying to engage views and that CIL monies could be spent on a whole variety of things.

Mrs Robinson felt that HVS was not being proactive against development. Mr Osborne replied that the Hurst Action Group (HAG) was shrouded in secrecy and no one was truly aware of its operation. Councillor Palmer noted that the HAG was quick to respond to emerging situations with traction on social media platforms. He challenged the lack of social media presence by HVS. Mr Osborne referred him to the HVS website.

The discussion became increasingly lively and acrimonious. The Clerk advised the Chairman to halt the public forum and noted that the discussions now no longer fell within the remit of Parish Council business. The Chairman drew the public forum to a close and asked for the matter concerned to be discussed by the Village. It was not for the Parish Council.

Mrs Carr Osborne concluded by asking the Parish Council to note that, with respect to Mrs Lou Robinson, she did not feel her husband had been fairly able to respond to accusations which had been sprung upon him with no chance to plan a reply. The Chairman reiterated that the conversations were for outside of this meeting.

9206 **Neighbourhood Planning**

The Chairman reported that Mr John Edwards had taken over the Chairmanship of the Neighbourhood Planning Working Group. It was never the intention that the Parish Council Chairman and Clerk would service this group for so long. Both of them had now stepped down. He thanked Mr Edwards for taking over the role.

Mr Edwards updated the Council and reported that good progress is being made with a number of evidence based reports. He did note, however, that expertise would have to be bought in to cover specifically the transport and travel report, landscape report, business report and mapping. The Clerk had already provided details of one firm which may be able to help with mapping and he thanked her for that information.

To this end, Mr Edwards informed the Parish Council that he would be approaching them for funds once he had received various quotes for the above consultants.

RESOLVED: Mr Edwards to present quotes to the Parish Council for consideration ahead of the next Parish Council meeting on the 7th December 2021.

9207 **Planning Applications**

Members discussed the applications attached to these minutes. They had no adverse comments relating to applications 213139 and 213264. They objected to applications 213145 and 213237.

With respect to application 213378, Land at Broadcommon Road, Councillor Beauchamp explained that she had prepared the draft response on behalf of the Parish Council. She outlined the Council's primary objections and said she would be very interested to hear the views of any members of the public who may be in favour of the development. It was noted that the applicant had gone to great lengths to prejudge objections with a view to mitigating impact. Given the large monies that the developers will have made on this application she felt sure they would go to appeal if permission was refused.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Beauchamp for an extremely detailed and professional response which he was very grateful for.

The Chairman confirmed that there is still no further update reading the appeals lodged in respect of Sawpit Lane (211532) or the 5G telecommunications mast (211667).

RESOLVED: the Clerk to communicate the Parish Council's planning comments to WBC.

9208 **Finance**

The following accounts were presented for approval this month:

Nov-21									
					Main Fund	CIL*	Neighbourhood Planning	Total	
Previous Balance					£	68106.80	125996.05	-2898.12	191204.73
The following accounts are presented for approval this month:									
Ref	Expenditure - Payee								
8.1	SCS (monthly grounds maintenance)					699.29			
8.2	Advantage Printroom (newsletter printing)					568.00			
8.3	J Earley (watering)					25.00			
8.4	St Nicholas CE Primary School (4 no. hall hire)					100.00			
8.5	5G (monthly phone)					32.39			
8.6	SLCC (professional course fees)					300.00			
8.7	Prince Stonemasons (war memorial renovation)					1100.00			
8.8	SLCC (reference book)					123.80			
8.9	M Bradshaw (reimbursement for 2 no. poppy wreaths)					50.00			
8.10	Microsoft 365 (annual subscription)					79.99			
8.11	M Bradshaw				Salary (Oct 2021)	1037.70			
					Overtime (Aug-Oct 2021)	853.00			
					(Income Tax)	-179.00			
					(National Insurance)	-131.24			
					(Pension)	-41.51			
					Office	40.00	1578.95		
8.12	NEST Oct (Employee pension £41.51 + Employer pension £31.13)						72.64		
8.13	HMRC Oct (Employee's Income Tax £179.00 & National Insurance £131.24)						310.24		
Total Expenditure						5040.30	0.00	0.00	5040.30
Total Income						0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Revised balance c/f						63066.50	125996.05	-2898.12	186164.43

RESOLVED: all payments were approved.

9209 **Correspondence**

There was no correspondence to bring to this meeting which had not already been discussed.

9210 **Any other business**

Revised Standing Orders

RESOLVED: revised Standing Orders were approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman. The Clerk to publish on the Parish Council website.

Public Attendance at Meetings Policy

RESOLVED: the Public Attendance at Meetings Policy was approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman. The Clerk to publish on the Parish Council website.

St Nicholas Night

Councillor Curry confirmed that she would organise the mince pies for St Nicholas Night on the 5th December 2021. She did however have to source the mulled wine which in previous years has been donated by the local pub landlords. She did not feel it was appropriate following the tough times of the pandemic to ask for this support. Mr Richard Hardy, who was in attendance in the public forum, stated that he would be very happy to donate the mulled wine. Members thanked him for his kind contribution.

Allotments

Councillor Curry noted that the grass was long in areas at the allotments and asked for the contractors to be cut back. In addition, she asked if an allotment tenancy agreement had yet been drafted. The Clerk confirmed that an agreement, based upon NALC recommended best practice, had been drafted with a view to being introduced in April 2022 when tenancies come up for annual renewal.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to contact SCS regarding the grass cutting; and

The Clerk to pass Councillor Curry the draft allotment tenancy agreement for consideration.

Parish Council Christmas meal

RESOLVED: Councillor Curry would circulate to all Members and the Clerk, potential dates for a Christmas meal.

The meeting ended at 8.45pm.

Signed.....

Date.....