

ST. NICHOLAS HURST PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD VIRTUALLY (VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS) ON
MONDAY 12th APRIL 2021 AT 7.30 p.m.

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

OFFICERS: Mrs. M. Bradshaw (Clerk).

PUBLIC: Suzy Watt, Parishoner,
Christine Lambert, Parishoner,
Jo Newbold, Chair, Hurst Village Society (HVS).

9120 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Holdstock.

9121 Prejudicial Interest

There were no prejudicial interests to declare.

9122 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 1st March 2021 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at the first available opportunity.

9123 Matters Arising

The following matters were noted:

- the Chairman had met with SCS to discuss planting in the wild flower meadow at the Community Orchard. It was concluded that a variety of mixed flowers would be planted; and
- Fencing Products has been asked to provide a quote for the replacement post around the village pond.

9124 Public Forum

The Chairman welcomed Suzy Watt, Jo Newbold and Christine Lambert to the public forum. Suzy Watt and Jo Newbold had previously submitted their questions in writing to the Clerk. The Chairman invited them to present their questions to Members.

Mrs Watt thanked the Clerk who had previously raised, on her behalf, the issue of the highways signage positioned around the village directing M4 roadwork traffic. She felt that the signage had been up long enough and she was aware of complaints from neighbours regarding it. She considered the signage unattractive and attention is no longer paid to it. The Chairman agreed but explained that the signage had been placed by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) as a direct response to residents' complaints. Mrs Watt further explained that she believed construction traffic from Dinton Pastures was now routing down these roads. The Chairman was unaware of this and agreed to ask Dinton Pastures if they were aware.

Mrs Watt asked if the Parish Council could speak to residents and gather their opinions. The Chairman explained that any resident concerns had to be directed to WBC as the Highways Authority responsible for signage.

Mrs Watt thanked Members for their time.

Jo Newbold introduced herself to Members as the newly elected Chair of HVS. She said the Village Society was seeking projects within the Village where they could be involved in making a difference. The seven village gates had been identified as being in need of painting. She understood that albeit the installation costs of the gates had been met by HVS, the upkeep of the gates was the responsibility of the Parish Council.

The Chairman confirmed that he had spent time last year scrubbing and mould protecting the gates. In addition, bulbs had been planted which are currently in flower.

Mrs Newbold confirmed that although HVS has a willing group of volunteers, this work outweighs what they would be able to do themselves. The Chairman confirmed that, given the close proximity to the highway, he believed the work would require a highways licence which could be costly. To this end, he would seek advice from WBC as to whether their Highways Contractor could quote for the work.

Mrs Newbold thanked Members for their time.

The Chairman welcomed Christine Lambert to the meeting. Miss Lambert explained to members that she had lived in the village since 1967 and was now moving on to pastures new. She thanked Members for the wonderful space which had been created at the community orchard – a site she considered was now a tranquil place for reflection and enjoyment. She congratulated the Parish Council on its transformation. Additionally, she complimented the Parish Council on the Village Pond area which she again said was beautifully maintained.

The Chairman thanked Miss Lambert for her kind words. He said it was nice for Councillors to receive such positive feedback. It is often overlooked the many hours of free time which Councillors give to the Parish.

Members wished Miss Lambert well and hoped that she would keep in touch.

Mrs Watt, Mrs Newbold and Miss Lambert wished to stay on the call for the remainder of business.

RESOLVED: the Chairman to seek a quote from WBC's Highways Contractor regarding the painting of the village gates. An alternative quote would try and be sought from a contractor with a street licence.

9125 Covid 19 Update

The Chairman hoped that, as Government restrictions start to ease, communities can open up slowly and safely. He had no further updates to add.

9126 Neighbourhood Planning

The Chairman confirmed that the Neighbourhood Planning Working Group had not met since the last Parish Council meeting. Councillor Turvey queried whether updates would be given. The Chairman confirmed that all minutes and any relevant updates were available on the website.

The Group has dwindled to just a handful of members and the Chairman confirmed it needed re-energising and greater support. This would be revisited after the elections on the 6th May 2021.

9127 Key Projects Update

The following was noted:

- Councillor Larkin's memorial bench has been sourced and wording is being agreed. The cost is £575 (inc. VAT). Lead time for supply is 8-12 weeks;
- the Chairman and Councillor Holdstock had removed the broken bench from School Road Playpark which they intend to repair and reinstall; and
- the planned work at the allotments has been largely completed with new gates installed and car parking areas cleared.

RESOLVED: expenditure agreed for memorial bench in the value of £575 (inc. VAT).

9128 Planning Applications

The attached planning applications were brought to this meeting. Members agreed they had no comment relating to application 210581. They had no adverse comments relating to applications 210495, 210438, 210558, 210907, 210805 and 210895.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to communicate Members' comments to WBC.

9129 Finance

The following accounts were presented for approval this month:

Apr-21									
						Main Fund	CIL*	Neighbourhood Planning	Total
Previous Balance					£	44529.81	133407.59	-2898.12	175039.28
The following accounts are presented for approval this month:									
Ref	Expenditure - Payee								
1.1	SCS (monthly grounds maintenance Feb 21)					629.72			
1.2	Lyreco (stationery)					17.80			
1.3	Zurich (insurance 1/6/21-31/5/22)					1165.57			
1.4	SCS (monthly grounds maintenance March 21)					629.72			
1.5	Hurst Cricket Club (annual container rent)					275.00			
1.6	5G (monthly telephone)					30.93			
1.7	M Bradshaw			Salary (March 2021)	1037.98				
				(Income Tax)	-8.60				
				(National Insurance)	-29.52				
				(Pension)	-41.52				
				Office	40.00	998.34			
1.8	NEST Jan (Employee pension £41.52 + Employer pension £31.14)					72.66			
1.9	HMRC Dec (Employee's Income Tax £8.60 & National Insurance £29.52)					38.12			
						3857.86	0.00	0.00	3857.86
	Income								
	Precept (10%)					4470.00			
	Deposit account bank interest (1/4/20-31/3/21)					81.13			
	Allotment rents (2021/22 season)					735.00			
	Total Income					5286.13	0.00	0.00	5286.13
	Revised balance c/f					45958.08	133407.59	-2898.12	176467.55

RESOLVED: all payments in respect of this month were approved.

Audit Timetable 2020/21

The Clerk confirmed to Members that she had completed the year end accounts and corporate governance statements for 2020/21. The Chairman had signed these off. David Weller had agreed to once more complete the internal audit and the Clerk would be delivering documents to him this coming week.

Clerk's annual review

The Chairman confirmed that given the virtual nature of the meeting, he would conduct the Clerk's annual review via e-mail correspondence with Members. The Clerk would be informed of the outcome.

RESOLVED: the Chairman to e-mail Members to gather views for the Clerk's annual review.

9130 **Correspondence**

Request for Grant – St Nicholas Church

The Clerk had previously circulated to Members a request for help with funds which had been received from St Nicholas Church. The Church are looking to make up a shortfall of £10k to complete improvement works to the Parish Room, primarily used for the Sunday School. Members agreed this would be a worthy cause to support and Mrs Newbold confirmed that, having received the same request, HVS had agreed to support to the value of £3k.

Members agreed in principle to make a grant of £7k to the St Nicholas Church in support of the restoration. However, before a confirmed decision is made they wish to see sight of the quotations sought and confirm that value for money is being achieved.

Councillor Turvey queried whether the church should be supported when there are also other worthy causes in the village requiring funds. The Chairman confirmed that, whilst other worthy causes exist, none had applied in writing for support or approached the Parish Council to date.

RESOLVED: the Chairman to liaise with the Church and obtain the quotation details.

Metal detectorist in School Road Playpark

Following a reported incident of a metal detectorist digging up the football pitch in School Road Playpark, the Chairman confirmed that he had gone straight to the site and met the person. The detectorist had purported to be litter picking and confirmed that he had council permission. The Chairman confirmed that this was not the case and removed the man from the site.

Bottle bank facilities at The Green Man Pub

The Chairman had met with WBC officers at the glass recycling banks located at The Green Man Public House following complaints about the overflowing broken glass. Operatives queried why the bottle banks were not located at the Village Halls site where they believed they would be more suitably placed. Councillor Curry confirmed that this issue had been raised before and it was not considered suitable as young children are often in the proximity of the bottle banks and potential broken glass. The Chairman confirmed that The Castle Inn were receptive to three bottle banks being placed in their car park.

9131 **Information Reports**

There were no information reports to bring to this meeting.

However, the Chairman acknowledged that this would be the last meeting of the current Parish Council prior to the local elections on the 6th May 2021. Councillors Mansfield, Stephenson, Pilgrim and Turvey would be stepping down from Parish Council duties. The Chairman thanked them individually for their incredible contribution. Specific thanks was given to Councillor Mansfield for the tireless work he had undertaken over his tenure monitoring speed within the parish and setting up traffic surveys.

The meeting ended at 8.52 p.m.

Signed.....

Date.....