** WASHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**MINUTES** of proceedings for the monthly meeting of Washington Parish Council held on Monday 5th October 2020

**PRESENT:** Cllr C Beglan (CB), Cllr S Buddell (SB), Cllr B. Hanvey (BH), Cllr P Heeley (Chairman), Cllr J Henderson (Vice-Chairman/JH) Cllr A Lisher (AL), and Cllr G Lockerbie (GL).

**IN ATTENDANCE**: Cllr Jim Sanson (HDC)

**ALSO**: Clerk to the Council, Z Savill

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**: 2

**ABSENT**: KW

The Chairman opened the meeting at **19:05 hours**.

**21.27. Apologies for Absence and Chairman's Announcements**

**RESOLVED** unanimouslyto receive and accept apologies for absence from KW (work)

**21.28.** **Declarations of Interest from members in any item to be discussed and agree Dispensations**

None declared.

**21.29. To approve the Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting on 7th September, 2020.**

**RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the minutes of the meeting on 7th September 2020 and confidential report. Chairman to sign once physical meetings are resumed.

**21.30. Public Speaking**

Mr Tim Rodway spoke briefly about his client’s interest in building some terraced homes on land at Chancton View, Spring Gardens, and retaining the existing property. He reported that although the site is outside the built-up area boundary and is not designated for housing in the neighbourhood plan, there are planning policies in the document and district plan which would appear to support such development. Following a short Q & A session, the Chairman thanked Mr Rodway, explaining that the Council would be in a better position to comment on his proposals once a formal planning application is submitted.

Mr Rodway thanked the Council and confirmed that his client would be seeking pre-application advice.

*Mr Rodway left the meeting*.

**21.31. Reports from County and District Councillors**

The Chairman reported apologies from Cllr Paul Marshall (WSCC) due to prior business. Cllr Marshall confirmed in his absence that there was currently no further report on progress with the A283 East Clayton Farm crossing proposals.

Cllr Jim Sanson (HDC) reported that Horsham District Council has strongly objected to the way housing requirements are calculated in consultation documents for the Government’s proposed planning reforms. The methodology if applied, would see a housing increase of 40% from 900 to c1700 a year. Cllr Sanson strongly criticised the increases as unsustainable and without supporting infrastructure. He understood that HDC is in the process of identifying sites to be developed but it would appear that the Washington parish is not being included. Strong opposition to the consultation documents has also been expressed by the MP for South Downs and Arundel, Mr Andrew Griffith, and West Sussex County Council. Two members of the Parish Council expressed concerns about ‘land banking’ of brownfield sites in the district which were already allocated for housing, and that these should be developed first. Cllr Sanson agreed and urged the Council to put pressure on local MPs to oppose the changes.

*The Chairman thanked Cllr Sanson and reported that the Council has raised concerns in its consultation responses to the reforms, copying in local MPs and local members*.

*Cllr Sanson left the meeting.*

**21.32. Matters Arising from the last meeting.**

The Chairman reported on thefollowing:

* **Meeting with representatives of the Council and Allotment Holders.**

Three representatives for the Allotment Holders are confirmed and an informal meeting with Council representatives, GL and AL, is to be arranged for discussions on managing the site.

* **Bus stop light, Recreation Ground**: The Clerk is still awaiting a response from HDC to confirm if they will continue to be responsible for the light. It was decommissioned last year following a fault. HDC is yet to confirm a c£2,000 quotation for repairing the light which the Council has agreed to contribute towards from S106 funds. Clerk to chase for a response.
* **Charity bike ride, Sunday 11th October 2020 - Cancelled**

The event is cancelled due to Covid-19. Organisers are hoping to re-schedule it in 2021, subject to consideration of a fresh application to hire the Washington Recreation Ground as a rest area.

* **Potential A283/Storrington Road crossing improvements at East Clayton Farm**

The Council has submitted its consultation response to the Highways Authority to support a non-illuminated crossing in principle, but with priority for a crossing outside Millford Grange on the same road where a boy was recently injured in a traffic accident. Correspondence was received from residents which show a split in support of crossings at both locations.

* **Council’s response to Government’s two consultations on proposed planning reforms in England.**

The Council has submitted its responses to the two Government consultations on planning reforms: *Changes to the Current Planning System,* and *Planning for the Future.* Thanks is expressed to BH for kindly drafting the responses. In order to meet the consultation closing date, the responses were agreed and submitted by the Clerk under delegated powers, following approval by the Council’s Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Planning & Transport Committee.

* **Invitation to give financial assistance towards securing the re-opening of the of the Chanctonbury Leisure Centre, at risk of closure**.

This item is further deferred pending supporting information.

* **Freedom of Information request - update**

Legal advice pending in response to a request from Washington Allotment Tenant, Mr Michael Turley (19th August 2020) for evidence to support the Council’s position that the site is non-statutory. Clerk also to chase for a response from the Council’s solicitor on releasing legally privileged information requested by Mr Turley.

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It was NOTED that the pitched roof would improve  the appearance of the property and would not overlook neighbours.  **RESOLVED** unanimously to make **NO OBJECTION**.  **Planning Decisions:**   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Application Number:** DC/20/0717  **Site:** Vineyards Old London Road Washington RH20 3BN  **Description:** Demolition of existing dwelling house and erection of 16no residential dwellings (C3) with associated works  **Decision:** Application Permitted  **Date of Decision:** 15/09/2020  The Chairman reported that the site is designated for development in the  Neighbourhood Plan. The application was supported in principle by the Parish Council  at its online meeting on 11th May earlier this year with a request for adequate green  screening and no street lights. The application approval includes a several conditions,  including those relating to screening and lights.  **Application Number**: DC/20/1270  **Site:** Shambles Bracken Close Storrington Pulborough West Sussex RH20 3HTD  **Description:** Surgery to 1 x Silver Birch  **Decision:** Application Permitted  **Date of Decision:** 09/09/2020  **Application Number:** DC/20/0395  **Site:** Sandhill Lodge Sandhill Lane Washington RH20 4TD  **Description**: Removal of conditions 1 and 2 (personal occupancy) and variation to condition 3 (ancillary use of cabin to mobile home known as Sandhill Lodge) of planning permission granted through EN/15/0410 (APP/Z3825/C/18/3197002) to allow the timber cabin to be used for purposes ancillary to Sandhill Lodge  **Decision**: Application Permitted  **Date of Decision**: -3/09/2020  **21.34. Appeals**:  None lodged or decided in the parish at the time of publication of the agenda.  **21.35. To Review, Consider, Recommend and report on Parish Council issues, including Maintenance**  **21.35.1. To Receive the External Audit Report of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the Year Ended March 2020.**  The Chairman reported that Moore, the External Auditor, found that Sections 1 and 2 of the Council’s 2019/20 annual return to be in accordance with the Proper Practices and no other matters have come to their attention**.**  **RESOLVED** unanimously to note the report. The Clerk/RFO was commended for her work on the AGAR.  **21.35.2. To Report the Notice of Conclusion of the 2019/20 Annual Audit***.*  **RESOLVED** unanimously to **NOTE** that the Notice of Conclusion of the AGAR 2019/20 is to be published on the Council’s website for members of the public who wish to inspect the documents.  **21.35.3. To Approve appointment of the Council’s Auditor for 2020/21.**  Members considered a quotation of £210 from Mulberry & Co to conduct an interim and final audit for the Year End 2021. Mulberry & Co were praised for their professionalism in the last audit.  **RESOLVED** unanimously to engage Mr Mulberry’s audit services as quoted.  **21.35.4. To Receive and Consider the Council’s Q2 2020.21 Budget Report.**  Members considered the RFO’s Q2 2020.21 Budget Report circulated before the meeting and it was noted that the Council was operating comfortably within budget.  **RESOLVED** unanimously to **NOTE** the report.  **21.35.5. To Consider a tenancy application for Allotment Plot 6***.*  Members considered an application from Mrs A Spencer-Smith in the parish for Plot 6 which has become vacant from the end of September.  **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the application subject to a signed tenancy agreement and payment of rent.  **21.35.6. To Ratify appointment of Council representative on the Rampion 2 - Community Project Liaison Group meetings.**  The Chairman thanked CB for kindly agreeing to attend the Community Project Liaison Group (online) quarterly meetings as the parish representative for the Rampion 2 community discussions. The Vice-Chairman agreed to stand in if required. The Chairman agreed to be in reserve.  **RESOLVED** unanimously to note the information.    **21.35.7. To Consider a response to a letter from the Forestry Commission on the replanting of Longbury Hill Woods.**  Members discussed the Forestry Commission’s letter of 21st September 2020 confirming they are satisfied with the re-stocking of the woodland by natural regeneration and that no further action is required. The letter lists the licence terms and debunks several planning myths regarding proposed housing development on forestry land i.e. planning consent does not necessarily override the requirements in a felling licence on replanting and continued management. Members also noted correspondences from a resident pointing out variation of condition 7 of an appeal last year which states the following:  *‘Following the completion of the re-stocking, and no later than the re-stocking timeframes set out in the Forestry Commission Felling Licence (FLA019/180/17-18 part 2), the access and associated hardstanding areas shall cease to be used. Prior to the completion of the re-stocking works, details of a scheme of restorative landscaping for the access and hardstanding areas including a timetable for implementation, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.’*  Members noted the already established intention of the landowner to develop the site. There was concern by some members that the access, if retained beyond its purpose, could become established.  **RESOLVED** to write to the Horsham District Council Planning Authority and draw their attention to clause 7 of the appeal decision and that action is required; to write to the Forestry Commission, thanking them for their letter; in view of the sensitivity of the woodland area, to request confirmation that the FC will continue with the effective monitoring of the licence compliance.  **21.35.8. To Report a Freedom of Information Request and the Clerk’s response**  Request from Mr Michael Turley of School Lane, Washington regarding meeting and voting procedure on a confidential item of business regarding the allotment at the last Full Council Meeting.  **RESOLVED** unanimously to note the Clerk’s reply which confirms that the Council followed the correct procedure in accordance with its standing orders.  **21.35.9. To Discuss and Agree arrangements for the next Council Newsletter**  Members discussed dates for the next newsletter and considered a quotation of £520 by the Sussex Local to produce and deliver the publication under previous arrangements. Members agreed that the Council’s current quarterly reports in the Sussex Local are sufficient at this time and that the newsletter should be deferred possibly until the early spring.  **RESOLVED** unanimously to defer a decision for two months when circumstances are more favourable; to thank the Sussex Local in support of their quotation and that the Council will contact them in the new year to discuss arrangements for the next edition, possibly for early spring.  **21.35.9. To Receive October 2020 graveyard inspection report and Agree any**  **recommended action**  Members considered AL’s October inspection of the First Extension Graveyard which was circulated before the meeting.  **RESOLVED** unanimously to note that there were no recommendations for action.  **21.35.10. To Receive October 2020 Allotment inspection report and Agree any**  **recommended action**  GL reported on his inspection of the Allotment garden earlier in the day. It was noted that vacant Plot 7 may need strimming again if the weeds survive the first winter frosts. He would raise the matter of an overgrown pathway when he meets with allotment representatives later this month for management discussions.  **RESOLVED** unanimously to NOTE the report.  **21.36. Washington Recreation Ground Charity**  **21.36.1. To Report Maintenance Issues on the Recreation Ground**   * **Gates to Play Area not self-closing**:   HAGS engineer’s inspection report of the gates still pending. Clerk reminded members of the site inspection in August with a HAGS representative and that they have recognised there may be a manufacturing or design fault with the springs, subject to the outcome of the engineer’s inspection.  **RESOLVED** to write to HAGS against for the engineer’s report and remind them of the safety issue.     * **Annual Play Inspection safety report** *–*   Annual report is still pending from the summer inspection.  Clerk towrite to the Play Inspection Company again for the report.   * 1. **To receive reports and recommendations from Committees and Working**   **Parties**  **21.37.1. To Receive the draft minutes of the Open Spaces Committee**  **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the draft minutes of the OSRA meeting on 21st September 2020.  There were no recommendations.  **21.37.2. To Report the delegated decision to keep the Play Area open following**  **the Government’s latest Covid-19 Rule of Six restrictions**.  **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** that the Vice-Chairman and KW agreed with the Clerk’s delegated decision (25th September) to keep the play area open as the Council is acting in line with the latest Covid-19 safety guidance.  .  **21.37.3. To Report on progress of the Council’s new transparency website**  The Chairman reported that the working party is awaiting a formal detailed offer from  Vision ICT based on the proposed transparency website design.  The new 10-tab format is to meet the Government’s accessibility legislation and the  Council’s own website requirements. Further update to be reported at the next  meeting.  **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report.    **21.38. To Receive Year to Date Reconciled Payments, Receipts and Approve Purchases**  The reconciled bank statement showing transactions between 30.07.20 and 05.08.20  accounting year to date statement, payments schedule and invoices were circulated  before the meeting.  **RESOLVED** thatthe following payments totalling **£2,811.06** be **APPROVED**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Payee** | **Details** | **Amount** | | Z Savill | September salary & expenses | £1,159.03 | | NEST | Staff pension September 2020 | £ 50.58 | | HMRC | Q2 PAYE and NICs | £ 493.85 | | Sussex Landscaping | Grass cutting August 2020 | £ 747.60 | | Moore Stephens | External Audit 2019.20 | £ 360.00 | | **Total** |  | **£2,811.06** |   Councillors **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the financial reports as follows:  Outstanding purchase orders**: None**  Outstanding sales invoices **– None**  Income: **£20,904.00 2nd 2020.21 precept payment**  Reconciled Bank Balance **- £73,689.98.**  **21.38.2 VAT**  Q2 due October 2020. Schedule pending.  **21.38.3. PAYE and National Insurance contributions**  Q2 payment to HMRC approved - See payments above Min Ref 21.38.  **21.39. Correspondence Received**  The following correspondence was received and noted:   * News from West Sussex County Council COVID 19 - 11 September 2020 * Invitation to respond to the SDNPA’s parking supplementary   Planning documents (SPD) Consultation   * WW2 Veterans – email forwarded from Cllr Jim Sanson * Request from a resident for information on planning requirements for new fencing on Heath Common lanes following the recent installation of high fences in the he area.   **RESOLVED** unanimously to seek clarification from Horsham District Council Planning Authority on planning requirement for fencing on the edge of the lanes’ public bridleways/footpath network. Clerk to action.   * South Downs Newsletter – September 2020   **21.40. Clerk’s Report**  The Clerk reported the following information circulated before the meeting:   * **Coronavirus/Covid-19 update**   *Email update from SALC on the latest Government Covid restrictions.*   * **The rule of six, free food safety training, digital resources, new team member at Voluntary Sector Support and much more**   *Email bulletin from Horsham District Council (14-09-2020) on the latest Government Covid restrictions.*   * **WSALC Value for Money Project Update from HALC Chairman**   *Email from the Horsham district branch*   * **SSALC Strategy Review Update - important message form Trevor Leggo, CEO** * W**ellers Hedley Legal News for Town, Parish and Community Councils – Autumn 2020**   *See email of the above title, on the One Drive folder for the Clerk’s Report.*  **RESOLVED** unanimously to **NOTE t**he information.  **21.41. To Receive items for the next agenda**  None agreed.  **21.42. Dates and time of next online meetings**  Full Council: Monday 2nd November 2020  Open Spaces Committee: Monday 19th October 2020, 7pm  Planning & Transport Committee: Monday 19th October, 2020. 7.45pm | | |  | | | There being no other business to conduct, the meeting closed at **21:11 hours**  **Signed……………………………………………….**  **Dated………………………………………………..** | |