**AMBERLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes from the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 6th May 2021, 7pm via Zoom video conferencing.**

**PRESENT**: Parish Councillors; Chairman – Geoff Uren (GU), Jason Charman (JC), Peter Cozens (PJC), Hazel Allinson (HA), Elizabeth Tooms (ET), Tim Simpson (TS), Leigh Cresswell (LC), Laura Rawnsley (LR) and Alex Beveridge (AB).

**Also present**: HDC councillor Brian Donnelly, Vicky Spiers (VS) the Clerk and 2 members of the public (1 for only part of the meeting).

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN**

GU was nominated and second for Chairman and JC was nominated and second as vice chairman. Both signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received and accepted from HDC councillors Paul Clarke and Diana van der Klugt and County Councillor Paul Marshall.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

None

**4. AGREEMENT OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11TH MARCH 2021**

The minutes were agreed by councillors and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**5. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES AND ONE HALC/WSALC REPRESENTATIVE**

Agreed that all committees would stay the same, PJC to continue as HALC rep and TS as WSALC rep.

**6. REPORT FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

Cllr Paul Marshall had sent an update to the council before the meeting.

Cllr Brian Donnelly advised that from 7th May HDC would be returning to public meetings as the legislation for remote meetings had expired. Conversations were still ongoing regarding potential housing sites in the District, Brian highlighted the fact that the number of houses that HDC are required to build comes from the Government and not HDC.

**7. COMMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

No questions.

**8. MATTERS ARISING** **(a) Community Speedwatch and B2139 issues** – LR had provided an update to members prior to the meeting, in summary LR and Dr Charles Shaw (Houghton Parish Meeting) are looking at applying for a Community Highways Scheme grant for a pedestrian route joining the Monarch’s Way with Amberley station. LR , JC and Charles have met with Steve Douglas (Area Manager at Highways) 5 times to discuss.   
It is proposed that funding is requested for two parallel elements:  
- an interim solution, which would help to redirect walkers from the busy stretch of road with no pavement (e.g. the causeway and up Blacksmiths Hill) and provide them safe access from Houghton Lane up to the Monarch’s Way

- a feasibility study for a larger infrastructure project that would provide a direct, linear route - this would remove most risk to walkers and benefit residents and businesses.

LR asked for the PC’s endorsement and advised the next steps would be:  
- Reengage with senior stakeholders already involved (e.g. Matt Davey and Paul Marshall - depending on election outcomes)  
- Begin to draft the application documents (panel is in October)  
- Organise some community consultation to socialise the approach and gain agreement (this is likely to be in the form of surgeries and an online survey).

APC members agreed to progress this initiative.

**(b) Update on Parishioners queries** - (i) A resident had enquired why there was no Parish meeting this year, GU advised this was due to Covid-19 restrictions, GU and the clerk will issue a communication summarising the council’s achievements over the last year.

(ii) A resident of Church Street is unhappy with Network Rail using the end of the road for parking of numerous vehicles (on the 8th May there were 14) whilst repairs are made to the railway, he has made a complaint to them and would like the council’s support. PJC advised that Network Rail had recently updated their access point near the sewage plant off New Barn Road. Only properties that back onto the railway line are notified of scheduled repair works, agreed that the clerk should write to Network Rail to ask if they could notify the PC as well so we could pass onto other residents who are affected.

(iii) There have been several complaints from residents regarding illegal and/or inconsiderate parking in the Parish. The clerk has reported a car parked on the junction of B2139 and Stoke Road via Operation Crackdown, PCSO Michael Gamble advised he would pay the owner of the vehicle a visit. Residents are urged to continue to report via Operation Crackdown – photographic evidence is required. There are also parking issues in The Square with the bus shelter being blocked in by large vans meaning residents cannot access it, and that the defibrillator is not easily accessible. Vehicles have also been double parking along East Street causing obstructions and leaving no passing places resulting in cars having to reverse back down the road. GU advised that there are a couple of properties having work done along the road, which is exacerbating the issue, previous campaigns of putting notices on cars parked inconsiderately did not work, if yellow lines were considered these would not be policed and it would just move the cars to other areas of the village. The proposed village car park was felt to be the solution by members. It was also agreed to ask PCSO Michael Gamble to the next PC meeting to discuss with him to see if anything else could be done in the interim.

(iv) Community Speedwatch – there are two sites in the Parish, need more volunteers and someone to lead the CSW for Amberley. With regard to Rackham Road, it was agreed to install speeding strips in order to gain evidence and numbers of speeding vehicles, to be actioned after building renovations at Mile House completed.

**(c) Updates on support for local business post Covid-19 –**

HA has collated a draft directory which was sent to members prior to the meeting, she thanked Mike Toynbee for his assistance with the layout. HA is going to contact Bury PC to see if they would like to be involved and also look at printing costs. GU thanked HA for all her work on this initiative.

**9. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**(a) Planning –**

The list of current planning applications is as follows;



PJC asked if any other members would like to join the planning committee to contact him, GU asked for all members to provide feedback on the applications circulated.

PJC advised that the pre-planning application for Pickwick has been submitted to the SDNPA and they are currently looking at the plans for 7 houses on the site. PJC is going to contact Stella New at SDNPA to see when the opportune time was to submit APC’s representation.

The revised PADS is progressing well, the committee have met and walked around the conservation area, Hurst Cottages and up to the Rackham border to review housing styles/materials etc. They will shortly be doing a walk around Houghton Bridge and North Stoke.

PJC advised that following the White Paper on Planning the government have confirmed that areas inside National Parks and those with a Site of Special Scientific Interest will be exempt from housing requirements and any development will be landscape led. SDNPA have advised that they will be looking to adopt village design statements.

**(b) Roads and Paths** – JC advised he is clearing the pavement along the B2139 opposite the cricket field to allow easier access to and from the station to the village. JC thanked Malcolm Pheasey for clearing out the gully along the south side of the B2139. GU thanked Nyetimber for opening up the footpath from Mill Lane to the Quarry.

**(c) Assets and Amenities** – HA advised that following a request from the football teams playing at Amberley the PC hired a sit on roller for the football field, likely to be an annual task. A couple of residents have complained about the portaloo in The Square, clerk instructed to write to resident to find out how long it will be there.

**(d) Amberley Neighbourhood Plan delivery** – TS advised that with regard to the car park this is going to cost approximately £100,000 with £15,000 from Section 106 funds, £50,000 from CIL funding from the Strawberry Villas development and £35,000 from SDNPA grant or a variety of other means. The planning permission for the car park expires in August 2022. The building works for Strawberry Villas have been delayed 4 times, all the legal issues have now been formalised, just waiting for all the documentation to be in place. A proposed date for work to start is the end of May but this has not been formally agreed. TS advised the planning permission for the development expires in April 2023. PJC enquired why the PC has not looked at a loan from the Public Works Loan Board as this would mean work could start earlier. TS said he would calculate the cost of borrowing the funds required and circulate this to the ANP committee, it was agreed a committee meeting was required to discuss this in more detail.

TS advised that there will be electric charging points in the car park, LC is going to take this forward and advised there are grants available.

**(e) Amberley Climate Change** – HA advised that there is the recycling of crisp packets on 7th May in The Square, no other updates.

**(f) Village Bus** – ET advised that Phil Greenwood had written an annual review of the service and passenger numbers are down, they are hoping numbers will pick up once more businesses start opening up. After a discussion it was agreed that awareness of the village bus needed to be raised with potentially a village wide leaflet drop, ET will discuss with Phil Greenwood.

**(g) Finance** – The March 2021 bank reconciliation and bank statement were approved and signed. The financial statement for the period 1st March to 15th April 2021 was agreed by council and signed. The financial statement is as follows:

A resident joined the meeting to speak about his issues with Network Rail, his concerns are that Network Rail are using the end of Church Street like a car park and also blocking in his family’s cars. It is not clear why they are using Church Street and not accessing from the Station or the access route by the sewage plant (note – further action to be taken was agreed after the meeting, which will be noted at next PC meeting).

**10.** **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILTY RETURN – approval of Annual Governance Statement 2020/21**

The clerk had sent to members prior to the meeting, agreed and signed by GU.

**11. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILTY RETURN – approval of Accounting Statements 2020/21**

The clerk had sent to members prior to the meeting, agreed and signed by GU.

**12. CORRESPONDENCE AND REQUESTS FOR DONATIONS**

All correspondence had been forwarded to councillors. There was no request for donations.

**13. EXTERNAL MEETINGS ATTENDED BY COUNCILLORS**

TS attended a Dark Skies seminar run by SDNPA, a link to the presentation has been sent to members. The council discussed setting up a village observatory , TS will talk to Bury PC who have already set one up.

PJC attended 2 HALC meetings, HALC has been reorganised in the wake of the WSLAC reorganisation.

**14. INFORMATION ITEMS**

The clerk advised the internal audit was booked for 25th May, this will be done remotely, and all documents have to been with the auditors by 18th May.

**15. TO NOTE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

8th July 2021 at 7.30pm at the Church Hall where covid-19 regulations at that time will apply.

GU closed the meeting at 9.10pm.

Vicky Spiers - Clerk to Amberley Parish Council – 12th May 2021