



AMBERLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes from the ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 16th January 2025, 7.30pm at St Michael's Church Hall.

PRESENT: Parish Councillors; – Jason Charman (Chairman), Elisabeth Tooms, Paul Mustow, Tim Simpson, Leigh Cresswell, Hazel Allinson and Graham Smith.

Also present: WSCC councillor Paul Marshall, HDC councillor Paul Clarke, Vicky Spiers (the clerk), Steve Trott (the new clerk from 17.01.25) and six members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies noted and accepted from Fraser Wheeler and Ian Corcoran. Apologies also noted from HDC councillors Jon Campbell and Len Ellis-Brown.

The clerk read out a statement from the council advising that the SDNPA's Land Availability Assessment regarding a potential site for housing in Amberley would not be covered in this PC meeting but in detail in the public consultations on 18th January in St Michael's Church and 1st February at the Sportsman PH.

2. To receive declarations of interest from items on the agenda

Paul Mustow on item 7 as he is a member of Amberley Cricket Club.

3. To approve and sign the minutes of the ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 14th November 2024

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

4. Updates from County and District councillors

Cllr Paul Marshall advised that:

- WSCC will have a balanced Budget for 2025/26, there will be continued investment into adult social care and children's services.
- The Cabinets of West and East Sussex County Councils and Brighton & Hove City Council have agreed to submit an expression of interest to be considered for the Government's Devolution Priority Programme indicating support for a Sussex Mayoral Strategic Authority. As a result, the May elections may be deferred. Paul advised further updates will follow in 2025.

HDC councillor Paul Clarke stated that the HDC Local Plan has been suspended by the Local Plan Inspector and all scheduled hearings have been cancelled.

Paul advised that HDC will also have a balanced Budget for 2025/26.

Signed..... Dated 13th March 2025

5. Current Matters - updates: (a) The Pond

Jason confirmed that the contractor had fixed the outflow pipe, they have also undertaken a survey of the pond and sent a report to the PC with suggestions of additional work for the pond and surrounding area, this will be discussed in full at the next Assets and Amenities meeting. It was also noted that the two coppiced willows at the pond will shortly be removed.

6. Committee Reports -

(a) Planning - as detailed below:

APPLICATIONS DETERMINED SINCE LAST PC MEETING		
SDNP/24/02421/HOUS	The Coach House - new vehicular access	APC had no objections - Approved by SDNPA
SDNP/24/03484/FUL	Wildview House , Rackham Road, Amberley,- Extension to existing studio to form holiday let	APC had no objections - Approved by SDNPA
SDNP/24/03437/HOUS	Wildview House , Rackham Road - Single storey side extension	APC had no objections - Approved by SDNPA
SDNP/24/02691/HOUS	8 Crossgates, Rackham Road - Single storey rear extension	APC had no objections - Approved by SDNPA
SDNP/24/04585/HOUS	Wildbrooks , East Street - The addition of a pair of oak gates and posts to the consented entrance.	APC had no objections - Approved by SDNPA
APPLICATIONS AWAITING A DECISION		
SDNP/24/05286/LIS	Black Horse , High Street - Retrospective addition of lightweight studwork to create self contained accommodation. No structural alterations required	APC to comment - deadline 3rd Feb
APPLICATION GONE TO APPEAL		
SDNP/24/03398/FUL	Pickwick , Turnpike Road - Change of use from one dwelling to form four dwellings	APC objected - REFUSED BY SDNPA. Applicant has taken to Appeal
COMPLIANCE		
	Swan Meadows	No maintenance plan in place Draining issues - Jason & clerk had mtg with SDNPA Compliance on 20th March to walk the site, SDNPA will be taking the outstanding issues forward with the developer. Update July - SDNPA are not receiving a response from the developer. Update Sept - SDNPA are still not receiving a response from the developer Update Nov - still no response from the developer to SDNPA

Graham advised that the developer for Swan Meadows has fitted a non-return valve to the pipe by the new bridge, residents are hopefully that the remaining issues will also be rectified in the near future.

Leigh confirmed the PC's public consultations on the SDNPA's Local Land Availability Assessment for Amberley and advised that the Park is also running it's own public consultation on 28th January in the Church Hall.

(b) Roads & Paths – Jason advised that WSCC contractors have confirmed that remedial drainage works are necessary along the B2139 by The Cricketers, they will be undertaking additional jetting and removing tree roots, they will also use CCTV to establish if there is a collapsed pipe, the work should be undertaken in April,

The damaged manhole cover located on the land adjacent to the B2139 had been repaired.

There is a temporary closure of East Street from 30th January for up to five days, Jason confirmed the PC's 'Businesses Open as Usual Sign' would be put up.

Ruffs path resurfacing work will be a priority for 2025 with Jason planning to undertake by the end of April (weather dependent).

Signed..... Dated 13th March 2025

(c) Assets & Amenities – Hazel advised that the Hurst Cottages bus shelter was being used on a Tuesday as a community larder with food from the Pulborough Pantry, this is an initiative of St Michael’s Church.

Jason advised a replacement toddler swing had been installed in the cricket field playground and that a rubber safety strip had been fitted to the pedestrian gate in the Hurst Cottages playground, together with anti-slip strips on the nursery rhyme unit.

(d) Neighbourhood Plan delivery – Tim advised that the new village map had been installed in the car park, unfortunately there is a spelling mistake, the sign writer will be fixing this shortly.

Tim noted that the car park lights are currently not working, further investigation is required as to the reason.

(e) Village Bus – Elisabeth advised that parking the bus in the village car park was going well and that they had a steady stream of passengers.

(f) Climate Action and Nature Recovery Working Group – Fraser had provided an update prior to the meeting – he is working with a prominent energy industry figure focusing upon the lack of power in Amberley along with the increasing requirement of power due to the SDNPA proposal. Fraser also mentioned his membership of a ginger group within Friends of Wildbrooks and expects Greener Amberley to have a more prominent role as the group progresses.

7. Finance - to receive and agree Bank Reconciliations for November and December 2024; to review, and authorise payments on the Financial Statement from 1st November to 31st December 2024

The November and December 2024 bank reconciliations and bank statements were reviewed, agreed and signed.

The Financial Statement detailed below was reviewed and agreed to by the council and signed by Jason.

AMBERLEY PARISH COUNCIL – FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR PERIOD 01.11.24 to 31.12.24			
Current account closing balance as at 31st October 2024			£ 45,845.59
Plus Receipts since 1st November 2024:			
13/11/2024		Parham PC	Reimbursement for printing costs 9.99
21/12/2024		Parham PC	Reimbursement for 2 reams of printer paper 8.00
			£ 17.99
Less Payments since 1st November 2024			
07/11/2024	BACS	Mr A Philby	Cutting and strimming of HC playground x2 Oct 84.00
11/11/2024	BACS	Amberley PCC	Donation for Seasons' Greetings for Dec Parish mag 10.00
11/11/2024	DD	Octopus	Electricity for the car park for Oct 18.61
11/11/2024	BACS	DefibShop	Replacement pads for Hurst Cottages & Sportsman defibs 151.80
13/11/2024	DD	The Technology Doctors	Monthly unlimited 4G Broadband for CCTV in car park 30.00
13/11/2024	BACS	UK Safety Store	Business Open as Usual sign 63.20
14/11/2024	BACS	D A Norgate	Strimming of vegetation in the car park 100.00
24/11/2024	BACS	Viking (reimbursed to V Spiers)	Storage boxes 41.99
29/11/2024	BACS	Ms V Spiers	Clerk's Nov salary, mileage and office expenses 1,587.65
29/11/2024	BACS	HMRC	Clerk's Nov tax and NI 182.02
29/11/2024	BACS	Parker Brand (reimbursed to V Spiers)	Petrol hedge trimmer 85.49
29/11/2024	BACS	Amazon (reimbursed to V Spiers)	Stationery 18.48
29/11/2024		Natwest	Nov bank charges 2.45
02/12/2024	BACS	NEST	Clerk's and APC's Pension contributions for Nov 122.38
08/12/2024	BACS	Horsham DC	Emptying of litter bins Jan-March 25 81.90
08/12/2024	BACS	Andrew Philby	Cutting/trimming of HC playground Nov 24 56.00
09/12/2024	BACS	M Rollings	Remedial works to playgrounds following annual RoSPA inspection 118.00
10/12/2024	DD	Octopus	Electricity for the car park for Nov 18.00
10/12/2024	BACS	Mr T Simpson	Reimbursement for car park height barrier sign 23.58
13/12/2024	DD	The Technology Doctors	Monthly unlimited 4G Broadband for CCTV in car park 30.00
17/12/2024	BACS	PCC of Amberley	Hire of Church Hall Oct-Dec 108.00
20/12/2024	BACS	Spiers)	Printer Paper 23.79
20/12/2024	BACS	Ms V Spiers	Clerk's Dec salary, mileage and office expenses 1,591.35
20/12/2024	BACS	HMRC	Clerk's Dec tax and NI 200.15
20/12/2024	BACS	NEST	Clerk's and APC's Pension contributions for Dec 127.04
31/12/2024		Natwest	Dec bank charges 3.15
			£ 4,879.03
Current account balance available after 31st December 2024			£ 40,984.55
This includes £17,944.16 earmarked/ringfenced reserves:			
£295.60 - grant for Operation Watershed works			
£1,400 - for Ruffs path works			
£15,948.56- SDNPA CIL monies			
£300 - new picnic bench			

The council resolved to pay the Amberley Cricket Club their annual donation of £1000.

The council resolved for the movement of funds from General Reserves to Administration to pay for the consultancy services of Steve Tilbury.

8. To review the council's draft budget and precept for 2025/26

The council resolved to approve the 2025/26 Budget as circulated by the clerk prior to the meeting.

The Band D Precept has increased from £108.07 to £122 per annum.

A member of the public asked what the percentage precept increase was, the clerk confirmed this as 12.89%. The Chairman explained the reasons for the increase all of which were increased costs paid by the council.

9. To review a request for a donation from CIL funding by The Friends of North Stoke Church

Council reviewed the completed donation form circulated by the clerk prior to the meeting and resolved to make a CIL donation of £338.80 to The Friends for a new brown tourist direction sign for St Mary's Church in North Stoke, resolved that the clerk would arrange the payment.

Signed..... Dated 13th March 2025

10. Adjournment – to take questions or comments from members of the public (max 15 minutes)

The following questions/comments were received from residents:

- A resident asked for help in the clearance of the stream/ditch behind her property, this feeds into the village pond, her late husband had always cleared. Jason advised that this had been noted and would be passed to the A&A committee to review when they looked at the pond contractor's report/quotes. Jason advised that there would be a meeting before the next PC meeting in March.
- A resident wanted to raise with the new clerk that the PC had agreed to pay a donation to reimburse her for the cost of the Amberley CPR neighbourhood group phone, which is £7 per month, this was duly noted.
- The trees on the southern boundary of the football field are being overwhelmed by brambles and overgrowth. Jason advised the A&A committee were aware and this would be tidied up in April/May time.
- A resident asked the PC if the community larder was having a detrimental effect on the Village shop, Hazel advised that this was a church initiative and confirmed only non-perishables were put into the bus shelter.

A resident thanked Vicky the outgoing clerk for all the work she has done on behalf of the Parish over the last 10 years.

11. To review and approve the council's Fixed Assets Register as of January 2025

Council reviewed and approved.

12. To review and approve the council's Risk Assessment as of January 2025

Council reviewed and approved.

13. Clerk's update and Information items

The clerk advised that all the received and relevant correspondence had been forwarded to councillors.

14. To review the Parishioner's correspondence list and agree on any necessary action (including items raised at Saturday Surgery)

Noted that there is no outstanding parishioner's correspondence.

15. To receive any updates on external meetings attended by councillors

No external meetings have been attended.

16. To note the date of the next meeting 13th March 2025 at 7.30pm

Noted.

Due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed, the Press and Public were excluded from the following item:

17, Staffing matters

The council thanked Vicky Spiers, the outgoing clerk for her 10.5 years of service to the PC.

The council welcomed the new clerk, Steve Trott whose official start date is the 17th January 2025. The council formally noted the terms of Steve's contract, including the salary. Steve's hours of work as stated in the contract were agreed as flexible depending upon workload and commitments. Steve's contract of employment was signed by him and the chairman.

The chairman closed the meeting at 9.10pm.

Vicky Spiers - Clerk to Amberley Parish Council

22nd January 2025