# **AMBERLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes from the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 9th January 2020, 7.30pm at St Michael’s Church Hall.**

**PRESENT**: Parish Councillors; Chairman – Geoff Uren (GU), Jason Charman (JC), Peter Cozens (PJC), Hazel Allinson (HA), Abigail Rice (AR), Leigh Cresswell (LC), Laura Rawnsley (LR).

Also present: Vicky Spiers (VS) the Clerk, County Cllr Paul Marshall, District Cllr Brian Donnelly, District Cllr Diana van der Klugt and 7 members of the public.

**1. CHAIRMAN’S WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

GU welcomed everyone to the meeting and read out the following statement ‘Welcome to our ﬁrst APC meeting of the year, and of the decade.

You don’t need me to remind you of the rather fraught atmosphere that our country has been through over the last 3 years or so. Political tensions have been to the fore, but I want to remind everyone that the Parish Council is a non-political entity, and there should be no place for any discussion of politics at our meetings.

May I request that everyone respects this political neutrality and keeps our Parish Council meetings a “Politics Free Zone”, thank you.

Apologies for absence received and accepted from Tim Simpson and District Cllr Paul Clarke.

Item 5 was moved up the agenda

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

Cllr Paul Marshall confirmed that WSCC have reversed their decision regarding the cutting of certain gritting routes, additional gritters have also been secured.

GU advised Paul that Dr Charles Shaw has prepared a report regarding the volume and speed of traffic on the B2139 and the lack of footpaths in Houghton, they would like the opportunity to meet with Paul to discuss further. Paul advised that he would ask his Executive Assistant to set up a meeting also including Matt Davey (Head of Highways) and revert to the Clerk with some dates.

Charles Shaw advised that the results from the traffic survey in Houghton have shown that almost 100% of traffic exceeds the 30mph limit around the clock. During daytime hours 10% of the traffic exceeds 36mph and this increased up to 70% during nighttime hours. He cannot get an agreement for a Community Speedwatch (CSW) group in the middle of Houghton as the Police say with no footpaths it is too dangerous for volunteers.

It was noted that Amberley PC have secured a grant of £500 from the Police Property Fund to purchase the starter kit for a CSW group. The Clerk has set up a CSW on the Police’s online system and completed the online training, LR will shortly be joining as an administrator, it was noted that some CSW sites have already been agreed by the Police and these need to be added to the system along with Rackham Road. It was then agreed that LR could ask for volunteers.

Laura Rawnsley and Abigail Rice arrived 7.50pm

Cllr Brian Donnelly mentioned the recent spate of break-ins that occurred mainly in Rackham.

Brian encouraged Councillors to attend the Standards training being run by HDC on 30th January, the Clerk will resend the invitation.

Cllr Diana van der Klugt mentioned the Strawberry Villas planning application which is being heard by the SDNPA Planning Committee meeting on 16th January, GU advised that he, PJC and TS would be attending and speaking at the meeting.

Diana mentioned the Amberley Litter Pickers who pick up litter in the Parish, HA confirmed that the group already had the necessary equipment from HDC and that HDC collected the litter from them.

Cllr Paul Marshall left the meeting at 7.55pm

**2. PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT TO TAKE COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR**

Mel Edge, (Churchwarden for St Michael’s) spoke regarding APC and St Michael’s PCC working closer together, particularly with how best to deal with the occasional homeless person who turns up in Amberley. Mel provided an overview as follows;

Last winter she publicised the Streetlink/Sussex Outreach Services contact details on Listserve and in the parish magazine. However, as homelessness is a year round problem Mel thinks these details should appear every month as a standard notice.

Streetlink works via a call centre who contacts local services, the Outreach worker will try to get the person to engage with homelessness services, which can include hostel referral, medical and addiction help, financial advice etc., all with the aim of getting the person off the streets and into permanent accommodation.

Mel has also spoken to Turning Tides in Worthing, who provided her with a list of night shelters, which are open October-March. In Worthing these are organised by Storm Ministries and in Horsham by Horsham Churches Together/Horsham Matters. Some shelters only open when the temperature drops below freezing for several nights in a row.

The PCC have also set up CAMEO (Come and Meet Each Other) which is a get together at the Church Hall for socially isolated people in the Parish.

Mel also spoke about Family Support Work, the Diocesan Charity who support families in need, whatever that need may be – financial, parenting, marital problems etc. Not time limited: they will work with a family for as long as it takes to get the family back on its feet. The PCC, with the generosity of the Amberley community, supports FSW with cash donations, foodbank collections, and gifts at Christmas for kids and mums.

One of Mel’s concerns is that everyone in the community may not be aware that these services exist. Several ideas were discussed and it was resolved to put this information on APC’s website.

It was also agreed to look into placing a noticeboard in Newland Gardens, HA advised that we could apply for a grant from the Chanctonbury Local Committee to cover the cost of this, JC stated that Newland Gardens’ residents would welcome a noticeboard.

GU asked Councillors to reflect on Mel’s paper she had sent prior to the meeting and that further discussions could be had. GU thanked Mel.

**3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

None

**4. AGREEMENT OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14th NOVEMBER 2019**

A small amendment under 7(b) it was noted that no damage was done to the tearooms following the HGV damage to Turnpike Cottage. The minutes were then agreed by Councillors and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

**(a)** **Ham Piece** – The Clerk advised that this is being rented to Mr & Mrs Tester for sheep grazing until 30th November 2020.

**(b)** **Traffic Road Order on B2139** by Turnpike Cottage– JC advised that he and the Clerk had met with Stephen Douglas from Highways and the owner of Turnpike Cottage to discuss the issue of damage to her property following an HGV reversing into her Cottage (for the second time in 9 months) as it was too large to get under the railway bridge. Stephen Douglas advised that he would review the warning signage at Whiteway’s roundabout and then contact the owner to discuss again. There was also a discussion regarding the Clerk applying for a Traffic Road Order (TRO) to try and get a maximum HGV weight order for the road, however as acceptance of these are limited to one a year per the whole of the Chantry area there is no guarantee it will be successful.

**(c)** **Speeding along Rackham Road** – JC and the Clerk met with Stephen Douglas from Highways to discuss this further, he suggested traffic calming would be a good option and suggested the Clerk apply for a Community Highways Scheme. Clerk to look into options and review with residents. Stephen advised that also placing a CSW along the road would also be a good idea.

**(d) Community Speedwatch in Amberley** – See under item 5 for an update

**(e) Winter Plan -** HA advised that previous decision by WSCC to reduce the roads being gritted had now been reversed.

**7. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**(a) Planning –**

The list of current planning applications is as follows;



PJC advised that he, GU and TS will be attending the SDNPA planning meeting on 16th January which will see the application for Strawberry Villas being discussed and a decision made.

It was noted that hard copies of planning papers are no longer sent by HDC, PJC asked planning committee members to try and review any new applications as soon as they can after the Clerk sends the planning notification email, this way if there are any more detailed or complicated applications a meeting can be arranged.

**(b) Roads and Paths** – JC advised that he was aware that there are a few signs missing in the Parish, and whilst these have been notified to WSCC it is no longer a priority for these to be replaced. JC noted that following the heavy rains School Road had flooded but following the Operation Watershed works and the ditches being cleared along Ruffs Path the road cleared within 2 hours and the ditches cleared within 4 hours and were flowing well.

**c) Assets and Amenities** – HA advised that the hedge at Hurst Cottages playground was being cut on 3rd February.

**(d) Village Bus** – Geoff Conlon had submitted a report prior to the meeting advising that all was going well except for one breakdown which was due to a battery failure, a review of the contact details for the bus regulars is underway to improve the ability to inform them should a breakdown occur in the future. Also noted that 4 of the 7 regular drivers are required to go through medicals to renew their licences, Geoff has suggested an event to try and find new drivers.

**(e) Amberley Neighbourhood Plan delivery** – TS was unable to make the meeting but sent the following report;

Since obtaining the planning permission for the car park in August 2019 activity has been focused on fund raising. Guided by several cost estimates we are targeting to raise £150K.

We applied to the National Lottery Community Fund for £75,000 but were turned down in December 2019 – “*We’ve decided not to take your proposal further right now because we have more compelling projects in the local area”.*

We are currently pursuing four other possible sources of funding:

1. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding from the SDNPA Strategic Infrastructure fund. We have applied for £75,000, which was turned down in 2019 because at the time of asking we hadn’t secured the car park planning permission. We have been given an indication that now we have the permission our application may be viewed more positively in 2020. The deadline for reapplying is 31 Jan 2020.

This application will undoubtedly be helped if the proposed housing development at Strawberry Villas is approved – it says on the SDNPA web site that applications where housing developments are to take place will be viewed more positively. The Parish’s share of the CIL money from this development is estimated to be around £45,000 (the 25% the Parish gets by law). There is a critical meeting on 16 Jan, when the Strawberry Villas planning application is due to be reviewed by the SDNPA Planning Committee. A favourable decision on Strawberry Villas from this meeting would undoubtedly help our application for CIL funding.

1. Section 106 funding left over from Drewitts Farm. There is £16,000 left unspent, and we have been told that this is available and could be combined with CIL funding for the purpose of the car park.
2. The UK Government’s Rural Development Programme for Tourism. This is a fund specifically targeted at tourism infrastructure and facilities. We have applied for £75,000, and are waiting to hear if we have made the short-list (answer promised by mid-Jan). On the face of it, our car park plan meets the criteria very well. The key is the economic impact of the investment – in particular the number of new jobs created - and we have had a very helpful and supportive letter from the Black Horse on this point.
3. The Rees Jeffreys Road Fund. This is a private fund recommended to us by Mark Rose, SDNPA’s funding officer. TS thinks an amount of around £20-25K might be a real possibility.

There are other as yet untested possibilities – e.g. crowd funding via the West Sussex Crowd, and soliciting contributions from the community and from local businesses. We are holding off on these until we have more certainty about the above four possibilities.

**(f) Finance** – the Clerk had sent a copy of the proposed 2020/21 precept to Councillors prior to the meeting for them to review. This was approved by Council. There is an increase of £19.84 per annum/0.38p per week (for a Band D household), GU advised that he would write a piece for the Parish magazine explaining the increases.

**8. FINANCIAL REPORT**

All the necessary documents were approved and signed. The financial statement for the period up to 9th January was produced and agreed.

The financial statement is as follows;



**9. RUBBISH AND RECYCLING**

GU referenced Pick Amberley set up by Rebecca Beveridge who had complied the following report;

Pick Amberley is a community litter taskforce which began July 2019. We are volunteers who clean up our environment for the benefit of local wildlife, to prevent the contamination of waterways and to enhance all of our enjoyment of the place we call home.

We work in partnership with Horsham Council, who supply equipment and collect rubbish after each pick. The Bridge Inn also kindly sponsors us with a well-earned drink after each meeting.

We meet for 2 hours on the afternoon of the second Sunday of the month. 1-3pm in Winter, 2pm – 4pm British Summer Time. This coming weekend being our seventh meeting to date.

We are grateful to be able to rely on a team of regular helpers, but over the last seven months an amazing twenty volunteers have turned out to assist our efforts. We have also received an incredible number of supportive emails and phone calls from well-wishers who appreciate what we are doing. It’s great to have discovered that this initiative is very well supported by our community.

**Results**

We have to date cleared over 45 bin bags of rubbish, plus many bulky items from our Parish, including tyres, ladders, televisions, toilets. We have also found stolen items of interest to the police and alerted Arun Environmental Health with regards to domestic rubbish leaking into the river from Houghton Bridge Island Houghton Bridge Island. They have inspected and contacted the landlord.

**Pick Locations 2019**

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| --- | --- |
| July | Stoke Road |
| August | Stoke Road railway bank, station carpark, burned out caravan field (since understood to be private property!) |
| September | Playing field and stream, B2139 |
| October | Houghton Bridge Island and tunnels |
| November | Stoke Road ditches, causeway flood plain |
| December | Brook Lane/Greatham Road |

We have been learning in terms of where is good to pick when. For example, it would be better to clear the causeway flood plain in September, to ensure it is clear before the first waters rise. We battled the overgrowth in the Playing Field stream to find it was cut back the following week!

We are admittedly of the mindset that action and environment come before asking permission but are being mindful of landownership and are in touch with Norfolk Estate, WSCC and others. We were grateful for Jason Charman’s advice about ownership of the playing field stream.

This month we are heading outside the Parish as a one-off to clear Whiteways (with support from Arun Council). On the whole our efforts will remain within the Parish, but it cannot have escaped anyone’s notice that Whiteways is an absolute mess. From what we have established, Whiteways is the meeting point of many boundaries and areas of responsibility when it comes to cleansing and consequently no-one does it. And as the gateway to Amberley, we felt it warranted our efforts.

Rebecca is in the process of planning a pick schedule for 2020, if anyone would like to help her on the creative promotional side – to design a poster, as well as signs to use whilst picks are in progress please contact her. Pick Amberley can be found on Listserve and on Twitter @AmberleyPick.

GU asked for APC’s thanks to be recorded to Rebecca for such a good initiative.

HA provided an update about single use plastic recycling, following a meeting she had with the school they very pleased to join in and are going to start an Eco Council as sub group of School Council – lead by Mr Armitage and HA will be on it too representing Amberley PC, this will be replicated at Coldwaltham School (with hopefully a Councillor from their PC on the Council). The Eco Council will manage the bins, wastepaper baskets are being put out at lunchtime from 9th January to collect crisp packets and biscuit and cake wrappers the Eco Council will be responsible for emptying into the Crisp packet and biscuit wrapper Recycling bin every day. The second bin will collect laundry products and toothpaste tubes and toothbrushes/oral care, Mr Patel, the caretaker, will put out both bins for parishioners to use on Friday mornings in front of the school gate. Depending how full the bins are, HA will collect and with volunteers will sort the two waste resources in both bins into the 4 separate categories. We will either take these to Carrie Cort from Sussex Green Living at Coolham or to Storrington where Fiona from Thakeham Parish Council will take them to Coolham with hers.

Additional single plastic recycling is at Storrington village hall in the morning at the market.

GU thanked HA for all her hard work on this great initiative.

GU also mentioned that he thought more could be done to assist residents on everyday recycling as it is not always clear what can be recycled. Cllr Diana van der Klugt said that she would raise this with the cabinet minister.

There was also a discussion regarding the rubbish/fly tipping on a piece of land on Rackham Road, this land is managed by Savills, the Clerk and several residents have been in contact with them and we are hopefully for a resolution in the near future.

**10. INFORMATION ITEMS**

GU advised Cllr Geoff Conlon has resigned from the Council, GU asked for the Council’s thanks to Geoff to be noted and that the PC is very grateful for everything he has done from the village bus to Operation Watershed projects to car parking.

Mel Edge enquired if the PC had considered sponsorship for help with the car park costs, from local companies such Nyetimber and The Black Horse, GU advised this could be a consideration.

**11. PARISHIONER’S CORRESPONDENCE AND REQUESTS FOR DONATIONS**

No requests for donations.

The current list of parishioner queries is as follows;



There was also a letter received on the date of the meeting from a resident concerning a minor traffic altercation in East Street which involved the carol singers. GU advised that the PC had noted the letter but would not be taking any further action as this was not a PC matter.

**12. EXTERNAL MEETINGS ATTENDED BY COUNCILLORS**

No external meetings attended.

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

12th March 2020 at 7.30pm.

GU closed the meeting at 9.20pm.

Vicky Spiers – Clerk to Amberley Parish Council

15th January 2020