



**Minutes of the MEETING OF SOPLEY PARISH COUNCIL held on
Thursday, 23rd September 2021 at 7.30pm Sopley Parish Hall.**

In attendance: Chairman Rawstron, Cllr Allen, Cllr Brake, Cllr. Eccles, Cllr Emmel, Cllr. Hacker, Cllr Ludford and 2 parishioners. Also Present Mr. Edwin Macknamara Acting Clerk and Cllr. Tony Ring (NFDC).

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** The meeting was quorate. The Chair/Acting Clerk outlined the circumstances when it would be appropriate to declare an interest in matters to be discussed by the Parish Council. No declarations of interest were given in respect of Agenda items. Cllr Shutler and County Cllr Thierry were not present at the meeting.
- 2. PUBLIC SESSION:** The following matters were raised during the public session:
 - Thorney Hill Play Equipment: A statement was made in support of the application received by the Council for financial support to meet the costs of insurance and inspection of the play equipment at Thorney Hill Community Centre. **NOTED BY ALL PRESENT**
 - Footpath Bridges: The Council were asked to advise the Public Right of Way Team, Hampshire County Council of the instability of the bridges at Balls Common Lane and Watery Lane. **It was agreed that the Acting Clerk raise these matters with Hampshire County Council for action.**
 - Missing Speed Sign: The speed sign along the section of road between Owls Barn and Sopley Crossroads was missing. **It was agreed that the Acting Clerk ask Hampshire County Council to replace the missing sign.**
 - Flood Warning Sign: A flood warning sign along Derritt Lane needed to be removed. It was obscured by vegetation. The Acting Clerk would arrange for it to be removed.
 - Derritt Lane Pinch Point: The Warning Sign at the Pinch Point in Derritt Lane was obscured by vegetation. **It was agreed that the Acting Clerk ask the Highway Authority to cut the vegetation back.**
 - Burnthouse Lane/Ringwood Road Junction: The road sign at this junction required attention and was at an incorrect angle. **It was agreed that the Acting Clerk would ask the Highway Authority to repair the sign.**
- 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS – 22nd JULY AND 19th AUGUST 2021:** RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on the 22nd July and 19th August, 2021, having been circulated to all Members of the Council, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
Proposed: Cllr Hacker and seconded by Cllr Emmel. Agreed by all Members present.
- 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: (Minute 3 Derritt Lane)** The Acting Clerk would investigate the land ownership in respect of the overhanging vegetation obstructing pavement access outside the private residence on the north side of Derritt Lane. **ACTION: ACTING CLERK**
- 5. CURRENT ISSUES & FORWARD PLANNING: (All Council Members for discussion/approval)**
 - i) **NOTICE BOARDS:** The Parish Notice Boards at London Lane had been damaged and the leg of the Notice Board in Ripley was insecure. **Cllr. Eccles agreed to inspect the Notice Boards and advise remedial repairs.**
- 6. PARISH CLERK'S REPORT:** (Acting Clerk: Edwin Macknamara)
 - i) **EMAIL ADDRESSES:** Arrangements had been made for all Councillors to be given a dedicated email address for Parish Council purposes. All Councillors were advised to use there .gov

email address. The arrangements for the Burial Ground and Parish Hall email would also be included.

RESOLVED: That each Councillor be allocated a dedicated email address for Parish Council business. **(The Acting Clerk to action)**

- ii) **Bank Signatories:** The following members of the Parish Council were now able to access the Council's Bank Accounts and carry out online banking and sign cheques.

Cllr. A Rawstron; **Cllr.** J. Eccles; **Cllr.** K. Brake; **Cllr.** D. Shutler.

RESOLVED: That the above Councillors be authorised to carry out Banking transactions and sign cheques in accordance with the Financial Regulations/Risk Assessments agreed by the Council and currently under review. **NO FURTHER ACTION**

- iii) **Co-options:** The Acting Clerk confirmed that the co-option of Cllrs. Allen and Brake had been approved by the Council and their Declarations of Interest were properly displayed on the Website. Declaration of Acceptance of Office had been executed.

RESOLVED: That the position regarding these co-options be noted and confirmed.

ACTION: NO FURTHER ACTION

7. **FINANCIAL MATTERS – INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT:** The Internal Auditor's Report dated 4th May, 2021 had been circulated to all Members. The meeting noted that the Action Plan arising from the matters highlighted by the Internal Auditor was being revised and a full Report on the implications for Compliance and Governance would be made to the next Meeting on the 18th November, 2021. The Acting Clerk also reported that PKF Littlejohn LLP (The External Auditor) had requested further information regarding the accounts for the year Ended 31st March, 2021 and this had been provided to them by the Acting Clerk. An email had been received from the External Auditor which indicated that they would be raising a number of "except for" matters (qualifications) relating to the submitted AGAR and the file had been passed to their Engagement Lead who would review and sign off the accounts accordingly. These issues would also be dealt with in the Action Plan which the Council would be asked to discuss at the next meeting in November.

Members agreed that a Review of procedures was required and commented on the need to ensure that all financial information was open and transparent and properly reconciled in accordance with Audit Regulations and to satisfy the points raised during the recent Audit. Following the discussion, it was:

RESOLVED: That the present position be noted and that an Action Plan be submitted to the next meeting for further discussion to enable the adoption of robust Compliance and Governance Procedures. **ACTION: ACTING CLERK TO PREPARE REPORT FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE NEXT MEETING**

8. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

- i) **Queen's Jubilee:** The W.I had asked if the Parish Council would mark the occasion of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June, 2022 marking 70 years since her ascension to the Throne.

RESOLVED: That this matter be discussed at the next meeting. **ACTION: ACTING CLERK TO INCLUDE ITEM ON AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING.**

- ii) **NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL:** The Clerk reported that Kate Ryan had been appointed as the Chief Executive of New Forest District Council and would take up the post in December, 2021. In the meantime Colin Read would act as the Interim CEO. **NOTED BY ALL PRESENT**

- iii) **SSEN DISTRIBUTION: POWER PLAN CONSULTATION DOCUMENT:**

The Document was available on line: <https://ssenfuture.co.uk/have-your-say-intro>

NOTED BY ALL PRESENT

9. **APPLICATION FOR GRANT:** An application for Grant had been received in respect of the Thorney Hill Play Area to help with ongoing Insurance Costs and Safety Inspections.

RESOLVED: That a Grant of £350 be paid to the Thorney Hill Community Centre to support the provision of Play Equipment and in particular Insurance and Safety Inspections. **ACTION: GRANT PAYMENT TO BE MADE**

10. PLANNING

i) **DEVELOPMENT OF 100 DWELLINGS; INFORMAL OPEN SPACE; NATURAL RECREATION GREENSPACE AND PLAY AREAS; LAND TO THE SOUTH OF DERRITT LANE, SOPLEY**

<https://planning.newforest.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTAB=documents&keyVal=NEWFO DCAPR 214898>

The Acting Clerk reported that a meeting with NFDC had been arranged for Wednesday, 23rd September 2021 to discuss this application. It was unanimously agreed that in the context of the process for reaching a decision on this application and the availability of Members of the Parish Council a request should be made to re-schedule the meeting. New Information was becoming available which would shape the response from the Parish Council and in particular details relating to flooding and the pumping station. It was, therefore; **RESOLVED:** That the Acting Clerk request NFDC to re-schedule the meeting for early October, 2021. **ACTION: ACTING CLERK TO RE-ARRANGE MEETING DATE**

ii) **CALL FOR SITES AS PART OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW BY NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL (OUTSIDE THE NATIONAL PARK)**

<https://newforest.gov.uk/article/2766/Call-for-sitesDraft>

In view of the recent development at Heatherstone Grange and the current proposal for an additional 100 dwellings on the south side of Derritt Lane it was felt that the current infrastructure would not support any further development and that New Forest District Council should be recommended not to include further sites for development of 100 or more houses within the Parish of Sopley in the second Phase of the Local Plan Review.

RESOLVED: That the Acting Clerk respond to the Call for Sites accordingly and advise NFDC that the Parish Council do not consider that there are any sites within the Parish Boundary suitable for further development and that the current infrastructure would make such development unsustainable. **ACTION: ACTING CLERK TO SUBMIT COMMENTS TO NFDC**

iii) **NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK DESIGN GUIDE – SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/consultations

RESOLVED: That the Document be noted for information. **ACTION: NOTED BY ALL PRESENT**

11. Heatherstone Grange:

Heatherstone Grange Allotments: The Allotment site was well used and a welcomed addition to the facilities within the Parish

Children's Swing: The addition of the swing had been welcomed by residents and provided an additional facility for the younger children locally.

Benches/Picnic tables - These had now been ordered as previously agreed by the Parish Council.

NFDC had agreed to the proposed siting of the benches/tables. **ACTION: 1. REPORT NOTED**

BY ALL PRESENT. 2. PAYMENT BE MADE TO "REFORM PLASTICS" £1300 EXC VAT

12. Shirley Allotments update: Cllr. Eccles provided an update on the ongoing discussions relating to these allotments. In particular he referred to the rental value of the site which was currently under review. The historical income from the site was being researched to bring the invoicing up to date.

RESOLVED: That the Report be received. **ACTION: CLLR ECCLES TO ARRANGE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS REGARDING THE SHIRLEY ALLOTMENT SITE.**

13. BURIAL BOARD REPORT.

Cllr. Brake had prepared a report for discussion which included a number of recommendations. The report had been circulated to all Members of the Council prior to the meeting. The report provided an update on the scope of work taking place and highlighted the current condition of the cemetery and of its administration.

RESOLVED: i) That the trees and overgrowth in the section behind the front wall be completely cleared to avoid further strain and future costly damage to the listed wall and that quotations be obtained for this work to be carried out. (Once cleared the area would provide potential for more interments).

- ii) That a quotation be obtained from a specialist contractor to repair the back wall (onto the extension). NB. Due to the large amount of repointing required the Contractor be asked to quote on the basis of the Parish Council providing a semi-skilled worker to assist with the work and also for the work to be undertaken entirely by the Contractor. **ACTION BY ACTING CLERK/CLLR. BRAKE**
- iii) That the offer received from the Bible College Students to assist with the clearance of the overgrowth in Sections 2 and 4 be accepted, subject to satisfactory Risk Assessments and quotations be obtained for any additional work required. **ACTION BY ACTING CLERK/CLLR BRAKE**
- iv) That approval be given for the purchase of a harness for the strimmer and helmet protection (estimated cost £35) ACTION: **CLLR BRAKE TO PURCHASE AGREED EQUIPMENT**
- v) That a new Burial register be purchased. ACTION: **CLLR BRAKE TO OBTAIN COSTS**
- vi) That training be approved to improve the administration of the Burial Ground. (Estimated cost £185)
- vii) That the Acting Clerk be asked to confirm whether the Council is a Member of the Burial Authority Advisory Body and if not whether Membership would provide support to the ongoing administration of the Burial Ground. **ACTION: ACTING CLERK TO OBTAIN COSTS OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE ICCM**
- viii) That provision be made within future Budgets for the ongoing maintenance and administrative costs including the Review of Charges on an annual basis. **ACTION: ACTING CLERK/CLLR BRAKE TO INCLUDE ESTIMATE IN BUDGET 2022/23**

The meeting recorded their thanks for the support received from Cynthia Hiscock in the administration of the Burial Ground. **NOTED**

14. PARISH HALL COMMITTEE REPORT (Cllr. Eccles)

Cllr Eccles reported that he had requested information regarding the reopening of the Parish Hall Post Covid. He would report further to the next meeting.

Some errors had been identified relating, to the Parish Hall, on both the Charity Commission Website and the Parish Website and steps were being taken to rectify this.

The Parish Hall Committee were also discussing the administration of Hall Booking Systems to Improve the visibility and use of the Hall.

A review of the financial position of the Hall would also be undertaken.

In conclusion he felt that details of the responsibility regarding legionella within the water systems should be undertaken. The Acting Clerk was asked to obtain further information. **ACTION: ACTING CLERK TO ADVISE HALL COMMITTEE REGARDING LEGIONELLA RESPONSIBILITIES**

15. PARISH FOOTPATHS & RIGHTS OF WAY ISSUES: (Cllr. Shutler)

The following matters were identified for future discussion:

- The viability of providing a safe footpath from the Wyatt Homes site along Derritt Lane
- Shirley Common – Cut along the footpath as part of the ongoing maintenance of the Common. **ACTION: ACTING CLERK AGENDA ITEM TO BE INCLUDED FOR NEXT MEETING**

16. HIGHWAYS & TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ISSUES: (Cll. Rawstron/Shutler)

The meeting noted that a Partnership Scheme with Hampshire County Council had been

Considered whereby work would be undertaken by HCC if financed by the Parish Council. Further information would be needed to enable further discussion to take place. **ACTION: ACTING CLERK TO MONITOR SITUATION AND REPORT TO COUNCIL WHEN APPROPRIATE.**

17. OUTSTANDING PAYMENTS:

The Acting Clerk reported that he had identified the following outstanding payments:

PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT (£)
UK DEBT MANAGEMENT	Loan Repayment (DD)	1441.00
Zoom Meetings	On Line Meetings (DD)	14.39
HALC	LCPD Membership	192.00
Came and Co	Insurance Renewal	1989.18
Thorney Hill Play Area	Insurance and Inspections	350.00
	TOTAL	3986.57

ACTION: BANK SIGNATORIES TO MAKE PAYMENTS LISTED

- 18. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS: RESOLVED:** That pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act that Members of the Public and Press be now excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that publicity may be prejudicial to the public interest or because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

- 19. Clerk to the Council:** The meeting was advised on the implications during the period that the Clerk to the Council was on sick leave. **RESOLVED:** That the terms and conditions of the Clerk to the Council's Contract of Employment be honoured and that appropriate payments be made during her absence on sick leave. **ACTION: ACTING CLERK/CHAIR TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS**

- 20. Appointment of Locum Clerk:** The Chairman reported that advice had been obtained from HALC regarding the appointment of a Locum Clerk during the absence of the Clerk to the Council. Mr. Edwin Macknamara had been undertaking the role of Acting Clerk since the 31st August, 2021 at the rate of £13 per hour. Hampshire Association of Local Councils had been consulted and they advised that a temporary contract or contract for services be entered into to cover the period of absence of the Clerk to the Council/RFO.
RESOLVED: That the appointment of Mr. Edwin Macknamara as the Acting Clerk effective from the 31st August, 2021 at the rate of £13 per hour be approved subject to the terms and conditions of such an appointment being in accordance with the recommendations of the Hampshire Association of Local Councils and for a temporary period during the absence/recovery of the Clerk to the Council/RFO. **ACTION: CHAIR TO AGREE TERMS WITH ACTING CLERK**

Date of next full council meeting Thursday 18th November 2021.

Meeting closed 9.45pm.