

Minutes of the Yardley Hastings Parish Council

Wednesday 27th October 2021, at 7.30pm, the Memorial Hall

Present: Ms D. Smith (*Chairman*), and Messrs A. Willis, C. Pickering, D. Winter, J. Quilter, A. Rowton, R. Houghton and M. Cooke.

Clerk: Mr G. Gill Public: Four Councillors: None

140./21 Apologies

None.

141./21 Public Participation

The Chairman said she was proposing to take item 150/21 (a) followed by item 149 at this point. This was agreed.

Item 150/21 (a) – Litter

Mrs S Clark, who had written to the Council asking that consideration be given to the installation of a litter bin near to the bus stop in Bedford Road East, addressed the meeting. She had previously contacted the Council about litter in the area and although the position had improved when the local authority had issued keys to control the use of their wheelie waste bins, she and her husband were still clearing up items such as coffee cups, crisp packets etc which were discarded into their boundary hedge / left on the wall of their property, adjacent to the village stores. It was noted that one of the commercial waste bins in this area was recently observed to be overflowing and although this sometimes happened, Mrs Clark did not feel that this was the cause of the litter problem.

As any bin that might be provided would require permission, the pavement being part of the public highway, it was agreed to contact WNC to enquire whether approval might be given for a bin in this area. In the meantime, the situation would be kept under review. It was also noted that businesses in the area do sweep the frontages. (*Mr and Mrs Clark then left the meeting*).

Item 149 – The Leys Development

Mrs K. Holden addressed the meeting and observed that she and her fellow residents of The Leys were aware that Francis Jackson Homes would shortly be resuming their building operations on the adjacent site. They were concerned that the immediate consequence of this would be that the residents would be deprived of the parking spaces which they had hitherto enjoyed on the north side of the carriageway of Northampton Road between Nos 1 and 16 The Leys. In reply the Clerk observed that local authorities generally were concerned to ensure that developers properly fulfilled their obligations to carry out alterations and improvements to the highway which were included as specific conditions in the grant of planning permissions. The way this was done was to require developers to complete these works before constructing any dwellings. The Parish Council had learnt that Francis Jackson Homes, not being approved highway contractors themselves, had recently invited tenders from a number of approved contractors, in the hope and expectation that a contract would be awarded to a company who would start operations early in the new year. Until that contract was signed it would not be possible to have any meaningful conversations about the day-to-day arrangements involved in its performance. Inevitably there would be a degree of disruption, but this would only be temporary, and in due course the Parish Council would be very happy to make representations on behalf of local residents to try to ensure that such disruption was minimised. It was likely that a temporary traffic management scheme would need to be put into operation, and the Parish Council had already put forward a suggestion that this should include one-way working along Northampton Road.

The Chairman reported that the previous week she and the Clerk had met with Mark Henderson of Compton Estates and Paul Johnson of Francis Jackson Homes. They had been reassured that both parties were concerned to ensure so far as possible that the concerns of local residents were taken into consideration. Mark Henderson had given an assurance that he would soon be writing in formal terms to the various residents of The Leys whose properties currently had a boundary against the field to the north, to offer them a vehicular right of way from that boundary, across the Estate's land, to the public highway in Northampton Road. The Chairman also reported that they had discussed the possibility of arranging a Community Display, on a date to be agreed early in the New Year, which would give Francis Jackson Homes and the Compton Estate an opportunity to showcase their plans. It was agreed that this possibility should be pursued. Mark Henderson had confirmed that Western Power Distribution had agreed to bring the substation at the rear of the Rose & Crown down to ground level, and "underground" the various overhead cables in the vicinity which currently crossed the site of the proposed new sports field. *(Mrs Holden then left the meeting).*

142./21 WNC Councillors' Reports

None

143./21 Members' Declarations of Interest for items on the Agenda

None.

144./21 Approval of Minutes of last Parish Council meeting held 5th October

The Minutes were approved on the proposal of Alan Willis, seconded by Max Cooke and signed by the Chairman.

145./21 Matters arising from Minutes

(Items 56./21, 104./21 and 125./21) The Clerk reported that he had still not received any written expressions of interest in relation to the three casual vacancies.

(Items 117./21 and 125./21) The Clerk reported that Gigaclear were offering a "Community Hub" to the village - a Gigaclear connection to a nominated building within the Parish. It was agreed that the Memorial Hall was the most appropriate building to take advantage of this offer, and Councillors encouraged Mr R. Houghton, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Memorial Hall Management Committee, to pursue it.

(Item 101./21) It was noted that Councillor Stephen Clarke had now received advice from the Assistant Area Manager responsible for overseeing Highway's maintenance of grass verges. All mowing had now been completed for the current season. Parishes were normally mowed three times a year, sometimes four, dependant on the time of the first cut and weather conditions through the spring / summer period. If there was a lot of rain and sunny periods prior to April, resulting in the grass growing quicker, the maintenance team might have to undertake an early cut, potentially necessitating an additional fourth cut at the end of the season in September.

146./21 Finance

- (a) Approval of the half-yearly financial statement and the half-yearly report of the internal auditor
Councillors considered the half-yearly financial statement, previously circulated, showing the income and expenditure to 30th September. The Clerk reported that because Mr M. Cooke had been away, he had given the books directly to the Council's internal auditor immediately on receipt of the October bank statements. She had drawn attention to two errors in in Item 7./21 (g) of the Minutes of the Council's April meeting: (1) the figure for the VAT paid to Playdale was

wrongly stated, and should have read: £2,743.08, and (2) the figure for NorthantsCALC's Annual Membership Subscription was wrongly stated and should have read: £374.14. Otherwise, her report was clear. The statement and the internal auditor's report were both approved. (*Copy statement attached*).

(b) Approval of the invoice received from J. Garrard & Allen (re: Registration of Lease)

The Chairman reported that she was now anticipating a reply from J. Garrard & Allen in advance of the Council's November meeting.

Action: Ms D. Smith

(c) Review and advertising of the Grass Cutting contract (Recreation Ground)

The Clerk circulated copies of the existing contract and a draft advertisement for the new contract (observing that this was identical with the advertisement agreed in connection with the current contract - with the sole exception of the quoted dates). He observed that the contract was a "contract for services", meaning that the contractor would not become an "employee" of the Council for the purposes of PAYE, and that the contract envisaged two cuts per calendar month between 1st March and 31st October. It was agreed that no changes to the terms of the contract were required. Ms D. Smith said she would include the advertisement in the December edition of the Village Newsletter and also arrange for it to be included in the December edition of the Parish Magazine. The Clerk said he would post copies of the advertisement on local notice boards, and send invitations to tender to the contractors in the locality who were offering grass-cutting services.

Action: Clerk, Ms D. Smith

(d) Budget for the financial year 2022/23 – First draft

Councillors considered the draft budget previously circulated by the Clerk. The Clerk observed that this was only a first draft, and that many of the figures quoted were speculative at this stage. He noted that the insurance premium paid by Council in the current financial year had been £900 over budget, and that in each of the last ten years the Council's expenditure had consistently exceeded the Precept. Over the course of the last ten years the Council had received in the region of £80k in the form of grants (including a "windfall" payment of £10k), and there was no guarantee that this stream of income could be maintained. The £10k "windfall" payment had hitherto been kept as a "special reserve" towards the cost of constructing a sports pavilion on the Council's proposed new sports field behind The Leys, but this had now been used as a contribution towards the cost of the new play equipment in the Recreation Ground.

(e) Report of payments made by Standing Order and Direct Debit since the previous meeting

SSE 20/10/21	Street Lighting – September (By Direct Debit)	NET: £100.18 VAT: £5.00	105.18
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(f) Payment by cheque of accounts received

G. Gill	Clerk's remuneration – October (to include backdated element)		324.00
Brown & Barden	Grass cutting - October	NET: £170.00 VAT: £34.00	204.00

Mr J. Quilter proposed, Mr M. Cooke seconded, and it was agreed that the above accounts be paid.

Action: Clerk

147./21 Planning Applications

(a) WNS/2021/1560/MAF - Variation of Condition 8 (Parking and Turning Provision) of planning permission reference S/2021/0700/MAF – Change of Use of land from agricultural to recreational use (resubmission of S/2013/1594/MAF & S/2018/1167/MAF)

Councillors noted the observations made by the Clerk at the previous meeting (*Item 127./21(a)*). It was agreed that the Council had no objection to the proposed variation.

Action: Clerk

- (b) WNS/2021/1746/FUL - Demolition of existing greenhouse and single storey extension and construction of new single storey extension - 2 The Square

It was agreed that the Council had no objection to the proposed development. **Action: Clerk**

148./21 Recreation Ground

The Clerk advised that following receipt of the grant monies promised in relation to the purchase of the Goalposts (£434.37) the balance of the Grant remaining unclaimed would be £3,267.16, and that to take advantage of this the Council would need to spend a further £1,089.05 of its own money, to purchase equipment to the value of £4,356.21 (net of VAT).

- (a) Signage

A number of Councillors indicated that they had seen instances of signage which were “positive” rather than “negative” in tone, and it was agreed that the theme of any new signage should be to encourage “good” behaviour, rather than threatening sanctions for “bad” behaviour. The Chairman encouraged Councillors to circulate photos of signage in situ elsewhere the wording of which had been composed according to this principle. **Action: All Councillors**

- (b) Development of the tarmac area

The Clerk reported that he had received confirmation from the WNC’s Grants Officer that the proposed “kick against wall” did fall within the definition for the grant funded project, and was therefore eligible for grant funding. The Grants Officer was also happy for the grant claim to be based on the quote received from “Action Play and Leisure” (in the sum of £2,940.00 + VAT). The Chairman reported that on Monday afternoon she, the Clerk, Mr J. Quilter and Mr C. Pickering had met on site with Andrew Wallace, a member of the WNC’s Healthy Communities Team (with responsibility for Leisure Facilities). He had advised that there was no compelling reason why the new wall should or should not be positioned in any particular location, and the consensus of the parties attending on site had been that the most suitable location was against the edge of the tarmac parallel to the Bedford Road. On the proposal of Mr C. Pickering, seconded by Mr J. Quilter, this proposed location was agreed (on a show of hands). Mr Pickering reported that he had arranged a meeting on site the following Wednesday with a representative of Action Play and Leisure, who would be bringing with him samples of the materials to be used in the construction. The Chairman, the Clerk and Mr J. Quilter all said that they would be able to attend this meeting, and it was agreed that if this meeting was satisfactory the Clerk was authorised to formally accept Action Play and Leisure’s quote. The Clerk said he would also notify Mark Henderson of this proposed addition to the play equipment, and ask for the Estate’s formal permission, as required by the terms of the Council’s lease. **Action: Clerk**

- (c) Installation of goalposts

Mr D. Winter confirmed that he was happy for the new goalposts to be delivered to the Yardley Hastings Garage.

It was agreed that the hedge against Bedford Road needed to be cut, and Mr D. Winter was authorised to find and instruct a contractor to carry out this work. **Action: Mr D. Winter**

It was noted that Brian Osborne’s latest report was clear.

149./21 The Leys Development

(See Item 141 above)

150./21 Correspondence

- (a) *(See item 141 above)*

- (b) Councillors noted the contents of an email received from the Environment Agency in reply to an email sent by the Clerk. The Agency’s contractors had attended in the village the previous week,

using their trimmers to cut the vegetation on the banks of the Grendon Brook, and the Clerk's email had expressed concern that the work that they had done was not particularly thorough – large areas had been left untouched. The Agency had responded to the effect that the reason why the lower sections of the channel side had not been cut on this occasion was because the workmen had been approached by local residents who had claimed that there were water voles (a protected species) present in the brook. The Agency had also promised that they would investigate this issue with regard to future maintenance. The Clerk was instructed to reply to the Environment Agency in terms encouraging them to carry out such an investigation, since so far as the Council were aware no water voles had actually been observed in the brook for a number of years.

Action: Clerk

151./21 Emergency Plan – Report from the working party

The Chairman advised that she had now completed an online survey as requested by Louis Greco of WNC Emergency Planning Dept and was awaiting further contact with a view to a Zoom meeting taking place. She advised that the survey had requested information as to the Council's Flood Wardens which had been supplied and that, as a consequence, they may be contacted directly with regard to forthcoming training opportunities.

152./21 Highways - Update on outstanding matters

It was noted that in response to Councillor Stephen Clarke's updates to Reports 2392685 and 2801763 (flooding of the carriageway of the main A428) Highways had now confirmed that there were "ongoing drainage investigations taking place in relation to this matter", and that they "hoped to have a conclusion and hopefully a resolution of this matter within 28 days' time". It was further noted that there had yet not been any response from Highways to Councillor Stephen Clarke's update to Report 2520777 (broken storm drain in Chase Park Road).

153./21 Police and Neighbourhood Watch

Mr R. Houghton reported that Northamptonshire Police had commissioned two new "Neighbourhood Beat Buses", which would be touring the County on a regular schedule of stops. However, it was unfortunate that this schedule had not yet been published, as promised, which had meant that the bus's recent visit to Yardley Hastings had been unannounced. There had been recent thefts of catalytic convertors stolen from vehicles in The Square.

154./21 Pocket Park and Millennium Triangle

It was noted that the wildflower area of the Millennium Triangle had now been trimmed. Mr A. Willis said he would now be spreading some more wildflower seeds.

Action: Mr A. Willis

155./21 Street Lighting

It was noted that street light No. 42, in The Square, was not coming on. It was also noted that Aylesbury Mains had recently decided to discontinue their streetlight installation, maintenance and repair services. The Clerk said he would make enquiries with a view to instructing another contractor to carry out the necessary repair.

Action: Clerk

156./21 Councillors' Reports and Concerns

None.

157./21 Future Meeting Dates

Wednesday 17th November, Monday 13th December