

WOODCOTE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Parish Council Virtual Zoom meeting Wednesday 17th February 2021 at 7.30pm.

PC MEMBERS

Chairman	Mr. R. Peirce
Vice Chair	Mr. M. Smith
	Mr. G. Botting
	Mr. S. Lawson
	Mr. R. Fletcher
	Miss. H. Booker
	Mrs. B. Hough-Robbins
	Mr. D. Booth
Parish Clerk	Ms. Jenny Welham

Present District Councillor Lorraine Hillier

1. To receive apologies for absence
Mr. M. Aldridge not present.

2. To Received Declarations of Interest.
None.

3. Public Forum: Opportunity for members of the public to address the Council, the public may also speak about specific items of business as they arise, with the permission of the Chairman.
Four MOP present.

4. To approve Minutes of the Parish Council Virtual Meeting held on 3rd February 2021
Approved as a True Record.

5. Matters arising from those Minutes not on the agenda elsewhere.
None.

6. **Planning Applications** to discuss and agree Councils response.
P21/S0126/FUL (Full Application) Minor. Proposal: Proposed construction of 3m x 30m compacted hardcore access track (retrospective) Address: Bucklebury Wood Goring Heath.

Two members of public spoke on this application giving their objections, which have been sent to SODC. D.Cllr stated that an Ecological Emergency had been declared by SODC and this may help, She will raise with them.. The PC requested District Cllr Hillier to call this application into Planning Committee.

The PC object to this application.

The application site forms part of Birchen Copse which is ancient woodland located to the east of Long Toll and to the south of Green Lane in the parish of Goring Heath, close to the parish boundary with Woodcote. The woodland is located within the Chilterns AONB.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2, Part 6, class E indicates that permitted development rights for woodland allow for development, including the erection, extension or alteration of a building or the formation, alteration or maintenance of a private way – provided that the land is used for forestry and that the development is reasonably necessary for those purposes.

No evidence has been submitted to indicate that the woodland covered by this planning application has ever or will ever be used for forestry purposes nor that the track is reasonably necessary for that purpose.

This section of woodland also has a shed and portaloo erected near to the end of the track, with, again, no evidence that they are reasonably necessary for the purposes of forestry.

According to signage placed on the gate and an adjacent tree, the site purports to be a nature reserve but there is no evidence of management of the area as a nature reserve, indeed the provision of a track and buildings would seem to be at odds with the claim that this is a nature reserve.

This track is an extension of tracks that were installed following approval of planning application P16/S1289/AG. This application was to extend existing woodland tracks in order to facilitate timber extraction. It was claimed that, as part of ongoing woodland management, Birchen Copse was due to be selectively thinned under Forestry Commission felling licence 019/433/15-16 and the existing woodland tracks needed to be improved and extended in order to facilitate timber extraction. The layout and specification of the woodland tracks was designed to allow access to forestry workers into the woodland for the purposes of woodland management operations and for forestry machinery to extract timber produce back to the roadside stacking area.

In reality no forestry operations ever occurred in Birchen Copse, apart from the removal of one or two trees to make room for the tracks which did not previously exist. Soon after the approval of the application, the woodland was split into a number of individual plots which were put up for sale by Woods4Sale. It immediately became apparent that the tracks were designed solely for the purposes of providing vehicular access to the individual plots – as indicated on the Woods4Sale website.

The claims made in the planning application were, therefore, false and this is now being further compounded by the current application to extend the track into this plot.

Woodcote Parish Council, therefore, strongly object to this planning application on the basis that no evidence has been submitted that the track is reasonably necessary for forestry purposes and, therefore, the construction of the track is an unjustified intrusion into this ancient woodland in an AONB. It is also contrary to policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the SODC Local Plan and the policies in the NPPF which seek to protect and enhance the AONB and protect ancient woodland.

6.1 Applications Granted by SODC

None.

6.2 Applications Refused by SODC

None.

6.3 Other Planning Matters

Vice Chairman updated regarding the Chiltern Rise and Garden Centre developments. Tree work will start 20th February in preparation for building to start during March.

7. Finance To approve payments, note receipts.

List of payments 05 Feb to 28th Feb

Date Paid	Payee Name	Amount Paid	Transaction Detail
05/02/2021	HMRC	SO 393.40	Monthly contributions
14/02/2021	Zoom Video	DC 106.88	Zoom software 1 yr
18/02/2021	SODC	TRANSFER 430.56	Dog bins 1/10 - 31/12
18/02/2021	Mr. M. Smith	TRANSFER 28.78	Zoom Jan/Feb 2021
28/02/2021	J. Welham	xxxxxx	Feb Salary
28/02/2021	L. Crocket	xxxxxx	Litter picking Feb
28/02/2021	T. Smallbone	TRANSFER 35.00	War Mem Grdn Feb
		Total Payments	2,638.53

Payments Approved.

Noted no Receipts

7.1 Quotations/Grants received for review/approval.

Quotation from Healthy Buildings to inspect the 4 areas of Asbestos in the Village Hall £199.00.

Approved to proceed.

8. Communications – Review Social Media Policy.

The Clerk had circulated the Draft policy prior to the meeting.

Some comments had been emailed by Cllr. Botting, these were discussed and agreed.

Another change regarding having a separate document stating Service Levels. Clerk to redraft the policy and circulate for review at future meeting.

9. Anti Social Behaviour Group – review recommendations

The Group had circulated an extensive and detailed report prior to the meeting.

The Chairman thanked them for their work on this matter together with producing the detailed report.

The report detailed areas and gave recommended actions, these were discussed as follows;

Greenmore Ponds – addition signage as recommended was agreed. Group to draft suitable wording for signs and circulate prior to costs being obtained.

Parking Area Rushmore Lane

This is in Checkendon Parish, a sign is suggest. Clerk to contact Checkendon PC.

Bus Shelter

The existing shelter on the Goring Rd was reviewed and either alterations recommended or replace with a new shelter. The PC resolved to replace the existing shelter, in due course, with the design suggested in the report, preferably a large shelter. This design to also be replicated for the new shelters for the Reading Rd following the development of Chiltern Rise.

Village Hall

The protection of the hall has many facets. The first one in the report is to prevent people climbing onto the flat roof at the rear of the building. The options offered were anti climb paint with signage, spikes at the point of access to climb onto the roof, a physical barrier along the edge of the roof, example shown.

Resolved to start with anti climb paint and signage. Group to obtain costs for both and report back. Additional cost for installing the paint will need to be costed.

Village Hall Lighting

Recommendations for lighting around the perimeter of the hall and the footpath area at the rear so people walking along the path feel safe.

Resolved and agreed

Light above function room to remain on for longer.

Investigate if proximity sensors on existing lights can be extended.

Additional lighting around the hall particularly to the rear.

Clerk to speak to PC's supplier to obtain quotes.

Car Park – Village Hall

Several options were presented such as barriers, flow plates, height restriction barrier and one way system to be implemented.

There was much discussion around these points and the type of barrier to be considered. Marking of parking bays within the car park was not accepted as this will reduce the number of cars that can park, this had previously been explored by the PC several years earlier.

Two councillors felt that adequate time had not been given to allow the existing improvements, new lighting and hedge reduction, to show if they were a deterrent.

Three councillors felt that barriers would make the rural nature of the area look much more urban and that such a change should be put to the village residents for their views.

A height barrier was generally not accepted.

Concerns expressed regarding unlocking a barrier during the evening and how this could be managed.

Suggested that hall hirers are given the key to the barrier and the premises for their booking as a solution. Some barriers can be opened with a code from a smart phone, however this may not be suitable for all hirers as some may not have smartphones.

Resolved to look at getting more definitive costs for implementing the one way system by with flow plates to the exit nearest the primary school, and costs for barriers.

10. Reports from Other Village Groups – to receive reports from working groups.

NPAG

The draft for the sleeve over the Correspondent had been circulated, a few comments and tweaks required.

Joint meeting of the group and the PC set for 25th February. The Chair expressed that it was important that all members attend as this was the opportunity to review the Draft plan and give inputs for changes, alterations prior too it being present to a full council meeting.

Village Hall

Trustees have agreed to go ahead with architect drawings to facilitate costings.

Building surveyor had carried out survey on 15th February, PC await report.

Village Green

6 new trees had been offered by a resident. The Vice Chairman stated that although the trees were kindly offered free, it is not free as there will be planting costs and the ongoing maintenance of said trees.

The VGC felt that the suggested planting area to shade the play area would create issues. These had also been discussed by the PC and were the same issues, clearing of dead leaves, moss and damp created on the surface, time for canopy to grow to offer sufficient shade, also potential damage to the path. The resident does not want to offer the trees for planting anywhere else.

The PC do not wish to proceed with this offer.

Cllr Botting suggest that shading the play area in some form be added to the project list, this was agreed.

Policing – nothing new to report.

Youth – the Chairman thanked Cllr. Hough-Robbins for her emails on this matter, and the Pc support that she now engages with the schools and Henley College.

11. Other Matters for Chairman to consider any matters arising after agenda published.

Clerk advised that the resident in the Close was still asking for the VH car park lights to be switched off overnight although they had been angled down lower.

The PC felt that they had actioned lowering the angle of the lights but they cannot do anymore with the lights and wish for them to remain on overnight.

Cllr. Lawson asked if there had been any response to the Reservoir site being made more secure.

Clerk advise that the owner does not usually reply but last time a letter was sent the fencing was fixed. He also asked how other Parish Council obtain funds for new village halls. The Vice Chair advised that the cost to replace would be in excess of two million pounds and maintenance costs would not be as much.

12. Correspondence – to consider & review any received.

None.

13. To note date of the next PC meeting: Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 3rd March 2021.

Meeting closed at 22.05

Signed.....Date.....