

**Ruscombe Parish Council**

**Minutes of Meeting of the Parish Council**

**Held via Zoom Video call due to the Covid 19 virus outbreak**

**On Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 at 7:30pm**

**Councillors Present:** Mr J May (Chair after item 99/21), Mrs C Bulman (Chair until item 99/21) Mr M Evans, Mr P Cassidy, Mr G Merrick, Mr G Howe and Mrs J Holmes.

**Twyford Parish Councillor Present:** Mrs L Jarvis

**Members of the public in attendance:** Three members of the public.

**Clerk in attendance:** Mrs R Reid

Mrs Bulman opened the meeting at 7:30pm.

**86/21 Apologies for Absence:** Mr May apologised that he would be late to tonight's meeting.

**87/21 Declaration of Interest:** Mrs Bulman declared that she lives two houses away from the house discussed in planning application 211468.

**88/21 Minutes:** Minutes for 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021 circulated via email. Proposed by Mr Merrick, seconded by Mr Evans, approved unanimously but not signed due to not being together.

**89/21 Public Comments sent to the Clerk or Councillors:** Three members of the public were in attendance with an interest in the planning application discussion 211468.

**90/21 Co-option Graham Howe:** Proposed by Mr Merrick, seconded by Mrs Holmes and approved unanimously.

**91/21 Update from Twyford Parish Councillor:** Mrs Jarvis updated that TPC have begun their Twyford Growers group. Stephen Conway reported at their recent TPC meeting to say that Piggott School did not have enough spaces for the children requiring them and he was working to resolve this. TPC are putting up a speed indicator device on the Hurst Road, there has been a request for a crossing on the Hurst Road and a speed limit reduction on the Wargrave Road. TPC Neighbourhood plan had suggested Springfield Park and Malvern Way should be made Green Spaces, but residents were unsure of the idea because they are spaces to be used by residents only. TPC have returned to face to face meetings but will only be doing their full council meeting for June, all other meetings are cancelled.

**92/21 Annual Parish Meeting Review:** RPC held their APM on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021 via zoom. Alex Cruickshank from Sundew Ecology gave an interesting talk about the biodiversity of Ruscombe. RPC gave thanks to Alex for doing this for them.

**93/21 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020 2021:** Mrs Reid has sent this off to PKF Littlejohn and will await further communication from them.

**94/21 Neighbourhood Plan:** Mrs Reid reported that ONeill Homer have sent back their responses to comments received during Regulation 14. Mr Merrick suggested the NP group should meet to go through what they have suggested. Mrs Reid will organise this.

**95/21 Update from Wokingham Borough Councillors:** Mr Howe updated that he has been made Executive lead for children's services in WBC, RPC congratulated Mr Howe. Mr Howe explained there has been a misunderstanding about Piggott School admission, people had been blaming Charvil Piggott infant school for the lack of spaces but The Piggott's admission numbers were increased to allow for the children coming from Charvil Piggott. Mr Howe also explained that schools will often appear oversubscribed, but the places do

resolve themselves once children going to private schools or grammar schools come out of the admission numbers. WBC will be communicating with parents about school admissions so that parents understand the process better. Mr Howe explained that lots of roads are being considered for reducing their speed and it could be that the speed outside The Piggott is reduced at the peak times of children arriving to and leaving school. Mr Howe reported that covid 19 cases have begun to rise again in the Wokingham area. WBC have meet for their first face to face meeting in the council chamber, 10 executives attended, and others attended online.

**96/21 Parish Council Insurance:** RPC need to renew their insurance. Mrs Reid has been struggling to get the insurance company to progress a claim for a broken noticeboard. Mrs Reid has shared via email the new renewal policy, this explains RPC could choose to fix for 3 years or just renew for one year. Mr Merrick proposed that RPC should renew for 1 year but withhold payment until the insurance company are making progress on the claim, Mr Evans seconded this and the majority of RPC approved. Mr Cassidy felt RPC would be wiser to fix for three years to stop the premium from going up after a claim. Mrs Reid will communicate this decision back to the insurance company.

**97/21 Noticeboard:** As stated in item 96/21.

**98/21 Town and Parish Charter:** WBC have shared this to clerks. The aim is to streamline working between WBC and the Towns and Parishes. WBC would like all towns and parishes to sign up to it. Mrs Reid has requested that all councillors read it and RPC will discuss it in July's meeting.

#### **99/21 CIL money**

Tap for Pennfields land: Mrs Reid shared a quote from Thames Water for £1,862.00 to add Pennfields land onto the watermain. Mrs Reid is meeting Hamblin water on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> June and will report back.

Bin New Road Pond: Mrs Reid received a request from CRoW to supply a bin for a pond, but RPC are unsure which pond they mean. Mrs Reid will ask for further details and if the rubbish at the location is branded to a coffee shop.

#### **Mr May entered the meeting.**

Boundary signs: Mrs Reid has received a quote from WBC to supply white boundary gates. Attaching boundary signs to the white gates Twyford are due to install on London Road will cost £817.64. Single boundary gates at the other boundary locations would cost £3,742.24 and double gates would be £6,388.64. RPC would like to proceed with London Road but not with the others. Mrs Reid will contact the other neighbouring parishes and find out if they would like to share the costs.

#### **100/21 Planning Applications**

211468 1 St James Close: This application was discussed extensively, and the three members of the public voiced their concerns. To summarise the comment submitted to this application: RPC object to this application because:

- 1) 1 St James Close would be noticeably taller than surrounding properties and
- 2) The raised ridge height would allow living space to be created in the roof under the permitted development rules without the requirement of further planning application. All the other properties in St. James Close and Northbury Avenue are single storey hence this property would be materially out of character for the area.
- 3) Allowing living space to be created in the roof would create an overlook into neighbours' gardens and properties on both sides thus denying privacy.

This planning comment is proposed by Mr Merrick, seconded by Mr Evans and approved unanimously.

Coppers: Planning application was granted for two houses, but developers have since withdrawn this application. The site has been left with piles of rubble around, possible bore holes in the ground only covered with boards and the site is only secured by a thin plastic fence. Mrs Reid will ask the planning department to ensure the site is made safe by the developer. If they are unable to help, Mrs Reid will report to environmental health because it is a health and safety risk.

**101/21 St James Churchyard maintenance:** Mr May had gone back to the church to ask about their finances but has not had a reply about these yet. Mr May is aware he omitted to discuss a Pine Tree in the churchyard, it requires maintenance. RPC are supportive of maintaining trees and interested by the amount of work would be required but RPC do still have queries regarding the church's finances because RPC does also have many other projects it had to pay for. RPC are aware that the person who had leased the glebe land opposite the Church have moved on. RPC are still keen to own or lease this land. Mr May will go back to the church to see if we could exchange help with the glebe land and the churchyard.

Mrs Jarvis left the meeting.

**102/21 Tree preservation orders:** RPC are keen to preserve the trees in Ruscombe, many of them are very large and are key to the street scene. Mr Merrick is aware of a Veteran Tree Association. Mrs Reid will reach out to VTA and WC's TPO team to find out their criteria with the expectation RPC will want to put forward some trees to have added protection.

**103/21 Finance:** Payments to consider: -  
Window Flowers £4,831.20: Paid #1/6 2021  
O'Neill Homer £330: Paid #2/6 2021  
Clerk wages and expenses £790.06: Paid #3/6 2021  
Nest pension £58.12: Paid #4/6 2021  
Royal Mail PO Box £360: Paid #5/6 2021  
SSE (May) £29.52: Paid via NatWest Direct Debit.

These payments were proposed by Mrs Holmes, seconded by Mr Cassidy and approved unanimously.

**104/21 Reports from liaison rep:** Mr Evans reported that Ruscombe Road and Ruscombe Lane Neighbourhood Watch group met, they are concerned about Coppers.

#### **105/21 Any other business**

New councillor: RPC do have a vacancy for a councillor. RPC are aware of some people who would like a place on RPC and aware of others they might like to invite to join. Mrs Reid will confirm with electoral services what we could do to fill the vacancy.

Resurfacing roads: Southbury Lane has been resurfaced but potholes have already opened up already. Mrs Reid will ask WBC to go round into Church Lane and resurface that too.

Boards for ponds and wildfire. Mrs Reid will contact Alex Cruikshank to ask about supplying information for some pond boards and contact a local artist about doing drawings for the boards. Mrs Reid will find out costs of benches as there are a couple of locations around Ruscombe that would be nice to add a bench.

Defibrillator Pads: Three out of the four defibrillators' pads in the Ruscombe defibrillators are due to expire at the end of July 2021. Mrs Reid will order three new pads for £129.60 including VAT and claim back on expenses in July. This is proposed by Mr May and seconded by Mr Merrick and approved unanimously.

Clerk working Hours: Mrs Reid needs to increase her hours to complete all the tasks RPC would like. For June Mrs Reid will note down all the hours she works and RPC will pay them

all. Then RPC will consider how many hours to set Mrs Reid's contact to or to set Mrs Reid usual working hours across each week. This is proposed by Mr Merrick, seconded by Mr Evans and approved unanimously.

Mr May closed the meeting at 9:42pm.

**Date of next meeting: Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

Chair Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_