

## 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> September 2020 at 7:30pm

**Councillors Present:** Mr J May (Chairman), Mr M Evans, Mr P Cassidy, Mrs C Bulman, Mrs J Holmes and Mr G Merrick.

**Clerk in attendance:** Mrs R Reid

Mr May opened the meeting at 7:33pm.

**115/20 Apologies for Absence:** Mr G Howe, Mrs K Robson and Twyford Parish Councillor Mrs L Jarvis.

**116/20 Declaration of interest:** Mr May and Mr Evans declared that they are directors of the Campaign to Protect Rural Wokingham (CPRW) and Mrs Bulman declared that she lives very close to planning application 201975.

**117/20 Minutes:** Minutes for 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 circulated via email. Proposed by Mr May, seconded by Mrs Holmes, approved unanimously but not signed due to not being together.

**118/20 Public Forum:** No questions or comments given to Mrs Reid or councillors.

**119/20 Liaison with Twyford Parish Council:** Mr Cassidy reported that he had attended TPC meeting. TPC were discussing the government change in planning permission. The Government are wanting councils to increase the number of annual house builds from 800 to 1600. It is expected that they will still protect the Green belt. RPC are also aware of changes to planning permission but are unsure of what impact it will have. Currently RPC are consulted on planning applications but not consulted at prior approval stage, in the future planning applications could only need prior approval but RPC are unsure if they will be consulted.

**120/20 Update from Wokingham Borough Councillors:** Mr Howe sent an update via email to say that WBC are working hard to re-open towns after Covid lockdown and that they are making good progress.

**121/20 Annual Governance and Accountability Return AGAR:** Mrs Reid reported that PKF Littlejohn have completed their external audit and RPC have received the certificate to state they have met all the requirements. Mrs Reid has uploaded this onto the RPC website.

#### **122/20 Planning Applications**

##### **201881 and 202015 Stanlake Farm Cottage, Twyford**

**201881:** No comment

**202015:** Ruscombe Parish Council would like it noted that this outbuilding is a similar age to the main house and RPC are surprised it is not included in the Grade II listing with the house.

If this application is approved, RPC would like to see that its development is completed with the same high standard that a Grade II listed building would, to preserve its historic importance.

**201975 1 St James Close, Ruscombe**

Ruscombe Parish Council object to this application for the following reasons:

The front extension is out of keeping with the street scene and with the staggered front build line on the street.

The proposed extension appears to be over the 50% extension limit.

The rear of the extension is very close to the property's boundary and the neighbouring property.

**201680 Coppers:** Mrs Bulman asked if there was any update following a change to this planning application. The applicant demonstrated that turning cars in the parking spaces would be possible. RPC agreed via email that that proposed plan was dependant on each house parking perfectly to allow the other to turn and that they still felt the proposed plan was overdevelopment of the site. Mrs Bulman suggested could RPC have asked that reverse drive visibility mirrors were installed if the application were to be approved. Mr Evans explained that they can be contentious between neighbours because to work best they need to be opposite the driveway requiring them. Therefore RPC did not feel this could be a requirement of the application.

**123/20 Neighbourhood Plan:** Mr Evans updated that RPC have received feedback from WBC. RPC can choose to go through the comments or ask O'Neill Homer to go through them and make recommendations to RPC. RPC have used all their scheduled days work with O'Neill Homer but allocated days could be brought forward but this would cost RPC more than the original quote. Mrs Reid will ask how much more with the expectation that RPC will be asking O'Neill Homer to review the comments from WBC.

**124/20 Parish Council website:** Mrs Reid will investigate two self build website options, Google sites or Wix and report back to RPC.

**125/20 CIL money**

**Bridge painting:** Mrs Reid reported that Volker Highways have quoted approximately £9,000 to repaint the bridge, this included the price of closing the road but wanted RPC to take responsibility for the road closure, which does not comply with Health and Safety Law. The other two quotes were from painting companies but they do not have any experience of this type of working conditions. Therefore RPC do need the larger type of highways contractors. Mr Merrick suggested that RPC could clad the concrete bridge with pre-painted metal sheets, similar to a bridge in Woodley. Mrs Reid will ask for permission from Network Rail and ask if they have a contractor who would quote to paint. Mrs Reid will ask Woodley Town Council if they recall which metal fabricator they used.

**Land opposite St James Church:** Mrs Reid reported that the diocese of Oxford do not want to sell the land but might consider a medium term lease of the land. Mr May is aware that they have currently leased the land out to someone keeping ponies, it is understood that this is a short term lease. Mrs Reid will communicate back to the diocese that RPC would be interested in leasing the land. RPC are aware that the hedge along this land is in need of some attention, Mr Cassidy will ask the CROW team to undertake this work. This is proposed by Mr May, seconded by Mrs Holmes and approved unanimously.

**Land at Pennfields:** Mrs Reid have received draft lease documents. RPC need a solicitor to manage the land transfer on their behalf. Mr Merrick will go into Ackers in Twyford and discuss the situation with them. Mr Cassidy reported that CR Landscapes have provided two different options of how to landscape the land and quotes to accompany. They have also provided a quote for the bee highway. Mrs Reid will ensure these plans are wheelchair accessible. Mrs Reid will seek a third quote to supply three quotes before a final decision is made. Mrs Reid will ask Thames Water if a water tap can be installed on site and investigate pest management to remove the rats.

**Biodiversity report ideas:** Mrs Reid shared a biodiversity report provided to RPC for use in the Neighbourhood plan that contains possible biodiversity aspiration ideas RPC could use for future CIL projects. Mr Merrick has received a request from the CROW team to investigate the ownership of a pond south of Castle End business park. Mrs Holmes will ask a contact if they know the ownership. Mr Cassidy will ask CROW if there is anything that can be done to make the other ponds more prominent.

**126/20 Finance:** Payments to consider: -

PKF Littlejohn (External Audit) £360: Paid via Unity bank

BBOWT £46: RPC will set up an annual direct debit via Unity bank

Clerk wages and expenses £584.93: Paid via Unity bank

Nest pension £48.32: Paid by direct debit via NatWest

SSE (August) TBC: Paid by direct debit via NatWest

These payments are proposed by Mr May, seconded by Mr Evans and approved unanimously.

**127/20 Reports from liaison rep:**

**NAG:** Mr Evans reported that NAG are expected to meet again soon.

**128/20 Any other business**

Mrs Reid reported that she had become aware that the PO Box has not been working because RPC are missing an SSE statement (Mrs Reid will request another) and a NatWest statement (Mr May will print one from online).

TPC clerk (Lucy Moffatt) contacted Mrs Reid last week because she thought RPC's SSE bills should be cheaper with LED lamps. Mrs Reid confirmed with SSE that they had not been updated of the change to LED lamps. Mrs Reid has requested an inventory from WBC street lighting team, once this is received SSE should be able to rebate up to 14 months excess payments.

Mrs Reid is also reapplying for the land registry because RPC did not receive an outcome from the first set of applications.

Mr May closed the meeting at 9:28pm.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chair initials \_\_\_\_\_

RPC September 2020