

Ruscombe Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Parish Council

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

On Wednesday 7th April 2021 at 7:30pm

Councillors Present: Mr J May (Chair), Mr M Evans, Mr P Cassidy, Mr G Merrick and Mrs J Holmes.

Clerk in attendance: Mrs R Reid

Mr May opened the meeting at 7:31pm.

49/21 Apologies for Absence: Mrs K Robson, Mrs C Bulman, Mr G Howe and Twyford Parish Councillor Mrs L Jarvis.

50/21 Declaration of Interest: None

51/21 Minutes: Minutes for 3rd March 2021 circulated via email. Proposed by Mr Merrick, seconded by Mrs Holmes, approved unanimously but not signed due to not being together.

52/21 Public Comments sent to the Clerk or Councillors: Mr Merrick has had contact with a resident after they received notification of a Tree Preservation Order on the trees at the end of the gardens in St James Close, the resident was surprised by the area of the TPO because they and RPC though TPO's were on individual trees not areas. Mrs Reid informed RPC that she has spoken to the WBC officer who has written the letter to residents and the TPC is a renewal of an existing TPO covering the area. With this knowledge Mrs Reid will report a potential breach of the existing TPO because the resident believes trees have recently been cut down.

Mr May has also had contact with a resident to complain about a commercial vehicle being parked in the conservation area. RPC have recently become aware that the parking of commercial vehicles is subject to planning approval. Mrs Reid will ask planning enforcement to check this situation.

53/21 Update from Twyford Parish Councillor: No one present and Mr Cassidy had missed TPC meeting.

54/21 Update from Wokingham Borough Councillors: No one present but Mrs Reid will forward anything received.

55/21 Ruscombe Parish Council Elections: RPC are still waiting to find out if RPC will have an election or not. Mrs Reid will let councillors know as soon as she is informed.

56/21 Annual Parish Meeting & Annual Members Meeting: RPC Annual Parish Meeting will be held via zoom on 27th May 2021 because as per the risk assessment it is unsafe for RPC to meet because of lack of suitably sized facilities. The date for the Annual Members meeting is not yet set because this is dependant on if RPC have an election.

57/21 End of year Audit: Mrs Reid has confirmed with David Weller that he is able to do RPC's internal audit at the end of April via online. Mrs Reid will have the AGAR (annual Governance and Accountability Return) report for signing in May 2021 meeting.

58/21 Planning Applications: Two planning applications (210796 and 210993) came into RPC on 7th April but due to lack of time for councillors to look at applications, these will be postponed to a later date.

59/21 Neighbourhood Plan: Mrs Reid reported that RPC have received comments on the draft Neighbourhood Plan and that there is just under two weeks left until the consultation closes. After that O'Neill Homer would like to be present to discuss the comments and moving the plan forward to the next stage.

60/21 WBC Local Plan Green Spaces: RPC have received three letters from WBC to inform RPC that they would like to include three spaces owned by RPC in their Local Plan Green Spaces, the three locations are the crossroads pond, Castle End Road pond and the green in front of the Church. Mrs Reid will respond back to say RPC do not own the green at the front of the church but RPC do agree the two ponds. This is proposed by Mr Merrick, seconded by Mrs Holmes and approved unanimously.

61/21 St James Churchyard maintenance: Mr May was contacted by the caretaker for St James Church to ask if RPC could help with costs of upkeep for the church yard because it is too much work for the volunteers currently doing it and very costly to pay someone to do it. Mrs Reid will check the rules about a parish council supporting a religious group and report back to RPC. Mr May will ask St James Church for more information about what is required.

62/21 Noticeboard: Mrs Reid has spoken with the insurance company and RPC could make a claim for the cost of a replacement, there would be a £100 excess to pay. Mr May proposed that RPC do make a claim and replace the damaged noticeboard with the same as the existing ones from Greenbarnes for £1,461.60, this is seconded by Mr Cassidy and approved unanimously.

63/21 CIL money

Streetlights New Road and Pennfields/Street light government scheme: Mrs Reid has received a quote from Volker Highways via WBC for £12,943.21 to install two new streetlamps on New Road and one on Pennfields. RPC are aware that the government have said they will pledge more money to install new streetlighting to make the streets safer. Mrs Reid has asked WBC Street lighting team and Safer Communities Team about how RPC could access this but neither team were able to help. RPC wants these lights to improve safety therefore Mr Merrick proposed that RPC should not wait for some potential government funding and should proceed with the quote from Volker Highways now, this is seconded by Mr Cassidy and approved unanimously.

Hanging baskets & Planters: Mrs Reid has walked round all the locations proposed for hanging baskets and oval planter with Window Flowers, all locations were suitable and this will cost £4332+VAT. This is proposed by Mr Cassidy, seconded by Mr Merrick and approved unanimously. The brackets for hanging baskets will remain in place so RPC would have an annual cost of approximately £3,000 to refill hanging baskets and planters.

Tap for Pennfields land: Thames Water needs an up front payment of £50 to undertake a survey for installation of a tap on Pennfields land, Mrs Reid will pay this and then claim back on expenses. This is proposed by Mr May, seconded by Mrs Holmes and approved unanimously.

Boundary sign: Mrs Reid has made contact with SSE about moving a fence to allow a boundary sign to be installed on Ruscombe Lane but SSE are yet to confirm if they/RPC could do this.

64/21 Finance: Payments to consider: -

Information commissioner £40: Paid via Unity Cheque #300001

Edge IT £256.80: Paid Unity #1/4 2021

Unity Bank £18: Paid Unity direct debit

Clerk wages and expenses £712.24: Paid Unity #2/4 2021

Nest pension £52.04: Paid Unity #3/4 2021

SSE (March) £32: Paid Natwest direct debit

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

65/21 Reports from liaison rep:

Neighbourhood Action Group: Mr Evans reported that NAG have decided to postpone meetings until they can meet in person in June.

Mr May closed the meeting at 9:16pm.

Chair Signed: _____

Date: _____