

## Ruscombe Parish Council

### Minutes of Meeting of the Parish Council

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

On Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 7:30pm

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

**Wokingham Borough Councillor Present:** Mr John Halsall

**Others present:** Jade Kidd Maidenhead Advertiser

**Clerk in attendance:** Mrs R Reid

Mr May opened the meeting at 7:35pm.

**129/20 Apologies for Absence:** Mr G Howe and Twyford Parish Councillor Mrs L Jarvis.

**130/20 Declaration of interest:** Mr May and Mr Evans declared that they are directors of the Campaign to Protect Rural Wokingham (CPRW).

**131/20 Minutes:** Minutes for 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020 circulated via email. Proposed by Mr Evans, seconded by Mr Merrick, approved unanimously but not signed due to not being together.

**132/20 Public Forum:** RPC and WBC have been made aware of some difficult neighbouring relationships within Pennfields. WBC housing are aware and are working to improve the situation. Mrs Reid will invite the local police to join an RPC council meeting so RPC can better understand how to advise residents with this type of situation.

**133/20 Update from Wokingham Borough Councillors:** Mr John Halsall reported that although cases of Covid 19 are rising in the borough, they are still generally low. WBC have worked hard to re-open services, but it would not be safe for them to open any more. WBC are working hard to facilitate Test and Trace. Test and Trace starts at a national level, with testing and notifying people of the test results and contacting people via the test and trace mobile phone application. It then comes down to a local level to trace people that have had contact with someone who has tested positive. WBC will do this by telephoning people and if they do not get an answer, WBC will visit people to ensure they are aware of the contact and requirement to self-isolate. WBC has the lowest level of deprivation rating in the UK and therefore WBC are the lowest funded borough in the UK. This poses many difficulties for WBC to manage their budget and Covid 19 has bought lots of new work that needs to be funded by them. WBC are doing their best to support business and have purchased the freehold for two local supermarkets to provide WBC with another source of income. WBC has 1,200 staff and WBC are working to them physically safe and keep their jobs safe. This has meant many of them have been redeployed to work in other areas of the council,

including the Test and Trace service and Adult's and Children's services because there has been an increase in demand for those services as a result of Covid 19 and the national Lockdown. WBC have used the quiet time during lockdown to complete road works. Mr Halsall also talked about two government white paper's, "Changes to Planning guidance" and "Planning for the future". Changes to Planning guidance wants to increase the annual housing target from 800 to 1600 and had a consultation end date of the 1<sup>st</sup> October (RPC have responded to this by writing to Theresa May local MP and Robert Jenrick Secretary of state for Housing, communities and Local Government), many of the local areas have responded to this consultation however Mr Halsall is generally disappointed by the amount of response this consultation created in comparison to other campaigns he has lead. Planning for the future white paper plans to bring together all of the other planning documents into one more streamlined document to deal with all aspects of planning and land supply. Mr Halsall also reported that WBC are doing very well with recycling with 55% of waste being recycled. WBC introduced food waste recycling nearly 2 years ago and that has been used more than WBC had expected. The waste services WBC use charge more for wet cardboard/paper waste and this is costing WBC £600,000 a year to dispose of. Therefore, WBC have invested in sealable, waterproof and weighted recycling bags. WBC did consider lids for the current boxes, but research suggests these would end up flying around the roads until homeowners collected them up again. WBC cannot use wheelie bins at present because the fleet of waste vehicles cannot hold wheelie bins. The bags are a temporary fix to the problem and WBC will continue considering other options, but any big change would need to happen at the point of change of contract to another contractor. WBC had to check their proposed plans to introduce bags because of a 'call-in decision', this meant that WBC lost their slot with the manufacturer therefore the bags will be delayed. Mr May asked if the new planning documents still protect the Greenbelt? Mr Halsall explained that initially the Changes to Planning guidance initially strengthens the greenbelt status but does not detail what would happen to the Green belt if 5 year land supply cannot be met elsewhere. Mrs Holmes asked how much of a threat is the current 5 year land supply to Ruscombe and the Greenbelt? Mr Halsall explained it is a huge threat. The ministry of defence is fighting against the use of land near Shinfield, that leaves WBC with land near Finchampstead, Hurst and then Ruscombe. Mr Halsall as the Northern Parishes Borough representative is fighting to protect Ruscombe but he may not succeed. Mr Halsall advised RPC the best way to make our opinions known is to write to Theresa May, she is being incredibly supportive of Mr Halsall and the campaign to protect the Greenbelt.

**134/20 Changes to planning guidance:** RPC have been shared a document by Mr Howe that was written by Wargrave Parish Council in response to the Changes to Planning guidance. RPC do agree with this document. RPC have already submitted a response to this white paper before the deadline of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020.

**135/20 Liaison with Twyford Parish Council:** Mr Cassidy attended TPC meeting and reported that TPC were discussing WBC purchasing the freehold of Tesco in Twyford. TPC requested the nail bar to switch off their neon lights overnight, which they have done. TPC also discussed options to reduce pollution at the crossroads and are working to progress the new Twyford library.

**136/20 Planning applications:** None to discuss but Mr Evans did report that WBC had approved the application 192198 for 2 houses to be built on the Coppers site. Mrs Reid reported that RPC had reported what they believed to be a planning breach to planning enforcement. Planning enforcement have investigated and the wooden structure in the garden is for storage of the building materials required for the extension, which is allowed and therefore Planning enforcement have closed the case.

**137/20 Neighbourhood Plan:** Mr Evans reported RPC are close to completion but that some more work is required to the design policy. Mrs Reid will ask if ONeill Homer can meet with the Neighbourhood Plan team to go through the design policy.

**138/20 Ruscombe Ponds:** RPC have realised they own some ponds in Ruscombe and whilst volunteers are working on those ponds RPC are liable for their health and safety. Mr Merrick will contact the volunteer group and then carry out a risk assessment and write a set of guidelines for the volunteers to follow whilst they are working on Ruscombe ponds. Mrs Reid will discuss the situation with RPC's insurance company. Mrs Reid will contact D & S Thompson to quote to dredge the bulrushes from the crossroads ponds.

**139/20 Ruscombe Parish Council website:** Mrs Reid reported that she had begun moving information from Ruscombe existing website onto a new google sites but Mrs Reid then realised there are new accessibility requirements and therefore Mrs Reid believes a purpose built parish council website supplier would be most suited to RPC's needs. Mrs Reid will ask BALC if they could recommend anyone especially good.

**140/20 Remembrance Service:** St James church are planning to go ahead with their Remembrance Service and the Church service that follows. The Remembrance service is outside and Mr May will attend and present a wreath on behalf of RPC but will not attend the church service. Mrs Reid will order the wreath, confirm the service times to Mr May and let the Church know Mr May will attend the outside service only.

**141/20 CIL money:**

**Bridge painting:** Mrs Reid has spoken to Network Rail and they do have a contractor that they will ask to quote. Network rail have said depending on the price they quote, Network Rail may consider paying for the work instead of RPC. If they offer, Mrs Reid will accept on RPC's behalf.

**Land opposite St James Church:** The diocese have leased that land for the next 3 years so this project idea is on hold.

**Pennfields Land:** Mrs Reid reported that Ackers are handling the land transfer on behalf of RPC. BALC had advised the lease should be signed by Mrs Reid but Ackers require a letter of authorisation to allow Mrs Reid to sign therefore WBC have advised that two councillors should sign and Mrs Reid will write that they are co-opted into the position as RPC Councillor. Mrs Reid will pass the terms and conditions over to Mr May and Mr May and Mr Cassidy will sign the lease and take their ID to Ackers. Mrs Reid has shared via email the design options for the land. CR Landscapes have given RPC two quotes, depending on what type of paving and Treetops Landscapes have provided quotes with various paving options. Treetops quote provides replacement of surrounding pathways. Mrs Reid will ask CR

landscapes to also quote to replace these paths and then RPC will decide which design to go with.

**142/20 Finance:**

**CROW pond clearing £60:** Paid via cheque #457

**ONeill Homer Neighbourhood plan work £330.00:** Paid via Unity #1/10 2020

**Unity Bank charges £18:** Paid via Unity #3/09 2020

**Clerk wages and expenses £699.93:** Paid via Unity #2/10 2020

**Nest pension £60.71:** Paid via Direct Debit

**SSE (September) £91.43:** Paid via Direct Debit

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

Mrs Reid has contacted WBC street lighting because SSE require an up to date inventory of RPC street lamps with LED lamps. Mrs Reid informed that she has contacted street lighting twice and waited the 10 days they request to respond but had not received a response. On the third time of emailing Mrs Reid made street lighting aware of the previous dates she had emailed and that RPC do need a response.

**143/20 Liaison Reps:**

Mrs Robson reported that the Youth and Community Centre have begun to open some of their services.

Mrs Robson reported that Polehampton Swimming association did open the pool on 1<sup>st</sup> August with limited people allowed to each swimming session. The season has gone well.

Mr May closed the meeting at 9:31pm

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_