

Ruscombe Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Parish Council

Held in the Twyford Room, Loddon Hall, Twyford

On Wednesday 2nd March 2022 at 7:30pm

Councillors Present: Mr J May (Chair), Mr M Evans, Mr P Cassidy, Mr G Merrick and Mrs Jane Holmes (from item 44/22).

Councillors Present via Zoom: Mrs C Bulman connected to the room via RPC laptop.

Also in attendance: Twyford Parish Councillor Mrs L Jarvis.

Clerk in attendance: Mrs Ruth Reid.

7:35pm Mr May opened the meeting.

31/22 Apologies for Absence: Mr P Evans and Mr G Howe.

32/22 Declaration of Interest: Mr May and Mr M Evans declare that they are directors for Campaign to Protect Rural Wokingham CPRW.

33/22 Minutes: Minutes for 2nd February 2022 circulated via email, approval proposed by Mr May, seconded by Mr M Evans and approved unanimously.

34/22 Public Comments sent to the Clerk or Councillors: Mrs Reid has had contact with three members of the public, one to report the oak trees in the conservation area appear to have suffered some storm damage and suggested RPC could replace them, RPC like this idea and Mrs Reid will investigate some prices. The second was to ask about trees on Northbury, no new trees had been planted outside their house and they wondered why? Mrs Reid explained locations were allocated by RPC but RPC had realised there were a few other locations that could host a tree that we had not allocated. Mrs Reid will ask CR Landscapes about adding in a few extra and Mr Merrick will check locations. The third was to ask about pruning of trees on the corner of St James Close, there is one that RPC did not prune but RPC believes another resident has taken responsibility for pruning them on an annual basis.

35/22 Update from Twyford Parish Councillor: Mrs Jarvis reported that TPC is still struggling to buy a gas bottle for their beacon, there has been a suggestion of hosting a film night in the tent that will be up for the beer festival, they are hoping to receive a grant from Awards for All for jubilee activities. Ward Councillor Stephen Conway is organising three more concerts for Twyford. Stephen Conway updated TPC that the local plan consultation has closed and they received 2,700 responses. TPC are asking WBC about who should be communicating with them about the library redevelopment because communication is minimal at present. Mrs Jarvis asked if RPC knew anything about adding a pond into the Adopt a Street route, Mrs Reid explained that she had asked if the New Road Pond could be added to Adopt a Street but they explained that access to the pond was difficult, Mrs Reid accepted this and communicated it back to the resident that had originally asked about having it regularly cleaned, therefore this query is closed. TPC is doing a litter pick day on 2nd April. TPC is going to invite Cuincy representatives over for a Jubilee celebration. TPC Neighbourhood plan draft submission plan is approved and ready for Regulation 14.

36/22 Update from Wokingham Borough Councillors: No one in attendance but Mr Cassidy attended the Parish Liaison Forum, they were very concerned about the Covid situation in the Borough, it was the third highest in the country, but this has since improved. The group also discussed the WBC tree project, they have got 6,000 trees planted so far, they will be attending some Parish AGM's to talk about the project, Mrs Reid will ask if they could attend RPC AGM. They talked about a builder levy being added onto developments, if

builders do not return to site to make good of the trees and hedges, WBC can use the levy to do so. Mr Merrick raised that he's noticed a hedge that could be added too to make it fuller,

37/22 Planning Applications

220305 The Hollies, Ruscombe Lane

RPC does have some concerns regarding this development. Our main areas of concern are:

1. In the creation of a first floor, the ridge height is being raised by circa 1m, we feel that this may affect the light levels, at certain times of the day, for the other two properties in this location.
2. The layout of the overall site will mean that the construction process is likely to cause a lot of disturbance to Orchard Cottage as they are very close to the boundary.
3. The property is one of 3 that share a plot with a restricted access/egress which also merges with a Public footpath serving Northbury Avenue and St James Close: Also the lines of sight when joining Ruscombe Lane can be difficult, this and the increase in vehicle movement associated with the build is likely to increase the risk to pedestrians significantly.
4. The first-floor windows on the North and West elevations would overlook other properties and therefore may need to be obscured.
5. The layout of the combined roadway and footpath would benefit from signage warning both Drivers and pedestrians of the hazards.

220306 73 New Road: No comment

220420 6 Garraway Close: RPC object. We feel that the glass should remain obscured as it could impact the privacy of the neighbour. A small fanlight window with a restricted opening could be included to allow ventilation.

We have also been made aware that the roof windows already installed have clear glazing and not obscured as per the requirements. This should be rectified to protect the privacy of the neighbours. Mrs Reid will ensure planning enforcement are aware of this.

220315 147 London Road: No comment

Planning enforcement on 1 St James Close: WBC enforcement report are wanting to close the case, RPC do not believe this is the right decision because it changes the character of the bungalow and RPC are concerned it will set a precedent for future application to do the same.

These comments are proposed by Mr Merrick, seconded by Mr Evans and approved unanimously.

38/22 Ruscombe Neighbourhood Plan: WBC have begun Regulation 16.

39/22 Northbury Avenue Trees: 18 new trees are planted, there are a few gaps and Mr Merrick will have a look where. Mrs Reid has spoken with the insurance company who have confirmed RPC cannot use their public liability insurance for volunteers to remove the dead tree, therefore RPC will use a tree surgeon with a budget of £100+VAT. This is proposed by Mr Merrick, seconded by Mr M Evans and approved unanimously.

40/22 Flowers Summer 2022: RPC agrees the proposal for summer 2022 of £3547+VAT for 30 hanging baskets, 2 boundary boxes and 4 Oval Planters. Mrs Reid will ask for another boundary box for Castle End Road and ask what happens to the hedges in the winter planting. This is proposed by Mr Merrick, seconded by Mr M Evans and approved unanimously. If the answer is the hedges are disposed of RPC will dig them up just before Window Flowers would remove and use them.

41/22 Tree Preservation Orders: RPC have been successful in getting TPO's on the trees in the two sites expected for development. Mrs Reid advised that WBC only really wants to impose TPO's on trees that are under threat, but RPC would like more TPO's on important trees in Ruscombe. Mrs Reid will check if they already have TPO's on them.

42/22 WBC Overview and Scrutiny Work programme suggestions: RPC has no suggestions.

Mrs Jarvis left the meeting

43/22 CIL Money: No updates but RPC will consider how to spend it next month.

Mrs Holmes joined the meeting during 44/22

44/22 Finance: Payments to consider: -

CR Landscapes £961.92: Paid #1/3 2022

BDK Solutions £120.00: Paid #2/3 2022

Clerk wages and expenses £667.30: Paid #3/3 2022

Nest pension £51.52: Paid #4/3 2022

Treetop Landscapes £108: Paid #5/3 2022

SSE (February) £51.78: Paid direct debit

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

45/22 Reports from liaison rep:

NPCG: Mr M Evans reported that they are due to meet at the end of March and did RPC have anything they wanted raised? If anyone thinks of anything, let Mr M Evans know.

46/22 Any other business

RPC Stall: RPC will consider if it would like an information stall at a community event over the summer.

Central bollards in the road on London Road: Mrs Bulman raised that these are looking untidy, Mrs Reid will investigate how RPC could get them replaced.

Road surfaces: RPC to make a note of potholes and uneven road surfaces and report them.

Jubilee: Mr Merrick informed RPC that London will be planting wildflowers around the tower of London for the Queen's Jubilee, and he proposed that RPC could distribute wildflower seed packs to all houses in Ruscombe, they cost an average of £1.15 per pack. Mr Merrick will share information via email. RPC agreed this is a very good idea.

Solar: Mrs Reid will investigate if there is anything RPC can do to make our energy usage renewable.

Mr May closed the meeting at 9:19pm.

Chair signed_____

Date_____