

HOOK NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF HOOK NORTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 7.30PM

Present: Councillors: Wilson, Hicks, Brotherston, Duggan, Gregory, Porter, Matthews, Noviss, District Cllr Brown and Mrs Watts (Parish Clerk/RFO). There were three members of the public in attendance.

20/136 Apologies for Absence – Cllr Shepherd and County Cllr Reynolds

20/137 Declarations of Interest: Cllr Matthews declared an interest in all planning applications relating to Ferris Hill Farm.

20/138 Chairman's Announcements:

20/138/1 Cllr Wilson thanked everyone for attending the virtual meeting.

20/138/2 Cllr Wilson advised Councillors that they will be expected to attend relevant zoom training sessions with OALC in the next 12 months (Councillors' Roles and Responsibilities). The Parish Clerk will advise Councillors when courses become available.

20/138/3 Provision has been made for this in the budget.

20/139 Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Parish Council held 8 October 2020

20/139/1 Cllr Wilson proposed that the Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 8 October 2020 be resolved as a true and accurate record of the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Hicks and passed unanimously.

20/140 Vacancies

20/140/1 Cherwell DC had confirmed that both vacancies on the Parish Council can now be filled by co-option. The posts have been advertised on village noticeboards, HNPC website etc.

20/140/2 Any resident interested in joining the Parish Council should contact the Parish Clerk for more information.

20/141 Planning Applications – (Annex 1) Cllr Duggan reported:

20/141/1 Fourteen planning/TCA applications had been received since the last meeting.

20/141/2 Councillors objected to 20/02834/TCA – The Sun Inn, fell Ash tree and 20/02826/F – Southcroft House, Southrop Rd, Retrospective Application, erection of gates, pillars and boundary wall.

20/141/3 Cherwell District Council had granted ten applications.

20/141/4 Cherwell District Council had refused three applications; 20/02346/F Lower Nil Farm, change of use of orchard to leisure development, 20/02361/Q56 Manor Farm, Station Rd, change of use of agricultural building to three houses, 20/02360/Q56 Manor Farm, Station Rd, change of use of agricultural building to single house. The Parish Council had objected to all three applications.

20/142 Reports of Working Groups

20/142/1 Recreation

- The play area can remain open during lockdown.
- Quotations had been obtained for supplying and fitting a picnic bench in the play area. The most competitive quote was from Adam Hope in the sum of £410 and Cllr Wilson proposed that this be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Brotherston and agreed unanimously.
- A young fruit tree in the play area has been vandalised and will have to be replaced. Cllr Porter will deal with this.
- Wyatts have replaced the young pear tree that died soon after planting.

20/142/2 Cemetery and Allotments

- The stone wall in the churchyard at the bottom of Talbot House, Queen Street has failed. Quotations are being sought for repairs.
- The railings in the cemetery damaged by a falling tree should be replaced in the next six weeks.

Initials.....

- The autumn inspection of the allotments by Councillors Gregory and Hicks took place on 12 October. Members of HNAA attended. Tenants not affiliated to HNAA were notified of the inspection. Three plots were noted as needing improvement; they will be re-inspected at the beginning of next year to see if any progress has been made.
- Someone has vandalised the gates in the allotment gardens by removing the bolts. It will cost the Parish Council £77 per gate to have them replaced. If anyone has any information regarding the person responsible for removing the bolts, please contact the Parish Clerk rosemary.watts@hnpc.org.uk
- A notice has been put on the HNAA noticeboard reminding tenants that the Parish Council is willing to provide them with a 210-litre water butt. The butts will remain the property of the Parish Council and must not be removed when a plot is vacated. Tenants should register their interest with the Parish Clerk.
- There are currently twelve people waiting for allotments.

20/142/3

Environment

- Bus shelter, Station Rd – Quotations had been obtained, the most competitive being one from Adam Hope in the sum of £5k. Cllr Brotherston proposed that this be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Wilson and agreed unanimously.
- Two dog bins have been purchased to replace those damaged by persons unknown.
- A damaged dog bin Burycroft has been replaced but not by the Parish Council. It is not the same as ones purchased by the Parish Council – Councillors can only think that the person who damaged the original one has kindly replaced it.
- Work on the first tranche of tree maintenance begins on 30 November. Witley Parish Council v Cavanagh (2018) has raised questions about the frequency of inspections.
- Cllr Shepherd will be proposing to manage a number of Wildlife Zones in a manner to promote the cultivation of wild flowers. He is seeking advice from Plantlife and the Wildlife Trust. Wildlife zones will be a sub-set of the Environmental Action Plan which this working group will now manage.
- Environmental Action Plan – this states that the Parish Council is working closely with Hook Norton Low Carbon but as this is not the case, Councillors agreed that Cllrs Shepherd and Duggan should liaise with the group.

20/142/4

Hook Norton War Memorial Hall

- Further Government restrictions wef 14 September means that the hall will remain closed until these restrictions are lifted.
- Ken Smith has not yet fitted the lights to the outside front wall.
- Some internal maintenance work is required arising out of the hall not being in use.

20/143

Finance/Schedule of Receipts and Payments for Authorisation by the Council:

20/143/1

The Parish Clerk presented the schedules of receipts and payments for November totalling £4,217.25 for the Parish Council and £254.69 for the Memorial Hall (Annex 2, 3). Cllr Wilson moved acceptance of the payments detailed. Seconded by Cllr Hicks and agreed unanimously.

20/144

Parish Council Objectives

20/144/1

The Parish Council needs to produce and focus on a set of measurable objectives for 2021-2022 and measure progress against those objectives. They must be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely - SMART.

20/144/2

Cllr Wilson went through goals and objectives that she had considered (Annex 4).

20/144/3

Councillors were asked to consider SMART goals and objectives within their working groups.

20/144/4

This will be an agenda item next month.

20/145

Budget/Precept 2021-2022

20/145/1

Councillors had been asked before the meeting to submit costings for projects 2021/2022 and Cllr Wilson thanked them for their contributions.

20/145/2

The Parish Clerk/RFO had incorporated these figures into the budget paper (Annex 5).

20/145/3

Following a discussion it was agreed to increase spend in some areas, i.e. grants, tree management, planting of new trees, repairs to stone walls. Some requests for funds were capped. S137 grants of £600 for the Comet bus and £300 for Hooky Neighbours' Xmas Hamper scheme were approved.

20/145/4

The Parish Clerk will update the budget paper and re-distribute it for approval.

20/145/5

The Parish Clerk will produce a mid-year budget paper in September 2021.

Initials.....

- 20/146**
20/146/1 **Appointment of Internal Auditor 2020-2021**
Mr David Ralls AAT; ACCA, Bodicote carried out last year's internal audits. Cllr Hicks proposed that Mr Ralls be appointed again to inspect both the Parish Council and the War Memorial Hall Trust accounts for 2020/2021. This was seconded by Cllr Wilson and agreed unanimously.
- 20/147**
20/147/1 **Planters for Entrances to Village**
Cllr Noviss had unfortunately not been able to progress this. Cllr Porter offered to help him. They will make site visits as soon as possible to ascertain sizes, materials to be used and minimal upkeep. Cllr Wilson asked them to work within the £2k budget.
20/147/2 Permission for planters to be put on the verges must be obtained from Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department.
- 20/148**
20/148/1 **Engagement of Parishioners**
Cllr Gregory had sent Councillors four of the most important questions to be answered and they were asked to respond to these before the meeting (Annex 6).
20/148/2 Areas for consideration:
- Improve PC website with interactive social media links to all relevant Hook Norton social media groups
 - Dedicated internal PC resource to guide and manage a professional 'paid for' digital content and media management provider
 - Post good news stories on the website to promote work that the Parish Council has done
 - Digital newsletter
 - Link with partners e.g. the Brewery, Hooky Neighbours, Low Carbon
 - Submit features to Hook Norton newsletter and Banbury Guardian
 - Each Councillor taking responsibility to input
 - Zoom drop-in sessions, where residents get to meet Councillors and ask questions
 - Engage residents and school children over specific projects such as tree planting and creating wildlife zones. Ask residents what they love about the village.
- 20/148/3 Cllr Gregory summarised the responses.
20/148/4 Cllr Wilson said that if a new website is designed externally, it will have to be updated by the Parish Council, not a consultant.
20/148/5 Care must be taken if social media is used.
20/148/6 Cllr Gregory will speak to local groups to find out what can be done to let them know what the Parish Council is doing.
- 20/149**
20149/1 **Report on District Council Matters:** Cllr Hugo Brown reported as follows (see Annex 7 for full report)
Full Council - 19 October:
Motion on Badger Culling - "(i) That the leader write to DEFRA expressing our opposition to the badger cull across Oxfordshire, (ii) Not to permit the culling of badgers on any land owned or controlled by the council, (iii) To instead allow and support participation in licenced badger vaccination programmes on council owned or controlled land where these are applied for, (iv) To encourage all parish councils in Cherwell to take the same approach on their land". There was a lively debate and many members had firm views both in support and against the Motion. In the event, the vote went against the Motion
Local Government Ombudsman Annual Report 2019/20 - the Local Government Ombudsman received 18 complaints relating to CDC between April 2019 and March 2020, of which only 3 were upheld (i) an unfairly issued parking ticket, CDC's parking contractors found at fault (ii) recovery of over-payment of housing benefit, fresh appeal to the Tribunal to be permitted (iii) an Excess Charge Parking Notice, the Council cancelled the Notice.
20149/2 **Executive Meeting 2 November:**
Including Everyone. Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework - this is an update of the Council's equality policy which seeks to respond to the "serious inequalities highlighted by the Oxfordshire 2019/20 Director of Public Health Report, the unprecedented socio-economic crisis created by COVID-19 and the global calls for justice by the Black Lives Matter movement".

Initials.....

Car Parking Strategy / Civil Parking Enforcement - this relates to the 3 urban areas of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington. The main initiatives are (i) maintain car parks so that users feel safe, (ii) maintain car parks so visually and functionally they are easy to use, (iii) understand the demand for electric charging points, (iv) ensure lighting, layout and surfaces are fit for purpose, (v) explore Civil Parking Enforcement options, (vi) use the car parks to promote and support the leisure, community and recreational activities in the urban areas, (vi) ensure car parking charges are competitive (vii) ensure a good balance of ultra short, short and long stay spaces.

20/150
20/150/1

Report on County Council Matters: County Cllr Reynolds had reported as follows.
Library – OCC has undertaken a very cautious and phased approach to the re-opening of the library service. It does not have a date for reopening Hook Norton Library, however an officer followed up my query re the Reading Room.
OCC has obtained Listed building consent and planning permission for proposed work on the Reading Room. Largely because of Covid-19 lockdown delays, in September both permissions were granted for the required work. OCC Facilities Management are now proceeding to obtain quotes.
When the work goes ahead, only the Reading Room will be affected and possibly the carpark at the front of the library. Otherwise the Library will function in the normal way. Prior to any commencement of work, OCC Building Surveyors will convene a pre-start meeting with all concerned stakeholders. No date has been set for this work; however OCC will advise me when they know.
Whilst the rotten floor boards in the Reading Room were replaced, these do require a further check before allowing anyone in the room.

20/151
20/151/1

Correspondence:
The Parish Clerk had forwarded all correspondence to Councillors during the month and there were no matters outstanding.

20/151/2

The Parish Clerk had received another complaint about parked vehicles blocking Rope Way. This is a police matter and not something the Parish Council has any jurisdiction over.

20/152

AOB: Cllr Gregory attended Cherwell District Council's virtual Parish Liaison Meeting on 11 November. She sent a detailed report to Councillors afterwards. District Cllr Brown asked her if she had found the meeting useful and she confirmed that in the main, she had.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday, 10 December 2020 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business, Councillor Wilson thanked everyone for attending and closed the public meeting at 9.34pm.

Signed
Hook Norton Parish Council
Dated