

HOOK NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF HOOK NORTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 7.30PM

- Present:** Councillors: Wilson, Hicks, Brotherston, Gregory, Matthews, Shepherd, Porter, Noviss, Mills, County Cllr Reynolds (part), District Cllr Brown (part) and Mrs Watts (Parish Clerk/RFO). There were no members of the public in attendance.
- 21/018 Apologies for Absence** – there were none
- 21/019 Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Brotherston declared an interest in planning application 20/03691/F, Cowpasture Farm, Traitors Gate. He also declared an interest in Item 9 on the Agenda – Email provision. Cllr Matthews declared an interest in 21/00190/F, Ferris Hill Farm.
- 21/020 Chairman's Announcements:**
- 21/020/1 Cllr Wilson thanked everyone for attending the virtual meeting.
- 21/020/2 Cllr Wilson asked Councillors to observe two minutes silence in remembrance of David Shepley-Cuthbert and Ray Jelf, former long-serving Parish Councillors who sadly died quite recently. The Parish Council send their sincere condolences to David's and Ray's families.
- 21/020/3 Danny Duggan resigned from the Parish Council in January. The Parish Clerk has set the wheels in motion for advertising the vacancy.
- 21/020/4 Cllr Gregory has been appointed Planning Co-ordinator for the Parish Council.
- 21/020/5 Councillors and Volunteers working within the community are asked to adhere to rules around Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults and Health & Safety Regulations.
- 21/020/6 Hook Norton Emergency Plan: other than from Cllr Matthews, Cllr Wilson has had no response from Councillors to her request for the names of potential villagers/farmers/businesses who would be willing to help out in a serious emergency – (ref. 21/011/2 of the January 2021 Minutes). Please respond.
- 21/020/7 Virtual Parish Council meetings have slowly stretched out, with more time not necessarily resulting in better actions or decisions. In future, a timed agenda will be applied by the Chairman. Councillors are asked to be quick and to the point when speaking about their areas of responsibility. Written reports before a meeting are always welcome.
- 21/021 Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Parish Council held 14 January 2021**
- 21/021/1 Cllr Wilson proposed that the Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 14 January 2021 be resolved as a true and accurate record of the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr Matthews and passed unanimously.
- 21/022 Planning Applications** – (Annex 1) Cllr Gregory reported:
- 21/022/1 Six planning/TCA applications had been received since the last meeting.
- 21/022/2 Cherwell District Council granted eleven applications.
- 21/022/3 A Tree Preservation Order (TPO (NO.2) 2021 has been placed on T1 x Sycamore at 15 Hollybush Road.
- 21/023 Reports of Working Groups**
- 21/023/1 **Recreation**
- The play area remains open during lockdown.
 - Playdale has carried out repairs to some of the equipment.
- 21/023/2 **Cemetery and Allotments**
- 3 x allotment plots need attention and will be monitored.
 - Cllr Matthews will look at replacing the gate bolts in the allotments gardens that were vandalised at the end of last year.
 - Cllr Matthews will look at the repairing the gate latch at the top of cemetery.
 - Water butts for allotment holders are ready for collection. A time and date for collection will be arranged once lockdown restrictions are lifted.

Initials.....

- 21/023/3 **Environment**
- There is a nationwide project to plant a tree for every child starting school in the next two years. Cllr Shepherd has emailed the primary school Head asking to discuss.
 - It was agreed unanimously that two dog bins already in stock will be provided for 1) Bourne Lane estate by the play area and 2) the Green opposite Wheatsheaf House. Cllr Shepherd will address this before the next meeting.
 - A risk assessment of Parish Council owned trees has been undertaken by Councillors and as a result, an interim inspection a 51 trees will be carried out by Sacha Barnes when they are in full leaf.
 - **Objectives:** The Environment Group will identify land managed by the Parish Council that could be managed specifically for the benefit of wildlife etc. Then develop a strategy that allows the Parish Council to facilitate, where possible, Wild Zones and Local Recovery Strategy/Local Nature Partnerships, whilst utilising Parish Council resources to manage Wildlife Zones and Plant Britain.
- 21/023/4 **Hook Norton War Memorial Hall**
- Government restrictions means that the hall will remain closed until they are lifted.
 - Ken Smith has not yet fitted the lights to the outside front wall.
 - The Parish Clerk will ask the Parish Warden to flush toilets and run all taps on a weekly basis to ensure that bacteria does not build up in the pipes through lack of use.
 - Cllr Porter reported that the heating was fully on when she visited the hall a few days ago. Cllr Brotherston will check the system.
- 21/024** **Finance/Schedule of Receipts and Payments for Authorisation by the Council:**
- 21/024/1 The Parish Clerk presented the schedules of receipts and payments for February totalling £4,388.60 for the Parish Council and £39.00 for the Memorial Hall (Annex 2, 3). Cllr Wilson moved acceptance of the payments detailed. Seconded by Cllr Hicks and agreed unanimously.
- 24/024/2 The Parish Clerk had sent Councillors details of spend against budget before the meeting (Annex 4).
- 21/025** **Tender - Repairs to Walls:** Cllr Gregory has been unable to find any contractor willing to quote for a 12-month fixed contract for carrying out repairs to walls in the cemetery and churchyard. Cllr Matthews will look at the contract document to see if it can be improved/be made more attractive to contractors.
- 21/026** **Email Provision:**
- 21/026/1 Cllr Brotherston explained that the Parish Council originally chose Gmail because at the time, the online version of the Microsoft product was not as easy to use across multiple types of personal devices. Both products are now similar and the main driver for change is the ability to use the email on a desktop version of Outlook.
- 21/026/2 The main reason the Parish Council moved away from people using their personal email accounts to the HNPVC email system, was to conform with data protection rules. To achieve this, one of the stipulations was that HNPC emails would not be stored on any personal machines and that emails would be viewed and transacted through the web client only. The reason for this was that the Parish Council had (and have) no control over councillors' own systems and could not provide IT devices for them to use for PC business purposes only.
- 21/026/3 The issues of Gmail grouping conversations, having difficulty finding documents on a local system and the use of Google Drive for document sharing are almost exactly replicated when using Outlook online for Microsoft hosted emails but people seem better able to manage the latter.
- 21/026/4 The migration cost will be in the region of £500.00, which is made up of time and licences. The actual monthly email licence cost from Microsoft is very similar to Gmail and there would be one month where the Parish Council pays for both systems.
- 21/026/5 Cllr Shepherd proposed that the Parish Council move to Microsoft 365. This was seconded by Cllr Wilson and agreed by all except Cllr Matthews, who abstained.
- 21/027** **Safeguarding Policy**
- 21/027/1 The Parish Warden has offered to mentor a young person from the village doing her Duke of Edinburgh Award. Before this can happen, enhanced DBS checks must be made on the Parish Council's member of staff and a Parish Council Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults must be approved.

Initials.....

21/027/2 The Parish Clerk circulated a draft Parish Council Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults before the meeting (Annex 5). Cllr Wilson proposed that this policy be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr Hicks and approved unanimously. The policy will be reviewed every two years but monitored and updated whenever laws or guidelines are change.

21/028 **Report on District Council Matters:** District Cllr Brown reported as follows:-

21/028/1

Executive, 1st Feb

21/028/1/1

Budget and Business Plan 2021/22 - the vast bulk of the meeting was taken up with Budget setting for the 2021/22 financial year, which is particularly difficult following the ravages imposed by Covid during the current financial year. Local Councils have a legal requirement to set a balanced budget, budgeting for a deficit is not permitted. Local Government starts off by working out what it will spend (Net Cost of Services) and then works out how it will fund it. For 2021/22, CDC has set a Net Cost of Services of £22.415m, which represents £4.4m of savings compared to 2020/21 although "only" a net reduction of £3.188m after other factors are taken into account. The Net Cost of Services is worked out after including all income streams e.g. parking charges, rental income from Council owned properties (£5.7m from 24 investment properties), planning fees etc. and it includes contingencies amounting to £3.487m (of which £2.7m relates to a Covid contingency in case of reduced income or increased costs). The Net Cost of Services will be funded as follows:

○ Revenue Support Grant from the Government	£ 116,000
○ Council Tax	£ 7,682,000
○ Business Rates	£10,194,000
○ New Homes Bonus	£ 4,423,000
○ Total	<u>£22,415,000</u>

21/028/1/2

Council Tax: Councils can increase this by 2% (or more, if they hold a referendum) or £5 per annum, whichever the greater. CDC will be raising Council Tax by £5 per annum (on a Band D property) to £138.50. The New Homes Bonus is expected to be phased out from next year, although the Government has not yet announced a replacement regime (if any). Contract inflation is expected at 3% and increased income from fees and charges has been assumed at 2%. Pay of Council employees will be frozen (except for those earning less than £24,000 per annum, where a cost of living increase of £250 has been assumed).

21/028/2

Draft Statement of Licensing Policy - to consider the recommendation from the Oxfordshire Tobacco Control Alliance that where an establishment (pub etc) provides external seating, that the proportion of such external seating designated as "no smoking" should be increased from 70% to 100%. Exec decided not to take this proposal forward for the time being, recognising the difficult times the hospitality industry has been going through recently.

21/029 **Report on County Council Matters:** County Cllr Reynolds reported as follows:-

21/029/1

The OCC budget has been agreed. There will be a Council tax rise of about 3% (£45 for a band D dwelling). This included a little bit more for drainage problems, which is becoming a real problem in many villages as the gullies get blocked. There will be some money to help villages implement 20 mph limits if they want it. However the police have said they cannot enforce it. There is some confusion over the need for extra street works to slow down traffic, which will make it totally uneconomic for most villages.

21/030 **Correspondence:**

21/030/1

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

21/031 AOB:

21/031/1

Parking near Bean Acre Road continues to be a problem.

21/031/2

The hedge in Tite Lane needs cutting back. The Parish Clerk will contact Thomas Fox.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday, 11 March 2021 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business, Councillor Wilson thanked everyone attending and closed the public meeting at 8.53pm.

Signed
Hook Norton Parish Council
Dated