

HARPSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held virtually via Zoom on Monday 15th March 2021 at 7.45 pm

Present:

Cllr Kester George (KG)	Chairman
Cllr Catherine Rubinstein (CR)	Parish Councillor
Cllr Sara Langton (SL)	Parish Councillor
Cllr Matthew Phillips (MP)	Parish Councillor
Cllr David Bartholomew (DB)	OCC & SODC Council
Cllr Leigh Rawlins (LR)	SODC
David Brough (DBR)	Parish Councillor

In attendance: Anne Marie Scanlon (AMS) Clerk

3002 Apologies:

There were none.

3003 Declarations of pecuniary interests and/or requests for dispensations from Members regarding any item on this agenda: There were none.

3004 Co-option of new Council Member: CR proposed David Brough (DBR), seconded by KG and DBR was co-opted and welcomed to the Council.

3005 Approval of Minutes of last Council Meeting on 18th January 2020: The minutes were approved and signed into the record by AMS on behalf of KG.

3006 Matters arising:

There were none

3007 Oxfordshire County Council Report: (attached at Appendix 1)

(i) Street Lights at Thames Farm A4155

DB had run a poll on the Shiplake Village website about the street lights outside of the Thames Farm site. The overwhelming response had been that the lights should be turned off as they were creating an unwanted source of light pollution.

(ii) Sheephouse Lane

DB said that the lead engineer had been off sick for an extended period which had delayed progress. A preliminary drawing had been produced and the engineers would like to discuss it with a representative from HPC. The work would be undertaken with cost being split between OCC and HPC on a 50:50 basis as per Gillott's Lane. DB needed confirmation that HPC were happy to agree to this. The Council agreed.

KG said he would like to meet the engineer on site, so that they could see the passing places.

DB said that because of Covid it was policy to avoid face-to-face meetings but as it was outdoors he would raise the question with the officers. DB hoped to pencil in a date towards the end of the month. DBR said he would attend the meeting with KG if he could.

ACTION KG to email DB with some possible dates.

(iii) Thames Farm Drainage

DB said that the latest Taylor Wimpey proposal suggested water be piped along A4155 to join up with the culverts near the foot of Sheephouse Lane in Harpsden. While Shiplake had made little response Henley residents were very unhappy with this proposed solution. DB said that while lots of modelling had been done objections from Henley and Harpsden had to be taken into account. He said that questions had arisen about the grouting TW wanted to pump into the voids they had found under the site and the impact that could have on the aquifer beneath the site. Any damage to the water table could have serious consequences for the water supply to Harpsden, Henley and Shiplake.

DB said he was pressing for the tree planting to go ahead along the A4155/Reading Road to replace the trees removed by Taylor Wimpey.

MP asked DB whether all of the proposed water pipes would be in Harpsden. KG said they would be until they almost met the river. DB said the biggest issue facing TW's drainage scheme was getting the water across the railway line. TW wished to avoid any works that would mean a full closure of the train service as the cost would be immense. This was one of the reasons that they wanted to pump excess water and that was why TW wanted to pump the excess water to the existing culvert under the railway line. KG wondered whether OCC realised how much water could flow through the culvert.

KG said that TW should find a solution on the site or abandon the site. He suggested a limited development of large houses around a lake, meaning there would be no need to remove surplus water. That would be better for the environment than their latest proposal, which, appeared to risk polluting the public water supply without fully assessing the risk. This new proposal could also be a threat to the land in Harpsden between the culvert under the A4155 and the river since it was conceivable that an extreme flood could leave the playing fields in Jubilee Park soaked in sewage. AFC Henley (who use the playing fields regularly) were aware of this risk and also opposed the TW drainage proposal.

DB said that he had been pushing a similar solution and said if TW built nine large houses they could recover their investment. He said that there were so many different agencies involved (OCC, SODC Planning, Thames Water, the Environment Agency) that it was hard to get definitive answers as they kept referring matters on to each other with none seemingly willing to take responsibility or make a decision.

DB said that TW would be putting their drainage proposals to the District Council in the following week but given the backlash it was possible that they would revise their plans. The Thames Farm Action Group were seeking legal advice to see if the District Council had followed the proper procedure. He said that Thames Farm also impacted the proposed building at the Wyevale site. The developers had permission for 40 residences at Wyevale. It was thought that they wished to apply to increase the number of houses but if they were to do that they would be facing the same drainage issues as Thames Farm.

KG noted that any development at Wyevale would want to take advantage of whatever drainage system was installed for Thames Farm and DB added that Crossways also wanted to piggyback on the same drainage system.

3008 South Oxfordshire District Councillors Report (attached at appendix 3)

LR said that SODC's financial situation was unclear as there was little clarity from Government on the funding framework for local government. SODC had had a significant deficit and that had been reduced but there was still a deficit. He said that SODC was highly efficient in terms of cost. With

regard to income for SODC, LR said that Council Tax in Oxfordshire was relatively low. He said the New Homes Bonus was being amended to make it “more focused” and it looked as though the Government was going to increase the limit to 4% but he was unsure when this would help local councils.

The May Elections were to proceed which created a number of questions about how polling stations would operate and how votes would be counted (safely during the pandemic).

LR said Covid cases had decreased in number locally, the vaccination program was proceeding successfully, and lockdown easing would continue if cases stayed low and without too many new variants.

LR said that Government had said they would produce a spatial framework for the OxCam ARC which local councils would have to accept.

SODC and Vale of White Horse were looking at producing a joint local plan to save money.

LR reminded HPC that Councillor’s Discretionary Grants would be opened up again in the Autumn.

LR expressed concern about the most recent proposal for Thames Farm drainage from Taylor Wimpey. His concern was that the proposed grouting could contaminate the local water supply and he hoped that the Environment Agency would assess the plans carefully.

In questions KG expressed his frustration that SODC had allowed TW to start building work before they had agreed on drainage, but LR suggested that they had had no choice. The matter had anyway been put to the Local Government Ombudsman for his verdict, though KG should bear in mind that this was not binding on SODC. Only a judicial review could achieve that.

Finally, DBR asked LR for examples of what HPC could spend Discretionary fund on. LR said projects could be anything other than routine maintenance which would benefit the community or environment. He said the request would need costings and quotes which was why he was reminding the Council well in advance.

3009 The Neighbourhood Plan

KG said there was little to report except to say that a list of the possible sites for housing would be put out for public comment. The JHHNP Committee had to wait to see what impact the new Local Plan would have. LR said that Henley and Harpsden would have to accept more houses but there seemed a good chance that the most sensitive green sites (e.g. Gillotts playing fields, Lucy’s Farm, Juliet Noble’s meadow) would escape.

MP asked if Crest Nicholson were still attempting to extend Highlands Farm. KG said that was probably the best solution to any unmet housing needs in the area as it could also include social and affordable housing. CR noted that enlarging the Highland Farm development would increase traffic. KG said that the increased traffic would add to the case for making Gillott’s Lane a one-way system. MP asked if there had been any resolution to Wyevale and KG said that while the property developers wanted to extend their planning permission the situation with Thames Farm would have a direct bearing on the site. DBR said that Henley Town Council had declared a climate emergency, but they continued to build houses outside the town. KG said that ultimately the fault lay with the Government’s dictation of housing targets with which local planning authorities couldn’t argue.

3010 Planning Matters:

3010 (i) New Applications since the last meeting:

P20/S1898/DIS

(RE P17/S3119/FUL

Thames Farm, Reading Road RG9

Discharge of conditions 3 – details of windows, doors & rainwater, 4- material goods schedule, 5 – boundaries, 7- landscaping, 8 – protection of existing trees, 9 -demolition, 11 – risk assessment, 12 – removal of existing drive, 13 – off-site highway walks, 15 – driveway turning & parking areas of P17/S3119/FUL (additional information received 21 Dec 2020.) (Change of use of barn to four residential units (C3) & associated parking in the form of proposed courtyard, landscaping, demolition & amendments to access into Reading Road

Planning Officer Emma Bowerman

Target 23 Dec 2020

P21/S0662/LB

P21/S0660/HH

Hunts Farm House, Harpsden Bottom, RG9 4HY

Reinstatement of original access gate to courtyard & infilling present gate access to match existing boundary wall.

Planning Officer Marc Pullen

Consultation 3rd March – 3rd April

Target 6th April

No objection.

P21/S0709/HH

P21/S0710/LB

Hunts Farm House, Harpsden Bottom, RG9 4HY

Installation of an air source heat pump on exterior of the building

Planning Officer Marc Pullen

Consultation 3rd March – 3rd April

Target 6th April

No objection

3010 (ii) SODC Decisions since the last meeting:

P21/S0391/DIS

(RE P16/S0077/0

Highland Farm

Discharge of conditions (External lighting – General) in planning application P16/S0077/0 Outline Planning Application (all matters reserved except for access) for the phased development of the demolition of existing buildings and construction of up to 170 dwellings along with up to 2,000 m sq BI employment space, a Community Hub, public open space, drainage, earthworks, structural planting, substations & associated infrastructure

Planning Officer Tom Wyatt

Fully Discharged 25th Feb

APPEAL

APP/Q3115/W/20/3247466

P19/S2024/HH

Bellehatch Park, Harpsden, RG9 4AN

Erection of single storey pavilion adjacent to tennis court (within Bellehatch Farm as per amended plans received 4th December 2019) (As per tree protection details uploaded 30th January 2020)

APPEAL ALLOWED

Condition 5 deleted.

P20/S3271/FUL
(RE P19/S2646/FUL)

Highlands Farm, RG9 4PR

Variation of conditions 1 (approved Plans) and 14 (boundary treatment) of application P19/S2646/FUL Full planning permission for a variation of housing mix at Highlands Farm (as consented under P17/S0024/RM), comprising the substitution of 85 dwellings in the central and south-western parts of the site with 113 dwellings; a net increase of 28 dwellings with 40% affordable housing maintained across the site, along with footpath connection (as amended to alter the route of the proposed footway off Highlands Lane and to provide minor adjustments to the development layout)

Planning Officer Tom Wyatt

Target 3rd December

PP 9th Feb 2021

Email sent to KG, CR, MP & SL 23/2/21

APPEAL

APP/Q3115/Y/20/325842

(P20/S1624/LB)

Hunts Farm House, Harpsden Bottom, RG9 4HY

Description of development: Installation of four conservation style rooflights in roof of Dairy rear south west elevation

If you wish to make comments, or modify/withdraw your previous representation, you can do so online at <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk>.

APP/Q3115/W/20/3258303

(P20/S1623/HH)

Appeal Dismissed Feb 2021

P20/S4626/HH

Woodhill, Harpsden Woods, RG9 4AF (Jane Martin)

Part single storey, part room in the roof, 2 storey side/front extension with dormer windows.

Planning Officer Hannah Gibbons

Consultation Ends 19th January 2021

Target Decision 4^h February 2021

18/1/21 SL will ask owners as there is confusion as to what plans mean.

AMENDMENT regarding arboriculture 23 Feb. 21

Planning Permission 3/3/21.

3010 (iii) Outstanding Applications and Appeals:

P20/S4884/A

Land at Sheephouse Lane, RG9 4HT

Bremont Factory

Two x illuminated entrance signs displaying the company name

Planning Officer Tom Wyatt

Target Decision 9th March 2021

Consultation Ends 3rd Feb 2021
18/1/21 HPC to object
No decision a/o 15th March 2021

P20/S3241/LDE
(RE P16/S0970/O)

Thames Farm, Reading Road RG9

Development has commenced for the purposes of permission P16/S0970/0 (as amended 6th May 2020) and the permission is therefore an extant permission which may be carried out to completion in accordance with the terms of the planning permission.

Planning Officer Anne Wilkinson

P20/S4109/DIS
(P20/S1671/LB)

Hunts Farm House, Harpsden Bottom, RG9 4HY

Discharge of Condition 3 (Joinery Details) on application P20/S1671/LB (Installation of five windows into Barn in North East and North West elevations)

Planning Officer Hannah Gibbons

Consult Ends 18th November 2020

Target Decision 16th December 2020

No decision a/o 15th March 2021

P20/S1259/DIS
(RE P19/4180/FUL)

Upper Bolney House, Upper Bolney Road, RG9 4AQ

Discharge of Conditions 4 levels, 5 Spoil Distribution, 6 Planting & 8 Lighting on planning application for proposed riding school as addition to existing facilities.

Planning Officer Victoria Clarke

Target 28 May (NOT FULLY DISCHARGED A/O 15th March 2021)

P19/S4049/FUL

Crowsley Park Lodge, Harpsden Bottom, RG9 4JD

Demolition of existing dwelling. Erection of proposed new four-bedroom dwelling.

Planning Officer Caitlin Phillpotts.

Consultation Period Ends 5th December

Harpsden Parish Council objects to the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling and to its replacement with a larger building that would be out of place in this very quiet rural corner of the Chilterns AONB, both because of its size and its shape.

Target 7th January 2020.

NO DECISION A/O 15th March 2021

P20/S2103/FUL

Land to the rear of Crossways, Reading Road, Shiplake, RG9 4AA

Proposed erection of 20 dwellings with associated landscaping and parking (as amended by information on 15th October 2020 & 2 November 2020).

Planning Officer Katherine Pearce

Target 26th March 2021

P20/S2161/FUL

Johnson Matthey, Blounts Court Road, Sonning Common, RG9 9NH

Demolition of existing restaurant building and development of a new customer innovation centre within the existing Johnson Matthey site plus associated arrivals space, landscaping, access, servicing area and car parking. (Additional information received 30 October 2020)

Planning Officer Mark Pullen

Target 12th October 2020

NO DECISION A/0 15th March 2021

3011 Plans for Annual Parish Meeting (APM) April 2021

Due to the ongoing pandemic it would not be possible to have the APM in the Hall, but the Council decided to have a virtual meeting via zoom. The proposed meeting would take place on Wednesday 21 April at 6.30pm

There were a number of issues the Council wished to bring to the Parish including the threat to the Aquifer, possible traffic calming measures for the village and suggestions for projects that could be paid for with the Councillor's Discretionary Grants.

3012 Financial Matters

3012.i Bank Balances and Reconciliations (attached Appendix 4a)

Community Account:	£215.69
Business Saver Account:	£404,996.05

Total of both accounts: £405,211.74

Total Amount of CIL Money: £399,947.53

AMS had previously circulated by email the bank reconciliations for the 2 months to 1st March 2021 for the Community and Business Saver Accounts and both were now approved by Councillors and signed by the Chairman. They are attached at Appendix 3a.

3012.ii Approval of Payments

The following were approved for payment and are attached at Appendix 4b

Reimbursement of Zoom Payments M. Phillips (May 2020- Jan 2021 incl)	£129.51
Moore (External Audit)	£720.00
OALC Annual Membership	£146.16

3012.iii Actual Spend vs Budget

AMS had previously circulated by email the actual spend vs budget for the 2 months to 1st March 2021 and it was approved by Councillors and signed by the Chairman. They are attached at Appendix 3c.

3012.iiii Review of External Audit

AMS had circulated the external auditor's report by email and had already explained that she had problems with the AGAR which had the effect of adding £200 to the cost. She still maintained, however, that the auditor's criticism of the Council's presentation of the CIL money was unrealistic and yet she had been unable to get them to explain what they wanted. KG said he thought the criticisms were unreasonable and he would draft a reply for members' consideration. MP said he thought it would be a good idea to have a high-level plan with funds earmarked. AMS said that HPC had not yet been invoiced for the work at Gillott's Lane.

The audit was accepted by the Council.

ACTION KG to draft a response to Moore restating the position of HPC and reiterating that HPC had sought guidance and clarification from OCC on several occasions regarding CIL spending.
ACTION AMS to email DB to request a contact in the Billing Department of OCC regarding the invoices for Gillott’s Lane.

3012. iv Appointment of Internal Auditor:

The Council unanimously agreed to appoint Jane Olds as the new Internal Auditor.

3013. AOB

(i) DBR said that the parking lights at Bremont were unnecessarily bright and wondered if anyone had complained. CR said that HPC could add the issue of the parking lights causing light pollution to the objection sent to SODC regarding Bremont’s application for illuminated signs.

(ii) DBR said that reducing the speed limit through the village to 20 mph would have a knock-on effect on SatNavs & GPS devices which would perhaps discourage them from taking cars and lorries through the village.

(iii) KG showed the Council a plan he had received from Mr Wason of Harpsden Court with a proposed carpark in the woods adjacent to his property. DBR said that the removal of that many trees would probably need a licence from the Forestry Commission. DBR said that if the proposed carpark was for commercial reasons such as filming or parking for events then Mr Wason would need to seek planning permission. MP said that a car park would not be very sympathetic to the area. Summing up discussion of this item, KG said that, despite the potential benefit to the Church, members were clearly against the proposal and he would let Mr Wason know this.

(iv) CR asked if everyone had seen the policies that SL had written. KG said that he had not but if they were acceptable to the rest of the Council then he would agree to them being put in place and put on the website.

ACTION SL to send policies to AMS to publish on the website

ACTION AMS to contact SODC re Bremont parking lights.

3014 Dates of next meetings:

Annual Parish Meeting April 2021 date & time to be decided

Council Meeting 17th May. 2021 7.45pm

Council Meeting 19th July. 2021 7.45pm

Council Meeting 20th September 2021 7.45pm

Council Meeting 15th November 2021 7.45pm

Approved: **Date: 17th May 2021**
Kester George, Chairman