

HARPSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held virtually via Zoom on Monday 18th January 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

In attendance: Anne Marie Scanlon (AMS) Clerk

2989 Apologies:

There were none.

2990 Declarations of pecuniary interests and/or requests for dispensations from Members regarding any item on this agenda: There were none.

2991 Approval of Minutes of last Council Meeting on 18th MAY 2020: The minutes were approved and signed into the record by AMS on behalf of KG.

2992 Matters arising:

There were none

2993 Oxfordshire County Council Report: (attached at Appendix 1)

(i) IMPACT OF ROAD WIDENING ON A4155 AT THAMES FARM

DB said that Shiplake Parish Council had commissioned a traffic survey as the perception locally was that the road widening had led to an increase in speeding at Thames Farm. The results of the survey had revealed that the average speeds at the A4155 Thames Farm section were in fact lower than they had been.

The speed reduction might indicate a) On the north-bound side, the success of the speed limit change at the 40mph section which facilitated the large 30 mph signs;

b) On the south-bound side, the impact of the kink in the road where old joined new, and the presence of the traffic island.

Despite this improvement the figures remained higher than OCC would like for compliance within a 30mph speed limit and officers would make Thames Valley Police aware of this data. Officers had also observed that the effect on road safety could not be assessed until the new road junction became operational.

(ii) THIRD READING BRIDGE

DB said that the Berkshire parties continued to press for funding for the Outline Business Case to support the bridge. In order to be involved in the discussion, OCC had agreed to be a party to a 'joint statement of agreement' to investigate all options for improving cross Thames travel. However, SODC had withdrawn from the joint statement and as a consequence DfT had expressed reluctance to consider the bid.

(iii) UNNAMED ROAD LINKING A4155 TO HARPSDEN WAY (Sheephouse Lane)

DB gave an update on the results of the team who inspected the road on September 23rd and did a scoping exercise using the brief agreed with the Chairman. A drawing was being worked up to show the improvements OCC felt would be needed, and which would satisfy the aspirations of the Parish Council. Once the drawing was complete it would be sent for review by the PC and DB. OCC anticipated the works would be in a similar price region to those of Gillotts Lane (i.e. circa £100 - £120k). This would be more accurately priced once the drawings were completed and then it could be refined as the proposals evolved. As agreed informally, this would be another 50/50 funding arrangement. DB had followed up for an update on the drawings and was advised the delay was because of the long-term absence of the project lead.

SPECIFIC SODC REPORT FOR SHIPLAKE

THAMES FARM: P20/S2808/DIS (DRAINAGE)

As previously advised, the drainage proposal from Taylor Wimpey (TW) had major implications for the area. Residents were now well aware of the details and around 150 objections had been lodged on the SODC website. There was incredulity that TW had not been asked to undertake a revised Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). TW had now agreed to do that, and an updated FRA had been promised for November, but DB understood that it had been delayed until the spring. He would contact the planning officers regarding that and associated matters. Thames Farm action group also complained about unsightly security barriers. TW were proposing to erect close clad fencing along the edge of the site which would cost them a lot. DB would be pressing the planning department that these should be temporary and not used as an excuse for urbanisation in the future.

ENFORCEMENT AT ROSE COTTAGE, READING ROAD, HARPSDEN SE20/131

DB had been copied on various emails related to the matter. He had advised the enforcement officer that he supported her view that a retrospective application was required, and that the 'common sense' approach advocated by some would be in breach of due process.

KG said that HPC had been approached for a comment on Rose Cottage but having ascertained the facts had realised that the Parish Council had no remit to comment or intercede.

In open discussion MP asked about the drainage work along the valley and whether the Austins, who farmed there, had been consulted. DB said that all parties had been consulted and the work was in hand.

KG wanted to know how SODC's CIL level compared with that of neighbouring planning authorities, since it had been claimed that SODC were softer on developers than neighbouring Wokingham. DB said he would find out.

SA wanted to know if Airband, providers of Superfast broadband, had permission to dig at will. DB said they did have wide-ranging permissions.

MP said he was unhappy that Bremont had put in an application to put illuminated signs at their entrance. He understood the need for signage but felt illumination was not in keeping with a rural area. The Council agreed unanimously, and DB said that he would match HPC's objection himself.

ACTION DB & KG to object.

2994 South Oxfordshire District Councillors Report: (attached at appendix 2)

(i) Local Plan

LR said that the LP had been much improved during the examination process though housing numbers were still too high and some of the sites allocated were unsuitable for development. The Inspector wanted to have 'extra' housing but LR thought that 27% 'extra' was excessive and this inflation was responsible for the inclusion of sites that should, in LR's opinion, have been omitted. He gave the example of Bayswater Brook.

LR said that a Judicial Review had been lodged against the LP by an environmental group who had issues with sustainability, the environment and the duress exerted pushing the plan through. He added that most Judicial reviews were dismissed.

(ii) Covid-19

LR said that Covid had become more prevalent in the area than it had been in the early stages of the pandemic.

MP asked if LR had any idea when lockdown would start to ease. LR said he thought that it would not happen at any time soon and it would depend on the pressure on the Health Service.

CR asked why private hospitals were not being used and LR said that apparently the Government had had a contract for 8000 beds in private hospitals, but it had been terminated. He said that the issue was not just one of beds but of qualified staff.

CR wanted to know if police in South Oxfordshire had been clamping down and LR said that in general people in the area had been good about complying with the rules.

LR said that the vaccination programme wouldn't just be about the 'jabs' but all of the ancillary equipment and personnel needed to facilitate the injections.

(iii) Councillor Grants

LR said the District Council Grants could be used for any projects in Harpsden and did not have to be specific to the Parish Council. He and DB would work together to support projects that needed funding; both Councillors believed that the Parish Council were best placed to know what the community needed.

KG asked about CIL spending strategy and whether the concessions given to county and district councils would be extended to Parish Councils. The rules on how parish councils could spend their CIL money were very tight. LR implied that there might be scope for common sense and discussion with SODC officials but that the aim was still to make it easier to absorb and integrate new development.

MP wanted to know if LR could inform the Council when the Brown Bin collections would resume. CR said that according to the SODC website the collections were due to start that day, 18th January but they had been suspended again. LR was unable to offer a date.

2995 The Neighbourhood Plan

KG said that sites were still being considered for another 115 homes, but it was to be hoped that windfalls would have covered the need for new housing.

MP asked if Lucy's Farm and Gillotts were being allocated as one site. KG said that this hadn't been agreed and that there was strong opposition to both sites. The Neighbourhood Plan hadn't been progressed because of the delay on the Local Plan into which it had to fit.

Now that the LP had been accepted Harpsden and Henley were both waiting to see how SODC would interpret it.

CR observed that prior to the LP being revised that Harpsden and Henley had already had enough allocations.

MP wanted to know if the land beside Sheepphouse Lane, currently owned by Juliet Noble, was being pushed as a possible site.

KG said that he was unaware of anyone pushing for that site because development there would conflict with one of the primary objectives of the NP. He had also heard Ken Arlett, the chairman of the NP Committee, not the feeling in Henley against the development of this site as well as others.

2996 Planning Matters:

2996 (i) New Applications since the last meeting:

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

HPC to oppose illumination.

ACTION KG to write to SODC

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 4th February 2021

ACTION SL to check what effect the extension would have.

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

2996 (ii) SODC Decisions since the last meeting:

P20/S4031/DIS

(RE P20/S0227/HH & P20/S0228/LB)

Harpsden Court

Discharge of Conditions 5 – (UNIQUE – leading to the front elevation windows) on Planning Application P20/S0227/HH & P20/S0228/LB. Removal of 1st and ground floor bay windows on the south elevation and replacement with windows to match the existing windows in the South elevation replacement and internal alterations of existing kitchen and new roof to rear flat roof section at first floor over kitchen. New dormer windows on the North elevation of the roof. Internal alterations

Planning Officer Caitlin Phillpotts

Target Decision 7th December 2020

FULLY DISCHARGED

P20/S4426/HH

Eden Cottage, Mays Green, Harpsden RG9 4AJ

Works including double storey rear and front extension, single storey side extension, replacement roof and increase in ridge height and alterations to windows.

Planning Officer Caitlin Phillpotts

Consultation Ends 17th December 2020

Target Decision 15th January 2021

Planning Permission 15th January 2021

P20/S3943/HH

Treetops, Woodlands Road, Harpsden, RG9 4AB

Construction of detached garage at the rear of the property.

Planning Officer Hannah Gibbons

Consult Ends 18th November 2020

Target Decision 16th December 2020

Planning Permission 3rd December 2020

P20/S2808/DIS

(RE P16/S0970/O)

Thames Farm, Reading Road RG9

Discharge of Conditions 11 – (Drainage) on Planning Application P16/S0970/O. Outline Planning Application for up to 95 dwellings and assorted public open space and landscaping. Means of access and strategic landscaping not reserved.

P20/S2574/DIS

(RE P19/S2646/FUL)

Highlands Farm, RG9 4PR

Discharge of Conditions 7. (Tree Protection Arboricultural Method Statement) on planning 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 SW 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). App P19/S2646/FUL Condition 7 – following this grant of planning permission no development shall take place until an arboricultural method statement to ensure the satisfactory protection and related trees during the construction period has been submitted to & approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Planning Officer Tom Wyatt

Fully Discharged 19 November

P20/S4151/FUL

The Cottage, Harpsden, RG9 4AP (Marina Caprotti)

Erection of a replacement dwelling.

Planning Officer Davina Sarac

Consult Ends 11th December 2020

Target Decision 28th December 2020

Planning Permission 23 December 2020

2996 (iii) Outstanding Applications and Appeals:

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 18 Jan. 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>.

Consult Ends 10th DECEMBER 2020

HPC had no objection.

APP/Q3115/W/20/3258303

(P20/S1623/HH)

As above.

NO DECISION A/O 18TH JAN (BOTH)

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 18 JAN 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 18 JAN 2021

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)

NO DECISION A/O 18TH JAN 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 7th January 2021

18/1 HPC had strong objections.

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/O 18TH JAN 2021

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

NO DECISION A/O 18TH JAN 2021

2997 Financial Matters

2997.i Bank Balances and Reconciliations (attached Appendix 4a)

Community Account:	£208.21
Business Saver Account:	£406,146.05

Total of both accounts: £406,354.26

Total Amount of CIL Money: £399,947.53

AMS had previously circulated by email the bank reconciliations for the 2 months to 4th January 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.

2997.ii Approval of Payments

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

Clerk Salary (less £50 loan repayment)	£1150.00
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2997. iii Room Rental:

Having paid in full for room rental in the Parish Hall in 2020, despite holding only one meeting there, the Council agreed unanimously to ask the Trust to agree to excuse them from paying the fee for 2021 and simply to pay for each occasion that they used the Hall.

ACTION AMS to speak to Sarah Tipple

2997.iv Budget vs Actual Expenditure: This had previously been approved by the Council but was now under review pending a possible increase in Precept.

ACTION. AMS to prepare a 'bare bones' budget in the event that the Precept is not increased.

2997.v Vote to Increase the Precept:

Given the draft budget for 2021-22 is in excess of the Precept by over a quarter the Council voted unanimously to request that the Precept be increased to £8,000.

ACTION. HPC will return the Precept Letter requesting an increase and including the reasons for that increase.

2997. vi Review of the Clerk’s Salary:

The Clerks salary was increased to £4,800 pa.

2998. Review and Adoption of Financial Regulations

The updated Review of the Financial Regulations had been completed and circulated by AMS prior to the meeting. The Council voted unanimously to accept it.

2999. Approval of Asset Register

AMS had previously circulated the Asset Register. A question arose regarding the location of the Kissing Gate listed. This item preceded AMS’s employment with the Council.

ACTION AMS to contact Sarah Tipple, the previous Clerk, to find out the location of the Kissing Gate.

3000. AOB:

(i) CR asked MP if there were anything happening at the John Hodges Trust that would impact on the HPC. MP said that he had a Trust meeting the following evening. CR suggested that the Councillor grant money might be used to upgrade and/or replace the Trust Noticeboard.

(ii) The Casual Vacancy notice generated by Hilary Andrews’ resignation was due to run its course this week. KG thought that David Brough was interested and noted the skill he had shown in dealing with OCC engineers about the refurbishment of Gillotts Lane. Nonetheless it would be helpful to have other names in reserve and he invited suggestions. In response SL suggested Domenic Bertilli and Sam Butler.

CR said that HPC needed a Councillor who would be good at dealing with bureaucracy, who was patient and methodical.

(iii) MP said that he was still reviewing the website with the aim of improving it and meeting compliance. He said that making the website completely compliant with Local Government standards would be a challenge.

(iv) SL was concerned at the lack of policies governing employment procedures and standards of individual Councillors.

ACTION SL to draw up some policies and circulate them to other councillors for consideration.

3001 Dates of next meetings:

Council Meeting 15th March 2021 7.45pm
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: 15th March 2021
Kester George, Chairman