

THURSLEY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting

Tuesday 2nd March 2021 at 7.00 pm
Remote meeting via Zoom Video Conferencing

Attendees: Cllr J. Mendelssohn (Chair) Cllr H. Flavell Cllr P. Hunter
Cllr J. Luff Cllr R. Owen Cllr J. Swift
Cllr M. de Vries Mrs E. Felton (Clerk)

Also attending were: Cllr D. Harmer (SCC) Cllr J. Else (WBC) Cllr D. Else (WBC)

1.0 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

No apologies were necessary.

It was noted that a parishioner who may have joined the meeting to discuss the matter of widening of the bridleways would no longer attend as the matter had been satisfactorily resolved.

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No members disclosed any (a) Personal, (b) Prejudicial interests which they are required to disclose by section 94(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with The Parish Council (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007.

3.0 APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd February 2021 were approved by the Council to be signed by the Chairman.

4.0 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

(4.1) Cllr Mendelssohn confirmed that he had written to Mr Lindley.

(4.2) It was noted that the contractor was due to start the works on recreation ground the following day.

(4.3) Cllr Hunter advised that he was not able to provide information regarding the bus station on the site now owned by Natural England but that Mr Sean Edwards may be able to help with this matter.

5.0 COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND BOROUGH COUNCILLOR REPORTS

(5.1) Cllr Harmer provided information regarding the 'Your Fund Surrey' community fund which is now open to receive formal funding applications. It was noted that Thursley Village Hall had submitted their application and was in the process of being supported by parishioners.

It was noted that the Preserve Our Reserve committee were considering how best to submit an application to the fund.

(5.2) Cllr Harmer advised that works to repair Thursley Road from the beginning of the 30-mph speed limit sign leaving Elstead to Pride of the Valley would take place in the next financial year as funding has been confirmed.

(5.3) Cllr Harmer advised that as he was not able to find out ownership information about the land on which fly-tipping had taken place from his previous contact, he was attempting to access the information via a different route and he would report in due course.

The Clerk was asked to contact Mr and Mrs Ranson to provide them with an update.

(5.4) Cllr Jenny Else reported that the WBC garden waste collections had resumed. It was noted that there had been an issue accessing the collection date information on the WBC website but that this had now been resolved with the belief that the first collection would take place in the village on Friday 5th March.

(5.5) Cllr David Else advised that the recent WBC Council meeting had taken place over a number of sessions. He advised that WBC had recommended to the Boundary Commission that the number of Borough Councillors be reduced from fifty-seven to fifty but that an alternative proposal suggested that it should stay at the current number taking into account the increase number of residents in the coming years.

(5.6) Cllr David Else made reference to the Local Government Collaboration proposal which would see WBC working closely with neighbouring councils including Guildford.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Councillor Mendelssohn, on behalf of concerned residents, raised the matter of plans for the land at Hindhead Hill Farm to be used as a depot to allow for works to take place at the control room by the southbound entrance to the tunnel. It was noted that the land had until recently been used for sheep grazing but that the tenancy arrangements had changed and the sheep had been removed.

Discussion took place regarding the history of the land and planning requirements that state that it should be returned for use for agricultural purposes as Critchel Down rules apply.

Following discussion it was agreed that Cllr Mendelssohn contact WBC to inform them of a possible breach. Cllr David Else ask that he be copied into the communication.

6.0 PLANNING ISSUES AND COMMUNICATIONS

(6.1) WA/2020/0128 – Silver Birches, Pitch Place, GU8 6QW
Certificate of Lawfulness under Section 192 for single storey extension with flat roof.

Following discussion and review of the documents, it was agreed that the Parish Council had no comment regarding the application.

(6.2) WA/2021/0254 – 11 Homefield Cottage, Highfield Lane, GU8 6QH
Erection of extensions and alterations to driveway

Following discussion and review of the documents, it was agreed that the Parish Council had no comment regarding this application.

(6.3) WA/2021/0285 – Witley Park, Lake Cottages, GU8 6NG
Alterations to 1 dwelling to provide 2 dwellings; Erection of single storey extensions and alterations following demolition of existing conservatories

Following discussion and review of the documents, it was agreed that the Parish Council supported the application.

7.0 FINANCE

(7.1) The following list of payments for March were presented and were duly authorised and approved for payment:

Voucher Reference	Payee		Amount
0046	Thursley History Society	Display frame costs	£300.00
0047	John Swift	Expenses	£9.60
0048	E. Felton	Salary & expenses	£490.98
0049	HMRC	March Payment	£95.40
0050	SCC	Return of funds (received in error)	£365.00
	TOTAL		£1,260.98

(7.2) The Budget review document for 2020-21 showing actuals to end January 2021 was available to Councillors in advance of the meeting. No matters were raised for discussion.

8.0 HIGHWAYS

(8.1) Discussion took place regarding the on-going issues of vehicles entering Bowlhead Green during tunnel closures due to missing signage and cone placement in the diversion route and the inability of contractors to follow the agreed layout.

Following a suggestion that a communication with Mr Jeremy Hunt MP may be necessary, **it was agreed that Cllr Mendelsohn and Cllr Swift contact Catherine Blofield at Highways England in a final attempt to resolve the matter.**

(8.2) It was noted that Cllr Swift had agreed to take on the Highways Portfolio but that as a consequence, his other responsibilities for the Welcome Pack and VAS would need to be passed to other Councillors.

Cllr de Vries agreed to be responsible for the Welcome Pack. **Cllr Swift agreed to provide her with information. It was suggested that if anyone would like to take on the role for the VAS, they let Cllr Mendelsohn know in due course.**

Cllr Hunter agreed to arrange for the information and documentation relating to highways to be passed to Cllr Swift.

9.0 BOAT UPDATE

(9.1) Cllr Flavell advised that she had attended an AONB meeting at which the misuse of byways had been discussed. It was noted that at the meeting it had been stated that Ms Hannah Gutteridge (SCC) was in discussion with Thursley Parish Council regarding repairs to the BOAT at High Button.

Cllr Flavell advised that it had been suggested that the erection of fencing was not possible as it would not allow for passing places. Discussion took place about possible ways in which to restrict access such as providing permitted users with access codes or cards. It was agreed that further discussion with Ms Gutteridge was needed.

Cllr Flavell advised that the Trail Riders Foundation, which is a national organisation who ride responsibly, were obviously keen to keep byways open to them and that they were working hard to find ways to prevent misuse. It was noted that a booklet had been made available to those attending the meeting which included reference to 'Guardian Angels' who help educate riders on safe and responsible usage of byways. Cllr Flavell advised that she had a meeting arranged with them to discuss local issues the following week.

Cllr Jenny Else advised that she had raised the matter with WBC and that although Matt Lank (WBC Park and Countryside Manager) was not able to help as the land is not owned by WBC, the Safer Waverley Partnership may be able to provide support. It was noted that the partnership work with interested parties including the Police, SFRS, SCC etc. to ensure community safety. **She confirmed that she would report back once progress has been made on whether it was possible for the partnership initiative to be involved.**

It was suggested that it may also be beneficial for the new Waverley Police Commander, Sam Adcock, to be involved in the discussions.

Cllr Flavell suggested that it was crucial that all parties visit the site in order to gain an understanding of the depth of the problem. Cllr Mendelssohn agreed that this was necessary as he had been dismayed at how badly deteriorated the area had become following a recent visit.

Cllr Owen raised the matter of TRO's and the length of time in which they could be applied. It was noted that temporary TRO's can be issued but that there is a need to indicate how long it would be until the byway would be fully open again and that a change to legislation would be required to change this. It was suggested that Cllr Flavell may wish to speak to a Frensham Parish Council representative as they have a similar issue so a collaborative approach to speaking to the Forestry Commission and National Trust may be beneficial. Cllr Hunter suggested that it may also be appropriate for the MOD Police to be involved. Cllr Owen advised that he had seen Surrey Police on Hankley and the Punchbowl.

(9.2) Cllr Mendelssohn reported that the recreation ground had been re-opened with a restricted parking area and that as a result, the problems of cars parking on the road had been reduced.

It was noted that at the weekend one driver had ignored the restrictions in place and removed the temporary fencing that had been erected to allow him to park in an area which was out of bounds. It was noted that a parishioner had approached the driver to explain the situation but he had not been receptive and had become verbally abusive. It was noted that

details of the owner of the vehicle had been obtained. **The Clerk was asked to write a letter to the visitor to the site to request that he comply with local arrangements.**

10.0 HAMMER POND UPDATE

Cllr Mendelssohn advised that he had received a communication from Mr Michael Woodhouse late afternoon in advance of the meeting to provide an update on progress with regards to Hammer Pond.

It was noted that several of the points made reference to actions being completed at the end of March 2021. Following discussion **it was agreed that Cllr Mendelssohn respond to the email to request written confirmation that these points have been completed and that a further update be provided in advance of the Parish Council meeting on 6th April 2021.**

11.0 VE COMMEMORATION

Cllr Swift made reference to the paper which he had made available to Councillors in advance of the meeting. He highlighted that the plan was for the commemoration to take place on Remembrance Sunday weekend in November. It was noted that he had applied to the Armed Forces Covenant to extend the funding deadline.

As per his briefing paper, he provided an overview of the expenditure items and costs associated with publication of a booklet. It was noted that the freelance editor was charging to cover his expenses only and that the publisher had been previously used by the History Society and had quoted a very reasonable price for his services to provide a high quality publication.

Cllr Swift advised that after seeking guidance from the internal auditor, he was recommending to Councillors that on this occasion they accept that the need to obtain three quotes for the work be overlooked in light of the circumstances that exist with regards the funds being held on behalf of the History Society and them making their own arrangements. This was accepted and agreed by Councillors.

12.0 CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Cllr Swift made reference to the briefing paper which he had made available to Councillors in advance of the meeting. It was noted the Cllr Swift and Cllr de Vries had spoken to Witley Parish Council who are in the early stages of their discussions on the matter but that a multi-parish collaboration arrangement had been discussed.

Councillors agreed that they were supportive of Cllr Swift and Cllr de Vries to continuing their discussion on the matter. It was noted that the Parish Council would be kept updated and make any decisions that were necessary.

13.0 PRESERVE OUR RESERVE UPDATE

Cllr Mendelssohn advised that a meeting of the Preserve Our Reserve committee had taken place the previous week to consider the boardwalk replacement proposal which Natural England had prepared.

It was noted that there had been some concerns raised about the exclusion of part of BW504 from the plan as this was the main point of access for Elstead residents and that if it was not in situ they would continue to walk over the area to the possible detriment of wildlife.

Cllr Mendelsohn reported that Natural England had applied for a funding amount of £150k from their central fund but were optimistic that they would receive a substantial sum if the full amount was not made available. He suggested that funds of approx. £200k may be available to support the project taking into account the POR fund raising, CIL bid and other funding options. It was noted that not all of the local fund-raising amount would be allocated to the project initially but that some would be retained for on-going costs and to support future funding bids requiring matched funding.

It was reported that Natural England were keen for the works to commence during the summer. Cllr Mendelsohn advised that the boardwalk/walkways had been broken down into seven sections so that funding availability could determine the sections that could be completed.

Cllr Mendelsohn advised that he had prepared an update report to be made available in the parish magazines, Facebook pages etc. to inform people of the progress and plans etc.

Cllr Jenny Else advised that it was the landowner that would need to apply for funding from the National Lottery and that as it was a community initiative, it may be appropriate for Natural England to prepare an application. **She has already contacted Natural England to encourage them to make an application and asked that Councillor Mendelsohn should follow up with Natural England to reinforce her suggestion.**

The Clerk was asked to provide Councillors with a copy of Natural England's proposal.

In response to a question from Cllr de Vries about insurance for the boardwalk, it was noted that the Government policy is to self-insure.

14.0 DONATIONS TO CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS

Cllr Mendelsohn made reference to the paper which Cllr Swift had prepared and circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting to support the suggestion the Parish Council make a charitable donation to the Citizen's Advice Bureau. He provided an overview of previous discussion which had resulted in the Parish Council adopting a policy not to donate to charitable organisations and to encourage parishioners to support their own worthwhile causes. It was noted that the Parish Council funds are received through the Precept

Cllr Swift advised that he agreed with the general principle of the Parish Council not providing donations but that the Citizen's Advice Bureau worked directly to support parishioners and that they are under pressure to obtain funding to support their work. He advised that he was aware that approx. 50% of the Town and Parish Councils in WBC provide them with a contribution. He suggested that CAB were a special case and that a small donation should be considered.

In response to a question about why Cllr Swift considered that CAB were different to other charitable organisations, he advised that they provide services to the most vulnerable and are available to all parishioners.

Following a vote of Councillors, a majority of 4 – 3 were against giving CAB a donation. However, it was agreed that it was a difficult decision and that **it should be raised at the Assembly meeting to determine whether parishioners were in favour or not.**

Discussion took place regarding the arrangements for the Assembly meeting. It was agreed that the Chair would present his annual report and would speak on behalf of local clubs and societies. It was noted that there would be no external speaker. **It was agreed that Cllr Mendelssohn would speak with Cllr Swift on other matters that could be reported on such as climate/sustainability etc.**

15.0 WESTERN VILLAGES MEETING FEEDBACK

The Clerk reported that it had been highlighted at the meeting that highways matters be reported online rather than emailing individual staff members and that the VAS units for the western villages would be collected by Mr Harris for distribution. It was noted that an order for the batteries for the units may be placed collectively for the villages resulting in a small cost saving.

The Clerk made reference to the Gigabit project in Grayshott, details of which had been shared with the western villages. Discussion took place regarding the internet speeds in the areas of the village which were previously struggling. It was noted that the village appears to be well served for internet at present following installation of new cabinets etc.

16.0 CORRESPONDENCE

It was noted that correspondence is usually shared with Councillors at the time of receipt. There was discussion on the following items of correspondence:

(16.1) Farnham Infrastructure Programme:

It was noted that the programme is currently only part funded and works would be completed on a stage-by-stage process as funding is made available. It was suggested that it was not necessary to comment.

(16.2) Consultation on proposed Public Space Protection Order:

Discussion took place about whether it was appropriate or possible to include misuse of the BOAT's in the proposed order. Cllr Flavell suggested that a separate application would be necessary. It was noted that the proposal includes areas of Godalming and WBC owned land.

Discussion took place about whether there was a need to have an order for the recreation ground. As an outcome of the discussion, in light of the infrequent and unpredictable incidents and the inability to enforce the order, it was agreed that this was not appropriate.

Cllr Jenny Else agreed to investigate to see whether it was possible to include additional areas on the proposed order and that if it is possible, what the arrangements are for enforcement.

(16.3) **Cllr de Vries advised that she was in touch with the equestrian community and had obtained their opinions and comments regarding the BOAT's which she would share with Cllr Flavell.**

17.0 MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION AT NEXT MEETING

- Items carried forward from above

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

The date of the next meeting is **Tuesday 6th April 2021** at 7.00 pm.

Signed

6th April 2021