



Minutes of the Highclere Parish Council Meeting

Westridge Studio

Tuesday 14 December 2021 at 7.30pm

Members Present: Cllr Norton (Chairman), Cllr York, Cllr Jenkins, Cllr Stoker, Cllr Easton, Cllr Smith

In attendance: Cllr Tom Thacker (until 7:45pm)

Clerk: Amy White

The Chairman, Brad Norton welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. 94/21 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Dierks and Leeson.

2. 95/21 Declarations of Interest

None.

3. 96/21 To confirm accuracy and sign minutes of 09 and 30 November 2021

It was unanimously resolved that the Minutes be accepted as an accurate record. They were signed by the Chairman, Cllr Norton.

4. 97/21 Update on actions from 09 and 30 November 2021

	Clerk to liaise with Silver Linings to agree £600 for six months of support. Actioned- see Finance Item 14.	Clerk
93/21	Clerk to ask planning officer for extension to 14 January 2022. Actioned	Clerk
93/21	Clerk to engage services of Steve Lees. Actioned	Clerk
93/21	Clerk to add decision to Facebook and website. Actioned	Clerk

5. 98/21 Public Participation

No one from the public was in attendance.

6. 99/21 Reports from County and Borough Councillors

Cllr Falconer sent an update to the PC regarding planning applications: the Policy Planning Team have put in a consultee report on Watermill Bridge, arguing that the flood plain issue is too significant for it to be approved.

Cllr Thacker: reminded us about his County Councillor grant; the council will ask for a grant towards replacing the bench that has recently been removed opposite the Red House pub on the A343.

Action: Clerk to apply for grant for a new bench.

The information on the bollards along the A343 before Seven Stones Bridge was disputed in Cllr Thacker's report- the bollards are due to be removed by Highways in the New Year. The Council argued that the reason why the bollards are there is not just for preventing parking, but also because wild orchids grow there. There is a sign there to request no strimming because of these orchids. Cllr Thacker will report this back to highways who are likely unaware of this.

Highways will straighten any wonky poles if the removal of bollards is carried out.

7. 100/21 AONB- feedback from virtual meeting

Cllr York gave feedback on the meeting with the AONB. What was striking was the lack of awareness of what they do as an organisation. It was thought that signage in the Parish may help with recognition of the importance of being in the AONB.

Action: Clerk to ask Whitchurch Clerk how they got their AONB signs for their Parish.

8. 101/21 Neighbourhood Plan update

Please see Colin Wall's report at the end of the minutes.

9. 102/21 Recent Planning Applications (comments in bold):

- 21/03394/OUT Land at Watermill Bridge Andover Road Wash Water (deadline extension to 14/01/22) **HPC Decision: Holding statement sent in advance of new deadline of 14/01/22.**

Cllr York gave an update on work completed so far by Steve Lees; he has a working draft of HPC's objection

Action: All planning group members to give their thoughts on the items highlighted in red in the working draft sent out by the Clerk.

- 21/03016/HSE Erection of a double garage and workshop with gym/games room/home office above (Deadline 20 December) **HPC Decision: Objection: The height and size of the garage is not in keeping with local area and overshadows adjoining properties.**
- 21/03513/FUL at Woodlea, Deadmoor Lane Burghclere RG20 9DY (Deadline 28/12/21) **HPC Decision: No Comment.**

10. 103/21 Review of current planning procedure: Cllr Leeson will collate planning working group's decision on the majority of applications to send to BDBC. For the next meeting, the planning working group will meet in advance of the full council meeting.

11. 104/21 Roads and Transport Update

The SID likely needs repair; it is losing too much battery power and settings at each location move. Cllr Easton will send it back in the New Year.

Action: Cllr Easton to send SID to Germany for repair.

12. 105/21 Environment

Taking Pride in Highclere: Cllr Smith brought samples of the footpath signs for Highclere. Cllrs Dierks and Smith will decide which ones to use and place them on one footpath as a trial. If positive feedback is received, then more permanent signs will be investigated.

13. 106/21 Website update- improvements and data

The Clerk briefly explained the improvements made to the site; the news and planning are now more prominent, following statistics provided by Silver Linings Consultancy that the majority of users view these pages.

Data from new site:

- Sessions 222, Unique visitors 123
- Average time on site per visit: 4m 10secs (4mins is a benchmark set by Google for good performance)
- Most traffic is coming directly to the site or through Google although there are decent numbers from Facebook showing the posts there are working.
- These numbers are pretty good given the size of the audience we are aiming at and are an improvement on the original site.
- Most visitors to the site are from the UK although there is traffic from Germany, the USA and Canada.

14. 107/21 Finance update

The Clerk presented the following items for payment:

	Category	Notes/Explanation		
15-Dec-21	Pension contribution		£	69.84
15-Dec-21	Admin & Office incl payroll	Red76 for Nov	£	12.00
15-Dec-21	VAT	Red76 for Nov	£	2.40
15-Dec-21	Admin & Office incl payroll	Website creation: Silver Linings Consulting Ltd	£	600.00
15-Dec-21	Neighbourhood Plan	Planet Reviewing V&O Survey report and SB response	£	540.00
15-Dec-21	VAT	Planet Reviewing V&O Inv 2100	£	108.00
15-Dec-21	Clerk's expenses	ionos (£6.00)	£	5.00
15-Dec-21	VAT	ionos (£1)	£	1.00
15-Dec-21	Clerk's Salary		£	739.89
15-Dec-21	Litter Warden salary		£	446.82
15-Dec-21	Litter Warden Exps		£	13.95
15-Dec-21	PAYE	HMRC Month 8	£	225.83
15-Dec-21	Neighbourhood Plan	Highclere Village Hall Neighbourhood Plan Meeting	£	7.50
15-Dec-21	Hall Hire	Westridge Studio- 30 Nov and Dec 14 Meeting	£	30.00
15-Dec-21	Other (Repairs, Lengthsman)	Broken bench removal	£	71.66
15-Dec-21	VAT	Broken bench removal	£	14.33
			£	<u>2,888.22</u>

108/21 CIL Funding: HPC has received £2800 in CIL funding. There are restrictions on how to spend the money; this will be discussed in the New Year.

109/21 Projection to end of year: The Clerk reported that current projections show HPC will have approximately £35k of funds in the bank at the end of the financial year. New projects will be discussed in the New Year.

110/21 Precept first draft: The Clerk recommended raising the precept in line with HCC and BDBC at the inflation rate of approx. 4%.

Explanation: After a 17.5% increase in 20/21 to raise funds for the speed awareness project, in year 21/22 no increase was made.

A decision will be made on 11/01/22.

15. 111/21 Correspondence Received

The clerk has received an email from a Parishioner regarding a poorly maintained pavement on the A343. This has since been investigated and confirmed that it was recently cleared by HCC.

16. 112/21 Items to take forward to next meeting:

Standard items, agree precept for 2022-23.

Finding out about AONB/National Park status etc.

2022/23 Budget 2nd draft.

Watermill Bridge decision.

113/21 Date of the next Council Meeting Tuesday 11th January. at Westridge Studio.

Signed _____ Position _____ Date _____

Actions from 14 December 2021 Meeting

99/21	Clerk to apply for grant for a new bench	Clerk
104/21	Cllr Easton to send SID to Germany for repair.	Cllr Easton
100/21	Clerk to ask Whitchurch Clerk how they got their AONB signs for their Parish.	Clerk

Neighbourhood Plan Update, Colin Wall

Two meetings have been held on Nov 16th and Dec 7th, the latter by Zoom as a concession to the latest Covid developments.

Community Survey

Final copy should be complete this month. I will send it to the Clerk for publishing.

Some additional analysis has been done by David Skyrme which should be available for publication after our January meeting.

Project Plan

A revised version of the Project Schedule was agreed after consultation with PlanET. The current prospective date for the Referendum is now May 2023.

Next Steps

There has been substantive discussion about whether now is a good time to issue the Call for Sites, given the recent emergence of the Watermill Bridge application and the immediate and vocal public opposition to it. Although cogent arguments on both sides were presented, there was unanimous agreement that delay would have a negative impact on how quickly our own views could then gain statutory weight, and we should therefore press ahead.

The Call for Sites is planned for issuance this month along with an application for (even) more grant-funding for the subsequent Site Assessment. The issuance will be presaged by the publication of a short introductory article on why we are still going ahead in the context of recent applications.

It was further decided at the December meeting that the NPSG will submit an objection to the Watermill Bridge application, but based purely on NP considerations.

Hampshire County Councillor update

December 2021

Community Climate grants

The Council is inviting bids for grants to make community buildings more energy efficient as part of its commitment to combatting climate change. These grants are provided under the Parish and Town Council Investment Fund.

Capital projects that could be funded include solar panels, LED lighting, window replacements or insulation for buildings such as village halls and community centres.

Revenue grants for measures that meet local needs are also available with an upper limit of £30,000. Schemes that enable local communities to be more resilient, for example encouraging 'neighbourliness' and tackling social isolation or for the management of community assets could be eligible.

Training investments up to £10,000 to provide appropriate training in the local community. This could cover a broad range of schemes, for example training from specialist skills for Parish Clerk through to local path wardens looking after their rights of way.

For more information, visit: <https://hants.gov.uk/community/grants/grants-list/parish-town-council-investment-fund>

Community Waste Reduction

Grants of up to £5000 are available for community organisations. Grant funding is available to community groups, small businesses, schools, charities, and parish councils to fund projects that will introduce a new waste prevention, reuse or repair project to the local area.

Potential applicants are asked to discuss their ideas first with the Waste Prevention Team before applying. Please contact the at: waste.prevention@hants.gov.uk to arrange an informal discussion. The deadline for applications is 5pm Friday 18 February 2022.

Christmas Holiday Grant

Hampshire County Council will offer healthy food and activities to children who are eligible for free school meals during the Christmas holidays. Parents and carers can sign up for free school meals using the [Hampshire Online FSM Application \(cloudforedu.org.uk\)](https://cloudforedu.org.uk) and find out what local activities are on offer by searching the [Family Information and Services Hub](#).

County Council Leader, Councillor Keith Mans has written to Hampshire's MPs to seek their support for a more equitable funding solution. Rural councils like Hampshire have historically received lower funding from central Government than the metropolitan authorities. Although major funding reform at the current time is difficult, a change is needed in the short term otherwise those authorities at the bottom end of the funding tables will continue to be hit the hardest as we recover from the pandemic.

Local matters

I have also written to Councillor Mans, Councillor Rob Humby and Rt Hon Kit Malthouse, MP asking that local and national government work together to find a national solution to the issue of cross-border access to household waste and recycling centres, without having to be charged on top of their Council Tax. Kit has replied, saying that he is raising the matter with the minister. Cllr Humby has also replied, explaining the financial strains the County faces.

The Local Highway Engineer has looked at the bollards on the A343 and whilst agreeing that they do make this section of the A343 look untidy, deems that there isn't anything reported that is a safety issue. Therefore, at present there are no plans to carry out any immediate work here.

Highways has confirmed with HCC Traffic Management that the bollards/verge marker posts are no longer required on the bends as the speed limit has been changed in recent years. Therefore, he proposes in the new financial year to have posts removed completely. This will help make the verge maintenance/grass easier.

At the same time Highways will arrange for any leaning signs to be straightened and cleaned and have a general tidy up.

Tom Thacker