

WHITSBURY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT 7.00PM ON 27TH JULY 2020 AT WHITSBURY VILLAGE HALL

1. Attendance Register and Apologies

Present: Cllr G Thompson (Chairman), Cllr C Harper, Cllr D Bellini, Cllr H Sutton,
Cllr G Dominey,
In Attendance: Mrs N Manston, Mrs J Kinsey, Mrs R Druitt, Mr S Husher,
Cllr E Heron (HCC and NFDC), Mr E Hale (Clerk),
Apologies: None

The Chairman welcomed everyone and apologised for having to cancel the last two meetings.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 6th January 2020

Accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising

Cllr Sutton said the gate at the end of the footpath behind Lower Grove has not been replaced and the path is being used by cyclists. Cllr Heron agreed to investigate this issue.

5. Items raised by Members of the Public

None.

6. Report by Cllr Heron

The changes to ward boundaries are that Sandleheath will come under Cllr Heron, while Godshell and Hyde transfer to the Fordingbridge ward.

HCC will have to make more cutbacks to try to balance its accounts. Even with cutbacks the cost of social care means it cannot continue more than two years without major changes. Hampshire could consider becoming unitary like Wiltshire and Dorset.

HCC and NFDC stepped up to provide support and advice during the Covid crisis but most support came from local communities, such as Whitsbury.

7. Correspondence

None.

8. Financial Reports

Approval of Accounts. Cllr Thompson asked for approval of the Accounts for 2019-20 so details can be submitted to the external auditor. Cllr Harper proposed acceptance, this was seconded by Cllr Dominey, and all Councillors voted in favour. Cllr Thompson said a large part of the precept is being spent on cutting the open space which should be reviewed in the future.

Account Balances. The balances are £9,359.16 in the Treasurers account and £2,489.58 in the Business Banking account. Mr Colborne had asked for a payment of £200 to cover four grass cuts and some tree works at the open space. This was approved by Councillors.

9. Planning Applications

No new Whitsbury applications. An application for Rose Cottage was approved in June.

10. Whitsbury World

The Group has asked that verges in the village are not cut, but have noticed some have been cut. Cllr Heron said the verge cutting teams are now told to only cut around junctions or where there are visibility issues, but there can be mistakes. Cllr Harper said the verges in the village are cut by his operatives and he is often asked why areas are not being cut. Cllr Thompson said people asking for cutting should be told how important it is to leave verges uncut to encourage wildlife. Cllr Heron said there needs to be a balance as there is still work needed on uncut verges to remove unwanted weeds. Mr Husher said there needs to be a verge management plan to record which areas are to be cut, and which should be left uncut.

11. Other Meetings Attended

No meetings attended.

12. Covid Crisis Response

Cllr Thompson said how proud he is of the way that Whitsbury residents have worked together to cope with the pandemic. Whitsbury Helpers was set up within days of the lockdown and he particularly wanted to thank Juliette Knibbs, Andy Foreman, Steve Husher, Charlotte Thompson, Geoff Dominey, Arabella Tregoning, and Gemma Hearsom. He said there had been many acts of kindness that are too numerous to mention, but also Mark Turner and Marcus Locock for mowing, Annette from the Cartwheel for painting the seats, and of course the Cartwheel for providing takeaways.

Cllr Sutton and Mrs Manston thanked those who had helped them to collect food and prescriptions during the lockdown. Mrs Druitt said how grateful she was for the letter from Whitsbury Helpers offering support at the start of the lockdown. Cllr Thompson said how important the website is for sharing information. He had also been speaking to Mr Cobb-Smith who said there is still a shortage of First Responders in this area. If any villagers have an emergency, please contact Mr Cobb-Smith direct.

Cllr Heron said he had found that most communities were reporting it was support from local people which had really helped in the pandemic. HCC and NFDC had provided information and support, but local communities were the helpers on the ground. Residents were unsure how to access HCC and NFDC information and asked if details could be emailed to them. Cllr Heron said they would only receive emails if they had specifically signed-up for this. Councils are not allowed to email out to all email addresses which they hold. He also spoke about providing a grant for wi-fi in the Village Hall, but Councillors thought it is more important for more homes in the village to have better broadband. The Clerk has recently received an email from HCC about grants available for upgrading broadband speeds, which he will circulate with the minutes.

13. Future Meetings

Councillors agreed to hold the next meeting in the Hall with social distancing again.

14. Any Other Business

Cllr Sutton asked about providing a charging point for electric vehicles. Cllr Heron said these are available in many town car parks and are mostly provided in locations where people are away from their homes.

Cllr Thompson had received a letter from Theo Troughton about providing a play area in the village and wondered if the new open space would be a suitable location. Cllr Harper said there had been one in the past but it was not used much. Councillors thought usage would depend on the location as the most popular play areas seem to be those close to housing. Cllr Heron said that some villages have tried to arrange different types of equipment from each other, such as zip wires. He suggested a consultation on what villagers would want. He also said that any new equipment would need to be inspected and maintained annually which can be expensive.

Mr Husher said that a decision had been taken to postpone the Village Show and the Scarecrow Competition from 2020 until 2021. He had transferred ownership of the website to the Parish Council, although he will continue as domain manager. There have been additional charges of £128.24, which Councillors agreed to pay. There have been lots of visits to the website and it is now linked to the Facebook page.

Cllr Harper suggested it would be better to make access to tips easier to discourage fly tipping. Cllr Heron said the government is trying to reduce the amounts of waste so has introduced the landfill tax. Most fly tipping has been traced to commercial organisations which would have to pay disposal costs. The best way to reduce it is for residents to only use licenced disposers.

Cllr Dominey said many people had not realised about booking places at tips. Some had registered their cars and assumed this would give access, without knowing about the new requirements.

Councillor Harper thanked Mark Turner for working to keep the lower end of Lower Grove tidy.

15. Date of Next Meetings

The next meeting will be on Monday 26th October 2020 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

The following meeting is planned for 4th January 2021.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Edward Hale – 30th July 2020