

OTTERHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
held on
THURSDAY 7 JANUARY 2021, 7.00pm (on ZOOM)

Julie Evans welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that due to health issues, Bob Birkenhead would take the Chair this evening and possibly the next couple of meetings. We all wish Julie well.

DECLARATION(S) OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS:

1. Parish Councillors – Dispensation for the Brookside Rd Housing Development.
2. B.Birkenhead advised he no longer worked part-time for EDF Hinkley Point so he will withdraw his Declaration of Interest from SDC.

PUBLIC SESSION:

1. Concerns of inconsiderate parking near the base of Church Hill were deemed a ‘civil matter’ between neighbours, although it was recognised that difficulties are encountered for drivers of vehicles, especially those entering and exiting Church Hill from and into Brookside Rd.
2. The kerb stones at the entrance to the bus shelter from Brookside Rd are broken and either need to be replaced or removed. The kerbs are no longer able to protect the grass so the area is becoming very muddy and could be a safety concern as well as an eyesore at the entrance to the village. A defect will be reported via “Fix my Street”.
Action: B.Birkenhead
3. A resident said the removal of the hedge near the play area has tidied up and improved the area.
4. See Minute 4/21 for the proposed Brookside Rd housing development item.

Ward Reports

Councillor Caswell said staff are being re-deployed at County Hall to help cope with the Covid-19 situation and that things are taking generally longer to progress.

Councillor Pay advised there was a Full Council meeting in December, approving the Stronger Somerset bid which has now been submitted to the Secretary of State.

PRESENT:

Bob Birkenhead (Acting-Chair), Marie Beckley, Andy Darch, Julie Evans, Tina Gardener, Lindsey Parsons, Rachel Perrett, Aly Prowse (Clerk), Ward Councillors Julie Pay and Mike Caswell; 22 members of the public.

1/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

There were no apologies for absence.

2/21 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3.12.20:

The minutes of the meeting on Zoom held on 3.12.20 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

3/21 PLANNING MATTERS:

1. **39/19/00011** – Application of lime render (listed building application) 60 Crossways. AWAITING DECISION
2. **39/19/00014** – Repairs to leaking roof, chimney stacks, roof timbers) 60 Crossways AWAITING DECISION
3. **39/20/00007** – Erect a dwelling at 21 Riverside, Combwich. AWAITING DECISION
4. **39/20/00010** – Erection of 2 agricultural buildings, Lower Hill Farm, Otterhampton. SUPPORTED subject to PRoW BW 25/14 being retained AWAITING DECISION
5. **39/20/00009** – Erect agricultural building over existing concrete cattle yard, Lower Hill Farm, Otterhampton. GRANTED
6. **39/20/00012** – Roof and change of use from silage clamp to silage clamp and livestock building. Lower Hill Farm, Otterhampton. SUPPORTED
7. **39/20/00014** – Request for an EIA Screening Opinion for the proposed Combwich to Hinkley cycleway. It was noted a copy of an email to SDC was received from a resident requesting sighting of the opinion together with the reasons involved in making the opinion when decided.
8. **39/20/00015** – Erection of a dwelling, land to west of 14 School Lane, Combwich. SUPPORTED
9. **39/20/00013** – Outline planning permission with some matters reserved, for the erection of up to 60 dwellings, a community hall, car parking, public open space and associated infrastructure. See minute 4/21.

4/21 **39/20/00013 BROOKSIDE ROAD DEVELOPMENT:**

Each member of the public was invited to comment on this planning application. As is normal practice re General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) we do not include individual names for members of the public. The meeting was attended by 22 members of the public; we are sure it would have been considerably more if a public meeting could have been held.

1. Background

- a. The Application was received on 31.12.20 – closing date for parish council comments 3.2.21
- b. A public consultation was delivered to all households on 6.1.21 (return to village hall letter box by 22.1.21)
- c. Residents are encouraged to respond to the consultation and also direct to SDC, either by letter using the above planning reference or direct on the website, whether for or against.
- d. Responses in favour or against the application should be based on valid planning grounds (for example, spoiling one's view is not considered to be a valid planning ground).

2. Summary of common themes and comments made

- Serious Flood risk concerns in Brookside Rd (flooding to properties already experienced) and subsequently elsewhere if development built. Heavily redacted Flood Risk Assessment does nothing to allay these concerns. Ongoing maintenance provision for attenuation ponds must be provided by either the Developer or the Environment Agency
- Poor drainage currently exists. Need further information on how this will be mitigated
- Many inconsistencies and inaccuracies throughout the application, reports and drawings
- A Housing Need Assessment (HNA) is essential to determine a need. This must be done before the application is approved
- The Village Hall assumptions must be provided. This is considered as infrastructure provision together with the HNA, and hence key considerations of Policy T3a. Community agreement has not been determined for any new infrastructure requirements
- Unwilling to accept the trade-off of a village hall for this development. Negative comments re its proposed location
- Access too close to the C182/Combwich junction. Lack of transport links – a 2.3km walk along the busy C182 to a bus stop in the next village is not “well served” by a bus stop or practical as per the Transport Statement. Bus times quoted incorrect for both Combwich and Cannington.
- Over development of the village; the scale of development is not appropriate to size, accessibility, character and physical identity; outside of the settlement boundary. This is the thin edge of the wedge re the 150 houses identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
- Does not conform to SDC Local Plan 2011 - 2032, Policy T3a
- Use of A1 agricultural land at a time when the country will need to increase its production of food from the land
- SDC Local Plan Tier 3 settlements collectively have already exceeded the required number of houses to be provided by 2032. Therefore, there is no justification for this development on a greenfield site.
- Combwich already has planning approval for a further 5 houses, plus applications for another 2 houses are awaiting a decision
- Loss of Public Right of Way
- It will create a further parking shortage in the village (re the creation of the access to the development) and certainly for existing Brookside Rd residents
- A small development of 20-30 houses may be acceptable

3. Parish Council Response to SDC (due 3.2.21)

The parish council will of course await until the public consultation questionnaires have all been analysed, but certainly there are many critical and technical aspects of this application that cannot be supported, regardless of the support/objection to the development it may receive. We simply could not for example, compromise the Flood Risk for Brookside Rd residents and other areas in the village as a consequence of the development

4. Steering Group

A number of residents offered to help with various aspects of this application. A steering group will probably evolve as the process progresses.

5. Consider professional advice

The Clerk has spoken with a professional company to discuss terms and costs to engage the services of a professional consultant to prepare the response to SDC. Costs would be approximately £575 per day. It was proposed that 2 days maximum would be adequate. This was AGREED. **Action: Clerk.**

T.Gardener added that this consultant did the same work for Cannington Parish Council and she would forward the response to councillors so they could view his work.

6. Housing Need Assessment (HNA)

Whilst it is clear that the outline planning permission cannot proceed until a HNA has been carried out; and despite the parish council's efforts to push SDC for the last 18 months for one, the onus is on the Developer and not the parish council to facilitate it.

Ward Cllrs M.Caswell and J.Pay left the meeting at 8.50pm adding that they are both available to help in any way they can.

5/21 FINANCE:

1. **Bank Balances** - Current A/C £2063.97; Deposit A/C £21043.12; Reserve A/C £21112.17
2. **The following payments were AGREED:**
 - a) Mrs A Prowse - £600.28 (Dec salary inc. £35 defib, £39.00 misc. office costs; and £14.39 Zoom monthly subscription)
 - b) Mrs A Prowse - £54.00 (Defibrillator pads for Steart)
 - c) Mrs A Prowse - £139.57 (Multi pack print cartridges plus single black cartridge)
 - d) Mr K Preston - £220.00 (Village gardening costs and playground inspections Oct-Dec 2020)
3. **APPROVE PRECEPT FOR 2021/22**

The Precept for 2021/22 financial year was AGREED at £26000 (this is the third year running at this level) as proposed by T.Gardener and seconded by M Beckley. **Action: Clerk**
4. **INCOME:**

The VAT repayment of £1851.30 was received. This relates to 2019/20 purchases.

6/21 STEART WARD:

Little to report on Steart, although A.Darch is photographing arctic lorries on the road evidencing the potential dangers to cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians if the cycleway goes ahead without suitable provision for their safety.

7/21 REVIEW OF ACTION LIST:

1. Play Area
 - a. Wooden marker posts – Highways has advised that we will need to complete a S171 form to obtain permission to carry out the works as it is alongside the highway. Once this is approved a specification to carry out the works can proceed. **Action: Clerk.**

B.Birkenhead suggested we could use a couple of the wooden marker posts to support the village sign once it is repainted. T.Gardener said she would like further discussion regarding the sign; how it is put back e.g. possibly on a brick base, and the location for it. As it is not urgent, she suggested we discuss this in the spring.
 - b. Refurbishment of wall alongside the common – T.Gardener said this is not a big task but she is trying to research its history. B.Leathwood is helping her.
 - c. Ground settlement legal claim against Wicksteed – Awaiting SDC action.
 - d. Signage for play area - The Clerk has agreed with SDC that we can use the balance of £99 from the RLT2/3 funds to pay for the signs. **Action ongoing.**

8/21 HIGHWAYS:

1. **Potholes along Riverview**

This area is believed to be part of the highway but confirmation will be required from Highways. The Clerk said if Highways did agree to fix the potholes, the work would not be able to proceed until the deep puddles dry up significantly. **Action ongoing: Clerk**
2. **Outstanding highways issues**

There are 4 outstanding actions on the action list; 3 are a low priority. The children's play area "Slow" markings on the road will be pursued as we were advised by K.Tyson that this would be carried out in 2020/21 and as there is a lot more traffic around mainly due to people visiting WWT Steart Marshes, it has become a higher priority. **Action ongoing: Clerk**

9/21 MEETING REPORTS:

8.12.20 – Village Hall.

L.Parsons previously circulated notes of the meeting. The Trustees have been approached to ask if the hall can be used as a Covid-19 vaccination centre. This was agreed, subject to the heating and cleaning costs being met.

16.12.20 – SALC AGM

M.Beckley attended and circulated a report on 18.12.20.

10/21 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

12.1.21 – Village Hall

21.1.21 – Community Forum

11/21 CORRESPONDENCE:

1. General List

- SDC – Members' Interests for review. This is not urgent but will be added to the action list so it is not forgotten. **Action: Clerk**
- PCSO Jason Wyatt – Reporting one crime reported in the last 28 days of 'violence against a person'. No reports of ASB.
- The Clerk completed the Hinkley Point Community Fund end of grant report for the Combwich defibrillators and submitted it to the Somerset Community Foundation.

12/21 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES:

1. Public Rights of Way – B Birkenhead

R.Perrett walked along the footpath from Hill House towards the school. The path is very narrow and it is enclosed by an electric fence either side. A.Darch said the recommended width of a footpath across a field is 1.5m and if it has been ploughed or has an uneven surface, the landowner is obliged to flatten it. She asked B.Birkenhead if he could look into it. **Action: B.Birkenhead**

2. Otter Tales – The next edition will be January 2021.

3. School Liaison – R.Perrett

The pre-school is open; the main school is open for vulnerable children and children of key workers.

13/21 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on Thursday 4 February 2021, 7pm (on Zoom).

Please note we have set aside two dates 28 Jan and 1 Feb to hold an extraordinary meeting(s) to discuss the response to SDC regarding the Brookside Rd Housing Development.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Signed: B.Birkenhead

(Acting Chair)

Date: 4 February 2021