



Great Shefford Parish Council

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GREAT SHEFFORD MINUTES

MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 3rd DECEMBER 2020. THIS WAS A REMOTE MEETING.

Cllr's Present:

Cllr. S. Ackrill (Chair)

Cllr. E. Bell (Vice-Chair)

Cllr. B. Williams

Cllr. S. McCarthy

Cllr. R. Hale-Power.

Cllr. G Knass

Cllr. P. Storey (from Item 11)

Parish Clerk: K. Lloyd.

Attendance: 5 Members of the Public.

The Clerk announced this meeting will be recorded for minute purposes and the recording will be deleted once the minutes are approved.

1 **APOLOGIES**

Cllr. Storey had contacted Cllr. Ackrill before the meeting and said he would be late to the meeting.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr. Ackrill declared an interest on agenda item 14 the 'Grounds Maintenance Contract' as Cllr. Ackrill provided a quote

Cllr. Ackrill and all members of Parish Council declared an interest in the precept, which will be discussed during agenda item 15, 'Budget 2021 to 2022'.

3 **MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

Members **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** to confirm and adopt the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5TH November 2020.

4 **OPEN FORUM.**

None.

5 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED**

No Planning Applications received at time of publishing Agenda.

Decision Notices.

West Berkshire Council 'Granted' the following application.

20/02008/FUL Swan Inn

Proposed erection of a series of 150mm x 150mm box selection metal posts to support six canopy panels of varying dimensions.

<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=20/02008/FUL>

6 **TRAFFIC CALMING /PARKING ISSUES**

Cllr. Ackrill said this was originally raised by a resident to the Parish Council as reported in the last meeting minutes.

WBC Highways were asked to do a traffic review on the area. They have been out and looked, but nothing has been sent to the Parish Council yet from Highways. This item will be on the January meeting agenda.

7 FENCE AT BOTTOM OF HUNGERFORD HILL

Following on from the last meeting the Clerk was asked to find out details regarding a claim and contact WBC, Highways to ask them to survey this area. WBC Highways have visited the area and inspected, but nothing had been received yet.

Cllr. Ackrill reported that the Clerk had obtained vehicle registration details from the Police who attended the accident when the fence was damaged. The Clerk then spoke to the Parish Council insurance company who were not very reassuring that the Parish Council would get the excess money back if a claim were made. The insurance company passed on details of a website on how to obtain further details of the vehicle, including their insurance details. This would cost £4.50 per search. The insurance company said the Parish Council can take this option. Cllr. Ackrill proposed we do this and pay £4.50 to obtain details and pursue the claim ourselves. Cllr. Bell agreed, Cllr. Williams proposed and Cllr. Hale-Power seconded.

Cllr. Ackrill said we have one quote to repair the fence like for like, but it has been discussed to put posts and barriers in where the section of fence keeps getting knocked down. If we are successful with the claim, the Parish Council would need to pay extra if this is agreed.

ACTION: Clerk.

8 SPEEDING – WANTAGE END OF VILLAGE

Cllr. Ackrill said the Parish Council had received the data on the day of our last meeting, and now the members had had time to review the data.

Cllrs. Ackrill and Williams deployed a SID operation for eleven days in August. WBC said there was a problem with the device trying to collect the data off the machine, and that is why the Parish Council have only received the stats. Cllr. Ackrill kindly condensed the data and said he would ask for this information to be added in the December newsletter, but will send to the Parish Council members a draft before submitting.

The junction of Blakeney fields on the A338 showed an average of 73% exceeding the 30mph speed limit. WBC do not take notice of anyone doing between 30 and 35mph, as they deem this acceptable. Exceeding 35mph at that junction, there were 35% of vehicles, which does warrant further action from WBC, as their cut off is 25%.

The junction at The Mead we had 26% exceeding 35mph southbound and only 11% northbound. Community Speed Watch (CSW) is what WBC would consider to be the next step but with no access to the Police Volunteer, their hands are tied. From these results WBC said we had three options.

1. Great Shefford can wait for the police to start CSW in the village but it was said it probably will not be in any plausible position until end 2021 or early 2022.
2. The Parish Council can participate in CSW by loaning WBC CSW equipment, and collect the information manually. This is noting the registration, colour, model of vehicle, date, time, and location and to present this in a format that WBC can pass on to the police volunteer. Then a letter is sent to the offender.

3. WBC collect the CSW data, and a member of the Parish Council goes into the West Berkshire Council office to abstract the information from the video clips, transfer the info onto an excel sheet and WBC send to the police Volunteer to process.

Cllr. Ackrill attended a SID meeting hosted by the Senior Road Safety Officer. Cllr. Ackrill said during the meeting he found out, there are only 1 full time and 2 part time employees in Traffic & Road Safety Team at WBC who cover the entire area.

Cllr. Ackrill asked the members what their thoughts were on the options offered. Cllr. Hale-Power said to keep deploying a SID operation until we get the right result. All members did agree the VAS needs repairing sooner than next year. It was recently communicated to the Parish Council that WBC were waiting on parts for the broken VAS. The Clerk was asked to write to WBC to say, this is unacceptable.

After a full discussion, and in mind of the information the Parish Council would have to note on deploying a CSW, the best option was to request WBC to deploy a CSW. A member of the Parish Council would then go to WBC offices and help abstract the information, ready to send to the police.

Cllr Ackrill said following the SID meeting that he attended, his personal view was that if the Parish Council spent £2,500 the minimum on a SID. This may not get us anywhere because of limited resources to analyse the data.

The recommended deployment for a SID is 3 weeks up and 8 weeks down, as vehicle drivers become complacent if the SID remains in the same place for longer. Cllr. Bell said unfortunately there is no enforcement and agreed.

All members agreed to requesting option 3 as above, to ask WBC to deploy a Community Speed Watch (CSW).

ACTION: Clerk.

9 **BRIDGE DAMAGE**

The recent accident damaged the bridge and WBC Highways have been asked to look at the bridge when visiting the area to carry out a survey, but nothing reported yet from Highways.

10 **FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME**

Cllr. Ackrill reported that no further update since the last meeting. An Outline Business Case has been submitted. We are still working down the route of a local deliverable scheme. A newsletter article in the Christmas edition will be submitted to bring everyone up to date.

ACTION: Cllr. Ackrill

11 **FACEBOOK COMPLAINT**

Cllr. Ackrill was sad and offended to report on some recent Facebook Posts, he felt he should reiterate to the members of the public how a Parish Council conduct their business.

The Parish Council do not use Facebook, we have no right of reply. The Parish Council is a 'body' and we cannot make reply to comments individually on Facebook. There has been a lot of activity on Facebook lately mainly connected to the local pub's planning application.

As members of the Parish Council, we must adhere to policies which residents do not realise.

In local government, a Parish Council is one of the consultees and must make comments on planning applications based on policy, and not emotion. The Parish Council were dealing with a permanent application not just an application during the COVID-19 period and must follow policy. Some of the comments regarding the difficult times the pub is experiencing during COVID-19 whilst true are

unjustified in the context that they were used as they were not connected with the planning application

Some of the comments suggested, which with reference to the publican "*what a good job he has done with the pub*", and "*that the Parish Council have not supported the pub*" are untrue. The Parish Council is not disputing the fact that the publican has done a great job with the pub, in fact it has been minuted previously what a great job the Publican has done with the pub. However, this is not relevant to what we are discussing at that time when considering the planning application. Another Facebook comment said, "*The whole village was for it -and the Parish Council was opposed to it*". - Again, this is not true, there was in fact a 50/50 split and it was not an easy decision for the Parish Council.

The objection points raised on the pub planning application were that no flood risk assessment had been carried out. Cllrs. Ackrill and Bell met with the publican and his agent before the Parish Council meeting, when the application was to be considered. To SUPPORT the publican in his application. The Parish Council informed the publican and his agent, that this application site is adjacent to the watercourse, in a Flood Zone and the site had Flooded numerous times before and because of these points a flood risk assessment would be needed. The Parish Council were told by the agent they would not need one. Since, WBC has said they need a Flood Risk Assessment!

Concerns over the busy car park were raised as when life goes back to normal the weekend lunchtime trade was going to be busy which would present traffic problems. This point again has been raised by WBC highways.

(Cllr. Storey joined the meeting)

The Policy called SHOP.5 protects our local rural shops. The Parish Council wanted WBC to take this policy into consideration. The Parish Council and nobody in fact really knows what effect the Farm Shop would have on the shop/post office.

A further post was read on Facebook, that the Postmaster was in cohesion with the public to get people to object. Cllr. Ackrill said, the publican had been doing the same to get people to support. The publican's words were to Cllr. Ackrill / Bell when they had their meeting was, '*My campaign starts now*'! his words. It is not fair to complain about the Postmaster, as this works both ways!

Some of the comments on Facebook were border line accusing the Parish Council of bribery.

These comments should have been removed by the Facebook administrator, but the administrator unfortunately 'liked' the comments instead, which is infuriating, and Cllr. Ackrill felt the administrator is failing in their duties.

Cllr. Ackrill said the whole village should be pulling together in these hard times!

Cllr. Hale-Power agreed to everything that Cllr. Ackrill said.

Cllr. Bell said we did have a difficult job looking at the support and objection representations. The letters of support just said comments like the publican is running a good pub. The objection letters were detailed and raised some good points; the Parish Council must consider these. Cllr Bell said

she was shocked by the comments on Facebook. Cllr. Bell said the Parish Council members and other volunteers in the village that are a part of community groups give up a lot of their time and put in a lot of effort on village issues, for no remuneration.

Anyone that insinuates that the Parish Council is corrupt is monumentally out of order!

On the Chairman's discretion. Cllr. Ackrill stopped the meeting to ask if any members of the public who were attending the meeting wanted to speak. One member did, and said they believed a lot of miss-information is being written on Facebook lately and would go as far as saying they had read bullying. They felt that on other village Facebook pages these kinds of posts would have been deleted.

It comes back to BEING KIND, and for everyone to think about how that person would feel before they write it!

Cllr. Bell thanked the member of the public for speaking out.

The Clerk was asked to make an official complaint to the Facebook Administrator.

ACTION: Clerk.

12 **FCC RECYCLING COLLECTION**

FCC Recycling (wheelie bin waste) had failed to make collections and the service was not going well.

Cllr. Ackrill had obtained a quote from Biffa, chased up by the Clerk.

The Clerk asked if the Parish Council want to move to Biffa, in mind of this or remain with FCC?

The members agreed to give FCC one last chance as they were slightly cheaper.

13 **FINANCE**

Members **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** to confirm the payments for December as shown in Appendix

1. The Cashflow 2020/21 for December was noted

(All finance documents emailed to members of the Parish Council before the meeting)

14 **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT**

Cllr. Ackrill stepped out of the meeting and handed over to the Vice-Chair.

Cllr. Bell said this contract is an important contract as it relates to the grass mowing, playground inspections and the litter picking. The Clerk had obtained four quotes and emailed a comparison table to the members.

After a review of the quotes, the members of the Parish Council **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** to continue with S & S Management Services Ltd.

Cllr. Bell asked the Clerk how long a Parish Council should be employing a grounds maintenance contract for? The Clerk said it is up to the Parish Council but recommended 3 years. Cllr. Knass asked if Cllr. Ackrill would keep his costs for the 3-year period despite having been asked to quote for just one year.

Cllr. Ackrill was invited to speak and was asked if this cost would remain for 3 years. Cllr. Ackrill said during the third year there should be an inflationary rate increase, the cost has already been the same for the last two years and proposed to increase the cost by a 2% inflation rate in 2023.

Cllr. Bell proposed to the members to review the contract in two years. Cllr. Knass said 2 % was not a big increase. All members resolved to employing S & S Management Services Ltd for two years at the same cost quoted for 2021 budget, and then to review in 2023.

BUDGET 2021 TO 2022

The Clerk showed the budget on the screen during the zoom meeting and each budget item was reviewed by the members. The budget and the end of year cash flow was emailed to the members before the meeting.

The following items were discussed.

The **Clerks salary** was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** to increase to the next spinal point on the National Joint Council Salary Scale to point 25. Cllr. Ackrill said it has been a difficult year for the Clerk and it was an easy decision. The Clerk thanked the Parish Council.

Clerk Training

The Clerk proposed enrolling onto Certification in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) course as this would be extremely beneficial to the Clerk and the Parish Council. The cost is £410 for registration and £390 for the course. The Clerk suggested splitting the cost between the five Parishes that the Clerk works for, being a cost per parish of £160.

Payroll - The Clerk had also offered to do the payroll herself on HMRC PAYE Tools which would save the Parish £182 a year in not using a payroll company. The training would then be funded by no longer using the payroll company. All members of the Parish Council **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

The Clerk commented on the budget item for Councillor / travelling expenses, and that they are entitled to claim for travelling /parking to meetings and telephone calls, printing etc. The Clerk reminded the members that they never claim for anything. The members agreed to keep this at nil for 2021-22.

Dog Waste Bin.

In a previous meeting it was decided to ask WBC to add an extra dog waste bin to the contract. Since, the Clerk has received an email saying no more dog waste collections will be added to the WBC contract, which is a permanent decision. As we already have a dog waste bin, the Parish Council would need to pay for a collection independently if this extra bin is installed.

This could be as much as £180 a year depending on the frequency of collections.

Cllr. Ackrill said he would not mind collecting the dog waste from the new bin, at no cost to the Parish. The Clerk and members Thanked Cllr. Ackrill.

The Clerk said we must keep reviewing the Streetlight fees as hope to see a reduction soon following the LED lantern replacement.

Village Maintenance was reduced to £500 instead of £750 as this has not been spent in previous years due to the Parish Council members doing a lot of the maintenance themselves at no or very little cost.

It was agreed to remove the Contingency Fund that was set of 10% of the Net Budget Expenditure.

After a further discussion it was agreed to provisional set a precept of £16,000 as previous years, but this would be ratified in January. The Clerk hoped the Tax Base figure would be sent by WBC before

our next meeting. This will show how much is spent on the Parish Councils contribution towards a household of Band D Council Tax.

16 **VILLAGE CHRISTMAS TREE AND LIGHTS**

Cllr. Ackrill said the Parish Council have an ongoing arrangement with Charles Parry from Templars Farm who kindly donates a tree every year. Hopefully, this is still in place this year.

Cllr. Ackrill said he would contact Charles Parry and proposed to erect the tree on the Green on the 12th December. Cllr. Williams and Hale-Power volunteered to help.

Cllr. Ackrill reported (via an email to the Parish Council) the offer of £100 from Clive Hooker our District Councillor from his Members Recovery Bid to be spent towards Christmas lights. The Parish Council Thanked Clive Hooker and would like to accept the offer. The funds will be spent on Christmas lights.

17 **COUNCILLORS /CLERK REPORTS.**

None.

18 **MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION.**

None.

19 **FAREWELL AND THANK YOU TO CLLR. KNASS**

Cllr. Ackrill said its sad to report that Gareth is leaving us.

Gareth needs a long service medal. Gareth joined the Parish Council on the 7th May 2009, that's 11 years on Parish Council, I think we can all agree that he has certainly done his time!

Gareth has always been the voice of reason, and his exceptionally good letter/report writing has been a real asset to the Parish Council.

A big Thank you from all of us on the Parish Council and on behalf of the whole village for all you have done and the support you have given, while on Council

Cllr. Ackrill said Gareth will be sorely missed.

All the members of the Parish Council echoed this and thanked Gareth.

Gareth gave Thanks and said it had been a pleasure working with the Parish Council over the last 11 years. There have been some interesting agenda items over the years. Gareth wished the Parish Council and the Village well for the future.

Gareth said he would still be around to support and help on the Flood Scheme/forum. The Parish Council Thanked Gareth for carrying on supporting the Flood Scheme.

20 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING.**

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 7th January 2020 at 7pm.

This is a remote meeting unless government guidance is granted to meet again. The Clerk will inform the Parish Council members if this changes.

APPENDIX 1

Statement of Accounts
Accounts for Payment DECEMBER 2020

Expenditure brought forward 20-21 £15,547.87

Payments

Cheque No	Payee	Description	Amount
SO	Kim Lloyd	Clerk Salary - Oct	
BACS	Kim Lloyd	Zoom Licience contribution	£ 23.98
BACS	FCC Recycling UK Ltd	Wheelie Bin Collection	£ 13.76
BACS	Kim Lloyd	Donation gift of thanks to long serving x Cllr.	£ 50.00
			<u>£ 718.24</u>

Receipts

Total Receipts £ -

Financial Position to date

Balance carried forward 31/03/19 (incl S106 contributions)	£ 22,955.26
Income for year 20-21 to date.	£ 16,807.95
Less payments for year 20-21 to date	£16,266.11
Total including S106 Funding, Funds and Reserves	<u>£ 23,497.10</u>