

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Planning Register

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Date / Time: | Thursday 25 th January 2024 @ 8.00pm |
| Location: | Rushden Village Hall |
| Councillors Present: | Kate Heath (KH) - CHAIR, Steve Pettyfer (SP), Graham Lamb (GL), Jenny Barlow (JB), Sue Lewis (Co-Opted at the meeting) |
| In attendance: | Mark SG Hopley (MSGH) - Clerk, Michelle Hopley (MH) & 2 members of the public |

| Item | Description | Status / Action |
|--------|---|-----------------|
| 24/001 | <p>There was a minute's silence held for Victoria Greenwood, the victim in the recent murder enquiry close to Wallington.</p> <p>KH proposed to send a copy to Victoria's family, of a few words written to remember Victoria, known as Vicki.</p> <p>"By holding a minute's silence at the start of our meeting, we ensure that there will be a permanent record of Vicki Greenwood's name in our Parish Council minutes. We do this on behalf of all those residents we represent who were deeply shocked and saddened to hear about the untimely death of a stranger, discovered in our usually peaceful countryside."</p> | |
| 24/002 | <p>To receive and accept apologies for absence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steve Jarvis | |
| 24/003 | <p>Declarations of interest and dispensations</p> <p>a) To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. <p>b) To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. <p>c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NA. | |
| 24/004 | <p>Sue Lewis was proposed as the new Parish Councillor by Steve Pettyfer and seconded by Jenny Barlow and therefore co-opted onto the Parish Council. Appropriate notices had been placed on the NHDC website as well as parish notice boards and the parish council website with no requests for an election received. Sue Lewis and the Responsible Officer signed the following forms that entitled Sue to take part in the meeting as a new Parish Councillor.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office' form 'Declaration of Interests' form sign 'Compliance with Code of Conduct' form | |
| 24/005 | <p>To confirm the Minutes of Rushden and Wallington Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 14th September 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes were <i>carried unanimously</i> as a true and accurate record of the proceedings. No matters arising, other than those on the agenda. Minutes were signed by the Chair. | |

| Item | Description | Status / Action |
|--------|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on Revlvel Community Group is that they have been in touch with the landowner. The landowner does not want volunteers to be involved but they have undertaken to install leaky dams in the Cat Ditch, as suggested by Revlvel for optimum replenishment of groundwater. There is also a link on the Parish Council website to the Revlvel Groups website. Moon and Stars Community Asset update from Steve Pettyfer. As the pub is closed at the moment it is hard to justify the pub as a community asset. SP will keep a watching brief on the situation but at present it is hard to justify renewing the pub as a community asset. | SP |
| 24/006 | <p>Report from the District Councillor and the County given via email.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is understood that the drainage works in the top part of The Street in Wallington are scheduled to start on 5th February. It looks as if the road is expected to be closed until 25th February. KH to contact Derek at Ringways to confirm the works and then inform residents via the village WhatsApp Group and email that this work is scheduled. SJ is still working to get the River Bean fence in Mill End fixed. Officially this is regarded as low priority since the red plastic fencing is apparently all that is required for safety, but SJ is negotiating with Ringway to get this a dealt with. SJ has been promised that it will be done, but at present there are currently no dates for this. SP reported that residents have secured the fence temporarily. There is a new programme to clean what are described as “hard to access” drainage gullies – mainly on narrow roads where it is claimed that traffic management is required and which therefore may not have been cleaned for some time. Some work on these is to be done in Rushden in March. North Herts has agreed that it needs to start the process of updating the recently adopted Local Plan. Since it took so long there are sections which are already out of date, particularly in areas such as sustainability (requiring the highest standards of insulation, PV panels, etc. on new buildings). The update process will take several years (although the exact time will depend on whether changes to the process proposed by the government are actually introduced) but hopefully nowhere near as long as the last one. It was suggested by GL that we check the dates of our future Parish Council meetings with Steve Jarvis to ensure that our proposed dates do not clash with dates that Steve Jarvis cannot do. If any dates clash, then it is proposed to change the date of those meetings (if possible) so that Steve can attend our Parish Council meetings. | KH SJ MSGH |
| 24/007 | <p>There was planned to be an updated from Giles Meredith from CDA (Community Development Action). However, he is moving on from CDA, so it was decided to postpone this update until his replacement has taken over.</p> | |
| 24/008 | <p>River Beane fence repair has been covered in the District Councilor’s report above.</p> | |

| Item | Description | Status / Action |
|--------|--|------------------|
| 24/009 | <p>The recent flooding between Redhill and Mill End has been resolved with the help of Steve Jarvis and the National Rivers Authority. However, it was mentioned to Steve Jarvis that a longer-term solution to stop the culverts from blocking is still required.</p> | SJ |
| 24/010 | <p>Beane Valley Solar Farm Proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a recent meeting in Cottered hosted by RES who are the applicants for the Beane Valley Solar Farm proposal. • RES have submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening report (EIS) to East Herts District Council (EHDC). • Harvey Phipson, who lives in Cromer and who was present at this Parish Council meeting as a member of the public, wanted to raise awareness to local Parish Councils about the Oppositiontobeanesolarfarm@outlook.com. He has previously emailed the Parish Council raising awareness of the proposal and highlighting local opposition. • He informed the Parish Council that both Cottered and Ardeley Parish Councils had objected to the proposal as had over 90 members of the general public as at 25th January 2024. He informed the Parish Council that the final date to object was around the 2nd/3rd February 2024 and asked that Rushden and Wallington Parish Council highlight the proposal and these key dates to all parishioners in order that they can make an informed decision and object or support as they individually see fit. • He made the point that the opposition group were not against solar power or renewable energy per se, but rather against the inappropriate nature, location and scale of RES's Beane Valley application. He also highlighted the noise pollution aspect that could on some occasions impact the resident of Rushden. The battery storage stations proposed could generate up to 100dB of noise at the height of Summer. • SP made the point that Rushden residents have already been made aware of the solar farm proposal via the village WhatsApp group. • KH suggested that a full Environmental Impact Study should be carried out by EHDC and that the Parish Council should encourage the District Councils to do this. SP highlighted that the recent re-wilding around Sandon had already had a significant impact of the Deer population in the area. • The Parish Council agreed to highlight the Solar Farm proposal to its parishioners and make them aware of the 2nd/3rd February deadline but felt that as the proposal was outside of the parish that they would take a watching brief over the application and highlight any future issues that might directly affect its parishioners via a standing agenda item at future Parish Council meetings. This would be communicated via the Parish Council website and respective village WhatsApp / email groups. This was proposed by KH and seconded by SP. | MSGH/ KH / SP |
| 24/011 | Charitable Trust Update from KH. | |

| Item | Description | Status / Action |
|--------|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KH attended 2 training sessions on charitable trusts. • The training provided by HAPTC was up to its usual high standard. • KH has circulated the training slides with her personal notes to the Parish Council. • KH reported that a new type of level entity called a Charitable Incorporated Organisation – it has the benefits of being a trust (with trustees) in addition to having the benefits of limited liability companies in that it can hold the title to property, land and buildings which a charitable trust cannot do except through a third party, which adds potential cost and complexity. • Further legal advice would still be required if it was decided to go down this avenue, but it could allow the Parish Council to potentially resolve historic land ownership issues such as common land and village ponds and unregistered land within the Parishes, without taking on legal ownership itself. | |
| 24/012 | <p>Wallington Footpath FP022 Update from GL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been little progress since the last PC meeting. • Neither NHDC nor HCC, who have differing views on the proposed solution, can agree a way forward with the landowners. • It has been discovered that the original information that HCC provided was incorrect but as the maps provided by them show FP022 then it is their legal responsibility to maintain that path. • There continues to be a difference of views within the village as to which proposal should be adopted. This is mainly between those that live in the houses directly affected by the path and other residents who are concerned about the environmental and visual impact of the proposed alternatives. • The Parish Council’s preference is that if there is to be a new route, that a path down the side of the drive of number 7 Kits Lane / The Spinney best meets the differing viewpoints. • HCC have agreed to now maintain the footpath from the Spinney to opposite no’s. 14-16 Kits Lane. • GL has been in correspondence with Steve Jarvis who agreed to follow up progress with both NHDC and HCC. | SJ |
| 24/013 | <p>Proposal from KH on raising awareness of violence against women and girls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KH proposed that the PC adopt a safeguarding policy that helps highlight the help available to those subject to domestic violence. This was seconded by Jenny Barlow. • The PC should promote this help via the website with links to the NHDC helplines as well as appropriate National helplines and via the village notice boards. • KH also proposed that we have a regular review of these notices as we do with all other standing orders and policies. • SP highlighted that not all residents will get to see the website or the notice boards or the social media postings so he proposed that the PC print off a flyer that can be posted through residents’ doors so that we ensure that everyone in the Parish gets to see a copy of the help available. | <p>KH</p> <p>MSGH/KH</p> <p>KH</p> <p>KH</p> |

| Item | Description | Status / Action |
|--------|---|-----------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SP enquired as to how website stats to see how many people use the website and MH agreed to circulate the latest stats to the PC. KH proposed a selection of National helpline posters that we should place on the notice boards. SL suggested that these be changed on a regular basis so that people may take note of a new colourful notice. | <p>MSGH</p> <p>KH</p> |
| 24/014 | <p>Planning update from MH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awaiting decision - Moonshine, Southern Green change of use of land to equestrian and erection of stable building with solar panels on south-west roof slope, menage and parking. Granted - Moonshine, Southern Green - Replace and increase height of existing chimney pot. Granted - Poplar Cottage, Southern Green - Replace windows, including French Doors to rear. Granted - 7 Church End, Bennetts Lane - Increase chimney height. Granted - 2 Julians Cottages - 2 storey rear extension, single flat roof rear extension, single story pitched roof extension, two storey side extension, porch, first floor window, roof slope window following demolition of rear element. Awaiting decision - 15 The Street - Variation of plans Wallington Neighbourhood Plan – the Neighbourhood Plan was approved by NHDC at their January cabinet meeting and will now go forward for a referendum on Thursday 14th March 2024 for those residents who live in the Neighbourhood Plan area. KH asked the Parish Council for permission to access approximately £150 of PC funding in order to positively promote the referendum to residents. The current WNP grant funding cannot be used for this purpose. MH confirmed that there are funds available within the current budget where we have underspent on items such as print and stationery. SP recommended Brian Duffey, who prints the local Gazette, as a possible supplier for these flyers. KH / MH to get quotes. This was proposed by KH and seconded by GL. | <p>KH/MSGH</p> |
| 24/015 | <p>Finance – Draft Budget update MSGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft budget has not changed from proposal presented to the PC meeting in September 2023. Inflation has been assumed at 5% for the coming year. This is a reduction from the 10% assumed last year. It should be noted that this is not on all lines of expenditure and overall, the inflationary impact on the draft budget works out at 3.7%. However, we have made savings on some lines to mitigate the last 2 years of inflation and the proposal is to keep the precept request at £4,850 which is the same as last year. MSGH did highlight that the contingency was now quite low at 3% (£125). A comfortable contingency should be between 5% - 10%. SP confirmed that he has taken responsibility for managing the Rushden grass cutting timetable with Greg Pettit. | <p>SP</p> |

