



Reed Parish Council

Clerk: Catharine Toms, 1 High Street, Barkway SG8 8EA

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Councillors Email:

Cllr. Ken Langley (Chair) - langley@reedparishcouncil.co.uk

Cllr. Caroline d'Ayala (Vice-Chair) - dayala@reedparishcouncil.co.uk

Cllr. Martin Higgs - higgs@reedparishcouncil.co.uk

Cllr. Peter Lawrence - lawrence@reedparishcouncil.co.uk

Cllr. John Kershaw - kershaw@reedparishcouncil.co.uk

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th January 2021 at 7.30pm held remotely via Zoom.

**Present Cllrs: K Langley (Chair), C d'Ayala (Vice Chair), M Higgs, J Kershaw.
In attendance the Clerk Catharine Toms & ten members of the public.**

This meeting would be recorded for the purpose of the minutes

- 1.1.21 **Attendance** (as above)
- 2.1.21 **To receive apologies for absence.** Cllr. P. Lawrence (indisposed)
- 3.1.21 **To receive Members Declarations of Interest.** Cllr. d'Ayala (re: item 13.1.21).
- 4.1.21 **To approve the Minutes of the Meetings of the Parish Council held on 4th November and to authorise the Chairman to sign them as a true record** – It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to approve the minutes. Resolved. The Clerk to forward to the Webmaster for uploading onto the website. **Action: Clerk**
- 5.1.21 **To invite Members of the Public to address the meeting.** Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of the public to address the Council. No one wished to speak at this point. The Chair agreed to suspend standing orders during the meeting if members of the public wished to speak on matters on the agenda. Standing Orders were resumed. Cllr. d'Ayala raised a point from a Parishioner concerned that there had been a noticeable influx of visitors from outside the area, parking and walking during lockdown. After discussion it was agreed to monitor the situation.
- 6.1.21 **To receive Chairman's Report** (see Appendix A). In addition, for information, following discussion with the Parish Council, a local resident was now engaging a contractor to clear the ditches across his fields. However, he was not certain that this was the cause of flooding problems in Hobbs Hayes. Standing Orders were suspended to receive reports from County and District Councillors.
- 7.1.21 **To receive report from County Councillor** – Cllr. Hill reported that the Speed Indicator Device (SID) was now functional on the A 10 and that the Police would be carrying out speed checks as their resources allowed. The Covid-19 situation was being monitored and reviewed daily by the County Council. Libraries were open for click and collect and looking to

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support IT needs. She had written in support of the Reed PC objection to the Mill Corner Farm PIP application. Regarding drainage and flooding issues at Hobbs Hayes, Mr Gerrard at Herts County Council Highways had now scheduled a vac clean to take place on the drains in the forthcoming financial year. Cllr. Hill to be informed if the situation worsened and was likely to cause flooding to properties – as emergency measures would then need to be taken.

8.1.21 To receive report from District Councillor – Dist. Cllr. Morris reported that salt supplies were still available on request. Other matters to report were items on the agenda. Standing Orders were resumed.

9.1.21 To review action points from the meeting on 4th November 2020 – this was reviewed, and new actions agreed. Proposed, seconded and agreed by all. Resolved. Clerk to produce a new list of action points. (see Appendix B). **Action: Clerk**

10.1.21 To finalise and agree budget for 2021/22 and associated precept application – Information had been previously circulated showing current financial status, forecast to 31.3.21, the budget for 2021/22 and projected level of general reserves as at 31.3.22. Concern was raised that reserves would be eroded to an unacceptably low level based on the projections. However, it was agreed that with the current pandemic, this year was not the year to increase the Precept by a substantial amount to address that. It was therefore proposed, seconded and agreed by all to agree the proposed budget and submit a request to NHDC for a raise in Precept of just £150 to £5,150. This small level of increase ought to reflect in no increase of the Parish Council element of the Council Tax bill for householders on a Band D basis, due to the higher number of houses in Reed. It was recognised however, that to replenish general reserves to a level recommended as good practice, a significant increase in the level of Precept application next year might be necessary. Resolved.

The Clerk to submit the Precept Application to NHDC by 29th Jan. **Action: Clerk**

11.1.21 To receive report from the Clerk on current financial position - Copies of the accounts and list of monies received and payments to be authorised had been emailed to all Cllrs. Accounts showed a bank balance of £16,642.27 of which £10,133.35 was Push Energy Community Contribution (ring-fenced for special projects), £900.50 was Bonfire Night reserves, £1,163.00 was P3 grant balance, leaving general reserves at £4,445.42.

12.1.21 To agree accounts for payment - Payments to be authorised at the meeting were Clerk's salary and PAYE, NHDC Annual Play Area Inspection. Proposed, seconded and approved by all. Resolved.

13.1.21 Save The Cabinet (SCAG) – (see Appendix A). Standing Orders were suspended to allow a member of SCAG to address the meeting. It was reported that since the last meeting over 30 objections had been lodged against a planning application for an outside store, a flue pipe and retention of fencing. A firm of solicitors had been engaged to respond on behalf of SCAG pointing out that listed building consent had not been sought. This application has still not been determined by NHDC. Environmental Health had also put in an objection as a result of receiving complaints from neighbours about the smell. It had also come to the attention of SCAG that a former garage had now been turned into living accommodation. SCAG had written to NHDC to draw their attention to this, followed by a letter from Reed Parish Council. It was yet another example of unauthorised development taking place on this site. Back in October SCAG had written to NHDC about the irregularities identified in an extant Listed Building Application. To date none of these letters had been acknowledged. The situation had been going on for over 5 years with continuing inaction from NHDC. SCAG were now considering submitting a formal complaint to NHDC. Dist. Cllr.

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Morris agreed to talk to a senior person at NHDC regarding The Cabinet and Wisbridge Reservoir.

Standing Orders were resumed.

14.1.21 To note Planning Appeal regarding Mill Corner Farm and date of Hearing (Information only) – (see Appendix A). The date of the Appeal Hearing – 18th Jan.

Members of the public can request to attend as observers. The NHDC planning case officer had submitted an exemplary statement to the Inspector defending its planning refusal.

15.1.21 To consider and make comment on planning application : Full Permission Householder : Vehicular crossover onto Blacksmiths Lane with partial removal of hedge3 Hobbs Hayes, Blacksmiths Lane, Reed, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8AU. Case Ref No: 20/02988/FPH – After discussion on the application it was proposed,

seconded and agreed unanimously to object to the application as it was considered that to create a vehicular access at this point would be inappropriate and unsafe. Response to be submitted to NHDC. **Action: KL/Clerk**

16.1.21 To receive update regarding the Wisbridge Farm Reservoir project – (see Appendix A). Standing Orders were suspended to allow Dist. Cllr. Morris to inform that he had received notification from the Environment Agency (EA) stating that an officer had attended the site on 9th November and had carried out a full inspection of the works and could find no evidence of environmental crime taking place. Cllrs. Morris and Hill to meet up to discuss the matter further to see if anything could be done to address the situation as it was currently ineffectually going around in circles between NHDC Planning, Herts County Council Waste and the Environment Agency. Standing Orders were resumed.

17.1.21 Highways – to discuss continuing flooding of Hobbs Hayes and agree any action – (see item 7.1.21)

18.1.21 To discuss poor condition of footpaths around Reed – (See Appendix A). The Rights of Way Officer had asked for details of actual Footpaths (rather than Bridleways or BOATS) that were being mis-used. It was a difficult matter to address as kissing gates could not be installed where footpath entrances were wide, however some re-surfacing in identified areas on all types of Rights of Way could be carried out in the next financial year.

District Councillor Morris departed from the meeting at 9.28pm. He was thanked for attending.

19.1.21 To consider research summary regarding Airport consultations and agree any response – Cllr. Higgs having studied the consultation documents, recommended that as Reed would actually benefit from the proposals, there was no need for Reed Parish Council to respond. Resolved.

20.1.21 To receive annual and bi-monthly play area inspection reports and agree any necessary maintenance to be carried out – It was reported that the Annual Inspection Report had not revealed anything not already being flagged up by the bi-monthly inspections. The rotted obstacle course posts needed replacing as soon as possible now and in addition one gate post. It was also noted that the post supporting the village sign would need attention in the next 12-18 months. **Action: KL/JK**

21.1.21 To receive update regarding Push Energy fund expenditure – It was reported that having been asked to re-consider the criteria for Push Energy Fund expenditure, it had been decided to remain committed to consider funding only new initiatives for the village rather than contribute to pre-existing large fund-raising activities. However, the situation would be reviewed periodically.

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District Councillor Hunter departed from the meeting at 9.45pm. He was thanked for attending.

22.1.21 **To receive update regarding Reed Village Facebook page** – It was requested that this item no longer needed to be discussed as the query had, since setting the agenda, been resolved satisfactorily. Agreed.

23.1.21 **To receive matters for report and or referral to next agenda. (Information only)** – Wisbridge Reservoir, Planning working party, Village informative signs, Push Energy fund expenditure, Highways matters, Play area maintenance, Covid update, Save The Cabinet, Grant funding meeting NHDC.

24.1.21 **To note correspondence received. (Information only)** – Nothing not already covered elsewhere in the meeting.

25.1.21 **To agree date of next meeting. 3rd March 2021.** Agreed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.53pm