



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. John Kershaw - kershaw@reedparishcouncil.co.uk

Cllr. Edwin Kilby - kilby@reedparishcouncil.co.uk

Cllr. Barbara Blower - blower@reedparishcouncil.co.uk

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3rd March 2021 at 7.30pm held remotely via Zoom.

Present Cllrs: K Langley (Chair), C d'Ayala (Vice Chair), J Kershaw, E Kilby and B Blower.

In attendance the Clerk Catharine Toms, County Cllr. F Hill, District Cllrs. G Morris and A Hunter & four members of the public.

This meeting would be recorded for the purpose of the minutes

- 1.3.21 **Attendance** (as above)
- 2.3.21 **To receive apologies for absence.** None received.
- 3.3.21 **To receive Members Declarations of Interest.** Cllr. d'Ayala (re: item 15.3.21).
- 4.3.21 **To approve the Minutes of the Meetings of the Parish Council held on 6th 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**
- 5.3.21 **To vote on co-option of two new Councillors to fill current vacancies** – Further to the resignations of Cllrs. Lawrence and Higgs and the elapsed period of notice of those vacancies, which did not result in a call for an election, it was proposed, seconded and all voted unanimously in favour to co-opt Mrs Barbara Blower as a new Councillor. It was also proposed, seconded and all voted unanimously in favour to co-opt Mr Edwin Kilby as a new Councillor. Both new Councillors signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form which was held up for the Clerk to acknowledge. Resolved.
Both new Councillors were warmly welcomed to the Parish Council and were now able to fully participate in the remainder of the meeting.
Gratitude was expressed for the work of former Councillors Lawrence and Higgs, and in particular, to honour Peter Lawrence for the vast number of years of invaluable service that he had contributed to Reed Parish Council.
- 6.3.21 **To invite Members of the Public to address the meeting.** Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of the public to address the Council. A resident spoke

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about the broken drain cover in the High Street. This now had a temporary cover and was awaiting replacement from Herts County Council (HCC) Highways.

Standing Orders were resumed.

7.3.21 **To receive Chairman's Report** (see Appendix A)

Standing Orders were suspended to receive reports from County and District Councillors.

8.3.21 **To receive report from County Councillor** – Cllr. Hill reported that the vaccination programme was going very well throughout the County. Waste recycling centres were extremely busy with just Royston open at the moment. A Highways Liaison Meeting had taken place. Highways had successfully addressed the flooding issues in Hobbs Hayes and there was now funding available from April for Highways work to be carried out in Blacksmiths Lane. She would chase up progress on the replacement drain cover in the High Street. Libraries aimed to be open fully for browsing from mid-April, if it was considered safe to do so.

9.3.21 **To receive report from District Councillor** – Dist. Cllr. Morris reported that the planning department at North Herts District Council (NHDC) was short of staff due to the unexpected death of a key member of staff. They were currently having to deal with a sudden surge of planning applications and processing was taking longer. Dist. Cllr. Hunter informed the Council that the NHDC Local Plan was due to be brought to the NHDC Cabinet Meeting on 16th March. The Inspector had made very few changes. If voted through, this would result in a further consultation.

Cllr. Morris was asked why certain departments at NHDC like Environmental Health and Building Control were currently able to conduct site visits, whilst Planning and Enforcement were not. It was agreed to email Managing Director at NHDC to ask why there was this inconsistency. **Action: KL**

Standing Orders were resumed.

10.3.21 **To review action points from the meeting on 6th January 2021** – 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**

11.3.21 **To consider and agree on whether to adopt LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020** – Cllrs. had previously been circulated the draft model which had included some helpful guidance notes. It was now understood that this document was being considered by the NHDC Standards Committee and their recommendation was awaited. It was agreed to defer this item now until the Annual Meeting in May. Resolved.

12.3.21 **To receive report from Chair and Clerk on review of Governance documents and to consider approval of any recommended amendments** – The Clerk reported that following an initial read through of the documents, Cllr. Kilby had highlighted some areas that needed attention. Particularly where there were cross references between documents. It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr. Kilby would now conduct a thorough review of all Government documents and report back to the Council at the May meeting. **Action: Clerk/EK**

13.3.21 **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 £15,497.06 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 £3,300.21.

14.3.21 **To agree accounts for payment** - Payments to be authorised at the meeting were donations of £125 each to Friends of Reed School and Friends of Reed Church, Clerk's salary and PAYE, NHDC Dog Bin Emptying £264.02, Clerk's expenses for paper, ink and

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stamps £91.29, reimbursement to Cllr. Kershaw for the Playground signs £96.00. Proposed, seconded and approved by all. Resolved.

15.3.21 **Save The Cabinet (SCAG)** – The Parish Council had recently submitted a letter to NHDC regarding works being carried out at The Cabinet and their effect on a pending Listed Building Planning Application.

Cllr. Kilby at this point wished to declare an interest in this item as a member of SCAG, (interests having already been declared by others before his co-option). This was duly noted. Cllr. Kilby reported that SCAG had been chasing NHDC for a response to their correspondence relating to the undetermined Listed Building application and to the fact that a former garage had now been turned into living accommodation. A reply had since been received from Mr Ellis at NHDC saying that a decision on the Listed Building application would be made quite soon. In the last few days a kitchen flue had been extended, possibly as a result of a visit from Environmental Health (EH). EH had also seen evidence on their visit that the garage was being used as accommodation and this had been reported this back to both the Council Tax and the Planning Depts. at NHDC.

The Conservation Officer at NHDC had been contacted as some of the documents relating to the Listed Building application had been retracted and replaced with revised documents. Clarification was needed as what had changed and if this would require a new consultation. This matter was being investigated and a response was awaited.

16.3.21 **To consider and make comment on planning application : Full Permission Householder : Insertion of roof light in rear slope of existing garage and side extension to existing garage**

7 Nicholls Yard, Crow Lane, Reed, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8BJ. Case Ref No: 21/00393/FPH – After discussion on the application it was proposed, seconded and agreed that there was no objection. Response to be submitted to NHDC. **Action: Clerk**

17.3.21 **To receive update regarding the Wisbridge Farm Reservoir project** – (see Appendix A). A response had just been received from an NHDC Enforcement Officer indicating that the enforcement case remained open and that they had been in contact with the agents, Savills, for further information. NHDC also planned to make a site visit and would then review the case and respond with an update. It seemed certain that this was a District Council matter as NHDC had issued the Certificate of Lawfulness based on information made available at the time, which now appeared to have been incomplete or erroneous, and which was now surely grounds for revoking the Certificate. A planning application would then need to be submitted by the applicant. This was likely to be refused as a reservoir was clearly unviable, and the applicants then ought to be made to restore the site to its former state.

18.3.21 **Highways – to receive update regarding Highways matters** – (see item 8.3.21) County Councillor Hill would ask Highways to clear the excess of loose chippings left after work at Hobbs Hayes and Blacksmith's Lane, also to inspect The Joint where verge erosion on both sides had been caused by HGV traffic and would report on when a litter clearance would be carried out along the A10. It was also reported that a directional sign from The Joint into Crow Lane and 30mph sign leading towards the A10 were now missing.

19.3.21 **To receive bi-monthly play area inspection reports and agree any necessary maintenance to be carried out** – Cllr. Kershaw reported that nothing much had changed since the last inspection. A meeting had taken place with a playground equipment supplier. A quotation of £6,743.91 had been received to replace the Activity Trail, the piece of equipment currently deteriorating. Grant funding would be needed to cover the expense. At present the policy with Push Energy fund monies was to use this for new items for the village, not replacement items or for maintenance costs. It was agreed to keep this

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replacement of equipment on the agenda and investigate potential funding. **Action: KL/Clerk**

20.3.21 **To receive update regarding Push Energy fund expenditure** – No requests for new items for the village had been received recently. The picnic benches purchased had proved very popular and the bulbs planted around the village last Autumn were now in evidence. It was queried if, as an exception to the criteria currently set for expenditure of this fund, whether the village sign could be repaired. This would be an item on the Agenda for May. **Action: Clerk**

21.3.21 **To agree action required to register and protect Pitties Pond and Cart Wash** – The Clerk had contacted the Herts and Essex Wildlife Trust following receipt of a bulletin from them indicating that they were available to offer advice with the preservation of wildlife habitats in the area. It was thought that if the ponds could be listed as historic features, then it could lead to grant funding opportunities to pay for any restoration work required. Concern was raised about possible pollution in Pitties Pond. The Environment Agency would be contacted to see if the water could be tested. **Action: KL/Clerk**

22.3.21 **To receive update on village Covid-19 support work** – The communication channels set up were continuing to work well and the team spirit to help one another within the village was very evident and ongoing.

23.3.21 **To receive update regarding grant funding meeting with NHDC** – The NHDC Officer had provided information to the School for possible avenues of granting funding for their Library project. It was now for the school to investigate these and further enlist help from NHDC if required. It was agreed that to contact NHDC regarding funding for a new Activity Trail for the play area. In addition, Cllr. Langley to look at possible Lottery funding opportunities. **Action: KL/Clerk**

24.3.21 **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 (temporary drain cover), Play area maintenance and grant funding for Activity Trail, Protection of ponds, Covid update, Save The Cabinet, Village sign maintenance, Review of Governance documents, including new Model Code of Conduct.

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

26.3.21 **To agree date of next meeting. 5th May 2021.** Agreed.

The meeting on 5th May would incorporate the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, the ordinary bi-monthly Parish Council meeting, followed by the Annual Parish Meeting (by statutory requirement). Government guidance was still awaited as to whether the meetings would still need to be held remotely, via Zoom. It was also considered that the Annual Report produced last year in lieu of the Annual Parish Meeting had been very well received and it was agreed that a similar report should be produced again this year, in case of a physical meeting not being able to take place, or some people not feeling comfortable yet to attend a meeting. Cllr. Kilby volunteered his skills again in the production of this report. **Action: EK/Clerk**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.46pm