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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. Edwin Kilby - kilby@reedparishcouncil.co.uk
Cllr. Barbara Blower - blower@reedparishcouncil.co.uk
Cllr. Nick Payne - payne@reedparishcouncil.co.uk

Minutes of the meeting held on 1st November 2023 at 7.30pm held at Reed Village Hall.

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

In attendance the Clerk Catharine Toms, County Cllr. F Hill, Dist. Cllr. G Morris and three members of the public.

This meeting would be recorded for the purpose of the minutes.

- 1.11.23 **Attendance.** As listed above.
- 2.11.23 **To receive apologies for absence.** None received.
- 3.11.23 **To receive Members Declarations of Interest and note dispensation granted.** Cllr. d'Ayala (item 17.11.23). *Cllr. Kilby, for his period of office, a dispensation allowing him full participation at meetings in issues arising concerning The Cabinet public house including, but not limited to, planning matters.*
- 4.11.23 **To approve the Minutes of the Meetings of the Parish Council held on 6th September 2023 and to authorise the Chairman to sign them as a true record.** It was proposed, seconded and all voted in favour to approve. Resolved. Approved minutes to be posted on the website. **Action: Clerk/Webmaster**
Standing Orders were suspended.
- 5.11.23 **To invite Members of the Public to address the meeting.** The members of the public present did not wish to speak. The Chair agreed to suspend Standing Orders during the meeting if they wished to speak on agenda items. Standing Orders were resumed.
- 6.11.23 **To receive Chairman's Report** – (See Appendix A)
- 7.11.23 **To receive report from District Councillor** – Dist. Cllr. Morris reported that he had objected to a proposal for North Herts Council (NHC) to introduce meeting-free Fridays. Staff levels were low at NHC, with high absences due to mental health issues.
The Newsells Park Winery application was due to be determined by the NHC Planning Control Committee on 13th Dec. He considered it to be a development that would be beneficial for the area.

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www.reedparishcouncil.co.uk

8.11.23 **To receive report from County Councillor** – County Cllr. Hill reported that cyclical drain cleaning was currently being carried out in the area. She was pleased to report that grass and verge cutting issues had now been resolved and that the temporary drain cover on the High Street had gone and the drain now repaired. Work was being carried out under a section 278 agreement to sort out the entrance on the A10 to the old Red Lion site. She was working with the school and the Police to address the traffic speeding and parking issues around the school. She was awaiting a response from NHC as to availability of stickers for wheelie bins – as another means to try and deter speeding.

She asked if the Parish Council would consider signing up to support the Armed Service Covenant. The Clerk to forward the information to the Council and add to the agenda for the January meeting. **Action: Clerk**

Standing Orders were suspended to allow a member of the public to speak to Cllr. Hill regarding maintenance work needed to clear a stretch of pavement along the A10 around the bus stop area. Cllr. Hill agreed to add this to the schedule of works. Standing Orders were resumed.

Cllrs. Morris and Hill were thanked for submitting their reports.

9.11.23 **To review action points from the meeting on 6th September 2023** – reviewed.

Action Points from this meeting (see Appendix B).

10.11.23 **To receive report from the Clerk on current financial position**

A list of monies received and payments to be authorised had been previously circulated to all Cllrs. Accounts showed a bank balance of £28,171.64 of which, £10,133.35 was Push Energy Community Contribution (ring-fenced for special projects), £3,779.45 was Bonfire Night reserves, £690.75 was P3 grant balance, S106 Sustainable Transport Reserve was £651.87, Play Park Reserve was £2,000.00, leaving general reserves at £10,916.22.

11.11.23 **To agree accounts for payment.** Payments to be authorised at the meeting were Clerk's salary and PAYE. £996.66 to reimburse Cllr. Kilby for purchase of fireworks and £2.95 Clerk's expenses for magnetic pins for the noticeboard. Proposed, seconded and approved by all.

12.11.23 **To note/discuss introduction to charge to Parish for uncontested elections** – Notification had been received from NHC that Reed Parish Council would be charged £250 election fees every 4 years for elections from May 2024. After discussion it was agreed that this seemed unfair to Parishes like Reed that only had a small Precept. Cllrs. Payne and d'Ayala agreed to draft a letter of objection to be sent to NHC. **Action: NP/CD**

13.11.23 **To receive a first draft budget 2024/25 for consideration** – The Clerk had circulated a first draft to Cllrs. The figures were based on the assumption that there would be no increase in the Precept requested. It was agreed to hold an informal meeting in late Nov/early Dec to discuss the budget in detail. The Clerk to arrange a date. **Action: Clerk**

14.11.23 **To ratify comment submitted under delegated authority on planning application:**

Full Permission Householder : Two storey side/rear extension including juliet balcony, single storey side and rear extensions following demolition of existing rear element. Insertion of solar panels to side roofslope and rooflights to front and rear roofslopes, erection of detached garage. Alterations to fenestration.

3 Hobbs Hayes, Blacksmiths Lane, Reed, Hertfordshire., SG8 8AU. Case Ref No: 23/02032/FPH

A response of 'no objection' had been submitted subject to the Planning Officer being satisfied that materials and design harmonised appropriately and that planting would soften and mitigate the visual impact of the additional building. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to ratify the response. Resolved.

15.11.23 To receive update regarding required plan to remove excess material from Wisbridge Reservoir site – The Clerk had contacted NHC to determine if a disposal/re-profiling plan had been received from the applicant as the 12 month deadline had elapsed. The response was that it had not been received. The current application 23/01667/S73 to remove condition 6 was on hold whilst the applicant further investigated matters and NHC did not feel it appropriate to take any action against condition 9 at the current time.

After discussion it was agreed that the Clerk should forward the email sent to NHC every two months to remind them and try and obtain an update. **Action: Clerk**

16.11.23 To receive update regarding site RD1 and discussion with CDA Herts re: Housing Needs Survey – Communication received back from CDA Herts had indicated that it was inappropriate to conduct a further Housing Needs Survey because site RD1 existed within the adopted NHC Local Plan as an allocated site for development. They were involved now in establishing housing needs relating to 'Windfall' sites.

17.11.23 To receive update from Save The Cabinet Action Group (SCAG) – It was reported that the three enforcement notices were now stuck on Appeal. There was a new Enforcement Officer at NHC, who had responded to SCAG and had paid a site visit to the Cabinet but had been unable to gain access to the whole building. He was currently going through the legal process to complete his investigation and until then was unable to provide information to interested parties. Whilst the Parish Council was willing to write a letter to NHC in support of SCAG, it had been decided by SCAG that this was probably best left for the time being.

18.11.23 To receive update on Highways Matters including measures to reduce speeding along Brickyard Lane – (Also see item 8.11.23). It was reported that HCC Highways Officers were looking at areas to conduct new Speed and Volume surveys. Various signs around the Parish were identified as either being missing, broken or de-faced. Cllr. Hill noted these and agreed to add these to the works list. A query was raised regarding a footpath across a field that had now been ploughed by the framer and was unable to be used. It was understood that these should be reinstated within two weeks by the farmer. However, there was an alternative unofficial path alongside the edge of the field. It was agreed to keep the matter under review. **Action: Clerk**

19.11.23 To receive update on project to preserve ponds and agree any action required – Cllr. Blower reported that the Cart Wash pond had been cleared rather drastically by the Community Payback Team, but looked better than it had done previously. There was however large quantities of the invasive Bull Rush and Yellow Iris remaining, which the Payback Team were unable to clear because they did not have the necessary equipment. A member of the public present kindly volunteered to help clear this. Cllr. Blower suggested that she would liaise with them outside the meeting as it would need to be a co-ordinated job in conjunction with the Parish Council. **Action: BB**

20.11.23 To receive bi-monthly Parish Council play area inspection report and agree any action required – An inspection had been carried out by Cllr. Langley and it was reported that presently no action was needed.

21.11.23 To receive update from Play Area Working Party, including funding, and agree any action required – It was reported that two suppliers had visited and so far one quotation had been received from Wicksteed for £34k, which included 4 new pieces of equipment, removal of old equipment and the groundworks. Playdale's approach was slightly different, they were more prepared to work with existing equipment and add to it. Their quotation was still awaited. Now that a quotation had been received and the Playground survey had been conducted there was enough evidence to submit an application for grant funding from the National Lottery. Cllr. Blower to investigate the process for applying.

Action: BB

22.11.23 To receive update on final plans for Bonfire Night – Cllr. Kilby had collected the fireworks and they were now safely stored. A small team was in place to organise the fireworks display and bonfire and a larger team for duties of crowd control, bucket collection and traffic marshaling. A briefing meeting would be held at 5.30pm on the day. Additional help would be required for the clear up on the following morning.

An updated Risk Assessment had been carried out, which along with an Event Management Plan, had all been submitted to NHC Safety Advisory Team plenty of time in advance.

Volunteers would be advised to bring along good torches and the entrances to the Green would need to be marked out and made obvious in the dark.

The weather forecast was not good but only high winds or thunder would be a reason to postpone the event.

23.11.23 To receive update regarding likely timescales for Modification Order Applications to amend Definitive Maps of Rights of Way upgrading Reed 20 & 23 and Reed 21 to Restricted Byways – A response had been received from the Definitive Map Officer at HCC indicating that Reed 20 would be investigated first but it was likely to be some years before this happened and Reed 21 would be even longer as it was much lower down on the priority list.

24.11.23 To receive report on safety of kissing gate on Reed 005/011 and agree any action required – These had been inspected and deemed safe (005) or been removed by others (011), so no further action was required.

25.11.23 To receive proposal to create an orchard area on the edge of the Green using Push Energy funds – Cllr. d'Ayala to organise a site meeting in daylight just before the informal meeting at end Nov/early Dec and put together a proposal to replace trees that had died and add some additional trees. **Action: CD**

26.11.23 To discuss possible Community Payback projects and works already completed – It was agreed that the works already completed by the Payback Team of digging out the ditches around the Green and some clearance work in the Cart Pond had been a great success. Cllrs. d'Ayala and Blower to make contact with the Probation Officer to see if twice yearly maintenance work might be possible on those areas. **Action: CD/BB**

Other jobs that had been considered were work in and around the Churchyard but the Community Payback Teams were not allowed to work on Highways land or where there were no toilets or rest facilities available.

27.11.23 To receive report on condition and renovation work required for Community Noticeboard near the School – to be deferred to the January meeting.

28.11.23 To receive update from discussion with Gigaclear regarding Fibre Optic Network for Reed – Cllr. Payne reported that he had contacted Gigaclear who had said that they were committed to building the fibre optic

network first (through Openreach ducts and between Openreach poles) and would then engage with households who wished to connect. They were expecting to be live in Reed by the end of 2024 or sooner. The service would provide speeds of between 200Mbps and 900 Mbps down and up depending on the package subscription.

It was agreed that a link could be put on the website – for information only and similar put out via the community WhatsApp. **Action: EK/NP**

29.11.23 **To receive matters for report or referral to next agenda. (Information only)** Ponds Protection Project, Tree planting on the green, Fibre Optic Network, Wisbridge Reservoir plan for removal of excess material on site, Projects for Community Payback work, Speeding in Brickyard Lane, Play Area Project, Community Noticeboard, format of Annual Parish Meeting in May 2024, Armed Service Covenant.

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

31.11.23 **To agree date of next meeting.** Thursday 4th January 2024. Agreed. The Clerk to check availability of the Village Hall. **Action: Clerk**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.45pm.