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**Minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.30pm held at Reed Village Hall.**

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

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

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

1.03.24 **Attendance.** As listed above.

2.03.24 **To receive apologies for absence.** Cllr. B Blower (on holiday). Apology accepted.

3.03.24 **To receive Members Declarations of Interest and note dispensation granted.** Cllr. d'Ayala (item 21.03.24). 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.

4.03.24 **To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and to authorise the Chairman to sign them as a true record.** It was proposed, seconded and all voted in favour to approve the amended minutes. Resolved. Approved minutes to be posted on the website.

**Action: Clerk/Webmaster**

It was proposed and agreed by all to bring forward items 7.03.24, 8.03.24, 19.03.24 & 22.03.24 as Cllrs. Hill and Morris needed to depart early to attend another meeting.

Standing Orders were suspended.

8.03.24 **To receive report from County Councillor** - County Cllr. Hill reported that the Herts County Council (HCC) budget for 2024/25 of over £1.1bn (excluding the dedicated schools grant) had been agreed by Full Council in February. There is an increase of £98m overall in the budget and a 4.99% increase in the HCC element of Council Tax. 2% is ring-fenced for Adult Social Care.

Libraries are continuing to host drop-in sessions for the Police and Barclays Bank in addition to regular activities and Clubs.

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[www.reedparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.reedparishcouncil.co.uk)

She is continuing to work with stakeholders to try and improve health services in the area.

The Highways drain issues had all been reported and she was looking at organising speed and volume surveys for Crow's Lane and Brickyard Lane. Following another traffic accident at the known accident black spot, the junction of Church Lane and the A10, Cllr. Hill would investigate if it was possible for the foliage to be cut back to increase the visibility and for an enhanced 'Turning' warning road sign and 'hazard' road markings be installed. Safety along that stretch of the A10 had been under review for some time by HCC Councillors, HCC Highways Safety Team and the Police. The Parish Council to encourage Parishioners to share their knowledge of specific instances of collisions or near collisions at that spot within the last 5 years, to try and compile some factual evidence on just how dangerous that junction was. Cllr. Kilby to put out a message via the Community WhatsApp Group/Facebook. **Action: EK**

It was agreed that the Parish Council would write to HCC Highways to register concern regarding this junction (copying in Cllr. Hill) and to include evidence of past instances to assist HCC Safety Team with their investigations. **Action: KL**

**7.03.24 To receive report from District Councillor** – Cllr. Morris reported that the application to widen the agricultural access to land East of London Road had now been withdrawn. The Section 73 application to reword Condition 9 of the Agricultural Reservoir application he considered to be of no sense. It negated the condition and by the applicant not having to submit a report on what was going to be done with the excess material on site would mean that it was likely it would just all be left there. Cllr. Langley to forward Cllr. Hill a copy of the objection being submitted by Reed Parish Council. **Action: KL**

There was a new Enforcement Officer at North Herts Council (NHC).

Biodiversity Net Gain of 10% was now part of planning law on developments over a certain size.

The Royston Area Forum had an increased fund pot this year totalling £11k for grants to support local causes.

Standing Orders were resumed.

Cllrs. Morris and Hill were thanked for their reports.

**19.03.24 To receive update on status of Appeal – Land at Nicholls Yard, Crow Lane, Reed** – The full report had only just become available, so there had been little time to digest it. It seemed that the appellant's case was not strong. It was based on planning law and didn't take into consideration the impact the development would have on the Conservation Area. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to submit a response to the Planning Inspectorate to resist the appeal and support the refusal made by NHC. It needed to be emphasised that the decision by NHC to refuse the application was made by people who were familiar with Reed and were aware of the RD1 site that was part of the adopted NHC Local Plan. The deadline for responses was 8<sup>th</sup> April. **Action KL** Parishioners to be made aware of the Appeal via Community WhatsApp/Facebook **Action: EK**

**22.03.24 To discuss and agree any necessary action on Highways issues:**

- **Blocked drain at junction of Blacksmiths Lane and Jacksons Lane**
- **Lack of drainage on Crow Lane outside North Farm**
- **Drainage problem on Church Lane past the Grain Barn**
- **Accident black spot at turning onto A10 from Church Lane (accident w/c 19<sup>th</sup> Feb)**
- **Speeding in Brickyard Lane** – (see item 8.03.24)

Dist. Cllr. Morris and County Cllr. Hill and two members of the public departed from the meeting at 8.05pm.

**5.03.24 To invite Members of the Public to address the meeting.**

The Chair agreed to suspend Standing Orders during the meeting if members of the public wished to speak on agenda items.

Standing Orders were resumed.

**6.03.24 To receive Chairman's Report – (See Appendix A)**

**9.03.24 To review action points from the meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 - reviewed.**

Action Points from this meeting (see Appendix B).

**10.03.24 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 £28,275.32 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 £4,265.47, leaving general reserves at £8,754.43.

**11.03.24 To agree accounts for payment.** Payments to be authorised at the meeting were Clerk's salary and PAYE, £321.94 to North Herts Council for dog bin emptying 2023-24 and £61.61 to the Clerk for expenses – stationery, stamps and software 2023-24. Proposed, seconded and approved by all.

**12.03.24 To appoint an Internal Auditor for 2023/24 –** It was proposed, seconded and agreed by all to appoint Mr Peter McMeekin. Resolved.

**13.03.24 To review the effectiveness of Internal Audit –** This had been reviewed and there were no recommended changes from the previous year. The date to be changed to reflect the review and the website updated. **Action:**

**Clerk/EK**

**14.03.24 To review the Asset Register –** With no new assets purchased there was no change since last year.

**15.03.24 To receive report on review of Governance documents and consider approval of any recommended amendments –** The Clerk to review the Financial Regulations in preparation for the May meeting. **Action: Clerk**

**16.03.24 To agree dates for the meetings to be held in May and agree any actions required to prepare for the Annual Parish Meeting –** The Annual Meeting and Bi-Monthly Meeting of the Parish Council to be held on Weds. 8<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm and the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) to be held on Weds. 29<sup>th</sup> May @ 6.30pm for 7pm start. Proposed, seconded and agreed by all. Resolved.

The Clerk to check availability of the Village Hall. **Action: Clerk**

At the APM drinks would be served on arrival, and food would be available to purchase from a food van. Cllr. d'Ayala to organise. **Action: CD**

The Clerk to contact all the various village organisations to ask them to submit a written report which would be incorporated within a printed Annual Report and distributed to all households in the Parish. In addition, to invite them to attend on 29<sup>th</sup> and consider having a table from which they could promote their organisation's activities. **Action: Clerk**

**17.03.24 To ratify response submitted under delegated authority to planning application:**

**Full Planning Permission : Widening of Agricultural Access Land to the East of London Road, Reed. Case Ref No: 23/02909/FP –** Since the response had been submitted the application had been withdrawn by the applicant.

18.03.24 **To ratify response submitted under delegated authority to planning application:**

**Section 73 Application : Removal of Condition 9 (Excess imported material) of planning application 22/00910/FP granted on 17/10/2022 for Retention of 11,936 cubic metres of soil to create an Agricultural reservoir with a capacity of 5,500 cubic metres.**

**Land Between Bush Wood and Rokey Wood, High Street, Reed, Hertfordshire. Case Ref: 23/02887/S73** – Proposed, seconded and agreed by all. Resolved.

**And to consider and make comment on Section 73 Application : Rewording of Condition 9 (Excess imported material) imposed on planning application ref: 22/00910/FP granted on 17/10/2022 to: The reservoir shall be constructed from material already on site in accordance with the approved plans. No excess imported material not required in connection with the development material shall be removed from the site without full details of a disposal/reprofiling plan being submitted to and thereafter approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include a timetable of implementation for the proposed works. Such works shall thereafter be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details or particulars and in accordance with the agreed timetable unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

**Reason: To ensure that any excess material imported onto the site is removed or dispersed appropriately following the completion of the development, in the interest of visual amenity.**

**Amended description only.**

**Land Between Bush Wood and Rokey Wood, High Street, Reed, Hertfordshire.**

**Case Ref No: 23/02887/S73** - (see item 7.03.24)

Cllr. Langley to circulate a proposed response to the proposal of the re-wording of Condition 9. It was puzzling that the re-wording negated the Condition when there was clearly a need to preserve the Condition. **Action: KL**

20.03.24 **To receive update from the Turney Trust regarding site RD1** – It was reported that the Turney Trust had now initiated a pre-application consultation with NHC Planning Authority – so things were slowly moving forward.

21.03.24 **To receive update from Save The Cabinet Action Group (SCAG)** – Exchanges of communication had taken place with the new NHC Enforcement Officer and she had expressed an in principle willingness to meet but needed time to familiarise herself with the case. This was considered by SCAG to be positive news.

23.03.24 **To give consideration to holding an event to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day on 6<sup>th</sup> June** – It was reported that village organisations had looked into holding an event but with other events already in the calendar, it was not looking likely. The Parish Council, after consideration concluded that it just did not have the capacity to organise anything at this late stage either.

24.03.24 **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 there was further minor deterioration but no action was needed.

25.03.24 **To receive update from Play Area Working Party, including funding, and agree any action required** – There was not much update since the failure to obtain any Lottery funding. Ms. Edwards at NHC had informed Cllr. Langley that currently there were no funding pots to help towards purchase of play equipment. Cllr. Langley to write to Johnson Matthey in Royston for funding assistance. **Action: KL**

It was noted that in towns it was the responsibility of the District Council to fund play equipment and play areas.

26.03.24 **To receive proposal to plant replacement trees on the edge of the Green using Push Energy funds** – A site meeting to be arranged to consider matters again. Cllr. d’Ayala to set a date. **Action: CD**

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

28.03.24 **To receive matters for report or referral to next agenda. (Information only)** Ponds Protection Project, Tree planting on the Green, Wisbridge Reservoir, Projects for Community Payback work, Speeding in Brickyard Lane, Play Area Project, Community Noticeboard, Turney Trust and Site RD1, Review of Financial Regulations

29.03.24 **To note correspondence received. (Information only)** – Nothing not covered elsewhere.

30.03.24 **To agree date of next meetings.** Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024 (The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and the Bi-Monthly Parish Council Meeting. Agreed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.06pm.