

HORSHAM FOREST NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCIL
Clerk: Mrs M Vinall, 40 Rookwood Park, Horsham, RH12 1UB
Tel: 01403 269265 E-Mail: fnchorsham@sky.com
MINUTES OF MEETING 18th MAY 2020 7:30PM

Present: Messrs. N. Friswell, J. Milne, J. Olson, G. Stanley, B. Travers
Mrs. D. Sumpter (Chairman)

District Councillors: Dr. D. Skipp, Mr. P. Burgess, Ms. R. Fletcher, F. Haigh,
County Councillors 3 CC Mrs. M. Millson, Dr. N. Dennis and Mr. A. Baldwin
(left the Meeting shortly after Councillor presentations)

Public: 1 Mr. M. Grubb (by invitation as a prospective Councillor)

Press: 0

Apologies Mr. G. Sitton

Owing to exceptional circumstances - Pandemic Virus, Covid 19 - this was a Virtual Meeting hosted by The Clerk. Unless otherwise notified, this will be the way in which FNC Meetings will be conducted for the foreseeable future.

The Coronavirus Bill that received Royal Assent on 25th March 2020, stated Local Authority Meetings can take place virtually until May 2021. Mrs. Sumpter has asked HDC for clarification about Neighbourhood Council Meetings but has not received the information as at 18th May 2020.

Please see Item 06.03.20 Matters Arising, and this outlines the proposal for the way in which members of public will be invited to attend virtual meetings.

**01.05.20 Minutes of Meeting held on 16th March 2020
(April Meeting was cancelled)**

The Minutes were proposed by Mr. John Milne, seconded by Mr. Guy Stanley and it was agreed that the Chairman, Mrs. Diane Sumpter will formally sign the Minutes in due course.

02.05.20 Matters Arising

08.01.20 The Drill Hall

There is no further information about a possible Friends Group. Blueprint may have more information at its AGM on 19th May.

The Drill Hall and the work that is required on the building, forms part of a Tender that is out to Consultants. Mr. Milne commented that District Councillors considered the original wording was biased towards the non-viability of this building and, as a result, it was changed.

09.01.20 Highways

(please see CC Dr. Dennis Report where he refers to WSCC Mike Thomas appointment).

There is confusing information about when WSCC will repair potholes. It is best practice to report all potholes in case WSCC does not carry out its own road inspections.

Residents are disappointed with the way in which pot holes have recently been "filled in" in St. Leonard's Road. CC Mrs. Millson said that from first impressions, she agrees with the statement.

Resolved CC Mr. Baldwin will make a site visit and follow up any concerns.

04.03.20 The Local Plan

Disappointingly, The Minister of Housing, Central Government, has advised that he will not revise the overall housing numbers for this district or presentation timescale. Unofficially, Central Government is adopting the mantra, "build our way out of recession".

At the HDC PDAG (Planning and Development Policy Development Advisory Group) Meeting on 18th May, reference was made to a Consultant's Report on housing marketability stating:

- 1000 houses per year is feasible
- 1200 houses per year is debatable
- 1400 houses per year cannot be absorbed

In the light of the serious financial/employment outcome caused by Covid 19, PDAG is asking for this Report to be updated. As a side comment, FNC has heard that Berkeley Homes is already experiencing a notable drop in house sales at its Southwater site.

Mr. Milne who attended the PDAG Meeting in his District Councillor role, commented that the response to the preliminary Local Plan, showed strong objection to the proposed new town, Mayfield and there were 460 objections to the Rookwood Golf Course proposal. Response breakdown is to be imminently published. Central to future discussions is likely to be the proposed 10,000 homes West of Ifield and Rookwood Golf Course.

(DC Mr. Peter Burgess referred to the disastrous outcome if The Local Plan was not submitted by November. Developers could reference the lack of The Local Plan when submitting ad hoc proposals and it will be extremely difficult to uphold refusals. He already has concerns that the New House Farm Developer will find a way to refer to The Local Plan when promoting the application for 400 new homes at this site.

06.03.20 Facebook

NC Mr. Olson was again thanked for his work on Forest Neighbourhood Council Facebook Page. Mr. Olson commented that FNC already has 48 followers and 40 likes together with 64 engagement of posts. This is extremely encouraging.

Referring to engagement of posts, these have related to North Street Subway and Dog Fouling in Booth Way. In due course there will be a protocol as to how FNC will respond.

About the way in which members of public will be invited to become involved in Virtual Meetings, FNC Facebook Page will advertise the date and invite members of public to submit questions with a deadline date 2 days before the meeting. There could be the option to invite members of public to join meetings (currently through the app. Zoom).

07.03.20 Correspondence QE11 School

WSCC has not responded to the request that any future WSCC Planning Applications should include Forest Neighbourhood Council as a consultee.

Resolved DC Mr. Baldwin will follow up this matter

03.05.20 Reports from County and District Councillors

CC Mrs. Millson said that WSCC is using SKYPE for its virtual meetings. Meetings such as County Local Committee have been cancelled.

Mrs. Millson is concerned about the standard of air ventilation in Council buildings and is pressing for this to be monitored before they are re-opened and staffed.

CC Mr. Baldwin referred to the financial year end 2020 and said that without considering Covid 19, WSCC already had higher expenses than anticipated in children's services, fire and rescue and a major increase in adult social care costs. Sadly, more children have been taken into care. It is challenging times and WSCC may have to use some of its reserves.

Pupils in Reception, Y1 and Y6 will probably return to school on 1st June although there is still confusion as to how schools will operate, one thought in that children will attend on alternate days. It may also be the case that only 50% of parents opt to let their children return on 1st June. There is no information about the date for other classes to return to school, but this may be September 2020.

Forest Boys School has agreed to consultations for this school to become co-educational from 2021, initially enrolling Y7 girls. Millais has no objection.

CC Dr. Dennis referred to Central Government Strategic Transport Infrastructure Programme (STIP) and there is now an A24 Steering Group Horsham to Worthing. Great Daux Roundabout northward will need to be a separate scheme and a joint study with Surrey County Council. In the past, SCC has resisted change to this stretch of A24.

Referring to the appointment of Mike Thomas as WSCC Highways Manager for this area, DC Dr. Dennis suggested that a meeting to look at New Street issues is arranged as quickly as possible.

(at this stage, Councillors asked for an update on work that appears to be starting in Blackhorse Way. No-one had any information).

DC Dr. Dennis, Chairman WSCC Audit Accounts, said the report is delayed until November 2020 but it will include some challenges.

DC Mrs. Haigh referred to HDC and its response to Covid 19. It is being handled under the umbrella "Community Health and Well Being" and this includes HSIS (Horsham Self Isolation Support Group), Age UK Horsham District and Horsham Matters. **DC Dr. Skipp** added the comment that there have been 1,800 volunteers. In the past, Horsham Matters distributed 258 food parcels but in recent weeks that has increased to 662 food parcels.

DC Dr. Skipp referred to HDC virtual meetings, including a Planning Meeting at which applications were passed and refused. DC Mrs. Fletcher also referred to the Planning Guidance that came into effect on 13th May. There is no change to the planning timescale. CIL payments are being suspended.

Central Government has given emergency powers to Local Government, one of which is changes to construction working hours. FNC Mr. Stanley is concerned that when Saxon Weald work commences in Bennetts Road, late construction working hours will have an adverse effect on many elderly and vulnerable neighbours.

Resolved DC Dr. Skipp will follow up this concern.

DC Mr. Burgess confirmed that there will be a Virtual Unparished Meeting on 19th May and this will include the Town Centre Vision. He is hoping that Railtrack will honour its agreement to carry out remedial work at The Iron Bridge.

HDC is contacting local businesses to offer advice about Covid 19 and its consequences.

The new Chairman of Horsham District Council will be Councillor Karen Burgess and the Vice Chairman will be Councillor Dr. David Skipp.

On a personal note, DC Mr. Burgess is disappointed that RAFA is closing in Horsham and feels that this will have a detrimental effect on ex-Service Personnel in the district.

DC Mrs. Fletcher gave a brief outline about the new Parks and Countryside Manager, Peter Crawford. Although he previously worked in the Medway Area, he does live and knows this area. The grass cutting programme is behind schedule. However, at this stage, Councillors asked that the team is congratulated on the high standard of maintenance at Bennetts Field. (in answer to NC Mr. Stanley's question about apparatus being installed in Bennetts Field, this is being paid for from Section 106 monies, but its installation has unavoidably been delayed).

Residents are concerned about waste bins that have not been emptied. This may be because the recent uplifting of restrictions and good weather has encouraged residents to eat outdoors. Whilst HDC Mr. John McArthur will be contacted, it is important to acknowledge the excellent way in which refuse collection has continued throughout the current crisis and there should be no criticism of his department.

Resolved to contact HDC John McArthur and HDC Peter Crawford

POP UP ROUTES

DC Mrs. Fletcher, who is also a member of Horsham Cycle Forum, is promoting the Government Scheme for Pop Up Cycle and Pedestrian lanes. It is important that any ideas are submitted quickly as Central Government has allocated money to Councils for immediate work.

Mrs. Fletcher again referred to the idea of "School Streets" where roads are closed to traffic at school opening and closing times.

Please submit ideas to info@hdcf.org.uk by 26th May 2020

04.05.20 Blueprint

Blueprint Annual General Meeting is taking place on 19th May and is being virtually chaired by Mr. A. Cooke. "Blueprint" expires at the beginning of June but the intention is for this project to be amended, re-designated and re-submitted. As part of this initiative, there are now 32 members who have signed the new paperwork. **The AGM will take place on 15th June.**

The Neighbourhood Plan presentation has now been delayed until 6th May 2021.

05.05.20 Planning

Planning Committee has submitted the following responses:

20/0790	35 The Hornets	Extension	No Objection
20/0724	Aimesmill Cottages	Use of land as garden	N/O
20/0770	7 Paget Close	Surgery 2 Lime trees	N/O
20/0795	163 Comptons Lane	Fell 2 oak trees	Objection
20/0788	Gardeners Cottage	2 storey annexe	N/O
20/0834	79 Bennetts Road	single storey extns	N/O

Comments were made about DC/20/0756 that is a retrospective application for a barn replacement. This is in Nuthurst Parish Council area and those Councillors have not submitted an objection. This Council's concern is that any change to the barn designation and future use could add to traffic entering Hammerpond Road.

06.05.20 Treasurer's Report

Current Account £8,448.19, Reserve Account £1,285.90. The Clerk's honorarium and expenses have been paid for April and May and £150 Petty Cash will be added. Please note that the figures include 2020/2021 HDC grant. The cost of two newsletters in 2019/2020 exceeded the grant figure in that financial year.

At this stage, The Clerk will continue to pay Zoom costs and be reimbursed through Petty Cash. It is agreed that FNC will move to online banking and that The Treasurer can approve normal expenditure

Proposed by Mr. N. Friswell
Seconded by Mr. G. Stanley

FNC has paid one year in advance for hire of Salvation Army Hall. How to proceed will be discussed at June Meeting.

07.05.20 Correspondence

Horsham Green Spaces Forum – FNC is keen to become involved in this new Forum and is proposing that it also liaises with other interested parties, e.g. Horsham in Bloom
Keep Rookwood Green Alliance
Horsham Weekly Alerts
WSSC News Bulletins relating to Covid 19

08.05.20 Any Other Business

It was agreed that HDC should be congratulated on the way in which it has coordinated volunteer response to Covid 19.

Mr. M. Grubb gave a brief outline of his interests and it is hoped that he will join the June Virtual Meeting and consider becoming a co-opted Neighbourhood Councillor.

The June Annual General Meeting will take place on 15th June. Again, this will be a virtual meeting and nominations will be by e mail correspondence.

The Meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.