

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 15th FEBRUARY 2021 7.30 p.m.
(VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING HOSTED BY CLERK)

Present: Messrs. N. Friswell, J. Milne, J. Olson, G. Sitton, G. Stanley and B. Travers. Mrs. D. Sumpter (Chairman)
District Councillors: Ms. R. Fletcher, and Dr. D. Skipp,
County Councillors: CCs Mr. A. Baldwin (left the Meeting at 8.30 p.m.), Dr. N. Dennis (left the meeting at 8.30 p.m.) and Mrs. Millson
Public: 0
Apologies 0

The Chairman, Mrs. Sumpter opened the Meeting by announcing that Mr. Grubb has forwarded his resignation with immediate effect. It was agreed a letter of thanks be sent to Mr.Grubb.

01.02.21 Minutes of Meeting held on 19th January 2021
The Minutes were proposed by Mr. Friswell and seconded by Mr. Travers.

02.02.21 Matters Arising

04.03.20 Draft Local Plan

Following an informal Zoom discussion about the draft Local Plan and proposed Rookwood development, a draft letter had been sent round to FNC for comment. Six Councillors gave their support to the letter, one response was not received and there was one abstention.

The letter was sent on 8th February 2021 to Strategic Planning “unequivocally asking HDC to withdraw Rookwood Golf Course Development in its entirety from the draft Local Plan”. FNC Councillors believe there are too many questions that need to be answered before a non-reversible decision is made. The Statement in apostrophes will be posted on FNC Facebook page and readers will be directed to the FNC website where the letter will be posted.

It is understood that the publication of the draft Local Plan has been delayed due to issues that include Water Board input.

Rookwood

One Councillor highlighted a resident’s letter in WSCT Opinion Page referring to secret talks taking place between HDC and three Neighbourhood Councils about the Rookwood development. Everybody agreed this is an incorrect statement. The Neighbourhood Councils had been invited by HDC to meetings in the same way as other organisations, e.g. Friends of Warnham Nature Reserve.

A draft letter about Rookwood Proposal 4 had been circulated to Neighbourhood Councillors. Six Councillors gave their support, one response was not received, and there was one abstention.

The Rookwood letter was sent to DC Jonathan Chowen on 9th February, copying in District Councillors and HDC Officers.

Proposed response from three Neighbourhood Councils

Objections to the Rookwood development have been submitted from residents including from the three neighbourhood council areas – Denne, Forest and Trafalgar. It is agreed that a letter on behalf of the three neighbourhoods, to concisely explain the actions that have been taken, should be prepared and circulated.

06.08.20 Friends of Chesworth Farm – dog bins

Dr. Skipp explained that HDC management changes have delayed installing the dog bin in Arun Way. This prompted discussion about the poor state of the bridleway i.e. the unmade up track from the surfaced end of Arun Way to the entrance to the field which, due to historical drainage problems, can easily flood and become difficult to manoeuvre. As it is a public right of way, WSCC has an obligation to keep it “open”. Mrs. Sumpter also mentioned that the gate to the field and adjacent fence needed repairing.

CC Mrs. Millson agreed to raise the matter with the Rights of Way team and also the poor state of the fence.

04.12.20 Reports from District Councillors – Town Representation

DC Dr. Skipp had invited 2 representatives from each of the 3 Neighbourhood Councils and Ward District Councillors to a meeting to discuss how the town (urban area) is represented. To some extent, this has been prompted by the HDC Cabinet decision to not replace the Cabinet Member for Horsham Town, the role that was previously undertaken by DC Mr. Burgess. DC Dr. Skipp referred to the fact that the three Neighbourhood Councils are non-political and therefore can put forward their own viewpoints.

Resolved Mrs. Sumpter and Mr. Stanley will join the Zoom Meeting to be held on 22nd February 2021.

10.12.20 Mr. W. Jones (Arboricultural Officer)

This Council understands that an Officer has now been appointed to be responsible for arboriculture matters and this is welcomed.

04.12.20 The Shelley Memorial

Mr. Milne attended this Group’s Meeting and said that speedy progress is being made, including putting together the brief for the sculpture. HDC has expressed its strong preference for the sculpture to be sited in Horsham Park, close to the pond and path triangular strip. Whilst late in the day, Mr. Milne suggested that the Memorial should be a “Shelley’s’ Memorial” so that it encompassed Mary Shelley’s life (Frankenstein) as well as Percy Shelley’s. He felt this would extend the marketability of this project.

03.02.21 County Councillors’ Reports

CC Dr. Dennis referred to the New Street gas connection which will take place between 8-12th March and will affect the road from Queen Street to Victoria Street which will be closed.

Referring to the Page Court development, there is to be a reassessment of parking spaces and this could include setting up some 1 hour restrictions.

DC Dr. Skipp raised the issue of HGV vehicles travelling up New Street; this is really an unsolvable problem although perhaps the installation of weight limit signs might be a deterrent. CC Dr. Dennis also referred to complaints he has received about construction vehicles not adhering to the Construction Access Plan drawn up for the Paige Court development.

Resolved DC Dr. Skipp will forward the Construction Access Plan and this will be advertised on FNC’s New Street Noticeboard. Residents are to be asked to send in photographs with their complaints. This will allow the option to refer issues to HDC Planning Compliance.

CC Mrs. Millson referred to the potholes in St. Leonard's Road and these should be repaired at the beginning of March. She will report the recurring pothole in Queen Street (in the vicinity of the pedestrian crossing).

Enforcement action should take place regarding the overgrown hedge (Heron Way/Comptons Lane vicinity).

CC Mr. Baldwin advised that WSCC Budget was set on Friday 12th February and there is to be a 4.99% increase, 3% of which is dedicated to social and adult care. He explained there has been Central Government intervention, investing £22m primarily for adult and social services care and this has eased the situation. £12m has been set aside for Highways and £10m with the aim to meet WSCC ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030.

CC's Mr. Baldwin and Dr. Dennis left the Meeting.

04.02.21 District Councillors' Reports

DC Dr. Skipp referred to the Covid vaccination programme in this area that is being supported by HDC Officers. Most of the District Council time is being taken up by the draft Local Plan although Dr. Skipp said that "there are one or two other issues in the pipeline".

DC Dr. Skipp advised that the budget has been approved and Council tax will increase; he referred to the unpredictable time in our lives and sensible decisions had to be made.

DC Ms. Fletcher referred to a resident-initiative in Norfolk Road aiming to make this a conservation area and whilst this is not in Forest Neighbourhood, it might have implications for roads around Station Road.

There is a further initiative to install cycle racks in and around the town and this could include places such as care homes. DC Ms. Fletcher invited Neighbourhood Councillors to suggest possible venues.

05.02.21 Planning

Exceptionally, there are only two planning applications this month, one of which is an amendment to an application where there were no objections and the second is for a change to a driveway.

06.02.21 Treasurer's Report

Current Account £5,306.09, Reserve Account £1,286.18. The Clerk's honorarium and expenses for February have been paid. The Treasurer has submitted a stationary expense claim and Councillors are invited to submit their claims before this year end.

07.02.21 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies

Mrs. Sumpter had previously distributed reports on her attendance at Blueprint, HTCP, Quarterly Meeting, Meeting of 3 NC Chairs and Friends of Chesworth Farm meetings. She explained that the HTCP Meeting was arranged to discuss its response to Rookwood and how it will impact on the Riverside Walk. Referring to the Quarterly Meeting, arrangements are in hand to set up a discussion about "Wilder Horsham". Chesworth Farm Management Plan 2020/2021 will shortly be signed off. The question of how to advertise the Neighbourhood Plan referendum will have to be further discussed. However, Mrs. Sumpter commented that it was thought it would take place on 6th May – the current date for some County and District Councillor by-elections and the Police Crime Commissioner election; although this hadn't been confirmed by HDC.

There were no questions.

08.02.21 Correspondence

Neighbourhood Warden Report and correspondence relating to Lucy Hallett resignation. There was no response to the internal advertisement. Mr. Sitton will represent FNC on interview panel.

West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service – exploratory details and confirmation that the new Centre will be going ahead at Highwood.

WSCC and HDC News Releases mostly relating to Covid issues. Other issues covered are warmer efficient homes, climate change and national empty homes proposal/scheme.

Census Details

WSCC Pothole Repairs update about its dedicated web page:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-pothole-online/>

West of Ifield Update from Homes for England.

4TheYouth updates including formal report.

Police and Crime Meeting.

YMCA Transitional Housing Project (7 bed project in Horsham).

HDC Statement of Special Charge 2021.

Correspondence from Sam Fosberry, Countryside Warden who is interested in Ayshe Court Lakes.

Citizens Advice Bureau Bereavement Project (details available on website).

Section 106 Funding application for Riverside Walk. – **FNC has no objection to this application**

Novartis - Parish Liaison Notes

Older People's Forum taking place on 3rd March 2021

09.02.21 Any Other Business

NC Mr. Friswell commented that he had unsuccessfully applied to join the HDC Standards Committee.

NC Mrs. Sumpster explained that due to commitments, she has not been able to commence the newsletter.

NC Mr. Olson suggested that it is now time to “think ahead” and how Councillors perceive the way in which future meetings are held. This might be a return to meetings at Salvation Army Hall, Zoom continuation or a mixture of both. Councillors agreed that financial provision must be set aside for IT equipment (camera?) so that virtual attendance, including members of the public, can be offered if and when meetings resume in a hall environment.

The Meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.