

**Minutes of a meeting of Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Council
held via Zoom
on Tuesday 22 September 2020 at 7.00pm.**

Members present: Councillors A Sharpe (Chairman), B Story (Vice-Chairman), L Davison, P Deason, R Ellison, M Finch, J Gripton, C Herring, B Hilton, S Humphrey, S Jones, C Lester, C Richardson, S Verma, R Wood.
In attendance: Helen Goodwin, Clerk to the Council.

7703 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Councillors P Carter and J Gripton. Councillors S Jones and S Verma were absent.

7704 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman asked to receive any Declarations of Interest in accordance with the adopted Code of Conduct. The following declarations were made: Cllr A Sharpe - the Thames Hospice grant application; Cllr B Story – the Cordes Hall grant application, Cllr C Herring – the two-storey car park on Queens Road.

7705 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11 February 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed as such.

7706 FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- i) Since February we had to defer our Standing Orders and powers of responsibility were delegated; Standing Orders resumed from 01 September.
- ii) Cllr L Davison was welcomed as a new councillor to her first full council meeting.
- iii) Councillors were asked to clarify which committees they sit on; they will continue to sit on these committees until the next Annual Meeting in May 2021.
- iv) Councillors were reminded that the Ascot Support Hub is still operating, should they be approached by someone requesting help they should refer them to the Hub.
- v) The forum of parish clerks in RBWM has invited parish chairmen, or one representative of the parish council, to a virtual meeting at which they will discuss the RBWM budget and the possibility that some services may be decreased or cancelled. In the future parishes may wish to consider collaborating to pick up some of these services.
- vi) The chairman attended a virtual meeting of Network Rail regarding their forthcoming tree works and, following that, a meeting has been set up with them at Truss Hill Road on 30th September at 10am. Under current Covid rules only six people may attend the meeting - three members of Network Rail will attend, along with Cllrs A Sharpe, P Deason and C Herring.

7707 PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was not adjourned.

7708 PRESENTATION OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Finance & Personnel committee minutes of 10 March and 01 September were presented by Cllr A Sharpe.

The Leisure Committee minutes of 08 September were presented by Cllr R Ellison. All sites were discussed and the issue of the lease at South Ascot. Also CIL funding and the potential of having a lot of money in the near future; Cllr R Wood is to attend the next meeting to advise on possible projects.

The Planning Committee Minutes of 18 February, 10 March, 31 March, 21 April, 12 May, 02 June, 23 June, 14 July, 04 August, 25 August and 15 September were presented by Cllr R Wood.

7709 FINANCIAL REPORTS

- i) Cllr R Wood presented the end of year 2019/20 accounts; they were basically in line with expectation however the capital spend was lower than expected, in particular Cheapside playpark, which is still in the planning stages. Reserves are quite balanced; we have extra coming in this year with the increased precept.
- ii) The Clerk presented the Internal Audit report which noted that there were no areas of concern, however the auditor commented that “the total sum of the precept was not identifiable in the minutes (although we note the agreed Band D value) and this should be done as soon as practicable at a future meeting”. The Clerk therefore advised that the total sum of the precept for 2020/21 is £201,690.
- iii) Cllr R Wood presented the quarterly financial report for the quarter ended 30 June 2020.

7710 END OF YEAR EXTERNAL AUDIT RETURN 2019/20

- i) Cllr R Wood proposed the parish council approve the Annual Governance Statement, section 1, for 2019/20. Cllr P Deason seconded and all were in agreement.
- ii) Cllr R Wood proposed the parish council approve the Statement of Accounts, section 2, for 2019/20. Cllr P Deason seconded and all were in agreement.

7711 GRANT APPLICATIONS

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 Section 137, applications for grants were invited and the following awards were made:

- i) Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) - £1,500 – proposed by Cllr C Herring, seconded by Cllr S Humphrey, all were in agreement. This is to be the total grant to CAB for the whole of 2020.
- ii) Thames Hospice - £1,000 – proposed by Cllr C Herring, seconded by Cllr S Humphrey, all were in agreement.
- iii) Cordes Hall - £1,000 – proposed by Cllr C Herring, seconded by Cllr S Humphrey, all were in agreement.

7712 CIL FUNDING

Cllr R Wood had provided a written report which stated that at the end of March the council had received £144,000 in CIL funding; since March, £106,000 has been received meaning that there is now a quarter of a million pounds available to spend on infrastructure-related projects. He advised that items included on his report have not been discussed or prioritised, but are a list of possible activities that could be considered for utilising CIL funds. He reminded council that this was last discussed at a full council meeting when Chris Joyce of RBWM attended. Mr Joyce was going to put together the RBWM plans for infrastructure and report back to us. He has been chased twice but no feedback has been received. One of the thoughts had been to work alongside RBWM in order to prioritise some of the plans for our area. Until we have his report it is difficult to decide whether we can be involved with RBWM in this way or not.

Cllr A Sharpe suggested that, should RBWM reduce some services, the council may wish to consider using some CIL funding to provide such services in the parish. This could be discussed at the forthcoming Clerks' forum.

Cllr A Sharpe advised the council on one of the possible projects previously identified, that of the old Alexander David garage in Sunninghill which it was suggested could be utilised as a car park. RBWM put in a bid for the land but was unsuccessful. The borough has also attempted to engage with the owner of the land to try to obtain a lease to use the land for car parking but the owner will not allow land to be used in this way.

Discussion ensued around the possible application for CIL funds from organisations who have a project for which they require funding. It was pointed out that it is not appropriate for CIL funds to be “applied for” but is available for projects for the benefit of the community. Suggestions of projects should be invited from the community and the money used as best benefits the community. It was suggested that the parish council discuss the projects on its list and produce a smaller list with which to consult the community. Cllr L Davison recommended council members research online as there are lots of examples there of how other parishes are consulting with their communities. Cllr Wood reminded the council that there are still four years before the money must be spent.

7713 BOROUGH COUNCIL MATTERS

A report was received from RBWM Cllr D Hilton regarding RBWM matters including: COVID-19, Support to local businesses, Waste, Libraries, Council finances, Planning, Assessing Housing need, First homes, Supporting small & medium builders, SANG. Cllr Hilton has invited members of the council to email him with any concerns.

Planning

The proposed changes to the planning system were discussed; as well as the government consultation on the root-and-branch changes, there is a second consultation which finishes on 01 October with more changes to the current system, making radical changes both to the number of houses to be provided by the borough (the original local plan gave 712 per year, now 914) and the rule regarding the size of a development which may be deemed as automatically granted outline planning permission. Until now the rule has been in place that developments over 150 houses with no particular environmental issues are deemed automatically to have planning permission but the proposal is to extend that down to much small sites with as little as 10 homes and if they are on sites which have previously been developed. This is a very worrying change.

When the inspector wrote to the borough recently advising a Stage II examination on the Borough Local Plan she drew attention to the fact that there was a more recent, objectively-assessed, housing need than the borough's and that reduced the number from c16,000 to c6,000 houses required, which was good news. However, it now it appears to be going up substantially. The argument in the document is to concentrate all the development in urbanised areas. If Sunninghill & Ascot are included in this definition (above 10,000 homes is considered urban), and with such broad planning approval as being proposed, we are in danger of destroying the character of our areas.

It was agreed that the response to the consultation on the first white paper, a draft of which has already been circulated to the council, should be sent to MP Adam Afriye as well as to all our borough councillors. As there is very little time in which to respond to the second consultation a draft response will be prepared by Cllr P Deason and will be circulated to the council prior to sending to borough councillor D Hilton.

Libraries

Cllr B Story reported on the library situation. Maidenhead and Windsor libraries are open on a limited basis, operating on a click-and-collect and a select-and-deliver system. Books may be selected from a catalogue and users may go along and collect or have them delivered to the mobile library which is brought into local communities. This seems to be working well and there have been a large number of books being borrowed. The service is being expanded to accommodate the number of customers. In addition, there are three other libraries that are attached to schools and these are now staffed. However, some schools such as Charters have not been able to open their own libraries, which has increased the usage of the library system. RBWM is consulting regarding a proposal to reduce the opening hours across the service, partly because the online use has increased. People are encouraged to respond to the consultation. Other services that haven't opened are the museum in Windsor and the tourist information centre in Windsor, both of which are under review.

7714 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr R Ellison requested an update on the major planning developments such as Ascot rejuvenation and the new medical centre. Cllr R Wood reported that the planning application for the health centre is currently being considered by RBWM but the timescale has not yet been decided. In terms of Ascot rejuvenation, we are still waiting to hear, but Ascot Racecourse indicated at the beginning of the year that they wanted to move ahead with their part of the proposal. A request was made to meet with them to discuss this but no response has been received to date. However, it was pointed out that the development for the south side of the High Street can't go ahead until the Borough Local Plan is adopted as it is greenbelt and it will need to be removed from green belt before any development can go ahead.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20:34.

Councillor Allison Sharpe, Chairman