

**Minutes of a meeting of Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Council  
held via Zoom  
on Tuesday 15 December 2020 at 7.00pm.**

Members present: Councillors A Sharpe (Chairman), P Carter, L Davison, P Deason, M Finch, C Herring, S Humphrey, C Lester, C Richardson, R Wood.

In attendance: Mr Chris Joyce; Helen Goodwin, Clerk to the Council.

The Clerk advised those present that the meeting is being recorded and the recording will be kept until the minutes are approved at next parish council meeting.

**7771 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received from Councillors R Ellison, B Hilton, S Jones and B Story. Councillors J Gripton and S Verma were absent.

**7772 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman asked to receive any Declarations of Interest in accordance with the adopted Code of Conduct. None were received.

**7773 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 03 November were approved as a correct record and signed as such.

**7774 FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- (i) When giving apologies for meetings it is necessary to give a reason (as set out in The Good Councillor's Guide, page 37);
- (ii) Network Rail is going to be doing works on the cutting between Sunninghill High St and Upper Village Road during the week commencing 21<sup>st</sup> December, stopping for the period between Christmas and New Year, and starting again 4<sup>th</sup> January. Much of the work to the larger trees will be done over weekends in March when there are also scheduled engineering works and the tracks will be closed to trains. Information has been shared on our social media; Network Rail has been very good at keeping us informed and will continue to keep us updated.

**7775 PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was not adjourned.

**7776 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**

Mr Chris Joyce, Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth at RBWM, gave a broad update, explaining how his remit and his team has changed during 2020. He advised that the year has been dominated by Covid-19 and the policy and strategy work that was planned hasn't happened because they have been focused on their response to the pandemic, however they are intending to move forward with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). In his opinion there is an opportunity for our parish, where there is significant CIL development coming forward, to be a vanguard of developing a joint approach with RBWM, who can use this model to be rolled out to other parishes. This would involve doing a joint piece of work around the priorities in Ascot & Sunninghill and taking that approach, perhaps updating some of the work that has been done in the IDP specific to this area, to agree some priorities for the CIL spending. He highlighted that, as part of work being done with the Local Enterprise Partnership, a project for Ascot High Street has been developed and submitted with a view to get that into the programme for when funding becomes available. At the moment this is ranked joint 2<sup>nd</sup>, so is a priority.

Concern was expressed regarding the five-year timescale which parishes are allowed in which to spend CIL funds. Mr Joyce advised that RBWM recognises the impact of Covid and money not spent in that timescale would not be taken back by RBWM, particularly as our parish council has been one of the more pro-active councils and the borough is keen to work jointly with the parish. He will write to the parish to confirm this and suggested we work towards allocating priorities to projects early in 2021.

It was agreed that active dialogue would be the start point of the process and that the parish council would communicate in the new year with Chris Joyce and Tim Golabek, who is the Service Lead for Transport and Infrastructure, and share our CIL project list with them so that it can be brought into the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to identify requirements and prioritise projects.

The issue of the land currently up for sale off Coombe Lane was raised and Chris Joyce was asked what had happened regarding the possible SANG which was being considered for the land, why this hadn't happened and what can be done in a similar situation in the future to ensure a more positive result. Mr Joyce advised that the due diligence work that had been going ahead was slowed down by the Covid situation, and then one of the landowners decided to sell part of the land. In terms of SANG capacity, however, the site isn't essential as there is sufficient capacity without it to deliver the BLP. He will be looking at the impact of the sale on the project and will be able to come back and give a full update at a later stage. It was explained that the land off Coombe Lane has been used by the public for half a century and the parish would like to work with the borough to make it a public right of way but needs to know if there is a formal application that can be made so that the land can be protected. The parish council may also like to identify other areas of green space for consideration in the future, perhaps for a purchase for the community.

In terms of assets of community value, Chris Joyce was asked if there is any guidance the borough could give on how the parish council might approach registering such assets with them so that when they come to the market the council is able to act responsively and immediately. Mr Joyce was unable to advise as this isn't an area he deals with, but will speak with colleagues and send through the relevant information.

A question was asked regarding information on best practice for consulting with the community on spending CIL funds, both in terms of documentation and help in understanding the types of projects that can be on the list. Chris Joyce responded that, while the borough doesn't provide specific guidance on community consultation, there is a lot of information around on good practice on consultation broadly. In terms of neighbourhood CIL and the sorts of projects it can be spent on, there is quite a broad definition – it is anything that will mitigate the impact on the community from the development coming forward, ie things that will provide additional capacity in the community such as healthcare, green spaces, play areas, school places. He went on to say that he would be happy to look at designing a consultation together and that he advises against open questions which make it difficult to identify proprieties.

An update was requested on School Street applicable to our parish. Chris Joyce advised that they had heard back from the Department for Transport (DfT) in response to Tranche 2 of the Emergency Act of Travel Measures and didn't receive all the funding they were hoping for. The borough has been asked to build-in a period of public consultation because of the difficulties some authorities have had in delivering schemes. They will therefore be launching a public consultation in January, which will help prioritise the schemes put forward in respect of Tranche 2. The consultation will include the School Street proposed within the Ascot area. The aim is to identify a pipeline of schemes so that when the next tranche of funding comes available there will be more off-the-shelf projects they can bring forward that have already been discussed locally.

Chris Joyce was asked whether the borough would be preparing guidance for parishes on how to identify, consult and prioritise projects. He responded that there is no intention currently to do that as they would much rather work closely with parishes to go through that process.

#### **7777 PRESENTATION OF COMMITTEE MINUTES**

- The Planning Committee Minutes of 17 November and 08 December were presented by Cllr R Wood who reported that a fair proportion related to trees. Silwood Nurseries are looking to convert some storage buildings into 4-bed bungalows which the parish council was in favour of. The council was opposed to the application at 28B High Street in Sunninghill, where the application is to turn the building which was previously a travel agent into a 1-bedroom house, on the grounds that it considers residential accommodation behind the high street not appropriate.

- The Finance & Personnel Committee Minutes of 24 November were presented by Cllr A Sharpe.
- The Leisure & Cultural Committee Minutes of 01 December were presented by Cllr M Finch who reported that Blythewood work is progressing with the felling of trees; the tender specification has been drafted and presented for Cheapside playpark and is due to go out imminently. In South Ascot there was deterioration to the playground surface that prevented the playpark being able to open and this has now been repaired. In recognition of the fact that the playground was closed for an extended period some entertainment was provided over the weekend by Professor Bubbledore. At Tom Green's Field advice has been taken from Peter Harding and there are plans for wildflowers and nesting boxes. There have been complaints from residents of antisocial behaviour at Victory Fields. Some councillors have been out in the community litter picking in teams. Regarding the land off Coombe lane – when the land came up for sale recently the borough acted quickly to place a TPO on all the trees. The parish council is considering if putting in a community bid is appropriate and David Hilton is speaking to RBWM about this. There is still no news on the lease for the South Ascot land. The L&C projects' budget was agreed by the committee to be put forward to the full council; fees will not be increased.

#### **7778 DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2021/22**

Cllr Robin Wood presented the draft budget, explaining that it is based on the current levels of expenditure. At the end of the year there will be uncommitted reserves equivalent to four months' expenditure, which is considered prudent. In terms of the large projects, it is expected that we will spend on Cheapside play equipment this year (2020/21) and, for South Ascot, half in 2021/22 and half the following year. Leisure projects include the proposal for new fencing at Tom Green's Field, a Signs & Maps project and a further expenditure related to Community Wardens. It was explained that RBWM is planning to reduce the number of Community Wardens by half and to centralise those they retain. Parish councils have been invited to part-fund a community warden which would mean the provision of a Community Warden dedicated to the parish for a designated amount of time each week. It was agreed that this is an option the parish council wishes to take forward and include in the budget, with the provision that the warden communicates with the council, through the clerk, to ensure there is control over where efforts are focussed. A suggestion was made to increase the fencing required at Tom Green's Field to include the boundary with Coombe Lane.

The draft budget, to include an extra £6,000 for the extended fencing between Tom Green's Field and Coombe Lane, was unanimously agreed by show of hands.

#### **7779 COOMBE LANE**

The clerk reported that borough councillor David Hilton has looked into the issue of a Community Bid in regard to the land at Coombe Lane and has suggested that, although it is complex, it would be a good idea for the PC to look at beginning the process so that, should any other parcels of land fall into the same category, we can bring it forward when the time is right either for a community bid or for CIL funding, depending on the individual case. It was suggested that an alternative area the PC may want to look at in this regard is the open field opposite Tom Green's Field and that the Coombe Lane Residents' Association might be contacted to register the PC's interest in that land for future consideration. In addition, any other areas of land that this may apply to in the future should be identified. It was agreed that the PC will need to work with the borough on this.

It was pointed out that the Coombe Lane land for sale is in the Green Belt and should therefore be protected from development by that. When the BLP is eventually adopted the Green Belt areas must be enhanced for the community and it will be very difficult for development to take place there. In addition, the land has been used by parishioners for walking for more than 20 years and, as such, under section 31 of the highways act a Presumption of Dedication over a piece of land application may be made to take it into ownership so that it can still be enjoyed. This is something we may wish to consider with RBWM if we can demonstrate that it has been used in that way. It was noted that a large number of parishioners have been upset by the potential sale for development of this land and a petition has been registered with RBWM. It was further noted that the Coombe Lane land has particular significance in the parish, being of historic interest and pivotal between the different parts of the parish. In addition it forms part of our wildlife corridor and much of the wildlife found in the area is not present in other areas of the parish.

#### **7780 BOROUGH COUNCIL MATTERS**

RBWM Cllr D Hilton was unable to attend but will be asked to provide a report.

**7781 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- (i) The issue of the lease on the playing field at South Ascot was raised and there was discussion as to how this might be moved forward and any pressure that may be put on the land owner to expedite a new lease. A proposition to take legal advice was suggested and may be proposed for approval at a subsequent meeting. In the meantime our own lawyers could be contacted and advised that we are expecting paperwork to come into us and we could ask if they think there is anything they think we can do if we perceive the situation to be taking longer than it should.
- (ii) It was reported that we have still to appoint one trustee to the Sunninghill Trust. We have had an applicant for this post but he lives outside the parish and we are waiting for advice from the Trust as to whether this would be a bar to his appointment. The other trustee has a period to run; although we appoint trustees they then have no obligation to us or to work in our interests.
- (iii) A suggestion was made that a committee be formed to consider CIL funding. An explanation was given of the process that has been followed so far, the stage that has been reached and the arrangements in place for committees as set out in the Committee Terms of Reference. Should the PC wish to move in a different direction then that is a matter that would have to be raised and voted on at a full council as an agenda item. Discussion took place regarding the possibility for further community consultation and the PC was reminded that the parish plan is not due for review for another two to three years; a huge amount of work is involved. It was agreed that the CIL project list already drawn up would be revisited at the full council meeting in March; the clerk will circulate the list to councillors before then.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21:10.

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Cllr A Sharpe, Chairman