

**Ruscombe Parish Council**

**Minutes of Meeting of the Parish Council**

**Held via Zoom Video call due to the Covid 19 virus outbreak**

**On Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020 at 7:30pm**

**Councillors Present:** Mr J May (Chairman), Mr M Evans, Mr P Cassidy, Mrs C Bulman, Mrs K Robson (from item number 70/20), Mr G Howe and Mrs J Holmes (Co-opted at item number 83/20)

**Clerk in attendance:** Mrs R Reid

Mr May opened the meeting at 7:30pm.

**80/20 Apologies for Absence:** Twyford Parish Councillor Mrs L Jarvis.

**81/20 Declaration of interest:** None to declare.

**82/20 Minutes:** Minutes for 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020 circulated via email. Proposed by Mr May, seconded by Mr Howe, approved unanimously but not signed due to not being together.

**83/20 Co-option of a new Councillor:** Mrs Jane Holmes introduced herself to RPC and explained she's already involved with many local community charities and that she's very keen to continue supporting the community, therefore she would like to join RPC. Mrs Holmes left the meeting.

Mr May proposed that Mrs Holmes is Co-opted to RPC because she's very good at engaging and gathering support for campaigns of local interest and that is a skill that RPC do currently lack, Mr Cassidy who has also worked with Mrs Holmes for Twyford Together seconded this, approved unanimously.

Mrs Reid then confirmed that Mr Allan Wrigley had officially stepped down from RPC on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020, therefore the vacancy has been advertised. RPC give thanks to Mr Wrigley and Mr Bell (stepped down in May 2020) for their 18 years and 3 years of service respectively to RPC.

Mrs Holmes re-joined the meeting and Mr May and all welcomed her to RPC. Mrs Reid will share acceptance forms to Mrs Holmes.

**84/20 Public Forum:** No questions or comments given to Mrs Reid or councillors.

**85/20 Liaison with Twyford Parish Council:** No one in attendance but Mrs Reid will forward their meeting minutes.

**86/20 Update from Wokingham Borough Councillors:** Mr Howe reported that WBC schools are beginning to re-open, schools are working together to share best ideas of how to open safely. Virus numbers within care homes are still higher than the general public but they are reducing, PPE supplies in the area are good. Mr Howe reported that approximately 80% of WBC staff are working from home. WBC are concerned about the numbers of hidden mental abuse to the more vulnerable, especially within children's services, more will be known

about this once all school years are back. WBC have paid out £12million out of a possible £16million to small businesses in the area to help them, approximately 200 companies in the area have not accepted this help, it is unknown why not. WBC will focus on business regeneration over the next 18 months. Mrs Holmes asked what will happen with the left-over money that has not been accepted by businesses, Mr Howe confirmed it would be kept for further regeneration.

Mr Howe explained that in relation to planning application number 200753 2 Walnut Tree Close, was refused because the application did not meet the 25° angle for a right to light and because the distance from the proposed extension is more than 13 meters and therefore is within WBC's planning guidelines. Mr Evans pointed out that the chair of the planning committee had thought a site visit could be beneficial, this could not be advised because of Covid 19 and that RPC can comment a proposed application is not in keeping with a road because that is objective, not subjective. Mr May and Mrs Reid will draft a letter to WBC to ask why RPC and neighbours' comments were dismissed and for confirmation of their planning guidelines.

**87/20 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR):** Internal audit completed remotely last week by David Weller, he has advised RPC re-approved all policies and procedures to ensure they are current. Mrs Reid shared the AGAR via email and screen shared the finance page via Zoom meeting, Mr May and Mrs Reid explained the finances, the split between RPC reserve money and RPC CIL money. Mrs Bulman proposed that RPC focus this year on working out how to spend CIL because although RPC have got 3 and 4 years left to use it, it can take time for projects to finalise. The approval of the AGAR is proposed by Mrs Bulman, seconded by Mr Evans and approved unanimously. Mrs Reid will take AGAR to Mr May to sign as chairman of RPC.

**88/20 RPC Policies and Procedures:** Mrs Reid has shared via email the current Standing Orders and Financial Regulations from NALC website, a Code of Conduct and RPC's previous Risk Management policy. Mr Cassidy proposed that RPC temporarily adopt these policies and over the next month all councillors to read them and Mrs Reid will then adapt the documents, as necessary, Mr May seconded this and approved unanimously. RPC asset register includes assets in Mrs Reid's house (Laptop and printer) and community assets (noticeboards, lamp posts, benches, church clock, war memorial and Speed indicator device) are insured under the "All Risks" up to £75,000, this is enough for the value of the items.

Mrs Robson joined the meeting.

**89/20 Planning applications:**

**200739 19 St Michaels Court:** No comment

**200326 200327 Church Cottage:** No Comment however RPC would like to note this house is already above the 35% cumulative increase allowance for a house in the Greenbelt and that although the proposed extension is to the side of the house, it is to the front view from the Waltham Road.

Mrs Reid will also share application 200578 on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June, received today but details not on WBC website in time for this meeting.

**90/20 Neighbourhood Plan:** Mrs Reid reported RPC are really close to finalising the draft document, some screening opinion comments have been returned, but none expect the NP to have a significant impact on their work.

**91/20 WBC Local Plan Update Local Green Spaces:** Mrs Reid shall submit the green spaces in Ruscombe as identified in preparation for our Neighbourhood Plan. Mrs Reid will check ownership of Ruscombe Wood.

**92/20 Zoom Subscription:** Mrs Reid asked if RPC could purchase a subscription to Zoom as RPC can use it as required. Mr May proposed the approval of this, seconded by Mrs Holmes and approved unanimously. Mrs Reid will set up payment and claim it back on expenses.

**93/20 RPC website:** Mrs Reid presented four quotes

Quote 1: Creotec £3,200 to create and £240 per annum for upkeep.

Quote 2: Cobweb Media – approximately £2,500 but this is a very rough estimate given via email, they haven't talked about doing any other parish council websites before.

Quote 3: Ambition Creative – approximately £15,000 just given via email.

Quote 4: Netwise UK - £599 to create and £300 per annum to update.

Mrs Reid explained the positives of Netwise, they know the legal requirements for Parish Council websites and are specifically set up to deal with Parish Councils. All councillors to have a go at navigating around some of the sample sites Mrs Reid has shared to see if they like the Netwise experience and to note down anything they specifically do like and do not like about other websites. This will be carried to next month to decide.

**94/20 CIL Money:**

Bridge painting: Mrs Reid is struggling to find someone able to complete this work but will continue trying via Network Rail or commercial painters. Mrs Reid will begin the process to have the road closed so that workers are safe because this process takes 3 months.

Land opposite St James Church: WBC have now confirmed that they do not intend to use the land for burial land therefore Mrs Reid has gone back to the Diocese to ask if they would consider selling the land to RPC, awaiting to hear.

Pennfields land: Mrs Reid shared the Heads of Terms from WBC for this land, councillors questioned if RPC need to provide an ownership sign because there isn't one there now, WBC confirmed RPC do, Mrs Reid will make a temporary one until we have an official one designed. Mr Cassidy will gather quotes to design and plant this land with fruit trees. The Heads of terms for transferring this land to RPC is proposed by Mr May, seconded by Mr Evans and approved unanimously.

**95/20 Change bank account to Unity:** Mr Cassidy and Mr May now have access to RPC bank account via online banking, however they do not feel that the process for access is restrictive enough, therefore Mr Cassidy proposed that we move to Unity as recommended by Twyford Parish Council, Mr May seconded and approved unanimously. Unity would allow Mrs Reid to produce the payment requests, then 2 signatories would go online and approve the payments. This would cost RPC £6 a month, charged quarterly. Mrs Reid shall

investigate how RPC access money in the NS&I accounts with the idea of potentially keeping reserve money in there. Mrs Reid will open the Unity account.

**96/20 Finance:**

Grant request: Stephen Loyd £200 for Friends of Ruscombe Wood insurance for tools:

Section 137 Grant Paid Cheque #453

Window Flowers £582 (CIL Money): Paid cheque #445

Edge IT £242.40: Paid cheque #446

BALC £251.14: Paid cheque #447

ONeill Homer £1320.00: Paid cheque #448

Royal Mail PO Box £352.50: Paid cheque #449

David Weller Internal Audit £50: Paid cheque #450

Clerk wages and expenses £559.05: Paid cheque #451 and cheque #452 so Mrs Reid can pay it into her bank account via online app.

Nest pension £48.32: Paid Direct Debit

SSE (May) £94.22: Paid Direct Debit

All these payments are proposed by Mr May, seconded by Mrs Bulman and approved unanimously.

**97/20 Reports from Liaison Reps:**

NAG: Mr Evans reported NAG would like to meet in person but if they cannot meet by the autumn, then they will use Zoom.

Mrs Reid reported that she had been made aware of a car parked legally but permanently along Northbury Avenue, unfortunately nothing RPC can do because it is parked legally.

Mr Cassidy or Mr May will have a look as Castle End Road pond because Mrs Reid has had it reported that it is looking untidy.

Mr May closed the meeting at 9:52pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chair initials \_\_\_\_\_

RPC June 2020