

**Minutes**  
**of the Sulhamstead Parish Council Meeting held at**  
**Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet Village Hall on Tuesday 16 May 2017 at 7.06pm**

**Present:** Mrs Margaret Baxter (Chairman), Mrs Rosemary Sanders-Rose, Mr Richard Smith, Ms Teresa Sosna, Mr Roger Ashfield and District Councillor Keith Chopping.

**In attendance:** Mrs Fiona Jones (Clerk)

**Open Forum:** Members of the Public were invited to comment on any of the items on the agenda before the meeting convened.

*Declarations of Interest: Visitors were reminded that declarations of interest must be made where appropriate.*

**1) Apologies for Absence**

Mr Ivan Wise

**2) Declarations of Interest by Councillors**

There were none.

**3) Open Forum**

Mrs Elizabeth Penston commented that it would be useful to have a dog waste bin near the Ufton Nervet woods. This area is actually part of Ufton Nervet parish , but the Clerk agreed to raise it at the next Ufton Nervet parish meeting. **Action: Clerk**

**4) Approval of Minutes of 16 March 2017**

The Minutes were approved and signed.

**5) Matters arising from Minutes of 16 March 2017**

**Damage to the fence in the Public Open Space (POS)**

The Chairman agreed to write again to the land owner of the field adjoining the Public Open Space. **Action: The Chairman**

**Public Footpath Signs off Hollybush Lane**

The Clerk had reported the missing sign to West Berkshire Council (WBC) and was awaiting a response. She agreed to chase the matter up with WBC. **Action: Clerk**

**6) Local Interest**

**a) Public Open Space (POS)**

Councillor Wise had reported to the Chairman that the sewerage problem in the POS was under control for the time being. Councillor Wise was concerned about the state of the bridge which would need some repair in the near future. It was agreed to get a quote for the repairs. In addition he reported that some wooden posts on the perimeter of the POS were rotten and needed replacing. It was agreed to obtain a quote for the repair. **Action: Councillor Wise**

The Clerk reported that the inspection of the playpark had been carried out and that no major issues had been reported requiring immediate action.

**b) Website**

The stats for March and April were:

1,107 unique visitors                      2,830 page impressions

1,120 unique visitors                      2,726 page impressions

**c) Local Roads, signs and weight limits**

There was a discussion about purchasing a radar speed indicator, but it was agreed that this was not appropriate at the current time as the Speed Indicator Device survey carried out on Sulhamstead Hill had indicated that there was not a significant speeding problem.

Councillor Smith had reported to WBC that two de-limit signs at the top of Sulhamstead Hill were very overgrown. Mr Smith agreed to follow up. **Action: Councillor Smith**

Councillor Sanders-Rose reported that there was a long pot hole in Shortheath Lane near Councillor Chopping's residence. Councillor Chopping agreed to investigate and report to WBC if necessary. **Action: Councillor Chopping**

**d) Household Waste and Recycling**

Councillor Chopping gave an update on the application to dispose of Household waste at Padworth recycling centre. He indicated that it was unlikely to go before the Eastern Area Planning Committee until the Autumn.

**e) Willink Leisure Centre**

Councillor Sosna had arranged a legal review of the agreement with the Leisure Centre, and she had been advised to give WBC notice of the Parish Council's intention to cease contributing to the cost of the Leisure Centre, and to await the outcome. Before taking any action, Councillors agreed that it would be prudent to speak to the clerks of Burghfield and Stratfield Mortimer Parish Councils to seek the views of the respective councils who were also paying for the Leisure Centre. **Action: Clerk**

**f) Newsletter**

As the planning decisions for Benhams Farm and the Solar Farm had been concluded, it was agreed to issue a newsletter over the course of the next few months. **Action: Councillor Wise and Councillor Sosna**

**g) Notice Board**

Following storm damage to the notice board near Three Firs Way, it was agreed that it was beyond repair. It was agreed to contact the insurance company to see if a claim could be made. Failing that a new board would be purchased. **Action: Clerk**

**h) Councillor Vacancy**

Following the resignation of Councillor Souden, the Chairman noted that there were currently three vacancies for councillors. It was agreed to advertise the vacancies with a view to co-opting at least one additional councillor. **Action: Clerk**

**i) Berkshire Association of Local Councils (BALC) Membership**

Following on from the unfavourable planning decision on the Solar Farm, the Chairman commented that Councillors were unhappy with the poor level of service from the West Berkshire planning department and also associated departments such as the Enforcement Office. Councillors felt that they now needed additional support in order to challenge WBC. It was felt that by joining BALC the Council would be able to use the services of the organisation to support the Parish Council when dealing with planning applications and decisions made in

the future. The cost of the subscription to BALC was £297.08 and it was agreed to join for a year to see how their services could be used to help the Council. **Action: Clerk**

**j) Street Lighting**

**It had come to** light that WBC had inadvertently converted the street light in Normoor Rd., owned by the Parish Council, to an LED fitting. In light of this, WBC had agreed to take on ownership of the light. This meant that the Parish Council only owned one light going forward and that SSE Contracting would no longer be able to support a maintenance contract. It was agreed that this was acceptable and that the Clerk would investigate the costs associated with converting the remaining street light also to LED. **Action: Clerk**

**7) Planning Applications**

**a) Planning Decisions**

**Solar Farm Appeal 16/00042/WR**

The appeal was allowed. Ms Sosna expressed her disappointment at the decision and particularly the poor response by WBC planning department in defending the decision of the Eastern Area Planning Committee to refuse permission. Councillors agreed that this was an extremely disappointing outcome.

**Benhams Farm APP/W0340/W/16/3152933.**

The appeal was rejected.

**b) New Applications**

**17/01134/OUTD Wises Firs, Shortheath Lane Sulhamstead**

Proposed replacement chalet bungalow following demolition of existing – matters to be considered: access, layout and scale. The application was discussed and no objections were raised.

**17/0116/HOUSE 54 Hollybush Lane, Burghfield Common**

Proposed single storey rear, two storey side and porch extension following demolition of existing garage. The application was discussed and no objections were raised.

**c) Burghfield Park, Theale 16/01240/OUTMAJ**

No further developments to date.

**d) Theale Lakes Business Park 16/01517/FULD**

This application had been withdrawn.

**e) Jackaways Cottage**

Councillors noted that the land owner had cleared all the trees and shrubs from his south east boundary and also from the public highway. As there were planning conditions in place relating to site clearance and the protection of trees, and it did not appear that those planning conditions had been met and formally approved, the Parish Council had reported the situation to the Tree Protection Officer as well as the Planning Enforcement Officer. The Tree Protection Officer had responded and indicated that he had no interest in the site as there were no Tree Protection Orders in place. He had not commented on the removal of trees and shrubs from the highway. The Enforcement Officer had responded and indicated that his office did not have the resources to investigate the case. The Chairman and the Council expressed their disappointment with the poor response from both officers to Councillor Chopping, and commented that it seemed that the planning process was somewhat pointless if planning conditions could be ignored without any redress. It was agreed that the Chairman would write to the Appeal Inspector who had granted the

planning application to seek advice with regard to the removal of the trees and shrubs, as their presence on site had been the main reason why the appeal had been allowed. **Action: Chairman**

**8) Finance:**

<b>a) Account Balances at 30 April, 2017:</b>	Current: £5193.73
	Deposit: £4,676.46
	Investment: £10,000.00
	Bond: <u>£30,000.00</u>
	£49,870.19

An up-to-date Bank Reconciliation had been sent to the Councillors prior to the meeting.

**b) Budget Forecast**

Income and Expenditure year to date were sent to the Councillors prior to the meeting and were approved at the meeting.

**c) Annual Return**

The Clerk presented the Accounting Statement for 2015-16 and this was approved by the Council. The Chairman checked and signed the Annual Return.

**d) Internal Auditor's Report**

The report had been circulated and no major issues had been highlighted. The Chairman thanked the Clerk for her hard work in pulling the audit together and for an excellent outcome. The Council noted the requirement to update the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and formally approved the Auditor's report.

**e) Risk Assessment**

The Clerk raised the need to review the risk assessment on an annual basis. It was agreed to convene a meeting of the Finance Committee to carry this task out, as well as reviewing the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. **Action: Clerk**

**9) Review of Post/ Any Other Business**

**a) High Speed Broadband**

West Berkshire Community Broadband were unable to attend the meeting but sent an update:

- Broadband link now established from Woodcote via Englefield House
- Several houses on Sulhamstead Hill have been successfully connected on a test basis
- Line of sight rollout was beginning to areas such as Whitehouse Green

**b) New Sewage Treatment Works**

Councillor Ashfield notified the Council that a new sewage treatment works was due to be built on Sulhamstead Hill in Spring 2018.

**Next Parish Council Meeting**

To confirm that the next Parish Council Meeting and Annual General Meeting will be on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 at 7.00pm, to be held in the Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet Village Hall.

**Mrs Fiona Jones (Clerk)**

**Distribution**

All Councillors

Clerk – Sulhamstead Parish Council

Mr Keith Chopping

Notice Boards

Website