

**Minutes
of Sulhamstead Parish Council Meeting
held at Sulhamstead Abbots Parish Rooms Thursday 16th January 2014 at 7.30pm**

Declarations of Interest: Members are reminded that declarations of interest should be made where appropriate.

Present: Mr. Chris Souden (Vice-Chairman) Parish Councillors:, Mr. Ivan Wise, Mr. Gary Newell, Mr. Richard Smith, Ms. T. Sosna, Mr. Keith Chopping, District Councillor.

In attendance: Mrs. Elisabeth Shaw-Brookman (Clerk)

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Mr. Jones, Mrs. Sanders-Rose, Mrs. Baxter and Mr. Ashfield.

2. Open Forum

Nothing to report

3. Approval of Minutes of 21st November 2013

Minutes from the meeting held on 21st November 2013 were approved and signed.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes of 21st November 2013

After the meeting Mr. Jones advised the Clerk that under Local Interest, Item 5, Public Transport Funding, he had not agreed to attend the meetings at West Berkshire as he would be away. The Minutes were duly amended and initialed by the Vice-Chairman.

5. Local Interest

a) **Bridges & Weight limits:**

Mr. Richard Smith confirmed that the appropriate signs were now in position and it was hoped that they would be effective in preventing heavy goods traffic from trying to go down Sulhamstead Hill.

b) **Website & Parish Communication:**

The new Website is now up and running and is proving to be a valuable source of parish communication. It contains up to date information on a wide variety of items of interest. The front page shows breaking news of public interest such as the recent floods, fire brigade strikes, Firlands and Planning Enforcement. During the month 1.12.2013-1.1.2014 there were 2,393 visits, including search engines, viewing 5,600 pages. 24th December and 31st December were the busiest with 116 and 114 visits respectively. The most popular pages were the Local Information ones. This shows that people are finding items of interest and hopefully returning regularly for updates. The Clerk is happy to receive any relevant items that could be included.

Mr. Wise asked for more local businesses to be put on the website and that each month a different Business should be focused on with appropriate advertising information. The Clerk was asked to investigate the possibility of asking for a donation from these businesses to offset the running costs of the website. Ms. Sosna, Mr. Wise and the Clerk will liaise over the contacts for the businesses.

c) **Land at Jordans Lane**

Mr. Souden and the Clerk will liaise and send a letter detailing the background to this problem to WBC copying in Mr. Keith Chopping.

d) **Road Issues around the Parish:**

The Clerk was asked to send a letter to Mr. Robert Astor concerning the gravel and mud on Folly Lane which is a hazard.

Mr. Wise spoke about the problem of serious flooding in the area which has been aggravated by the recent poor weather. He asked the Councillors to support an initiative by the residents at Sunny Side, to address this problem, particularly in that area as a matter of urgency and to prevent any future building which would cause further flooding. Royce Longton was present at a recent meeting to support their concerns.

Mr. Wise also mentioned that he had heard that there was a proposal to build 200 houses between Burghfield Bridge and the Burghfield Sailing Club. Mr. Chopping agreed to speak to Mr. Longton to find out more details on this matter. This is of particular concern as this is flood plain and could make the present situation even worse. Mr. Wise reminded the Councillors of their objections to the proposed Waste Recycling Plant in Deans Copse Road.

Mr. Newell spoke about the problem of potholes in the area. Potholes that are 12"x12"x2" are deemed a priority by WBC. He requested that they also repaired ones that are maybe smaller but deeper and are just as dangerous. He will email the Clerk with examples for her to contact WBC to request urgent repairs.

e) **Public Transport Funding:**

Mr. Richard Smith reported that he had attended two meetings at WBC concerning the two services in question.

No.73 from Standford Dingley to Reading, once a week on a Wednesday, apparently does not have any custom from Sulhamstead residents but a great deal from Ufton.

No. 75 from Beech Hill to Newbury 3 times a week, (Tues, Wed, Thurs.), has Sulhamstead residents representing 3% of the take up.

The consultation closed on 13th December and WBC will come back with the results. One service will be retained. Burghfield and Mortimer are not interested in supporting these services financially as they have adequate services already.

f) **Noticeboards:**

The noticeboard on Three Firs Way needs repairing as it is loose in the ground, Mr. Souden offered to repair it. Firm quotations from Bob Hirst and Peter Hannington, for rubbing down and re-varnishing that noticeboard together with the one on Abbots Road, will be requested by the Clerk

g) **POS.**

Three trees have been removed by Bob Hirst. Two had come down in the gales and were leaning on the bridge and a danger to the public, a third was in danger of falling down. The wood is not worth selling and would be left. The possibility of asking the Scouts to do some work on the pathways was discussed when the weather improves. Mr. Souden will contact Mr. Vince Knight. Adult volunteers will also be needed.

h) **Confirmation was given of Parish Council Meetings dates for 2014**

January 16 th	Parish Rooms
March 20 th	Parish Rooms
May 15 th	SUN Village Hall - AGM
July 17 th	SUN Village Hall
September 18 th	SUN Village Hall
November 20 th	Parish Rooms

Finance Meetings:

May 1 st	TBA
September 4 th	TBA
January 2015	Date to be advised.

i) **Salt Bins**

A request for a Salt Bin to be sited in Three Firs Way had been received from two members of the public who had concerns about black ice on a bend in the road which was a danger each time there was a frost. Accidents had happened. It was agreed to purchase a salt bin and the Clerk will contact the people to confirm that they would be prepared to spread the salt when necessary. She will also confirm the siting of the bin.

j) **Speeding in Three Firs Way**

A request for action over speeding in Three Firs Way was voiced by the same members of the public and the Clerk will contact our local PCSO and ask him to investigate the problem.

6. Planning Applications

Planning Application 13/03041/FUL Rectory Cottage, Sulhamstead Abbots.

Installation of a ground mounted photovoltaic solar panel array consisting of one hundred and thirty eight 250watt panels.

Link:

<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=13/03041/FUL>

The Councillors had no objections.

Planning Application 13/1928/MINMAJ Waste Recycling Plant, Theale.

This is still under discussion by WBC.

7. Finance

a) Account Balances Current :	£14198.27
Savings:	£14644.60
Investment Bond	£30000.00 maturing 1/10/15
Total:	£58,842.87

b) Proforma invoices requiring signature

Karen Eagle	£100.00
Bob Hirst Garden Services	£150.00
SSE Contracting	£ 25.00
Thames Valley Police	£275.25
Mrs. E. Shaw-Brookman	£725.19
Bob Hirst Garden Services	£225.00
Total	£1500.44

c) **Online Banking update:**

The finance committee had agreed to give Lloyds Bank one more chance to resolve the issues with on line banking. Three members of the committee will have a meeting with the Bank to discuss the problems. The idea of changing to Unity Trust has been put on hold due to the problems with the Coop Bank of which Unity Trust is a subsidiary.

d) **Parish Precept for 2014-2015**

At the Finance meeting on 16th December the Committee had considered all options to mitigate the impact of the shortfall on the Parish Precept. A revised Precept request of £15850 was recommended to the full Parish Council and was duly approved.

This was made up of the Forecasted Budget of £16687 less the interest earned on the Term Deposit Bond of £1080 leaving a small amount of £243 to be held for contingencies. The Precept for 2013-2014 was £15349 which included a one off payment from WBC of £1349 to enable us to avoid the need to raise the precept. This is an increase of 3%.

e) **Budget Forecast for 2014-2015**

A Budget of £16687 was forecasted for 2014-2015, an increase of some 8 kept to an absolute minimum. The costs of the new website and the updates which will be incurred, plus extra maintenance on the POS explain the majority of the increase. The Budget Forecast was approved by the Councillors present.

f) **Donations:**

The donations proposed by the Finance Committee were amended and approved by the full Parish Council Meeting.

Burghfield Area Community Responders	£250.00
SUN Village Hall	£200.00
Thames Valley & Chiltern Air Ambulance	£ 50.00
Burghfield & Sulhamstead Scout Group	£200.00
SUN PCC towards maintenance of St. Michael's Churchyard	£300.00
Burghfield Royal British Legion	£ 75.00
Total	£1075.00

A sum of £250 for the cleaning of the memorial in St. Michael's Churchyard to be taken from the Savings Account was proposed by Mr. Newell and seconded by Ms. Sosna and Mr. Smith. A sum of £250 added to the list of donations in favour of Burghfield Community Responders was proposed by Mr. Newell and seconded by Mr. Smith. Both proposals were endorsed by the Councillors present.

8. Review of the Post

A communication from AWE had been received and forward to all the Councillors. Mr. Souden confirmed that he represents the Parish Council on the Local Liaison Committee.

9. Any other Business

None

10. Next Parish Council Meeting

The next meeting of Sulhamstead Parish Council will be held on 20th March 2014 at the Sulhamstead Abbots Parish Rooms at 7.30pm.