

Worth Parish Council
Minutes of the Full Council
28th January 2019 commencing at 19.30hrs

Present:

Cllr Anscomb (Chairman)	Cllr Coote (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Allen	Cllr Blakemore
Cllr Casella	Cllr Cruickshank
Cllr Dorey	Cllr Field
Cllr Gibson	Cllr Hitchcock
Cllr Hollands	Cllr Phillips
Cllr Webb	
Mrs J. Nagy (Clerk)	
Mrs E. Smith (RFO)	
Mrs T. Cruickshank (Administrator)	3 members of the public

95. Public Question Time:

The Chairman welcomed councillors and members of the public to the meeting and advised that there was no fire drill planned; if the alarms do sound, make your way to the car park. Do not use the lift. Please put mobile phones on silent, and do not use these during the course of the meeting.

She also welcomed Tracy Cruickshank to the meeting. Tracy is the new Neighbourhood Plan Administrator and has come to see what happens at a Council meeting.

Cllr Gibson advised that he wished to record a section of the meeting.

Hannah Billings from the Save the Pub Team thanked the Council for considering renewal of the Asset of Community Value designation for the Royal Oak pub, Crawley Down. Under the Localism Act 2011, a parish council is one of the qualifying bodies that can apply for an ACV.

A developer has on two occasions presented proposals relating to the Royal Oak, and it is anticipated that an application will be lodged in March/April.

Ms Billings urged the Council to agree to renew the ACV and offered any support from the Team that may be required.

Cllrs Coote and Dorey arrived at 7.35pm

Mr Paul Budgen, speaking on behalf of the Copthorne Village Association asked the Council to note that MSDC has spent £230,000 on the Gypsy & Traveller proposals at the Old Hollow, Copthorne and questioned whether this was value for money. He asked if the Council was able to pursue this with MSDC.

Cllr Gibson said that he was aware that the developer at Burgess Hill Northern Arc were proposing to contribute towards off site G&T provision elsewhere, and asked if those monies would offset that sum

Mr Budgen did not know.

The Chairman thanked both speakers; their comments were noted.

96. Apologies:

Apologies were NOTED and ACCEPTED from Cllrs Curzon, Scott

Absent: Cllrs Larkin and Lord

97. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interest

Cllr Gibson said that he was commencing to record the meeting.

Cllr Casella declared a personal interest in Agenda item 10, Council Land & Buildings, as he is Chair of the Copthorne Carnival Committee.

The Chairman referred to the Clerk's report in relation to Cllr Gibson seeking a dispensation to "activities relating to the development, implementation and reporting of site selection methodologies as part of the review of the Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan".

The decision on whether or not to allow the dispensation is the responsibility of the Clerk as Proper Officer. Having taken legal advice on the matter, she has refused the dispensation.

Councillors NOTED the Clerk's decision.

Cllr Gibson said that he was disappointed in the refusal; councillors are aware of his concerns. He reported that a developer had suggested that his involvement in the Planning Inquiry was unethical, referencing the cost to the Council. He felt vulnerable and threatened. He will not participate in the site selection process and felt that he had been driven out by developers, which is contrary to what he tries to represent as a councillor. He has asked the Clerk to provide evidence of which other councillor would be able to carry out the work and asks that she brings this evidence forward. He noted that other Councillors had declared personal interests due to living in the proximity to possible sites. He was not happy that details of his dispensation were put in the public domain.

The Chairman asked the Clerk if she had any further comments; she did not.

Cllr Gibson confirmed that he had ceased to record the meeting.

98. To receive the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 17th December 2018

It was proposed by Cllr Coote seconded by Cllr Cruickshank and agreed by all present that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 17th December 2018 were a true and correct record of the meeting.

99. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman advised that the Chairman's Dinner would be held on Friday, May 10th this year after the elections and therefore outside the period of purdah.

There will be meetings/exhibitions to publicise the elections to be held on Saturday, 2nd March at The Haven Centre and Saturday, 16th March at the Parish Hub. Councillors are invited to attend if they are free, to speak to possible candidates.

100. Correspondence and Action Lists

The Chairman drew councillors' attention to the correspondence list and action list issued for this meeting and asked if there were any queries; there were none.

The correspondence and actions were NOTED

101. Committees

To receive and adopt the following Minutes

Planning & Highways Committee 3rd and 17th December 2018
Date of next meeting: 4th February 2019.

General Purposes and Finance Committee – 10th December 2018
Date of next meeting: 11th February 2019

The Minutes and resolutions therein were duly NOTED

Allotment Sub Committee – 20th December 2018

The recommendation to increase the rent to 25p per square metre was noted.

Date of next meeting: to be called when required

Copthorne Neighbourhood Plan Sub Committee – 16th January 2019

Date of next meeting: To be called when required

These Minutes were NOTED

102. Accounts & Financial Matters

The GP&F Committee approved balances and transactions up to 31st December 2018 at its last meeting.

Grant Application for 4Sight Vision Support - £320

This organisation is asking for a grant to go towards low vision assessments and outreach worker support. The cost of each assessment is £80 per person, and there are 7 residents in the parish, so the project cost would be £560. The balance will be made up through general fundraising.

Cllr Casella noted that the organisation had over £1 million in assets. Cllr Phillips said that as a Charity, it was still obliged to fund raise.

It was AGREED by all present that a grant of £320 be awarded to 4Sight Vision.

CPRE Subscription

The 2019 subscription is due, at a cost of £36.00 for the year.

It was AGREED by all present that this subscription be renewed.

103 Council Budget and the Setting of Precept

Approval of the budget and precept was deferred from December Full Council; an error was made in the calculation which brought the precept to £290,000 and not £285,000 as agreed at the December GP&F Committee meeting.

At the January GP&F meeting, it was agreed that the precept be reduced to £275,000 but how it was supported was debated. A precept of £275,000 represent an overall increase of 9.56%, which equates to a Band D increase of 10p per week.

The RFO was asked to seek advice from Mark Mulberry; this she did, together with Cllr Phillips, who chaired the January GP&F meeting. Cllr Phillips reported that the payment out of reserves should be shown as a budgeted item.

An additional £10000 has been put into the Both Neighbourhood Plans cost centre, from which the Neighbourhood Planning Assistant's salary is being sourced, taking this to £15,000

Monies from Earmarked Reserves have been transferred back into the budget to balance it. However, at the GP&F, the £32,000 from Neighbourhood Plans i.e. both Plans, was allocated by £15,000 to Copthorne and £17,000 to Crawley Down. This means that it would seem that the total budget allocation for Copthorne is £30,000 and Crawley Down £37,000; the Clerk asked for clarification on this.

Cllr Hollands thought that Copthorne should have a higher budget as this Plan was yet to be finished. Cllr Casella agreed.

CLlr Dorey said that this matter could be decided by the GP&F Committee, as the Council was debating the precept being £275,000.

CLlr Gibson thought that a 10% increase was too high, as the Council will have around £50,000 additional surplus in 2018/2019. He proposed a precept of £266,000 or 6% increase, with the balance being made up from reserves.

CLlr Dorey thought that a 10% increase was not too high, given that Worth had around the 3rd or 4th cheapest precept in the county. A precept of £275,000 equated to only 10p a week on a Band D property. Having a reasonable amount of reserves allowed the Council to progress projects.

CLlr Holland said that discussions on the budget had been ongoing since last October, and the precept had been agreed by GP&F Committee. It was too close to the end of January deadline to change it now and was unfair on staff to expect this.

CLlr Phillips supported CLlr Dorey's comments.

CLlr Coote reminded Councillors that the planning inquiry would not have been possible without funding from reserves, and to keep back reasonable sum was prudential financial management.

The Clerk reminded Councillors that a motion had been tabled by CLlr Gibson.

CLlr Gibson proposed that the 2019/2020 precept be £266,000, an increase of 6%; this was seconded by CLlr Hitchcock. All were against this proposal, with the exception of Cllrs Gibson and Hitchcock.

The Chairman proposed that the 2019/2020 precept be £275,000; this was seconded by CLlr Coote and AGREED by all present, with the exception of CLlr Gibson who was against, and CLlr Hitchcock who abstained.

104 Council Land & Buildings

First Registration of Allotment Site

A surveyor from the Land Registry visited the allotment site last week to assess it as part of the Council's application to register the land to regularise ownership. The Clerk reminded Councillors that it had owned the land since 1951 but registration at that time was not compulsory.

The Clerk will have sight of this report via the Land Registry in due course.

Councillors NOTED this information

Copthorne Carnival

The Carnival Committee has asked permission to hold the Carnival on the Green on 29th June 2019

CLlr Casella declared a personal interest in this matter as he is Chairman of the Carnival Committee.

Councillors AGREED that permission would be granted.

Lamp Column

The damaged street light adjacent to the Memorial Car Park in Crawley Down has been replaced but is yet to be connected to the electricity supply.

The claim for costs against the driver of the car is being dealt with by a solicitor.

Councillors NOTED this information

105 Schedule of meeting dates

The Chairman advised that an error had been made in the 2019/2020 meeting dates in that there is a GP&F meeting on 22nd April, which is a Bank Holiday. This could be held on Tuesday, 23rd April, or on the same night as April P&H which is April 15th

It was AGREED that the April GP&F Committee meeting would take place on Monday, April 15th, after the P&H meeting on the same evening.

106 Membership of Association of Parish Councils Aviation Group

The Clerk has been approached by this body enquiring if the Council would like to join, at a cost of £100 a year; she included a copy of a presentation in the meeting pack for information.

It was AGREED that the Council would not join this organisation. However, it was noted that there was a "cc" membership, if that was free, then the Clerk will enable this.

107 Financial Regulations

As part of the Internal Audit report, Mark Mulberry suggested an amendment to Financial Regulation 4.1, which currently reads:

Mark Mulberry suggests that the current wording does not allow the Clerk/RFO to purchase items such as stationery without prior authorisation. He suggested adding a clause, and an amendment:

- *the Clerk/RFO for any order up to £500*
- *the Clerk/RFO in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items above £500 and below £1000.*

This addition and amendment were AGREED by all present.

108 Terms of Reference

As Chair of the Joint Neighbourhood Plan Committee, Cllr Phillips suggested to the Clerk that the remits for the two Sub Committees be amended to have these reporting to the Joint Neighbourhood Plan Committee and not to Planning & Highways Committee.

Amended TOR have been drafted and circulated.

It was AGREED by all present the Terms of Reference for both Neighbourhood Plan Sub Committees would be amended to allow these to report to the Joint Neighbourhood Plan Committee.

109 Consideration of Crabbet Park as a potential strategic site

Cllr Gibson asked for this item to be on the agenda, citing Burgess Hill as an example of what can be achieved.

He advised that 3500 homes were planned at Burgess Hill, with three schools and other associated infrastructure. Developments around the villages impact on local infrastructure and there would be advantages in promoting a strategic site.

Crabbet Park can accommodate up to 2500 homes and would support Crawley Borough's unmet need. He understood that the Clerk had contacted David Carden former Clerk to Burgess Hill who had overseen its project, and suggested that Mr Carden be invited to discuss progressing the matter, in order for the Council to decide whether it is viable.

Cllr Coote said that he understood that there were flooding issues in the Crabbet Park locality, which may be why MSDC seem reluctant to progress the site.

The Clerk suggested that the Council may wish to form a Working Party to meet with Mr Carden, but it was felt that he should attend a P&H meeting. She advised that as he was now working as a consultant, he is likely to charge for his time.

Cllr Dorey said that MSDC may agree at an early stage to progress as a strategic site, as that would lessen the burden on Worth staffing time.

It was AGREED that Mr Carden would be invited to attend a Planning & Highways Committee meeting; the Clerk to negotiate a fee.

Cllr Gibson noted that 64 homes had been permitted in Crawley Down Rd, Felbridge, and the current SHELAA sites in the vicinity would accommodate 3000 homes between Felbridge and Crawley Down.

110 Allotments

Cllr Webb asked for this item to be on the agenda.

Cllr Webb said that he thought the Sub Committee should be at full membership, and perhaps its remit should be absorbed into the GP&F Committee.

The Chairman said that as the Clerk said in her report, she is concerned that some Allotment Sub Committee meetings are held with the minimum of three councillors in attendance one of whom has a personal interest. She asked if any other Councillors would be willing to stand on this Sub Committee, but none present expressed an interest.

She said that two Councillors who had apologised for tonight's meeting may wish to join the Sub Committee, and that she would prefer not to make changes to its remit before the May elections, so propose to leave it as it is.

This was AGREED by all present.

111 Asset of Community Value

At this point, Cllr Anscomb declared a prejudicial interest in this matter, as her property is adjacent to the Royal Oak. She left the room

Cllr Coote took the Chair.

The Royal Oak Save the Pub Team has asked the Clerk to check when the current registration of the pub as an ACV expires. She has ascertained that this is in September 2019.

The Clerk suggests that she start the process as soon as possible, as she has been told that the original application in 2014 was lost, leading to several months' delay.

Cllr Coote was of the opinion that that the Council reapply as soon as possible. Cllr Gibson agreed, but said that the case put forward should reflect changes in legislation since the original application, such as the District Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.

Discussion took place as to whether the Clerk's draft application be approved by the Council prior to submission; it was agreed this was not necessary.

The Clerk advised that the renewal was unlikely to be approved prior to any planning application being lodged, but the current ACV was valid until September. She confirmed that she had the contact details of the Save the Pub Team so would consult for evidence if required.

Cllr Webb expressed concern that the Haven now had a licenced bar, and that the hairdressers' premises had applied to be a wine bar, which may affect the evidence submitted.

It was AGREED by all present that the Clerk would apply to re-register the Royal Oak pub as an Asset of Community Value as soon as possible and would keep the Council updated as to progress.

Cllr Phillips suggested that the Clerk check the expiry dates of the other ACVs in the parish; this was AGREED.

Cllr Anscomb returned to the meeting and resumed the Chair.

112 Report from representatives attending outside meetings

AECOM Heritage and Character Assessment visit, 22nd January, attended by Cllr Phillips, Mr Livesey, and the Neighbourhood Plan Administrator.

Cllr Phillips said that the tour was very interesting, and that the AECOM representatives were very well prepared. He and Mr Livesey were able to provide local information that was of benefit.

Cluster Group meeting, 23rd January attended by Cllrs Gibson and Hitchcock, together with the Clerk. As Worth Parish Council is the host for 2019, Cllr Coote was in attendance chairing the meeting, as Cllr Anscomb as Chair of the Council was unavailable.

Cllr Gibson reported that topics covered included the purchase of a replacement SID by four parishes, including Worth. No other parishes are commenting on the SHEELA sites, which he found disappointing. Cleaning of street signs, preparing for elections and clerk succession planning were also discussed. The next meeting is to be 3rd April in the South Room.

Cllr Gibson reminded Councillors that the MSALC conference will take place on 22nd February. Cllrs Anscomb and Coote will be attending as Chair and Vice Chair of the Council.

Cllr Webb thought that representation on outside bodies should be re-considered; the Clerk advised that this will take place at the Annual Council meeting in May, after the elections.

Item for future agendas

The Chairman noted that the Clerk had apologised for omitting this item from the agenda.

Cllrs Dorey, Blakemore and Hollands are experiencing difficulties picking up council emails on their phones; the Clerk will liaise with the Council's IT contractor so that he can assist.

113 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting is Monday, 25th February 2019

Meeting closed at 8.48 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____