ASHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Jubilee Hall on Monday 10th January 2022 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors R Fisken (Chairman), C Butler, A Keeley, R Butler and G Light

In attendance: Paul Thompson (Clerk)

1. Apologies: Councillor A Dick

2. Declaration of Interests:
The Clerk confirmed that the Councillors held dispensations to consider the budget and precept for 2022/23 under item 17 of the agenda. There were no other declarations of interest.

3, 5, 6. Minutes:
The Minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 1st November 2021 were approved and signed by the Chairman.
The Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 1st December 2021 were approved and signed by the Chairman.
The Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 14th December 2021 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising Not Covered by the Agenda: There were none.

7. District Councillor's Report:
District Councillor Alan Law had advised Councillors prior to the meeting that he had been unable to call into Committee planning application 21/02778, as requested, since the 30 day period, allowed from the date that it had been published, had passed. This was largely due to the holiday break curtailing the time available to consult with officers. Whilst Alan thought that more scope and time should be allowed in extended holiday periods like Christmas, the planning service are adamant that they will not give any latitude mainly because such latitude had been abused in the past.
Councillors asked the Clerk to write to the Planning Department as he had sent a copy of the request to the planning officer within the specified period and thus effectively allowing time for it to be discussed with another member of the planning committee.
Alan also advised that he was not aware of any new arrangements regarding the emptying of public litter bins such as those on the recreation ground.

8. Police Matters:
Councillor Alex Dick had submitted a report prior to the meeting in which he advised that Thames Valley Police now have a dedicated Rural Crime team and are being very proactive in combating poachers in the area with multiple arrests and vehicle/dog seizures in the last month or so. Remember to call 999 if you see any illegal activity, including hare coursing, and ask for a URN from the operator.

9. Footpaths and Byways:

Councillor Colin Butler advised Councillors that the new permitted path running alongside the Aldworth Road was now in place, with appropriate signage. Councillors were most grateful to the Estate for providing this path and hope that it will be well used. The Chairman will put a brief item on the village mailchimp and the Clerk will put an article in The Leaflet.

10. Roads:

Salt bins: It was agreed that the Clerk should check these on a regular basis. Residents should be reminded that the salt is for use only on the roads for which they are provided, namely Noakes Hill, Palmers Hill and Pykes Hill.

SID training: The Clerk advised that he had confirmed with our insurers that no additional cover for the equipment and its use is required. He also confirmed that we have a volunteer for training.

Maintenance review: The Clerk was asked to report drainage issues which were causing flooding on Holly Lane.

11. Planning Applications:

Updates:

20/01336/OUTMAJ - The Institute for Animal Health, Compton: Hybrid application for up to 185 residential units. Awaiting decision from WBC.

21/02346 - Quicks Green House, Quicks Green: Replacement of existing attached annexe with new single storey extension to accommodate new swimming pool, gym, plant and changing room. Approved by WBC.

21/02819 - Oakley House, Pinfold Lane: Single storey extension and change of use of garage. Approved by WBC

21/02881 - Sunrise, North Gardens, Burnt Hill (as adjacent parish): Single storey extension to rear aspect to enlarge kitchen. Awaiting decision from WBC.

21/02934 - Walnut Tree Cottage, Ashampstead Common: New Garage. WBC issued in error.

21/02996 - Walnut Tree Cottage, Ashampstead Common: New Garage. Awaiting decision from WBC.

21/02778 - Old Fleece and Feathers, Aldworth Road: Create new driveway access to service existing property. Awaiting decision from WBC

Planning observations procedure:

It was agreed that decisions arising under development control consultations would be delegated to the Clerk in consultation with all Councillors.

Consultation may be by correspondence, including email, virtually via 'zoom' or in person. It may also take place at meetings of the Council.

The Clerk is to issue relevant papers to the Councillors who should return their comments to the Clerk for determination of the Council's response within the prescribed consultation period.

Delegated decisions will be reported to and recorded in the Minutes of the next meeting of the Council.

In respect of controversial or major development proposals, the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman may decide that an extraordinary meeting of the Council should be called to consider the matter.

Councillors will endeavour to seek the views of residents thought to be affected by any proposals but such residents will be advised to submit their own observations if they object to or, indeed, support a planning application.

12. Open Spaces Review:

WBC 'Blossom into Spring' project and 'Greening Campaign': The Chairman reported that there seemed to be little support for these schemes. Councillor Graham Light advised that ART were still considering a community orchard although the cost of providing water to that part of the recreation ground would be expensive.

Playground: Councillor Graham Light advised that ART are still seeking funds via 'The Good Exchange' for improvements. It may be possible to replace the fence and purchase one item of equipment.

Trees on Flowers Piece: No problems reported.

13. Community Infrastructure Levy Utilisation:

Update: The Clerk confirmed that a sum of £6,434.62 is held. The Clerk was asked to obtain prices for picnic tables and chairs. It was agreed that there was little enthusiasm for a flagpole. New football goals may be needed as the items donated for repairs were not an exact fit.

14. Website Accessibility:

Councillor Rita Butler confirmed that she had received quotations for a new website which would meet the accessibility requirements. The likely cost for building the site would be £350 with annual hosting and domain name costs of £174. The website would ultimately replace the existing one under a new domain name. Rita was authorised to process the order.

15. Demand Responsive Transport Survey:

It was agreed that there were too few users in the parish to influence bus service providers.

16. Defibrillator:

The Chairman reported that the battery is low but may be used, if necessary, until a replacement is received free of charge under our contract with the provider. We will have to meet the cost of any future batteries.

17. Finance:

The Clerk produced his financial report for the year to date which showed that income and expenditure would be broadly in line with the revised budget, except in the case of maintenance and CIL. The contingency and maintenance budgets would be used to cover the cost of the website. It was likely, however, that much of the maintenance budget and also the CIL reserve would be carried forward. The latter does not affect the budget as it is a ring-fenced fund.

Payments were authorised as follows:

P Thompson	£230.75	Clerk's salary for December and January and expenses of £1.95
H M Revenue and Customs	£85.80	PAYE on Clerk's salary

Donation requests:

It was agreed that donations would be made under Section 137 of £50 to West Berkshire Countryside Society and £375 to West Berkshire Council in respect of the library service.

Budget and Precept for 2022/23:

The Clerk presented his revised budget for the year to 31st March 2023. He had assumed that the CIL monies would be spent before 31st March 2022 although this was looking unlikely. He had also assumed that little would be spent on maintenance by that date. Ignoring CIL monies, the budget indicated that the precept should be set at £6,910 and this was agreed.

It was agreed that of the underspend on maintenance in the current year, estimated at £4,400 should be carried forward with an additional reserve of £1,600 to cover not only maintenance but also potential Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. Councillor Graham Light will discuss the proposal at the next ART meeting. The Clerk suggested that £4,000 could be allocated to the Jubilee.

18. Any Other Business:
The Clerk was asked to contact WBC again regarding the overflowing litter bins on the recreation ground.
Regarding the enquiry from another Parish Council concerning superfast broadband, it was thought that there were no problems and that all residents who wished to be connected were able to do so through Gigaclear.

19. Date of next Ordinary Meeting:
The next Ordinary Meeting will convene at 7.00pm on Monday 7th March 2022.

20. There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.25pm.

21. Parishioners' Question: There were none.