

Cowfold Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 9 November 2015 in the Village Hall

Present: Mr J Palling (JP) (Chairman) (P/T) Mrs G Martin (GM)
Mrs E Precious (EP) Mr B Martin (BM)
Mr S Clarke (SC) Mrs J Wright (JW) (Clerk)

Mr L Barnard – West Sussex County Councillor

Public: 7

Press: 0

Chris Stark – WSCC Area Highways Manager, Horsham

Members of the Cowfold Safer Roads Committee

Chris Stark had been invited to attend the meeting following an email that had been sent to him complaining about the lack of service from the Highways team since Tim Boxall was moved from the area.

Chris explained that the restructure period for WSCC Highways had been a difficult time and that the Horsham team had ended up with the least experienced officers. This was considered to be an unacceptable situation. An officer had been allocated to Cowfold on a temporary basis and, therefore, it was expected that the service would improve; however, to date the officer had not introduced himself and no contact had been made and so it was not evident whether or not the issues that had been reported to Highways in the past few months were being dealt with. Chris asked for any outstanding issues to be sent directly to him and assured the Members that he would personally ensure that the issues were dealt with.

The Cowfold Safer Roads Committee members questioned Chris Stark on the information that had been received from the Traffic Signals Office with regard to the installation of a VAS. The figures quoted by WSCC for the installation were considerably higher than the quotation that had been received directly from the same supplier. Chris said that he would speak to the responsible officer and ask him to liaise with the Cowfold Safer Roads Committee direct to discuss the situation. Mr Barnard said that he would follow this matter up in a months' time.

The Cowfold Safer Roads Committee asked if the Parish Council would be prepared to pay the annual maintenance cost of around £420 once the sign had been installed. It was agreed to consider this request at the Finance Committee meeting to be held in December to discuss the 2016/17 budget.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Ms S Awcock, Mr C Collins, Mr J Chowen and Mr R Clarke.

2. Approval of the Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 12 October 2015 were agreed by all as a true and correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest with regard to any item on the Agenda.

4. Matters Arising

Mr Collins was not in attendance and, therefore, no information was available with regard to the damaged bus shelters.

(CC)

Mrs Wright had reported the two signs on the traffic island in need of attention to WSCC Highways.

Chris Stark had been invited to attend a Council meeting.

Mrs Wright had responded to the email from Julie Wilkinson with regard to support to get a footpath moved as had been agreed.

The VAS Maintenance and Installation Agreement had been forwarded to the Cowfold Safer Roads Committee and they had been invited to attend a Council meeting to give an update on progress.

Soil samples had been taken as expected and a visual inspection of the Pavilion by a structural engineer had been carried out on 20 October, however, no arrangements for further exploratory work had been arranged to date.

Mrs Wright had accepted the quotation for the play equipment repairs on behalf of the Parish Council and was currently awaiting a date for the work to be carried out.

The worn road markings and the blocked drains had been reported to WSCC Highways.

A letter had been written to a Thornden resident asking for the overgrown vegetation at the back of their property to be cut back.

5. The Public

Mr Brooke raised concerns about security issues at the temporary Post Office. It was agreed to speak to the Postmistress to get her view on the situation.

The vehicle that was for sale that had been parked in the lay by for a considerable amount of time was also mentioned. Mrs Wright said that it had been reported to the Police who had said that it was a Trading Standards issue.

6. District Councillor Report

Mr Chowen had sent a message to say that the Horsham Development Framework Plan

should be adopted on 19 November.

7. County Councillor Report

Mr Barnard reported on the following issues:

- Standards Committee
- Capital Programme
- Records Office Visit

8. Correspondence

Outset Youth Action – Request for a donation. It was agreed not to make a donation at this time but that the subject of Charity donations could be discussed at the next Finance Committee meeting.

Gill Martin – Concern from a resident concerning air pollution following a recent article in The Sunday Times highlighting the dangers to young children's lung development. It was agreed to contact Horsham District Council for an update on what progress was being made to improve the situation.

(JW)

9. Neighbourhood Plan

Mr Clarke had arranged two dates for interested parties to attend meetings. Nobody turned up for the first meeting and the second was cancelled due to resident's unavailability. It was agreed to try and arrange another date in around six weeks' time after the decision on the Horsham District Council Development Framework Plan had been made. In the meantime it was suggested that the subject should be advertised again in an attempt to attract more residents.

10. Public Works Loan

It was agreed to remove this item from future Agendas until a more accurate building estimate had been produced.

11. Skateboard Park

Mr Chamberlin had sent a message stating that he had looked at the weed situation which appeared to have improved. He had also spoken to the steel prefabricator and the grind rails were in production. Plans and prices for the rest of the equipment were currently being worked on.

12. Pavilion

Following analysis of the soil samples that had been taken from the Pavilion area it had been determined that piling can be avoided by utilising trench fill foundations excavated down to an acceptable depth according to the influence of the oak trees and filled with concrete. The deepest excavations would be closest to the existing building at approximately 1.9m reducing in depth away from the building to approximately 1.25m.

Now that this information is available, it was agreed to ask David Payne to produce a revised and more accurate specification and building cost estimate.

13. Street Art

An email had been received from the Art Department of the 6th Form College attaching examples of their work. Unfortunately, they were booked up until 2017 but Mr Rolfe said that he would try and progress the matter by approaching the owners of properties that had been identified as possible sites for Street Art asking for their opinion on the subject.

14. Play Area Refurbishment

It was agreed that the play area on the playing field was in need of some updating. Mr Clarke said that he would look at the area and suggest what work would be required so that a quotation could be obtained that could be discussed at the Finance Committee meeting in December.

(SC)

15. Village Recovery Co-ordination Plans

Mrs Martin had been asked by members of the Village Hall Management Committee for the subject to be discussed as an Agenda item. She had carried out some research and found that a group had been set up for the specific purpose. The Sussex Resilience Forum is a non-statutory, multi-agency organisation that works together to make Sussex a safer place. It was agreed to contact the group to ask if they require any input from the Parish Council.

(GM)

16. Representatives' Reports

Planning

In the absence of Mr Collins, no Planning Report was available.

Finance

Approval of the tabled cheques for signature was requested and agreed by all.

Open Spaces

Mrs Wright had said that she had walked round the village with the grass cutting/grounds maintenance contractor to discuss what work they should be carrying out. Since complaining about the service of late, it had vastly improved and the problems had now been rectified. Mrs Wright requested a quotation for the year 2016/17 by the middle of November. Grass cutting and grounds maintenance charges had been waived for the month of October as a good will gesture for the recent poor service.

It was agreed to request a quotation for the repair of the fence on the Acorn Avenue Kicking Field.

(JW)

The Scouts had asked if it would be permissible for them to extend the oil tank area to accommodate a secure cage to house flammable gas bottles. No objections were raised provided the Scouts contact Horsham District Council Planning Department to see if they needed authorisation or if there may be any health and safety issues.

Pond Warden

Nothing to report.

Footpaths

Nothing to report.

Allotments

Nothing to report.

Roads & Transport

Nothing to report.

Streetlights

Nothing to report.

HALC

Nothing to report.

Village Hall

Mrs Martin reported on the meeting held on Thursday 15 October 2015.

Website

Nothing to report.

CLC

Nothing to report.

17. Co-option of Councillor

All voted in favour of co-opting Tom Clary onto the Council.

The next meeting will be held on **Monday 14 December 2015**.

The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.