ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – BRAMDEAN & HINTON AMPNER

Meeting held by conference call on Monday 26th April 2021 at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr Katherine Hawkings (Chairman, Parish Council), 5 Parish Councillors, Parish Clerk, Cllr Lumby,

Rob Heathcock, Anne Newson, Adrian Taylor.

1. Apologies: James Bulloch, Sarah Densham, Lucinda Finlay, Hazel Flindt, Cllr Tony Harding,

Cllr Barbara Holyome, Cllr Rob Humby, Cllr Laurence Ruffell, Victoria Wakefield.

2. The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th April 2019 and the report in lieu of the Annual Parish Meeting on 29th April 2020 were presented for information.

3. Annual Report of the Parish Council – Katherine Hawkings

I would like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors for their work on behalf of the Parish Council during this past year. Without a very good team of Councillors this job would be incredibly difficult so my thanks to Barbara Holyome, Mandy Bulloch, Tony Harding, Chris McCrystal, Graham Rothery and last but not least to Matthew Morton who, after over 16 years as Chairman, stood down in April 2020. His length of service must be recognised by all and I have to say that it was rather a daunting task to take over from someone with so much experience.

Thanks must also go to our nominee to Blake’s Educational Charity, Hazel Flindt, to our Internal Auditor, Seamus McLaughlin, and to Neighbourhood Watch Village Co-ordinator, Chris Day.

It has been a very difficult year with Covid 19 changing the way everyone has had to conduct their business and we have had to adapt quickly to holding our Parish Council meetings virtually. Lockdown 1 commenced on 24th March and I was elected Chairman at the meeting on 19th May.

Rachael Greenwood, our Clerk, has been an enormous help with her guidance albeit at a safe distance and wearing face masks. She has decided to retire at the end of April, having served as Clerk to this Parish Council for 22 years, and we wish her the happiest of retirements.

I am delighted to announce that our new Parish Clerk will be Mr Robert Heathcock. With 40 years of experience in Local Government, of which the last 30 were at Winchester City Council, we feel he will be a very good replacement. Rob will start work on 1st May and undertake all the necessary courses to become a qualified Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.

Although we were unable to hold an Annual Parish Meeting in 2020 due to Covid 19, we did hold five Parish Council meetings in the last year, four by conference call and one in October when the R rate allowed us to meet socially distanced in the Village Hall.

With Covid 19 came an abundance of travellers to Bramdean Common. The Police were unable to move them on due to the pandemic and HCC would not permit its staff to undertake statutory welfare visits face to face. We believe this is the reason that we received more than our fair share of travellers this year. Whilst the mess they leave behind is unacceptable I must thank, not just WCC who get to the area quite quickly, but all those locally who help clear up afterwards. I am also grateful to Annabel McLaughlin and Maureen Carpenter for their numerous prompt alerts to WCC and the Parish Council on traveller arrivals and departures. We asked Coral Rogers (WCC Recreation & Projects Officer) to discuss signage and other measure to deter travellers. Having consulted colleagues, WCC concluded that the only option was to continue as is and to remove groups of travellers as quickly as possible.

Another result of the Covid 19 pandemic was the temporary closure of the Recreation Ground. Prior to re-opening, it was necessary to conduct a Risk Assessment and to post approved signage on the equipment. The Risk Assessment must be regularly updated. My thanks to Chris McCrystal for his efficient management of this ongoing commitment.

My thanks also to Anna Cox and Alex Green and their team of volunteers who, at the outbreak of Covid 19, were very quick to set up a village WhatsApp group to help residents who were self-isolating within our two villages.

We considered 27 planning applications over the year (25 in 2019-20). We adopted a new Code of Practice on Planning and a Policy on Planning and Enforcement to give help and advice to residents who require it. Both of these documents have been posted on the parish website. All planning applications are posted on the South Downs National Park website for public access and we would ask anyone who wants to comment on any application to do so on the SDNP portal.

Where possible Parish Councillors attended meetings organised by or with representatives of the Environment Agency, Hampshire Safer Roads and Winchester City Council, and we continued to support the Communities Against Noise and Speed (CANS) campaign for lower speed limits on rural roads in the Meon Valley

With funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), between lockdowns we managed to install a defibrillator in the former BT box outside the Village Hall. My thanks to Justin Berryman who initiated this project. We also ordered two Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) to be used in nine locations within Bramdean and Hinton Ampner. Inevitably, arrival of these was affected by the pandemic but I am pleased to say they are now both installed. My thanks to Graham Rothery and his team of volunteers for setting these up and managing them. There are ongoing talks with the Traffic Management Team with regard to further traffic calming measures for our two parishes. The Team is designing a scheme which involves better signage, more speed reminders painted on the roads and hopefully an affordable gateway at either end of the villages. The Team is working on similar measures for the Cheriton-Kilmeston crossroads so I hope we will have continuity throughout our four parishes.

The Parish Council bought a laptop computer for the Clerk which will be of huge benefit as we transition to a new Clerk as hopefully everything will be in one place. We were lucky enough to get a grant of £500 from Cllr Rob Humby’s Devolved Budget to help with the payment.

Ground water in Bramdean was pretty high again this winter. The Environment Agency issued a couple of flood alerts. Luckily no flooding occurred but we will continue to press Hampshire Highways to clear gullies and culverts to maintain a good flow when waters arrive next winter.

The HCC funded Lengthsman scheme worked very well again this year with the majority of hours spent strimming and clearing the watercourse alongside the main road. It is most important that all riparian owners continue the good work of keeping their sections free from obstructions.

We increased the Precept for 2021-22 from £7500 to £8000, the first increase since 2018-19. We felt this was necessary to ensure we have enough funds to cover maintenance costs of the Recreation Ground, the ongoing costs of the website and the annual maintenance of the defibrillator.

This year we carry forward the sum of £25,229.27, subject to audit, which includes the sum of £18,627.15 solely for expenditure which meets strict CIL funding criteria.

4. Parish Council Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2021 - Rachael Greenwood

Income. The Precept was £7500. A Grant of £500 was awarded from the HCC Councillor’s Devolved Budget towards a laptop and £1100 to engage a Lengthsman(including £100 to administer scheme**)**. There were two CIL transfers (Community Infrastructure Levy) from a separate account closed in November 2020. Two credits for VAT claims were received.

Expenditure. There were two items of Capital Expenditure: (1) defibrillator (installed in former BT kiosk outside Village Hall funded from CIL); (2) laptop (balance funded by Parish Council). An exceptional Donation of £250 was made towards replacing the wooden posts around the War Memorial and a donation of £50 to Victim Support. Apart from items listed, Admin/ Sundries included copying, ink, paper, postage, stationery and telephone. The Parish Council qualified for a Certificate of Exemption (gratis) so the external Audit fee (£200 + VAT) did not apply. The Insurancepremium was covered by a LongTerm Agreement (LTA); the second in a three-year term. There was no capital expenditure or unexpected costs at the Jubilee Recreation Ground. VAT was reclaimed to 31st December 2020: the claim from 1st January 2021 must be held until in excess of £100 has accrued.

The Balance c/f is £25,229.27 (subject to audit). As £18,627.15 is set aside for expenditure meeting CIL funding criteria, the available Balance c/f is £6602.12.

5. Report of the Recreation Committee – Chris McCrystal

I would like to thank my fellow committee members Kashy Hawkings, Tony Harding, Anne Newson, Rachael Greenwood, and in particular Adrian Taylor, for their support in what has been a challenging year. Adrian continues to maintain the Recreation Ground on our behalf to a very high standard – It really is a beautiful and much valued space.

Having been closed since March 2020 as a result of government guidance, the Recreation Ground was cleaned and reopened in late July last year, with a comprehensive risk assessment successfully carried out and appropriate signage and hand sanitiser put in place. The ground has continuously remained open since then, with signage and hand sanitiser maintained/ replaced as necessary and a fresh risk assessment successfully completed on 19th April 2021.

Repairs were carried out on the Play Hut timber walls and windows towards the end of last year and roof repairs were also recently completed. The committee commissioned a new memorial plaque to rededicate the hut in memory of Joe Blake. This year’s independent safety inspection identified some rot to a timber stepping stone on the adventure trail. The step was made safe and a replacement acquired free of charge from Playdale, as it was still under guarantee. The new step will be installed in the coming weeks. Other minor repairs noted in the report will be completed throughout the summer.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to convey a special word of thanks to those residents with a boundary on the Recreation Ground that have cut back trees and vegetation to prevent damage to the surrounding fencing or significant overhang. However, there is significant vegetation still to be cleared alongside the southern boundary.

6. Blake’s Educational Charity

The following statement from Blake’s Educational Charity was laid before the meeting. Those present were invited to direct any queries to the Treasurer, James Bulloch.

There were three meetings of the Trustees during 2020 and 30 awards were granted in total. These awards were comprised as follows: Primary (2); Secondary (9); Further Education (18). The Trust also supported the KS2 swimming lessons at Cheriton Primary School.

7. The accounts of Bramdean and Hinton Ampner Village Hall were laid before the meeting. Those present were invited to direct any enquiries to the Treasurer, Fiona Wingent.

8. Any enquiries regarding The Friends of Bramdean Children should be directed to Sarah Densham.

9. Report of Rob Humby, County Councillor

Cllr Humby had sent word that he would be pleased to take up any issues raised at the meeting.

10. Report of Hugh Lumby & Laurence Ruffell, City Councillors

The Winchester City Councillor Annual Report included the response to the pandemic, Council Tax 2021-22, the Winchester Sports and Leisure Park, and speeding and noisy vehicles. Cllr Lumby said the planning applications for the Loomies site had generated many objections and as there was little local support decisions would be referred to committee. Parishes should be vigilant against speeding motorcyclists and press for the installation of acoustic cameras on the road network.

11. Report of Winchester Rural East Policing Area – PCSO Victor Mills

Bramdean crime in the last year (includes Bramdean Common & Hinton Ampner)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Anti-social behaviour: 3 | Theft: 1 |
| Burglary: 1 | Public order: 0 |
| Criminal damage: 1 | Vehicle crime: 2 |
| Drug offences: 0 | Shoplifting: 0 |
| Violent /Sexual offence: 2 |  |

Brockwood crime in the last year

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Anti-social behaviour: 5 | Theft: 1 |
| Burglary: 0 | Public order: 1 |
| Criminal damage: 0 | Vehicle crime: 0 |
| Drug offences: 1 | Shoplifting: 0 |

Those present were invited to direct any enquiries to the Policing Team.

12. Any Other Business

Rob Heathcock had been appointed as Parish Clerk from 1st May and looked forward to working with the Parish Council and its associates.

Cllr Hawkings thanked Chris McCrystal for organising all the conference calls during the past year.

The meeting closed at 7.22 pm.

KH/RG