

Cowfold Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 11 March 2024 in the Allmond Centre

Present: Mr S Reading (SR) (Chairman) Mr C Towle (CT)
 Mr J Hooper (JH) Mr P Harsum (PH)
 Mrs D Everest (DE)(Acting Mrs M French
 Secretary)

Mrs L Lambert – Horsham District Councillor
Ms J Knowles – Horsham District Councillor
Mrs S Payne – West Sussex County Councillor

Public: 6
Press: 0

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs J Wright, Mrs J Newman and Ms K Kingshottt.

2. Approval of the Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 12 February 2024 were agreed by all as a true and correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

None.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Public

Members of the public were in attendance with interest in Agenda Items 10 and 11.

6. District Councillor Report

Mrs Lambert and Ms Knowles reported on the following:

- Forthcoming Review of Neighbourhood Plans
- Rampion 2 Response Timescales
- Cobwood Solar Farm Status
- Community Fund Projects
- Brook Hill Development Land Transfer
- Allocation of School Places

7. County Councillor Report

Mrs Payne reported on the following:

- WSCC Highways meeting. Any specific issues to be emailed to Mrs Payne.
- WSCC strategy relating to the targeting of young people on-line
- St Peter's Primary School and Country Mice request to advertise their joint fete to be held on Saturday 8 June 2024 by placing banners on the Playing Field railings. This was agreed although the timeframe should be in accordance with HDC guidelines.

8. Correspondence

None.

9. Oak Tree Adjacent to 14 Acorn Avenue

Informing 360 Globalnet of the Parish Council's preference for a root barrier to be installed preserving the (previously protected) oak tree, has presented an adverse response to the Parish Council. It was agreed to ask Mrs Wright to write to the owner of 14 Acorn Avenue asking them to ensure that other vegetation within their garden was not contributing or causing root penetration issues. Mr Harsum said that he would share supplementary information on root identification with fellow Parish Councillors. Mrs Everest undertook to pursue the contents of the letter from 360 Globalnet with HDC's legal team.

(JW/PH/DE)

10. WSCC Allocation of School Places/Transport

Parents present confirmed that as a result of the current configuration of senior schools in Horsham, ten boys from Cowfold had not been offered any one of their three choices of school. Two hundred children across the district are in this position.

There were a total of 9104 secondary school applications, a slight decrease from last year, with every child offered a secondary place. 7900 applicants (86.8%) will be offered their first preference school, which is slightly up on last year's percentage (86.4%). 97.8% per cent of all applicants this year will be offered one of their three preferences, which is up on last year's percentage (96.1%).

Mrs Payne, who had also been in attendance at the St. Peter's Primary School Meeting confirmed that, as the Burgess Hill Academy place allocation for the ten Cowfold boys not offered schools in Horsham was greater than three miles from their place of residence, WSCC would provide dedicated transport to and from Cowfold to Burgess Hill. The timings of this transport provision would not be confirmed until nearer the start of the new school year (September 2024).

Mrs Payne reminded parents in attendance that there was an appeal process in respect of the allocation of school places and also a likelihood that some boys who had been offered Horsham school places would not take them up in September (e.g. children moving out of the area or attending private schools) which would free up additional vacancies.

11. Rampion 2 Update

Mrs Everest confirmed that the Parish Council's formal objection had been submitted to the ExA. All documents presented to the ExA at the last deadline of 28 February 2024, have been made available online from 6 March 2024. Mrs Everest thanked Mrs Smethurst for her comprehensive email citing Rampion 2's response focussing on traffic management as opposed to the wider issues contained within the Letter of Representation.

Mrs Smethurst thanked the Parish Council for its robust submission which has been supported in writing by a number of parish residents.

Mrs Everest summarised the Parish Council's requirement that specific clarification was required from Rampion 2 on the points raised, not the overarching statement of intent.

Mr Hooper cited data retrieved from the WSCC Road Monitor (Number 00043) showing that in 2023, there was a 6.5% increase in traffic on Bolney Road (A281) and to date in 2024, a further rise of 5.9%.

12. Environment

Mr Hooper, on behalf of Greening Cowfold, sought funding from the Parish Council, to replace a tree in the churchyard with a suitable native species variety. He will present an estimated cost at the April Council meeting for consideration.

(JH)

Mr Hooper had pursued the possibility of finding a woodcarver/sculptor to ornament the large tree stump near to the play area on land owned by HDC. An indicative cost is likely to be between £1,000-£3,000. Mr Reading expressed concern with regard to using parish funds for the purpose and asked Mr Hooper to explore further. Mrs Everest suggested that an alternative may be to plant some native climbing plant species to create a 'living display'. (Please note that any work agreed to be undertaken will have to be cleared with HDC).

(JH)

The Spring Cowfold Clean-Up day will take place on Sunday 7 April 2024 between 2.00pm and 4.00pm. Mr Hooper will book the Allmond Centre to provide a 'base camp'.

Greening Cowold will be presenting a Bat Walk in St Peter's churchyard on Thursday 25 April 2024.

Some discussion had been held on the subject of the Parish Council funding a First Aid Course open to parish residents with priority being given to those who support village activities and events. Mrs Everest undertook to provide costs for consideration at the April meeting.

(DE)

13. Neighbourhood Planning Update

Mr Hooper confirmed that another public exhibition would be held in the Allmond Centre prior to HDC's referendum.

16. The Allmond Centre

Nothing to report.

17. Representatives Reports

Planning

Nothing to report.

Finance

The March payments will be approved retrospectively.

Open Spaces

Nothing to report.

Allotments

Nothing to report.

Roads & Transport

The February-March 2024 speed sign statistics show maximum speeds of 66mph outgoing and 65mph incoming.

Footpaths

Nothing to report

Streetlights

Nothing to report

HALC

Nothing to report.

Website

Nothing to report.

Youth Activities

Mrs Towle expressed concerns regarding the current provisions for Youth Club activities made by the current funded provider and agreed to investigate further and consider alternative options.

(CT)

The next meeting will be held on **Monday 8 April 2024**.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.