



WEST HOATHLY PARISH COUNCIL

representing Highbrook, Selsfield, Sharpthorne, Tyes Cross and West Hoathly

Document Reference 2101

Minutes of the Meeting of West Hoathly Asset and Highways Committee held on Monday 18 Jan 2021 at 7:30pm in West Hoathly Village Hall

Members

Paul Brown (Vice Chairman)	Jenny Edwards
Neil Greatorex (Chairman)	Claire Hilton
Martin Robinson	Douglas Denham St Pinnock
	Nicholas Griffin

* denotes absence

Also present:

Andy Beams (Locum RFO)

Due to the restrictions put in place in response to the Covid-19 pandemic this meeting was held using video conferencing technology

There was 1 member of the public present

The member of the public referred to emails sent in December regarding Operation Crackdown and asked what action the council is taking. He pointed out that the residents in the Tye's Cross area had taken the initiative, to try to get something done at the junction, and felt the council should be leading the way.

He noted the request in the Church Chronicle for residents to report anti-social driving but was concerned that the publication was not widely read in the village. He also requested the sharing of collision data with the general public.

Douglas Denham St Pinnock noted that the concerns had been addressed as an agenda item at the previous committee meeting, and Richard Speller had been invited to attend the Parish Assembly in March to answer questions. He felt the council was taking the lead and doing all it could within its limited powers.

Neil Greatorex commented that the council would never give up on trying to address traffic calming, but changed criteria meant that the Vinols Cross junction no longer met the required criteria for an assisted crossing. Many of the issues were caused by driver behaviour, and Operation Crackdown needed registration details to complete a report, which were not always easy to record during an incident. The Parish Council continue to look at ways to record data in a more efficient manner.

Claire Hilton stated that she had been involved with the Tye's Cross group, who had received support from the County Councillors. A petition had been submitted to make part of the triangle one-way and to install a speed camera, but the group have been informed that the criteria have not been met for a speed camera.

The member of the public thanked the committee for their comments and re-emphasised his opinion that Operation Crackdown provided a great opportunity to take action.

The member of the public left the meeting at 19:56

255) To receive apologies for absence

There were none.

256) To receive declarations of interest from Councillors in respect of any matter on the Agenda

There were none at this time.

257) To approve minutes of the Meeting of the Asset & Highways Committee held on 16 November 2021 (Document Reference 2032)

An amendment to minute reference 191 was proposed and agreed to state, 'The Committee agreed not to install a Christmas tree on Sharpthorne Green this year and agreed to donate £50 to the installation of the Costcutter Christmas tree'.

With this amendment, the minutes were approved, and the Chairman will sign them as a true record at a later date.

258) To receive the clerk's report and note any points of interest

The Clerk's report was received and noted, with most items relating to later agenda items. The Locum RFO read the content of an email from a resident regarding the C319, which largely supported the comments made by the member of public in attendance this evening.

Assets

259) To consider a resident's request to erect a greenhouse on their allotment

Details of the greenhouse were provided in the Clerk's report. Neil Greatorex declared a personal interest as an allotment plot holder.

Paul Brown commented that the issue of erecting greenhouses had been discussed by the committee in the past, and it had been agreed that glass greenhouses were not suitable due to problems with damage and glass getting into the soil. A number of plot holders had erected polytunnels as alternatives.

Neil Greatorex pointed out that acrylic versions were available, which could be more acceptable if the council's policy on allotments was amended to allow this.

It was agreed to refuse the application for a glass greenhouse but inform the plot holder that the council would review the allotment policy with a view to considering acrylic greenhouses, and this would be an agenda item for the next committee meeting in March. It was also agreed to defer the allotment meeting until after the March committee meeting to enable a decision to be made on greenhouses.

260) To discuss how best to proceed with the fencing at Warblers

Neil Greatorex shared a number of photos of the site and explained the background to the issue. The fence had been damaged over the years and its absence had increased incidents of parking on the grass verge, which was also now damaged. Recent investigation of the site had led to the discovery of electrical cables at the point where the fence posts may have been reinstated.

Committee members discussed the merits of reinstating the fence, potentially moving it further towards the road to allow vehicular access for the residents of the lane and considering a gate as an alternative to the original stile. It was agreed that Neil Greatorex and Paul Brown would visit the residents affected, when it was safe to do so, outline the council's plans and report back to the committee.

261) To discuss and agree where necessary the next phase of the Community Orchard

Douglas Denham St Pinnock explained that a resident who had been extremely successful in encouraging donations to the Community Orchard, was now seeking donations for one or two picnic benches to be placed in the Orchard. While there was money remaining from the original donations, this was intended to be used to replace any trees that failed, and/or for future pruning work.

Members discussed whether the Orchard was the right place for picnic benches, as the need may arise for litter bins and any structures may cause issues with maintenance of the grass. It was suggested that alternate sites such as the existing picnic area and/or near the upper allotments could be considered instead.

Neil Greatorex agreed to talk to the resident and discuss the options approved by the council. The Clerk will ask the resident to make contact with Neil.

262) To agree the next steps in the Bluebell Wood Management Committee

Claire Hilton provided an update on site visits, meetings held and ongoing issues at Bluebell Wood. She was keen to emphasise that the management of the wood was a long-term project and would incur costs, although funding opportunities were being investigated.

Current issues were the large amount of debris in the wood, the presence of an active badger sett, damage to the root system of an old oak tree caused by the digging of a drainage ditch and the existence of Ash Dieback in a large proportion of the Ash trees.

The Management Committee were keen to work in partnership with other stakeholders, which would also open other potential funding sources for some of the work required and were being well supported with specialist knowledge which would help in creating the management plan. In the short term, it was agreed to source some signs warning public of the danger from metal objects within the woodland. They enter at their own risk. Two surveys should also be obtained (quotes for) – for woodland management (with tree work), and for the removal of metal debris and a tree survey needs to be completed.

It was agreed that spending on these items within the current year's allocated budget could go ahead.

263) To consider a resident's request for a larger dog bin at the bottom of Bluebell Lane

Members discussed the request and agreed that the issue was likely due to the frequency of emptying, rather than the size of the bin. The Clerk was asked to reply to the resident denying the request and check with the contractor the frequency of emptying of the bin.

Highways

264) To note issues on parish footpaths and bridleways

Martin Robinson advised of the damage to the footpath at the new development, which had been caused by lorries driving over the pavement. It was noted this was at the same spot as a previous repair, which may have not been robust enough at the time.

It was agreed to continue to lobby Highways with any footpath issues and seek remedial action where necessary.

Claire Hilton advised that there were a number of broken stiles and footbridges with damaged slats. All of these had been previously reported, and it was acknowledged that part of the problem during lockdown was being able to get someone out to complete any repair.

Paul Brown pointed out that the Ramblers Association have a scheme for replacing stiles with gates, and the committee may wish to consider this at some point.

265) To consider the next steps on the surface improvements for footpath WH1

Paul brown offered to work with the Clerk to proceed this matter. Quotes would need to be obtained and checked against the footpath specification provided. An update on progress will be provided to the next committee meeting.

266) To consider feedback on the proposed off-road cycling route from Sharpthorne to East Grinstead

Paul Brown explained that letters had been sent out prior to Christmas, and some feedback had been obtained which was detailed in the Clerk's report. He suggested setting up a working party to pursue the issues once lockdown measures reduced. It was agreed that the matter would carry forward to the next committee meeting, and in the meantime, the Clerk is asked to respond to those who provided feedback.

267) To note items of interest or for consideration at the next meeting

It was agreed to add the following agenda items for the next meeting:

- C319 issues (to be a regular agenda item)
- Bluebell Wood Management (to be a regular agenda item)
- Update on Warblers
- Greenhouse policy on allotments
- Community Orchard update
- Off-road cycling route

Date of next meeting 15th March 2021

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21:41

Chairman-----