

CRONDALL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
held
Monday 26th February 2024

PRESENT	Councillor D Argent – Chairman ^{see 176/24} Councillors, S Gregory, G O'Connor, I Taylor and S Worthington
APOLOGIES:	Councillors R Freeman-Griffiths and G Smith Councillors C Dorn, J Kennett, and J Hale – Hart District Council (HDC)
IN ATTENDANCE	Councillor J Glen – Hampshire County Council (HCC) A Angove - Parish Clerk

The meeting commenced at 7.31 pm and ended at 8.46 pm.
Members of the public – 2

176/24 Appointment of Interim Chairman

In the absence of both the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, the Clerk asked for proposals for an interim Chairman to chair the meeting. Cllr Taylor proposed that Cllr Argent take on the role. Seconded by Cllr Gregory and AGREED unanimously.

177/24 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

178/24 Minutes of 22nd January 2024 Monthly Meeting

The Minutes of the Council meeting were proposed for acceptance as an accurate record by Cllr O'Connor, seconded by Cllr Taylor and **AGREED** unanimously.

179/24 Matters Arising

The Clerk confirmed that there were no matters to be raised.

180/24 Announcements from the Chairman, Clerk and Members questions received in advance

The Clerk confirmed that following work on the Esso Pipeline, hedging had been replaced along Farnham Lane. Work on the verge is expected to take place once the weather improves, in Spring.

(A member of the public joined the meeting)

181/24 County Councillor's and District Councillor's Reports

A written report having been distributed to all councillors; Cllr Glen provided a brief verbal update:

- Wilson Plant – meetings are going well, with the emphasis being on cooperation.
- VOW Public Meeting – reasserted the importance of parishioners remaining informed on the proposed development and particularly attending the meeting on 28th March at 7.00 pm in the Elizabeth Hall, Hook.

Cllr Argent thanked Cllr Glen for his update and enquired about the state of HCC's finances, in light of current press coverage. Cllr Glen confirmed that unlike other councils, HCC budgets 2 years in advance but is having to access contingency funding. Anything non-statutory is being cut out or reduced with finances adequate until 2027 if no additional funding is received from the government.

In Cllr Dorn's absence, the Clerk read out the following update on his behalf - *My apologies, that I can't join you this evening. As I have a minor operation on Thursday (delayed from today) I'm keeping out of public places just to minimise risk of catching anything that might delay it further!*

The big issue for Crondall is flooding. Following the flooding to houses on 4th Jan I wrote an extensive report that was shared with key stakeholders. This is helping to drive a little progress with the Environment Agency with the various flood monitoring systems. Please note that the old "Redlands Lane" monitor is now decommissioned and is replaced by "Crondall Bridge", whose datum is about 55ccm higher, so please take that into account if reading across between systems.

We had a reasonably close call on 8th Feb, with the river reaching ~ 1.11m on the new system. This was close to the maximum before we'd see flooding to houses. There is a WhatsApp group for concerned villagers and it was very active, alongside mine and other posts on Facebook. The core question is why are we seeing more high river events than previously? Although the winter has been not as wet as usual, we do see more "peaky" rain with concentrated cells. The amount we receive depends on how "clumpy" the rain is, if you look at the Met Office rain models, it's very obvious that their predictions are averaged over much larger cells than the radar shows for actual rain falling (and it's those "average" figures that feed the estimates of rain on other websites). Couple of screenshots attached, 5 minutes apart. You can see much more structure in "real" rain (from their radar) that is predicted by the Met Office modelling. Personally, I don't think their rain models will ever be able to predict with much more accuracy, as weather is just too variable.

This averaging effect means that (locally) we "might" get more rain in a short time, which tends to cause flooding. Especially if one of those ran cells coincides with a sensitive area of the catchment e.g. Ewshot Hill. But it could be more spread out and the river will cope (as it did on 24/25 Feb).

I have been walking around the catchment areas of Redlands and Heath Lane and there are definitely areas where we can make improvements to slow the flow. This is classic "Natural Flood Management", but it will need a few willing volunteers to implement and landowner permission or actions to achieve.

On 4th Jan, at least 2 houses were flooded from the road, with a mixture of sewer and surface water. The sewer is the bigger and more disappointing issue. Thames Water have now positioned tankers on Pankridge Street and in lower Redlands Lane. They have asked me for permission to site a Portaloo on the grass at the front of the house, so I don't think we'll be losing them any time soon. We're seeing the sewer react very quickly to rain, probably caused by the many cross-connections throughout the village. But even after the rain has stopped the sewer is still surcharged. This suggests that the lining (done in 2022) has not been effective in preventing ground water ingress. It may also be that there is another cross connection to a surface water ditch or drain. I've asked for some clarity from Thames Water and have also written to our MP to try and set up a senior level meeting. We really need more effective action and soon.

Quietly contributing to all this are the Highways drains. On 4th Jan they achieved a hydraulic lock, once the river water rose above the outflow (just below Redland Lane Bridge). I've suggested a flow enhancer, based on the principles of an eductor and dinghy self-bailer to try and ensure the highways system can continue to provide drainage during rain events. I await a reply from HCC.

At Full Council last week, I did ask for a change to the proposed budget for flood works. I felt that £30k in £11m wasn't much to ask and was based on a little redistribution of funds allocated to other projects that have stalled. The CCH/LibDem block vote firmly prevented such a change (7:21). I keep chasing the

Environment Agency for their report on Natural Flood Management undertaken by Jacobs. It really shouldn't take this long.

No further questions were raised and the reports were NOTED.

182/24 Presentation by a representative from “Villages oppose Warehouses” (VOW)

The parish council heard a presentation by Mrs Bonneywell, a representative from VOW, outlining the details to date on the proposed development at Lodge Farm, Junction 5 M3. In particular it was noted that the development is purely speculative and that, in the view of VOW would lead to significant issues including:

- Increased air and noise pollution;
- Increased risk for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Increased flood risk;
- Destruction of Hart's Rural Heritage and character;
- Devastation of the River Whitewater, a rare chalk stream and the surrounding unique ecological environment;
- Loss of 80 acres of productive farmland;
- Massive ongoing traffic delays and disruption across Hart.

It was noted that such developments are usually sited closed to big towns and cities, not in a rural area such as this, which further compounds the potential issues with raised traffic numbers and disruption around an extended area.

It was noted that at the time of meeting the application is still a PreApp with no formal application having been made. The purpose of this presentation and the planned public meeting is to raise awareness of the issues in preparation for the eventual application.

Cllr Argent thanked Mrs Bonneywell on behalf of the parish council, commentating on the professionalism of the presentation. The Clerk requested that a copy of the presentation and details of the upcoming public meeting be forwarded to her for further communication purposes.

(Cllr Glen and Mrs Bonneywell left the meeting)

183/24 Representations by the public

The Clerk confirmed that there were no representations by the public other than the request by the Village Hall Chairman to have the trees by the car park pollarded which would be covered later in the meeting under the Clerk's Report.

184/24 Planning Applications

Applications were considered in line with the previously circulated Planning Report and presented by Cllr O'Connor.

24/00110/HOU	Courtlands Farm Lane Crondall GU10 5QE	Erection of a single storey side extension, part single part two storey rear extension, part single part two storey side extension following demolition of existing garage, WC and utility, replacement porch, conversion of loft into habitable accommodation and insert terrace to rear. Replace all windows to front elevation, replace one window to ground floor rear with sliding doors and one window to first floor
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		rear with window and insert one window to first floor side.
Recommendation: No Objection subject to: - Standard conditions requiring prior approval of external materials prior to commencement; - Condition requiring the implementation of the mitigation set out in the submitted Bat Report.		
23/02794/HOU	Blue Bell Lodge Rye Common Lane Crondall GU10 5DE	Conversion of loft into habitable accommodation to include two dormers to front roof slope and insertion of rooflight to the rear roof slope and erection of a 4 bay car port.
Recommendation: No Objection subject to prior approval of external materials prior to commencement.		
24/00237/HOU	Little Dares Pankridge Street Crondall GU10 5RG	Erection of a single storey rear infill extension.
Recommendation: No Objection subject to prior approval of external materials prior to commencement.		
24/00270/HOU	The Moorings Pankridge Street Crondall GU10 5RG	Demolition of existing garage and erection of a double garage and adjoining garden room.
Recommendation: No Objection subject to prior approval of external materials prior to commencement.		

With no declarations of interest affecting the applications, Cllr O'Connor proposed all recommendations as listed above, namely no objection. Seconded by Cllr Argent and AGREED unanimously.

24/00269/HOU	The Orchard Well Road Crondall GU10 5PW	Improvement to the external fabric, proposed internal alterations and first floor extension above existing garage.
Recommendation: Objection for the following reasons: - Concern that the alterations and additions are disproportionate in scale - Concern that the proposal will have an overbearing impact on the plot, neighbouring properties and the Conservation Area 2 neighbour objections including on impact on privacy given the number of new windows at first floor level overlooking gardens - Concern the proposal harms the visual appearance of the existing property - Concern the proposal harms the prevailing character of the residential area - Conclusion – proposal will have a negative impact and harm the Conservation Area. Following a short discussion concerning the details of the previous two extensions, it was agreed that the proposed extension would be disproportionate in scale given the previous additions. Cllr O'Connor proposed as listed with this additional concern. Seconded by Cllr Worthington and AGREED unanimously.		

REPORTS

184/24 Clerk's Report

A full written report having been distributed prior to the meeting, the Clerk outlined a number of points requiring parish council input and agreement:

- The parish council considered a request by the Village Hall Chairman to have the trees by the Village Hall car park pollarded. It was noted that the trees had been cut back significantly last year and following professional input where it was noted that they have not grown significantly since then and that to cut them back any further would be detrimental to their appearance, not to mention dangerous if cut back more on the car park side, councillors agreed that the Clerk respond confirming the decision not to undertake the pollarding at this time. The Clerk confirmed that as with all trees within the parish council estate, the situation would remain under review;
- The purchase of an addition fuel tank lock as detailed on the expenditure authorisation list;
- The purchase of a padlock solution which interlinks with the court booking system for the tennis court, full costs also included on the expenditure list;
- Provided an update on the concerns about the ongoing breaches of planning and licensing conditions at the Itasca winery. It was again stressed that by raising these concerns, Council is not expressing any view regarding the business itself; simply its view that by seemingly not addressing the breaches, HDC are undermining respect for the planning process. HDC have confirmed that the breaches are being looked into and that separately, they are expecting a planning application from Itasca shortly, which should, at least in part, cover some of the issues.

No further questions were raised, and the report was NOTED.

185/24 Roads, Traffic & Footpaths Report

Cllr Taylor confirmed that an updated report would be issued in time for the March meeting but currently there are no further updates.

186/24 Flooding

Cllr Gregory provided a brief verbal update following meetings with District Cllr Dorn looking at revising the information provided to parishioners. Separately, there has been some concern about trees growing out from the riverbank at the junction of Pankridge Street and Redlands Lane by the bus stop, particularly as they could create a flood risk should they fall. The parish council groundsman has cut back some of trees, with Cllr Gregory having a very positive discussion with the owner of the adjacent property. The Clerk confirmed that she would liaise with HDC who it is believed own the land to ensure that the trees are suitably cut back and secured.

FINANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

187/24 Ratification of payments

The circulated list of 14 items including Payroll, valued at £21,714.06 was proposed by Cllr O'Connor, seconded by Cllr Argent, and AGREED unanimously.

188/24 To CONSIDER and AGREE a list of items for spending

There were two items listed for authorisation, for which the Clerk had provided a verbal update within the Clerk's Report, specifically an Igloo Home (Padlock 2) for the tennis court and Bulldog Fuel Tank lock. The items were proposed by Cllr Argent, seconded by Cllr Gregory, and AGREED unanimously.

189/24 To NOTE the Income and Expenditure report and Balance Sheet to 31st January 2024

No questions were raised, and the Council NOTED the report.

190/24 To NOTE the independent examination of the Bank Reconciliation for January 2024

The Clerk confirmed that she had undertaken an independent examination of the Bank Reconciliation for January 2024. No questions were raised. Council NOTED the Clerk's report.

GENERAL

191/24 Correspondence

All email correspondence has been circulated to Councillors and any physical correspondence was made available at the meeting.

192/24 Any Other Business

- Cllr Taylor highlighted a potential issue with planning in that residents of Glebe Road had not received any correspondence at any stage from HDC on the 16 Glebe Road planning application, including the yellow notices which was never posted.
- Cllr Worthington confirmed that an update on the superfast broadband initiative is still awaited, including the areas of Crondall that will be covered.

Signed as a true record dated 25th March 2024