

MINS OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF 5 MAY 2021

These are the unadopted Minutes of Crookham Village Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday, 5 May 2021 at 7.30 pm via a platform called Zoom. Please refer to the Minutes of the 17 May 2021 Crookham Village Parish Council meeting for any amendments.

Present: Cllr. Simon Ambler (Chairman),

Cllrs. Julia Ambler, Ben Millward, Dr. Stephen Bennett, Andrew Friend, and David Jackson and residents of the parish. Apologies from HCC Cllr. John Bennison.

1. Chairman's Report

Welcome to the 2021 Annual Parish Meeting for Crookham Village Parish Council. For everyone, it's been an extraordinary year. We have all had to get the hang of virtual meetings over the last year, but this will be the last one unless the Government introduce new legislation to allow us to continue them. As always, I should like to start by extending my thanks to all my fellow councillors for all their hard work over the last year. In addition to the formal business of the Council, they do a huge amount of work to help with the various projects in which CVPC is engaged. Their time is given on a voluntary basis and is unpaid. We have four members of staff: our clerk Carol, Angela our Responsible Financial Officer and our two centre Managers at the Zebon Copse Centre, Tabby and Lucy. While all of them work incredibly hard, this year has been particularly difficult and we are very grateful for the dedication they have shown in their various roles.

Planning

As in previous years, planning continues to dominate our work with the latest item to come before us being the Redfields Lane / A287 roundabout associated with the **Watery Lane** development. In this case, the developer made an application to defer the completion of the roundabout until after 50th occupation. This was the second such application and was again refused by HDC. Although this has now gone to appeal, progress has been made in that the developer has now signed the relevant agreements with HCC, including the lodging of a bond to ensure that the work is completed in the event that the developer fails to do this.

The **Cross Farm** appeal was held at the end of 2019 following the refusal of the planning application for this proposed development by Hart DC. We made representations at the appeal inquiry and were very pleased to see that Hart DC's refusal was also supported a large number of our local residents. When in February 2020, the Appeal Inspector issued his report, we were pleased to see that despite noting that our Neighbourhood Plan carried limited weight, he quoted a number of our policies in support of his decision to refuse the Appeal.

Following the work done by the Steering Group to resolve the points made by the Planning Inspector during his examination of our plan in 2019, the **Neighbourhood Plan** was submitted to Hart DC for final approval in March 2020. Despite some delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, our plan was unanimously agreed in July 2020 by Hart DC Cabinet who resolved that it could proceed to **REFERENDUM** at the next available opportunity. While normally, this would have been within 8 weeks of the decision, again due to Covid-19, it simply wasn't possible and the referendum will finally take place tomorrow. On behalf of the Parish and the Parish Council, I should like to say a huge thank you to all the team who put the plan together. Finally, the **Hart Local Plan** to 2032 was formally adopted by the Council in April 2020.

Precept

This year saw a small rise in our overall budget for the Parish with a 1.99% increase over last year to £77.28 for a Band D household.

Greening Campaign

In 2021, we launched our own Crookham Village Parish **Greening Campaign** to do our bit to tackle climate change. This is our response, as a Parish, to the recent declaration by HCC and HDC of a climate change emergency. Cllr. Andrew Friend is leading the Greening Working Group which will promote measures to help reduce carbon emissions and is already working with local schools. One of the aims of the Working Group is to identify ways in which we can all reduce our energy use by making simple, cost effective choices in the home that will work for our whole community and give our parishioners control over their contribution to this global issue.

Zebon Community Centre

For much of the last 12 months, the Zebon Community Centre has had to remain closed due to the pandemic. Despite this, the Centre continues to be well used by our residents as we now work to reopen again after the end of lockdown. We have been working hard in the last year to ensure that our users feel safe both in terms of Covid security and also when using the facility. To help reassure users of their safety, we now have the services of a security company who, as well as making regular patrols, are on callout in the event of an emergency. To supplement our security, we have also installed a new CCTV system to monitor the building and grounds and we are particularly indebted to Cllrs. Jackson and Bennett for all their hard work to ensure that this project is a success.

2. Greening Campaign for Crookham Village Parish

Cllr. Andrew Friend is the Lead Member for this initiative. He reported as follows - last year, Hampshire County Council declared a climate emergency and set out its roadmap to become a carbon-neutral county by 2050. With a large proportion of carbon emissions being generated in our homes, this roadmap asked for action from parish and district councils to lead the way in the local area. Crookham Village Parish Council already source all of the energy used to power street lighting and community buildings from 100% sustainable sources. This was a conscious decision on a large scale to combat climate change, but we can all play our part in our own homes too. The Greening Campaign is a "Community Interest Company" that promotes and facilitates community-led, community-focused action on energy use and climate change. Their blueprint has been successfully applied in towns and villages across the South of England to empower us to make simple yet effective lifestyle changes that are accessible to all. The idea is simple: to empower every member of the community to take small steps to achieve a huge cumulative effect against climate change.

Their stated aims and objectives are as follows:

AIMS

1. To demonstrate that small actions, when taken together, make big savings.
2. To create a sense that tackling climate change is possible.
3. To stop people feeling isolated and depressed about climate change.
4. To galvanise the community behind taking action against climate change

OBJECTIVES

1. To get as many people as possible in the community to make small changes in their energy behaviours at home.
2. To measure the monetary and environmental savings made by the community and highlight those successes achieved as a community.

'Greening Crookham Village Parish' aims to inform and advise every household of simple, cheap and effective behavioural and lifestyle changes that they can make to not only reduce their carbon footprint, but also save them money.

We can be found on Facebook and soon will be going live with our carbon neutral website – www.greeningcvp.co.uk and hope to hold our launch event in the next few months. The company is wholly sustainable and whilst not the cheapest option it upholds our mission.

3. Facebook Page for the Parish Council

Cllr. Ben Millward is the Lead Member for this initiative. Cllr. Millward reported as follows – the council has supported the formation of a Facebook page as we have seen in the past 12 months we have seen it is a good level of communication. Our current page is in private mode whilst it is being developed and protocols are being drawn up. The Plan is to have it up by the end of the month and it will promote messages from the new Council. Please keep an eye on other local groups ZCRA and Fleet parents as he is hoping they will promote the site.

4. Trustees and Appointees Reports

Mrs. Makepeace-Brown introduced herself and said what a privilege it was to represent the Council on the two bodies. She gave a briefing on the background for each charity.

Crookham Almshouse Charity

The Crookham Almshouses (located next to the war memorial in Gally Hill Road) provide accommodation for poor persons of good character who are inhabitants of Hart but with preference for those living in the parishes of Church Crookham, Crookham Village and Ewshot. The almshouses consist of 16 units; 14 for single people and 2 for couples. We have no lower age limit and currently have residents ranging in age from 50's through to 80's.

The last 12 months have been busy, as always for this charity, with the added twist of dealing with a pandemic. The clerk has been the single point of contact for the residents, keeping in regular touch by phone, reassuring them and communicating the latest government guidance. All the residents have remained well, with the exception of one, who works in a role which does expose him to other individuals. He has recovered nicely. The clerk has also worked with individuals who lost their jobs or were furloughed and had a difficult time with their Universal Credit payments.

There has been little movement amongst residents, with just one moving out over the past 12 months. We are actively seeking a new resident to replace him.

As soon as the first lockdown ended, garden furniture was bought for a newly created open space on site, so that residents could enjoy the outdoors and each other's company in a safe manner. Raised beds have been built and are tended to by residents.

Fleet Lions and the Welfare Trust kindly donated parcels of food to all residents at Christmastime, which went down a storm.

We are thankful for the input that representatives from the parish councils make to this charity. Although trustees only meet formally twice a year, it is there that key decisions are made and we appreciate the experience, knowledge and wisdom each individual brings to the table.

Fleet, Crondall & Crookham Welfare Trust:

By way of a very brief description of the charity for anyone new, this Trust was originally set up around 1830 to provide fuel for the poor as it had become illegal for people to cut their own turf from waste land. The Trust has changed over time, and now helps by giving financial aid.

The Trustees meet twice a year, in April and November, we have a small board of 6 and we work well as a team, which we feel is important for the Charity and for our recipients. We remain confident that we are on track with the focus and aims that we share for the Trust, and we are compliant with the Trust constitution.

Like most charities, we are finding that times are getting tougher in general and the Covid-19 situation hit us hard as we have received no donations in the past financial year, meaning that our 2020 Christmas gift support for our recipients solely came from our reserves. For this gift, we voted to maintain our £100 per person value as the people we generally support are vulnerable financially and the Trustees felt that we should use our reserves to keep the level of support that we did in 2019, to help people through what turned out to be a very hard year for many.

£100 may not seem much, but for the people we help, it makes all the difference. We have been unable to collect with our counter top collection tins over the past year (which did not receive any cash as purchases were mainly by card), and as Communicare has been our main donor for the past couple of years and they were unable to run through Covid, we have not raised any funds as previously stated. What funds we do have are managed as tightly as we can to make them work for the Trust.

We continue to look for local people who would benefit from our help, and would welcome any contact information for people whom members of Crookham Village Parish feel we could make a difference to. Many of us think that we live in an affluent area, but locally, we have a huge number of people being supported by the state and charities. These people are quite literally on the breadline. Through pride or ignorance, they often don't come forward, so we need any help we can get to reach these people. Whilst we still have funds, we want to direct them to where they are needed most for as long as we can. The board hopes that the CVPC representation can remain as is, for the foreseeable future, we thank you for your continued support and we look forward to your representation decision in due course.

5. Consider Resolutions

None Received.

6. Any Other Business

A vote of thanks was made from the floor to all involved in the Neighbourhood Plan and it was hoped that it would be supported tomorrow. The Chairman expressed thanks to those who initially kicked started it and which was then carried on to its conclusion. Further thanks were extended from the floor. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Cllr. Stephen Bennet who had made a super contribution in his time with us but who had felt the need to stand down now due to other commitments. The hope was expressed that we might encourage more young people to put themselves forward to serve on the Council and communication via Facebook might encourage. From the floor a request was made for meetings to continue via Zoom as it made it more easy for people not wishing to travel to meetings in halls. It was also eco friendly. Cllr. Jackson expressed his hope that more people had responded to the Gov consultation about meetings via Zoom. A question was asked about the duration of the Local Plan and was advised that it runs to 2032 which is the official date but it has to be reviewed within 5 years. What is in place at the moment has to incorporate the new bits of legislation. Housing numbers have to be looked at within the 5 year period and as the Government move the goal post. The NP has been done to the same date so that the policies conform to the Local Plan. The meeting closed at 8.05pm.