

Parish Council News

Summary of issues raised/arising in the month.

(This document is not intended to be read as a record of the minutes of the Parish Council (PC) meeting.)

Major Development in Ruscombe It was agreed to pledge £1.500 per annum for the next 3 years (if needed) to the Campaign to Protect Rural Wokingham (CPRW). The PC had asked residents (via the WSL website, The Lych Gate and the Facebook page) to make their views known to the Clerk. Of the 15 responses 14 were in favour of the pledge. A straw pole at the January PC meeting showed overwhelming support for the pledge. The pledge will be added on to the precept.

To sign up for the updates on the CPRW go to www.cprwok.co.uk

Meetings Representatives from the PC met with Andy Jeffs (RBWM Executive Director) and David Scott (RBWM Head of Communities and Highways). Following on from our previous meeting in October:

- RBWM have asked the project centre to report on the incorrectly set drains in Halls Lane next to the Shottesbrooke stile and review the passing places on Brook Lane.
- Brook Lane surface has been inspected and some areas will be treated under the Pothole Challenge whilst others will be resurfaced – before the end of the financial year.
- There was no funding for footpath maintenance in 17/18 but there will be in 18/19. Attention was drawn to footpath 34 which has been marked as closed.
- A meeting has been arranged with Thames Water to address issues raised in WSL and in Cookham. The PC asked if a representative could join the meeting.
- RBWM are discussing how to better serve rural planning areas.
- The enforcement team is now fully manned so will be considering outstanding matters such as Downfield, Network Rail and Beenhams Heath.
- RBWM have arranged a workshop with the software supplier for the planning portal and are aiming to bring in a number of searches which WSL and other parishes have requested.

The PC raised some further items to be addressed.

1. Ruscombe Development. It is now on RBWM's radar. They need to get sight of the infrastructure plan and to check that Highways have been properly consulted.
2. Rubbish at the gates of the traveller site. This is slightly awkward because it is on private land. They will look at it further.
3. Speedwatch. After the failure of the last Speedwatch due to health and safety concerns raised by the lack of pavements, RBWM were asked to think of an alternative, possibly an unmanned speed sensor.
4. Solar powered speed sign on The Straight Mile. RBWM were asked to move this

sign further along the road as it is causing a nuisance in its current location.

Bellman Hanger
17/03903

There was a good turnout at the January PC meeting of people interested in this application for outline permission. The applicant has reduced the number of homes from 20 to 18 by removing the gatehouse and one house from the farm side. It has also moved the whole development to the south giving a bigger buffer to the ancient woodland on the northern boundary.

The removal of trees, including some very old oaks, has already been raised as an issue. The concerns raised at the January PC meeting included the following:

1. The farm that surrounds most of the site produces pedigree cattle. If the farmer wanted to build a new farm building he would have to ensure it is 400m from a neighbour to mitigate noise and smell. However, one of the proposed homes is right on the boundary. The farmer is concerned that the new owners will then register complaints about the noise and smells and he will be forced to make alterations which will affect his business unless the homes are sold with a binding agreement that all this has been made known to the buyers and they agree not to complain.
2. The farmer is also concerned about the impact of sounds, lights, sudden movements and dogs on his cattle. He wants a 6ft solid fence all around to protect the cattle.
3. The site is marked as zone 3 on RBWM's flood zone map.
4. The traffic survey is suspect at just 5 movements per house. There could be potentially 3 cars for some of the houses plus internet grocery and fashion deliveries. The bus service from Shurlock Row is not a practical means of transport.
5. There are currently 15 houses from Crockford's Bridge to the site with 29 residents. The new residents would number 51 if you assume 1 per bedroom, or 69 if you assume 2 people sleep in one of the bedrooms. This is a sizeable increase.
6. Houses along this stretch generally have non-return valves fitted to their sewage pipes because the system regularly struggles in the wetter months.
7. The school currently has 116 places rising to 128 in September with a maximum of 133. The nearby junior schools are full. Where will the children go to school?
8. The visibility splays are inadequate for a 60mph road on a bend, with no pedestrian provision.
9. The scale is too much for the street view. It is too dense, too high and not in keeping with the character and design of surrounding properties.
10. There will be a lack of light to the homes.
11. Impact on the local services – e.g. GP.
12. Light pollution.
13. The houses have gardens, so there may be further development of sheds and conservatories.
14. TPOs should be requested on any remaining trees.

The PC will write a detailed letter strongly objecting and asking that the application be called to Panel if there is an initial approval.

It is also suggested that an independent traffic survey be conducted, there may be a

contribution from the Preservation Society.

The PC also reminded the audience that they should register their objections in writing before the cut off date.

New Trustee for WSL Charities Congratulations to Jeremy McEvetts who will replace Nigel Backer. Many thanks to Nigel for his hard work.

Overnight closure of Straight Mile Bridge The bridge will be closed overnight for approx. 2 weeks from 1st Feb 2018 to allow Kier Highways access for maintenance. There will be diversion signs up via The Straight Mile and Forest Rd.

Wokingham Half Marathon The usual road closures will be in place on 18th February to allow the runners to compete safely. The PC will write to the organisers reminding them to clear the rubbish by the following day.

Precept It was agreed to set the precept for 18/19 at £22,500. This is an increase of £5,000 and covers a half year's worth of expected costs for The Shurlock Rd Nature Reserve and Play Area at £3,500 and the first year of a 3-year pledge to the Campaign to Protect Rural Wokingham at £1,500pa. This will result in a charge of approx. £33.79 for a band D household for the year.

Footpath watch If residents come across any problems with footpaths, please contact katie@kimservices.co.uk

Contact and share

General queries or items of interest can be addressed to the Clerk at WSLparishclerk@gmail.com or to individual PC members via the email addresses shown at the back of this magazine. Items of interest can be shared on Facebook and Twitter via <https://www.facebook.com/WalthamStLawrence/> and @WSL_RG10

Next Parish Council meeting is 6th February 2018, 7.00pm Neville Hall