

Minutes of the Holt Annual Parish Meeting and Holt Parish Full Council (HPC) Monthly Meeting held on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021 by Video Conference at 7.30pm.

**Attendees:** Cllr Game (Chair), Cllr Nicholson, Cllr Hendon, Cllr Siddall, Cllr Mizen, Cllr Offiler, Cllr Goodman, Parish Clerk Baker.

**In Attendance:** Cllr T Carbin plus 1 Member of the Public (MOP)

**156. Apologies** – None

**157. Open Meeting**

a. Cllr Game as Chair of HPC read out his Annual Report, a copy of which is placed at Annex A to these minutes. It will be published on HPC Website and the Clerk will ask for it to be published in Holt Magazine.

b. There were no questions from MOP.

c. Cllr Carbin reported the following:

The new speed limit on the B3107 between Melksham and Holt came into force 22 April.

A B3105 road closure between Bradford Leigh and Frankleigh, adjoining A363 will be in force from June – September for Wessex Water Works

Highway Resurfacing from Forewoods Common to Melksham end of the village will continue during 2021/22 Financial year.

No noticeable difference in HGV traffic between Staverton and Farleigh Wick although Councillors did advise they had observed additional HGV's going through Holt. Some of these vehicles relate to Cereal Partners and **Clerk is requested to write** and remind company of agreement concerning volume of HGV's travelling through the village.

Cllr Siddall expressed his views on the new WC planning system and asked Cllr Carbin to represent the views that the system is not working, and the Parish Council were not informed of its inception.

**158. Declarations of Interest and Dispensation** – None

**159.** a. Proposal to adopt Full Council minutes of meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Proposed Cllr Nicholson, seconded Cllr Hendon – **Resolved**

b. Proposal to adopt Extraordinary Full Council Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Proposed Cllr Siddall, Seconded Cllr Mizen **Resolved**

**160. Matters arising.**

a. Internet Banking, **Clerk** in hand on-going.

b. B3106 Hilperton Gap, ongoing with Highways Group to consult with WC.

c. Holt Manor – Posts Cllrs met with the owners of Holt Manor. The owners had been informed by previous incumbent not directly by Wiltshire Council that the verge was part of the highway, and Cllrs Goodman, Nicholson and the owners all agreed. The owners feel that the posts

prevent parking on the verge and wish them to remain in situ, they have agreed to continue mowing the area. The meeting was amicable and that a good relationship was established. No further action is proposed but should issues arise concerning the verges then the matter should be referred to WC Highways. No further action is proposed. The Clerk will advise the resident who first raised the issue of actions taken and agreed.

d. E mail addresses for Councillors. Actioned but it was decided not to implement until new Council elected.

e. To investigate the position on a School Traffic Plan. Cllr Offiler advised she had spoken with the school and a meeting with WC took place on 19<sup>th</sup> April with the officer responsible for drawing up the plan and action is in hand.

f. Verges in Station Road – see the Highways report.

### **161. To hear report from the Planning Committee**

a. Planning applications

21/01520/FUL – Extension and internal alterations – 294B Bradley lane – No comment

21/02299/FUL – 2 storey extension and single side extension – 19 Green Close – No comment

PL2021/03362 – Tree Works – 106 The Street – No Objection

Cllr Siddall also briefed on the recent Public Planning meeting concerning application 21/01854/FUL and 21/02601/LBC – Holt Farm Ground Corner, Installation of Solar PV panels on Garage roof and 21/02068/FUL – 89 The Street, Installation of a 10 panel, solar PV system to the front/south roof pitch of property.

WC enforcement followed up HPC concerns over Firlawn Development and advised that no action would be taken as a follow up application had been made. HPC had not sighted this application. However, HPC had received a CIL Payment of £96.91 resulting from this development.

Discussions concerning the Local Plan continues but nothing of note to report.

### **162. To hear report from the Village Facilities Advisory Group**

a. New picnic benches – Completed and awaiting concrete base and ground preparation to be completed.

b. Trowbridge Town Youth FC had expressed a wish to use the recreation field again next year.

c. The Caretaker is undertaking tasks including cleaning benches, reducing overhanging foliage and repairing gates.

d. Cllr Siddall is obtaining the tool required to remove the damaged flexi glass from the shelter on the recreation field. Cllr Goodman will report the criminal damage to Wiltshire Police after which an insurance claim will be made.

e. It was agreed that the metal bench in the Midlands would be offered to residents with a donation to Holt Pre School. Cllr Siddall to put details on Spotted. In the event of “no takers” then the bench would be removed by Stonewood. Once removed a drystone wall will be erected by Stonewood.

### **163. To hear report from the Highways Advisory Group**

Cllr Game, along with Cllr Offiler met with Kirsty Rose of WC Highways and agreed the following:

We should concentrate on the Midlands junction improvement as the village priority and jointly develop a proposal for the Substantive Scheme submission through the CATG in the summer for implementation in the next financial year.

This will be led by WC, with the next phase being a topographical survey and preparation of a detailed scheme. WC would come back to us if a HPC contribution for the survey would be essential to develop the proposal for submission this year.

While some cutting back to the verge to reclaim the highway would be fine, given utilities routing, it is unlikely that significant widening of the carriageway with retaining wall would be possible/cost effective. Widening and raising of the footway would still be possible if the speed limit were lowered to 20mph throughout the Midlands and other traffic mitigations were considered.

We also talked about changes to the main B3107 carriageway surface to slow traffic at that junction in a similar way to that at the junction by the shop.

The main HPC input to the proposal will be to demonstrate local support, help describe the benefits and agree the financial contribution. On the latter point, for substantive schemes this did not need to be 50%, but the contribution amount adds to the evaluation criteria, so we agreed to discuss this further as the proposal is developed.

Assuming this proceeds ok, there may be the opportunity to prepare surveys and detailed plans for the refuges for potential implementation in successive financial years, subject to resources, priorities, and affordability.

The above to be planned through the CATG, next meeting 17 May.

Should senior Wiltshire Council decision-makers agree that funding will be made available for all schemes in the next FY in lieu of the Tannery CIL as requested by HPC, then it is likely that this will need to be contracted-out via you to your preferred supplier, Atkins, given the workload on your team. This would naturally be at a greater cost than if planned sequentially by your team over several years.

We also briefly discussed the verges on Station Road and that we should include that as a non-substantive bid into CATG.

WC will request a quote for the topographical survey for The Midlands and will come back to HPC on that in due course.

### **164. To hear report from the Finance Advisory Group**

a. Cllr Goodman had circulated the end of year accounts to Councillors prior to the meeting and gave a short presentation at the meeting highlighting that income was as expected and expenditure lower due to over budgeting and Covid-19. These figures supported the decision taken in November to maintain the 2021/22 precept at 2020/21 levels.

- b. Proposal to approve payment of £186.66 additional hours accrued by Clerk and details provided prior to the meeting. Proposed Cllr Goodman, seconded Cllr Game **Resolved**
- c. Proposal to approve payment of £34.69 for additional stationery and mileage expenses incurred by Clerk and details provided prior to the meeting. Proposed Cllr Offiler, seconded Cllr Goodman **Resolved**

d. Payment of Account/Invoices

The following payments were **approved/resolved following a proposal by Cllr Goodman seconded Cllr Game. Resolved**

Clerks Wages and monthly expenses	£509.74
HMRC tax on Clerks Wages	£122.40
April Zoom Fee	£28.78 Refunded to Clerk
Lamming and Son Artwork	£178.37
WALC Annual Subscription	£702.48
Information Commissioners Office Fee	£40.00
C N Baker additional expenses	£34.69
P J Eyres Grass Cutting	£380.00
Crispin Keyzar Balance for benches	£445.17

e. 2 replacement Waste Bins have been purchased from Grist Environmental at a cost of £100 plus VAT.

f. Accounts will be passed to the internal auditor on 23 April and will be presented to Council at the June 2021 meeting as they must be forwarded to the external auditor by 30 June 2021. at the same time details will be placed on the HPC website and notice board from 1 July to 11 August (30 working days)

**165. Village Inspection Report/Parish Steward Tasking**

April/May – Cllr Mizen, June - Cllr Rachel Offiler, July - Cllr Marsha Nicholson, August - Cllr Steve Siddall, September - Cllr Phil Game

**166. Website** – Nothing to report. However, it was agreed that more information should be published. To include details of Parish Elections.

**167. Policies and Reports**

a. Proposal to adopt the Co-Option Policy document already circulated to Councillors. Proposed Cllr Nicholson, seconded Cllr Hendon **Resolved**

b. Grants Policy – Update. Ongoing, Clerk to present draft for discussion at May meeting. **Clerk**

c. Equality and Diversity Policy – Clerk to check what exists within other Councils – **Clerk.**

d. Proposal to accept the Holt Rural Housing Needs Survey dated November 2020. Some reservations were expressed at the conclusion drawn from the statistical information contained within the report. A counter proposal made by Cllr Game and seconded by Cllr Hendon was **Resolved as follows:** Approval deferred subject to consultation by Cllr Hendon with Survey Officer and recommendation by Cllr Hendon to be agreed remotely if prior to May meeting.

## **168. Correspondence**

- a. Parish Council Elections and administrative action required post May 6<sup>th</sup>. – Current Councillors elected unopposed together with new Councillor bringing complement to 8 (with 3 vacancies). **Clerk will arrange for Declarations of Acceptance of Office to be signed, and Councillors to update register of interests – Clerk to advise logon details.**
- b. Wiltshire Search and rescue – Request for Donation. Current Policy does not allow for donation to be made (note 167(b))
- c. Request for funds from resident James Morrison – Details to be forwarded to Councillors.

## **169. Police Crime Report**

- a. Nothing of note to report for Holt.

## **170. Items of report for future Agenda**

Cllr Nicholson advised that assistance could be required to work on the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) when it requires review. Until the way ahead concerning the Local Plan arising from new Government legislation no action will be taken on the NP.

**Meeting closed at 2130 hours, Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021, upstairs at the Village Hall at 7.30pm.**

## **Holt Parish Council – Chairman’s Report to the Annual Parish Meeting - 22 Apr 2021**

This Annual report from Chair of the Holt Parish Council covers exceptionally 2019-2021 given there was no Annual Parish Meeting during 2020 due to government restrictions in place in response to Covid-19.

These have been unprecedented times for the modern world and our little part of it in Holt was no exception. The impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic was felt by all of us and in particular the impotence initially against a relatively unknown threat. We are fortunate in the village to have a dynamic community and the response by the ‘Help for Holt’ group to reach out and connect everyone, providing points of contact for assistance and practical support was testament to this. The Parish Council set up an ‘Emergency Fund’ and has allocated £2500 to date, which has provided financial support to Help for Holt, the Holt Luncheon Club through the Old Ham Tree and relief for some local sports groups. Administratively this has meant, like many organisations, the Parish Council has met virtually over this time, which has worked well.

This has also been a significant time for our village in the development of the Old Tannery site, for which the Parish Council has been involved for over 10 years to ensure the villagers’ views were taken into consideration and I would like to thank Cllr Siddall and the Planning Committee for their sterling efforts. Despite interruptions due to Covid-19, the development has now commenced, and the first properties are expected to be available for occupation this summer. While we are still in communication with Wiltshire Council and our MP over expected benefit from this development, we are already seeing improvements to the Midlands junction by the shop and a new bus shelter is planned for this area at no cost to parishioners. We remain statutory consultees for planning applications and have worked hard to respond appropriately to benefit the overall amenity of the village.

The Council remains committed to improving the Highways and Street Scene of the village and has developed several schemes to improve safety and reduce the intimidation of traffic in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan. We are of course reliant on implementation through Wiltshire Council and during the last few years we have seen the establishment on new village gateways and enhancement to the mini-roundabout area by the Tollgate Inn designed to slow entering traffic. Our pavements are in a generally poor, and in places unsafe, state and in 2019 we conducted a survey, passing our results with our prioritised list to Wiltshire Council. Some areas have been improved recently, but there is much more to do, and we will continue to progress this alongside our other schemes, working closely with Wiltshire Council. We have continued to promote access across our public footpaths around the village, conduct our annual survey and have supported some improvements to remove hazards, thanks to efforts of Cllr Nicholson.

Our village facilities are of huge benefit to the village and require constant management and I would like to thank Cllr Mizen and the Facilities Advisory Group for their care and attention in keeping these safe, functional, and neat. We have also continued our monthly village inspections and implemented improvements through the Parish Steward, village caretaker, contractors, and self-help to keep our parts of Holt in good order. I would like to pay tribute to Garry Aland who maintained our village greens and recreation areas for over 20 years and passed away in August 2019; there is a tree planted in the recreation ground in his memory. We have also worked in partnership with fund raisers in the village, such as the "Scarecrow Trail Ladies" to improve facilities for villagers.

Perhaps one of the more divisive issues over this period has been felling of the Horse Chestnut trees that were such a visible feature of Ham Green but had become diseased. The Council had committed at the time to their replacement, and we sought the views of the village through a questionnaire in July 2020 and a subsequent public meeting in October 2020. I do not wish to repeat the points I made in my open letter to the village on this matter following that meeting but suffice to say we have learned from the experience and throughout sought to simply carry out the wishes of the village as we try to do on all matters, noting that even in Holt it would seem you cannot please all the people all of the time.

The Parish Council finances are in a healthy position thanks to the stewardship and forward planning by Cllr Goodman, the Finance Committee, and the Clerk as the Responsible Officer. We continue to add to the Village Development Fund through the solar panel income and part of the precept to provide for matched funding with Wiltshire Council for Highways improvements and other future capital projects.

Over this period the number of councilors has reduced and now stands at 7 of a potential 11 as we approach the local elections. Resignations over this period have included Andrew Pearce, our former Vice-Chair and councilor for over 8 years and we are grateful for his contribution across a range of issues during his time with the Council. Our numbers are expected to grow by one following the uncontested election in May and we will continue with our efforts to encourage the co-option of villagers and seek positive, constructive, and inclusive engagement.

I am proud to be part of such a great village and serve on the Council. I would like to thank my fellow councilors who give up their time voluntarily for the benefit of all villagers and thank our Clerk, Neil Baker, for modernising our administration and facilitating our operations.

Phil Game

Chairman