

Throop and Holdenhurst Village Council

FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

18th January 2023 – 7:00pm

Village Hall, Holdenhurst Village Road, Dorset BH8 0EE

Present: Cllr S R Fisher (Chair), Cllr N J Corcoran (Vice Chair), Cllr T Blackmore, Cllr N J Corcoran, Cllr J-A Houldey, Cllr P Hall and Cllr M J Waters

P Biles (Clerk)

Public attendance 8

1. Welcome from the Chair (215/22)

The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming out on such a cold night.

2. Apologies for Absence (216/22)

Cllr. L W Sabih sent his apologies

3. Announcements (217/22)

3.1-War Memorial update- the fund currently stands at £3633.22 leaving £1336.78 to reach the target of £4970

This is due to a couple of generous donations since the last update. Further fundraising is required, and the aim is to raise the full amount by June to enable us to hold an armistice event in November at the new War Memorial.

3.2- SANG Update- The Chair explained that the Chair, Cllr Houldey and the Clerk attend meetings with BCP regarding the SANG. Resulting from the last meeting, the Clerk wrote to BCP, 'At the top of your plans must be the requirement to produce definitive baseline to the 14 surveys listed in your report. So, to this end THVC request that a full summary of the identified surveys is completed by December 2022 which should be formally published for public inspection by the end of January 2023 as your base line'.

Martin Whitchurch, BCP, replied 'we will pull together the existing data into a cohesive report and share that with you as soon as it is available. This will include what repeat surveys and monitoring activity will be taking place in the future.

There is no requirement on the SANG with regards to Biodiversity Net Gain as the local planning authority did not have a policy on BNG at the time of application. As you are aware this is not within the planning conditions. I have also repeatedly said though that we intent to manage the SANG for the benefit of wildlife as much as possible and make every effort to make room for nature, alongside the objectives as a SANG.

In summary, the Chair expanded that BCP are saying there is no *obligation* in safeguarding the environment.

A question was raised by a member of the public, 'that if there is no requirement to protect wildlife in the planning stages, has there been any legislation to protect nature since then?' The Chair responded that she had spoken to local wildlife expert, Nick Dobbs, who suggested there should be some SANG/Biodiversity legislation coming out this year.

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A further point was raised by a member of the public that they were under the impression that it's always been that BCP had to show a net gain in biodiversity, and without a baseline how can this be measured?'

The Chair agreed and asked if there were further questions on this to include them later in the agenda, in the democratic 15 minutes.

The Chair continued, at the last meeting, Mr Tom Bennett, Senior Throop Ranger, provided some ecological surveys, some quite aged. One of the saddest points in the reports are that the Damsel Fly population has halved in the last 10 years under the stewardship of BCP.

3.3- The Kings Coronation Weekend- Holdenhurst are planning an event on the Holdenhurst Village Green on Saturday 6th May 2023 and Sarah Fisher ,the Chair, has offered an event in Mill Cottage garden, Throop, on Monday 8th May 2023 which is yet to be confirmed.

4. Declarations of Interest (218/22)

None

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting (219/22)

The Minutes from the previous meeting on 23rd November 2022 were signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.

6. Public Questions (220/22)

6.1 A question has been raised regarding the increasing number of very large lorries/HGVs are using Throop Road. It has been noticed that large tyre prints that have mounted pavements and destroyed lane verges. The lanes are not designed for this size of vehicle, as can be seen by the number of potholes we have to try and avoid. If access to the Industrial Estate has to be from Throop Road surely restrictions need to be applied to the size of vehicle.

This query has been forwarded to BCP traffic department and a response is awaited.

6.2 A separate question was also raised, to Cllr Houldey, regarding potholes being created by the size of vehicles using the small roads in Throop.

A further question was raised, to Cllr Houldey, regarding the refilling of the 'grit box' on the corner of Broadway lane and Throop Road.

BCP had responded that some of the deeper potholes have been fixed today, with more work to do on the smaller potholes tomorrow and a request has been forwarded to the works supervisor regarding the 'grit box'.

6.3 An issue was also raised regarding the black ice at the corner of Throop Road and Holdenhurst Village Road causing 15 cars to skid resulting in 3 cars losing control and 1 car running into a lorry, no one hurt but were shaken. This has also been reported to BCP today.

It was suggested a grit box is placed on the corner of Throop Road and Holdenhurst Village Road. The clerk was requested to write to the Team Manager, Environment, BCP to request a grit box be sited.

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6.4 The Chair raised the point that the Wessex Water HGVs are driving up through Broadway lane, due to the continuous flooding of their normal route.

7. Democratic 15 minutes (221/22)

7.1 An issue was raised about a house having solar panels, on the roof facing the road, fitted and if this allowed in a conservation area. The clerk to write to planning BCP and ask what the rules are for installing solar panels in a conservation area.

7.2 Biodiversity- (referring to 3.2 SANG) 'We thought there would be net biodiversity gain so why no obligation?' Open discussions surmising why the planning condition wasn't included by the planners and what it actually means to biodiversity in practice. The Chair stated that THVC would be challenging any detrimental actions to biodiversity. Cllr Waters suggested that THVC find out the facts of the conditions regarding SANG management, biodiversity, opening times etc. prior to challenging BCP on these issues. The Chair suggested that, at the next SANG meeting with BCP in February, she will check that all of the 22 planning conditions for the SANG have been met.

Cllr Corcoran concurred and suggested using the ecological appraisal for the SANG meeting, appendix 1 of the ecology report, as it lists legislation, not only for protected species but also regarding the impact on small mammals etc that should be abided by as it is the document that was submitted with the SANG proposal.

7.3 The dangers of flooding were also discussed, as there are dips, uneven surfaces, drains and ditches etc that cannot be seen when the fields which could be extremely hazardous for people cycling through.

8. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting (222/22)

8.1. It was asked if the overgrown vegetation (The Hedgerow) should be removed at the corner of Taylor Drive / Throop Road to allow drivers to see round the corner easier. The Clerk contacted BCP, the overgrown vegetation has been cut back.

8.2. The brambles at the duck pond, on Throop Green, could be trimmed back and tidied up as it's looking untidy. The Clerk contacted BCP who explained as, it isn't good practice to, completely, cut the brambles down as they provide cover for prey animals, it was agreed that the area will be tidied up so approximately half of the vegetation has been cut back this year and next year the other half will be cut back and will be rotated each year to keep tidy and provide shelter for the wildlife that depend on it, whilst keeping the area 'tidier'.

8.3. The gully outside Muccleshell Cottages on Throop Road requires digging out as it's blocked causing flooding as water cannot run away. The Clerk contacted BCP, awaiting update.

8.4. Between the Dairy Barn and the River Barn there are leylandii possibly causing blocked drains which causes the roads to flood more readily. The Clerk contacted BCP on the issue, awaiting update.

8.5. The 'blind corner' at the junction of Holdenhurst and Throop Road requires the overgrown vegetation to be cut back to increase visibility for drivers. The Clerk contacted BCP, this corner has been cut back.

8.6. Richborough Estates-

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Councillors resolved to delegate authority to the clerk to write to BCP reminding BCP that THVC is a statutory body and requests that BCP gives formal and prior notice to THVC of any further applications for planning relating to the above proposed development.

BCP responded-

'I note the wishes of the Parish Council. As you are aware the land is being promoted for consideration for development through the BCP Local Plan, as well as many other sites within the Green Belt. If we shortlist this site for inclusion in the Local Plan, we will of course be in touch to discuss this with the Parish Council. We remain on target to produce a draft Local Plan by Autumn 2023'.

Also-

Councillors resolved to delegate authority to the clerk to write to Richborough Estates reminding Richborough Estates that THVC is a statutory body and requests that Richborough Estates gives formal and prior notice to THVC of any further applications for planning relating to the above proposed development.

Richborough Estates responded-

'Your comments are duly noted, and you can be assured that the land is being promoted with proper regard to the relevant and emerging planning policies. We do understand the weight and function of the policies you refer to and that the emerging Local Plan must strike a balance between policy constraints and BCP's housing needs.

We are committed to the promotion of the site through the emerging Local Plan and as such it is highly unlikely, we would make any planning application unless the site were allocated for development by BCP. In any event, we would of course notify and consult the Parish Council in respect of any application as per our statutory duty'.

9. Clerk Report (223/22)

9.1- Bank Reconciliation completed 21/12/22

9.2- Cost v Budget report updated on 22/12/22

9.3-External Audit-

Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA) is the independent, sector led organisation responsible for the appointment and contract management of external auditors to smaller authorities since the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 established new arrangements.

BDO LLP will be the external auditors for the next 5 years in Dorset/Southwest.(Previously PKF Littlejohn LLP)

BDO LLP have been asked by DATPC if they could let us know if they plan any briefings before financial year end to help Councils plan and understand any subtle changes in process from PKF Littlejohn.

9.4- Internal Audit-

This years' internal audit, with the existing auditor, 'Do The Numbers', has been arranged for 30th May 2023

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10. Budget and Precept 2023-24 (224/22)

The Clerk referred to the budget report previously circulated to Village Council members and the Chair sought confirmation from the councillors that they are in agreement with its content and recommendations. (section 4 of report)

Following the Village Council agreeing its budget, the Clerk will notify BCP of the village councils precept requirement for 2023-2024 This has to be done by the deadline of 31st January 2023.

The Village Council is recommended to consider the details contained in this report and resolves to:-

4.1 Consider and agree the Throop and Holdenhurst Village Council budget for 2023-24 as outlined in Appendix A of the report.

4.2 Agree that the required Precept for 2023-24 is set at £12,090 which equates to a household Band D charge of £40.10.

4.3 Note that due to the increased budget requirement of £2,060, together with the equivalent "Band D" property factor, the amount of the equivalent "Band D" precept will increase from the 2022-23 level of £33.74 to £40.10 in 2023-24. An increase of £6.36 (18.85%).

4.4 Note that for the purposes of "essential running costs" an amount of approximately £11500 annually has been identified. An allocation to Reserves in 2023-4 of £1500 raises the Council's total Reserves to approximately £4235 overall (Equivalent to approximately 4.5 months running costs (para. 3.3 above refers).

Proposed by Cllr T Blackmore , Seconded by Cllr N J Corcoran

Vote - Unanimous

Cllr Waters suggested that next year, the budgeting process starts earlier (September/October) to help facilitate greater public consultation to identify what areas people prioritise i.e., funding or extra funding so THVC have more engagement with the public/residents. It was agreed a suitable process needs to be developed to enable this suggestion.

11. Neighbourhood Plan (225/22)

The Clerk referred to the Neighbourhood Plan report and asked Councillors to consider the actions/approach outlined in the report, to agree to create a Neighbourhood Plan for Throop and Holdenhurst Parish and resolve to delegate authority to the Village Clerk to:-

4.1 Obtain three quotes for the engagement of a competent Neighbourhood Plan Consultant for agreement at the next Full Council Meeting.

4.2 Investigate the process for the relevant funding that is available for creating a Neighbourhood Plan in readiness for submitting an application after engaging a suitable consultant.

Cllr N J Corcoran gave some background information on the process of creating a Neighbourhood Plan which promoted some discussion regarding the resolution being requested and after some further discussions it was agreed to amend the resolution to-

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Councillors to consider the actions/approach outlined in the report and resolve to delegate authority to the Village Clerk to:-

4.1 Obtain three quotes for the engagement of a competent Neighbourhood Plan Consultant for agreement at the next Full Council Meeting.

4.2 Consider the process for creating a Neighbourhood Plan in readiness for submitting an application after engaging a suitable consultant.

Proposed by Cllr N J Corcoran, Seconded by Cllr J-A Houldey

Vote - Unanimous

12. Allotment Lease Update (226/22)

The Allotment working party to interrogate the draft lease that has been received, raise queries, questions and suggestions and pass to the Clerk to forward to Wellers Law Group for consultation with the solicitor via zoom meeting (Date to be arranged).

It is intended to be able to issue a lease to the Longbarrow Allotment Committee by the end of this financial year.

Meeting closed at 8.01 pm.

Signed.....