

RUYTON XI TOWNS PARISH COUNCIL

2 FEB 2021 MEETING MINUTES

An ordinary meeting of the Parish Council was held online at 6.30 pm on Tues 2nd Feb 2021.

Parish councillors in attendance: Mr T Allison, Mr A Collier, Mr G Barrett, Mr S Denyer, Mr M Eyles, Mr S Gittins (Chairman), Mrs A Lister, Mr D Shearan, Mr D Spicer (Vice Chairman).

Absent: Mrs C Jones, Mr A Prince.

Also in attendance:, Lydia Bardsley (Clerk), Ian Kilby (SC Head of Planning Services), Nick Bardsley (Shropshire County Councillor), Public: 2

Meeting started at: 6:31pm.

124/20. Welcome by Chairman

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

125/20. Apologies

None received.

126/20. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests and Dispensation

None received.

127/20. Public Session

No comments at this time. It was **AGREED** to bring forward item 130/20a.

130/20: Reports

a) Road improvement IIG funding award – update from SC Head of Planning Services Ian Kilby

The Chairman welcomed Ian Kilby to the meeting who gave a brief overview of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the background to the strategic decision to award funding for a road improvement scheme for Ruyton XI Towns. The project would be a traffic calming scheme through centre of village (major through route from Shottaton to Baschurch). Key point is that there will definitely be an opportunity for the PC to help develop the project through the project lead Emma Walker. It was noted that Ruyton is feeling the effects of development pressures through traffic from other communities as well as from Ruyton itself.

PC will be able to share local knowledge of highways issues and engineers will lend technical expertise to solutions and mitigations that might be incorporated into design of road improvement scheme. The scheme will then be co-produced by Ruyton PC and SC. He apologised for the bumpy start in communication, but was pleased to hear that things are now heading in the right direction.

He briefly spoke on pre-applications for planning applications and thanked the PC for their openness toward discussions with applicants. He assured the council that SC Planning officers would be sharing our letter with pre-applicants and encouraging them to contact PC at that stage, though it is at the applicant's discretion whether they choose to do so or not.

Cllr Spicer gave an update on the recent excellent meeting with SC Officers, and there is now a commitment for monthly meetings with the PC and engineers from WSP. Ian Kilby wished to follow the progress of this collaboration with SC and the PC, as it moves from design to delivery phase, and would

welcome feedback from the PC on how things are going. It was **NOTED** that the PC and Safer Roads Group had done a lot of work and had a lot of statistical data from VAS signs to share which would be helpful for the road improvement scheme.

The Chairman thanked Ian Kilby for attending, and he left the meeting at: 18.44.

It was **AGREED** to bring forward item 132/20d. Cliffe Mountain bikes.

132/20d: Parish Matters

a) Cliffe – Mountain biking

It was **NOTED** that the application for Local Nature Reserve designation for the Cliffe had not yet been approved by Natural England. Clerk gave a brief run-through on the process of creating byelaws. There was a general feeling that byelaws should be a last resort, and that the need for evidence and witnesses, work required, and cost of enforcing breaches would be disproportionate to the potential impact on behaviour. It was **NOTED** that the Cliffe is “open access land” which means cyclists and horse riders can **only** use the public bridleways, and must not ride on footpaths or any other part of the land. Creating and enforcing byelaws would represent a zero tolerance approach at one end of the spectrum, but it was felt that we are currently at the other end of the spectrum where liberties are being taken, the natural environment is being damaged, and some riders ignore requests to stay on bridleways even when confronted in person. It was **AGREED** that the PC should work towards a middle ground with some give and take, which could mean identifying certain routes where the PC as landowner can choose to permit MTB, whilst preventing further tracks from being created. In some cases the PC may need to actively prevent access to certain unofficial tracks if they are deemed too dangerous, or if the local environment in those areas needs extra protections. It was **AGREED** that the clerk would check the Law of Property Act, 1925, s.193, which may allow courts to fine people £20 for going off RoW. It was **NOTED** that newly created trails were particularly evident since recent snowy weather, and an off-road motorcycle was spotted using the Cliffe as well.

It was **AGREED** that better signage was needed at entry points to the Cliffe to make clear what is and is not permitted, as it is not necessarily known to all that there are restrictions already in place.

Resident spoke as a MTB rider, and was concerned that other MTB users were given a voice in discussions, though they also recognised that some riders are definitely riding where they shouldn't be. It was **NOTED** that MTB riders would not be riding where nesting birds would be, and that some riders were travelling into the area from further afield (due to covid-19) who would perhaps be less sensitive to local concerns about wildlife and ecology.

Resident offered to act as a go-between with MTB groups on Facebook to encourage compliance to bridleway and any future permitted trails. It was recognised that the PC needs to communicate what the rules are as widely as possible, through clear signage, social media, and direct with MTB groups. Cllr Shearan gave the example of Long Mynd which has clear, official signage showing which routes are permitted for MTB. If after all those options have been exhausted people still flout the rules, then the PC may need to involve the police.

It was **AGREED** that 3 or 4 cllrs should discuss options informally with members of the local MTB community outside of meetings, and visit the site together with SC reps (covid-19 restrictions permitting) to identify potential MTB appropriate trails that that would not cause unnecessary damage to the environment, would not be too dangerous, and which could feasibly be designated as “MTB-only routes” to prevent collisions with other user groups.

128/20. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm that the [Council minutes dated 5th Jan](#) 2020 were accurate and would be signed at a future date.

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129/20. Coronavirus

It was **NOTED** that no financial support was being requested from the Basnett, Mathew, and Minton Trust for the Christmas boxes as these had been funded through other means.

It was **NOTED** that the Covid-19 helpline rota has been updated and there have been a couple of calls. It was also **NOTED** that Shropshire Council, Long Mynd Travel, and Go Carz Taxis are offering free transport to vaccination appointments for people who were elderly or in a vulnerable group with no other access to transport.

It was **NOTED** that the third national lockdown in England will be reviewed by central govt in the w/c 22nd Feb, but that schools would remain closed until at least 8th March. Legislation for the current lockdown is in place until March 31st, so rules and restrictions may need to be followed until then depending on vaccination programme and infection rates. Any restrictions are likely to be phased out gradually if at all.

130/20. Reports – Council to consider and agree actions.

b) Shropshire Councillor Nick Bardsley report (appendix A)

CLlr Bardsley (NB) gave a brief update on the following matters:

- Local Plan review – Consultation extended to 26th February. NB shared concerns that the weaknesses in the plan will drift through if representations are not made to request clarifications to the wording of the affordable housing policies. Baschurch are going to raise objections.
- Census – Office of National Statistics needs to reach everyone, but there will be significant minority who won't be able to complete survey online. PCs and other local community figures have a role to play in identifying people who may need help. It was **AGREED** this would be added to March PC agenda.

c) Local Police Report

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

Smartwater – It was **NOTED** that locations on the borders of the parish had been shared with WM Police for installing the We Don't Buy Crime signage posters. WM Police are working through a backlog of SmartWater postal distribution for other communities, so would be in touch once they were able to action the signage. In the meantime, cllrs should remind residents about the importance of using the free kits to mark up valuables and to put up stickers in prominent places as a deterrent.

d) Clerk's update report (appendix B)

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

Re. pot holes, it was **NOTED** that the repairs due to start on the B4397 today had been cancelled without explanation, and then reinstated for a shorter period of time (3rd-4th). Clerk had contacted Environmental Maintenance Oswestry and Keir to ask for an update and was still awaiting an official update from Keir.

In addition to the report the clerk reminded newer cllrs about their training on 03.02.2021 (Fundamentals for councillors).

131/20. Policies to review and approve (appendix C).

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following.

- a) **Planning Working Group Terms of Reference**
- b) **Climate Emergency Working Group Terms of Reference**
- c) **Action Plan 2020-21**

132/20: Parish Matters — Council to receive updates and agree actions.

b) Playing field/football field maintenance

Cllr Gittins gave an update on discussions re. upkeep for the Doctors Meadow football pitch. It was hoped Packwood school may help with the maintenance. Cllr Shearan spoke about hopes to reinstate the track around outside of Doctors Meadow playing field, and possibly extending this to the Spinney to allow wheelchair access. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk will look into grant funding for disability access for the track.

The clerk updated the Council on discussions with developers re. filling in the holes in the Doctors Meadow car park with gravel already provided by SC.

c) Census 2021

This had been briefly discussed earlier in the meeting. It was **NOTED** that the next Census would take place on Sunday 21st March. It is a legal obligation for all households to complete and there is a £1000 fine for non-completion. Cllr Shearan will share updates from the Census 2021 Facebook group on the Ruyton Facebook page.

d) May elections

It was **NOTED** that there was no change currently to the Local Elections currently scheduled for May 6th 2021, although there is increasing pressure on government to postpone them. The Clerk will be attending briefing/training sessions on 5th March (Elections essentials) and 9th March (Elections engagement) and would report back to Council on any urgent actions/information.

The Chairman asked other councillors to think about whether they might want to be Chairman, as they intend to step down as chair after the elections (but wish to stay on the parish council).

e) Climate emergency

Clerk had circulated notes from the first meeting of the Climate Emergency Working Group. Cllr Shearan gave an update on next steps, and it was suggested that the PC ought to consider environmental impact of everything it does.

f) PC social media account

After discussion it was **AGREED** that the clerk and councillors will look into this more, as it would need to be managed and moderated to a large degree.

133/20. Planning applications

1. [Maple Villa](#), Little Ness Rd, ref: 21/00066/FUL (Deadline: 21.02.2021)

Proposal: Erection of single storey extension to rear (adjoining to previous extension).

It was **RESOLVED** to make representation with no comments.

2. [Woodfield House](#), School Rd, ref: 21/00185/FUL (Deadline: 21.02.2021)

Proposal: Adaption to half the existing detached double garage to provide ancillary accommodation

It was **RESOLVED** to make representation with no comments.

134/20. Shropshire Council Planning decisions

It was **RESOLVED** to note the following decisions:

1. Proposed Development [West Of Darlee Cottage](#), ref: 18/02858/REM – Pending consideration

Proposal: Reserved matters for residential development of two detached houses (14/04168/OUT).

2. [Proposed Affordable Dwelling, Hillside Cottage](#), ref: 20/03470/FUL - Pending consideration

Proposal: Erection of an affordable dwelling with detached garage; formation of access and all associated works

3. [Proposed Dwelling East Of Wigmarsh Cottage](#), Wigmarsh, ref: 20/04269/OUT – Withdrawn

Proposal: Outline application (all matters reserved) for the erection of one (local needs) dwelling with ancillary external plant/machinery storage area.

It was **FURTHER NOTED** that a replacement application had been received today for this land, and this would be considered at the March meeting.

135/20. Consultations – Council to agree response

a) Shropshire Local Plan

It was **NOTED** that the consultation deadline had been extended to Feb 26th 2021. Following on from SC Cllr Bardsley's report concerns were raised about balancing employment with housing in rural areas, and questions were raised about how many people living in new homes will actually be rural workers. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Spicer will help draft a response to the consultation, with input from the Planning Working Group. Concerns were repeated about vague wording which could be exploited by developers, and that there were serious internal conflicts within plan regarding rural housing and sustainability, i.e., if residents have to travel long distances for employment. It was **AGREED** that the PC would not ask to participate in the hearing sessions at the examinations stage.

136/20. Payments – Council to consider and approve

a) Invoices/reimbursements to be authorised

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the following payments.

- Scottish Power, 3rd quarter streetlight bill: £244.94 (of which £11.66 VAT), direct debit paid 25.01.2021
- Clerk, Feb salary: £555.37 (no VAT)
- Clerk expenses (incl. Microsoft 365 subs): £123.18 (of which £13.38 VAT)
- UPS Direct Ltd, Solar panel for VAS: £438.00 (of which £73.00 VAT)
- NEST (direct debit), Feb pension contributions: £41.31 (no VAT)

b) Urgent invoices to approve after publication of agenda

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the following payment.

- Numbers Plus Ltd, Covid-19 helpline call charges: £0.74 (of which £0.12 VAT).

137/20. Finance – to consider and approve

It was **RESOLVED** to note and approve the following. Hardcopies of documents would be signed retrospectively once face to face meetings had resumed.

a) Receipts & payment report Jan 2021

b) Bank statement and Bank reconciliation Jan 2021

138/20. Future agenda items

Councillors are requested to use this opportunity to report minor matters of information not included elsewhere on the agenda and to raise items for future agendas.

Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision making.

- a) Safer roads – Cllr Shearan gave a brief update on the new solar panel which is installed on the Brownhill VAS. It was **AGREED** to monitor this and see how it works before ordering extra panels. It

was **NOTED** that 2 VAS volunteers have left the parish, but replacement volunteers have been found.

- b) Assets check – Clerk asked cllrs if they could please check street furniture, streetlights, and other assets for signs of damage, wear and tear, or other safety concerns. To report back at March meeting.
- c) Census
- d) May elections
- e) QEII wildflower meadow
- f) Climate emergency

139/20. Next Council meeting – Council to agree

Next meeting provisionally scheduled for Tues 2nd March 2021 (online).

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00 pm.

Confirmed as accurate: _____ Chairman, Cllr Simon Gittins. Date: _____