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MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of RIPLEY held on

THURSDAY 11th MAY 2017 at RIPLEY BOWLING CLUB at 1900hrs

Present:

Cllr Jennie Cliff Chairman
Cllr Colin Cross
Cllr Caspar Hancock
Cllr Suzie Powell-Cullingford
Cllr Vernon Wood
Jim Morris Clerk of the Council

63 Members of Public

Refreshments were served as people arrived.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Richard Ayears, and Lisanne Mealing
Apologies had also been received from many local residents who had been unable to make the meeting
Surrey County Councillor Julie Iles also sent apologies

2. WELCOME

Councillor Cliff welcomed everyone to the meeting. There had apparently been some confusion caused by the location of the meeting, and it was reiterated that the venue for the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) had been chosen before the guest speakers. It was hoped that the APM would move around the village to different venues in future years

3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 28th APRIL 2016

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Ripley held on 28th April 2016 were received, confirmed and signed as a true and correct record by the Chairman, Councillor Jennie Cliff.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Cliff presented the annual report of the Parish Council to the meeting, having been Chairman of the Parish Council during 2016-17

“The last year seems to have been an exceptionally busy year for your parish council team in general, and for the Clerk in particular. We thank Jim for keeping us on track with so many aspects of council business, and for his quick witted approach to the job he so ably manages. He has coped with an office move (we are now in Rio House, next to the Church). The new office space lends itself to small group meetings, and is well used, so Jim doesn't have the quiet life he used to enjoy

“Looking at finances for the past year, the figure of £200,000 has been mentioned as a rough total of money that has passed through the accounts in the past financial year. There have been several major projects including

the wildlife area, posts and rails on The Green, and the skate ramp which have been largely supported by Borough money, this means that grant applications have to be made, chased and dealt with alongside the other finance matters.

“Planning, as usual, has taken a lot of council time and effort, with carrying degrees of success. Richard Ayeards leads the Planning Committee, and always makes sure that the council responses to local planning applications are backed by legitimate reasons, but the Borough’s planning officers don’t always think in line with us. We feel sometimes that we are fighting to keep local opinions heard. We welcomed Tracey Coleman, head of Borough planning services to a meeting recently, and there was a positive exchange of information. We also had discussions with Mariana Beadsworth, who came to review with us the draft Conservation Area Appraisal document [cheers]. We are grateful for their willingness to meet with us, and trust that the various elements of our discussions will be kept in mind. A huge proportion of planning meeting time has been spent on responses to the draft Borough plan; we continue to try to make our voice heard on that front.

“The team of parishioners and associates developing the Lovelace Neighbourhood Plan continue to work hard on our behalf, and will soon be producing a Plan which will progress through stages of statutory consultation. The Plan will then carry significant weight when deciding planning matters, and help form planning policy for the Lovelace Ward. Approximately £11,500 has been spent so far. Most of this sum has come from grants set up under the government’s ‘Localism’ umbrella. An impressive reminder of the initiatives which the Neighbourhood Plan team has set up is the air quality monitoring equipment on the corner of Newark Lane. The report which will be produced is expected to aid presentations regarding traffic and pollution levels in Ripley.

“In some parts of the parish, life progresses fairly normally, and improvements have been made. The cemetery has had extensive tree works carried out; dangerous trees have been trimmed and felled, and will be replaced with native trees and hedge plants. We have continued with mowing and clearing through the winter so that we have a head start as the growing season comes round. On The Green, we have replaced a lot of the posts and rails, and have a schedule worked out to work through those old lengths remaining. We commissioned a report on the mature trees on The Green, had to fell some that were dangerous (health & safety coming into its own!) and have other safety work to do. We planted a small crab apple tree in memory of Fred Dixon, who was head of the local Primary School for 25 years just post WW2, and placed a small roundel memorial at its foot. We have a new man in charge of mowing; he has already given the tractor an airing, and The Green is ‘looking good’. The Nature Reserve has been a major triumph for us all. We have decided to let it alone for a few months as far as planting is concerned. Bye-laws and safety equipment are being sorted; meanwhile I would remind everyone that this is NOT AN AREA FOR DOGS. Please walk your dogs on The Green, where equipment is available for owners to clear up behind their pets. We are looking forward to officially opening the nature area on 23rd June... more details to follow..., and we would like lots of people to come along. On the other side of the tracks, the Village Hall Trustees are working closely with the parish council to find ways to finance the new Hall, help the Management Committee manage and maintain the existing Hall, and keep the facilities up to scratch.

“We, however, are not a complacent bunch. There are many challenges ahead, including all the threats to our parish from the proposed Borough Plan. We are working hard to support our treasured village school. We have huge concerns about our roads in general, worrying about our lanes in particular. Traffic speeding is an overarching problem, and the lanes in the parish are increasingly abused by oversized vehicles. Parishioners are helpful in pointing out their worries, and I feel that this is going to be our next, if you’ll excuse the pun, major drive, though putting on pressure in appropriate places needs to be carefully managed.

“Your parish council holds open meetings regularly with well-publicised Agendas. The office door is always open, and we welcome the interest and constructive comments of everyone. Please let us know how you feel about what we do to protect, maintain and enhance our special village.”

5. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM PARISHIONERS

Parishioners were invited to ask questions of the Parish Council

a) A local business owner asked whether village parking would be available at the redeveloped Village Hall Cllr Powell-Cullingford responded that parking for businesses had been offered at a cost of £10 per month so that their employees did not have to take up free spaces. Uptake had been disappointing. Cllr Cross added that Guildford Borough Council (GBC) had insisted on White Hart Car Park remaining free, which had resulted in it becoming clogged up during the day. The entire village needed to be looked at, including The Green. The village was likely to experience gridlock if proposed local developments such as at the former Wisley Airfield was allowed to go ahead

Several more residents chipped in with their own experiences of bad or antisocial road behaviour and parking Cllr cliff noted that new systems would also need future monitoring

b) A local resident noted the recent works that had been carried out to cut back overgrown vegetation on the north side of Newark Lane. Now the work had been finished, it would be possible to increase the width of the pavement back to the original as intended.

Another person in attendance suggested using the SCC interactive map to report highways issues

c) A local resident raised the issue over the height of the boundary wall at the site adjacent to Lutidine House. Sightline issues when exiting Wentworth Close had been experienced.

The issue had been raised with both Guildford Borough Council's Planning Enforcement Department and referred to SCC Highways Department

d) A local resident raised a question over the replacement of Pigeon House Bridge

A person in attendance had begun a facebook group to put pressure on SCC to replace the bridge. It was apparently not classed as being a priority issue due to the alleged cost. The Chairman agreed that the reopening of the bridge was a priority as it was an ancient Right of Way. It was noted that the bridge joined the parishes of Ockham and Pyrford.

The Chairman thanked all the participants and introduced the next item.

6. SPEECHES: "RIPLEY VILLAGE HALL"

The Chairman invited Gill Haig-Brown, the Chairman of the Village Hall Trustees, to speak on the plans for redeveloping Ripley Village Hall

The Chairman of the Trustees thanked the parish council for providing the opportunity to put forward the Trustees' aspirations for the Hall to the village. The 'Victory Hall' had been well designed and was fondly appreciated as a piece of community infrastructure. The aim of the presentation was to show what the Trustees wanted from Ripley Village Hall, what could be achieved, and what was possible. The Chairman introduced the first guest, Karen Holdsworth-Cannon of Surrey Community Action (SCA).

Karen was the Community Buildings Advisor for the organisation and worked with Trustees on the provision and upkeep of up to 5,800 such Halls in Surrey. The Village Hall was protected in law as an asset to the community. An in depth study of the Trustees' Constitution had resulted in the creation of a new Charitable Incorporated Organisation and the land was vested for the community. All decisions on land use had to be approved by the Charities Commission, and all information was publicly available. Money was tight for new building projects, and any profit from land sales had to be entirely reinvested in the Charity. All decisions would have to be taken with the full involvement of the community, and with realistic figures in mind. The process would be open to scrutiny in its entirety.

Gill thanked Karen for her speech and introduced architect Brian Hendry

Brian had been a resident of Effingham for 40 years and, based on other local work undertaken, the Trustees had asked him to look into undertaking a feasibility study for a new Village Hall. Amongst other ideas, it was hoped that the new Hall could be built before the demolition of the existing although it wouldn't be easy to achieve. The new concept integrated the outside space between the Hall and the History Society Museum, would have a generous main hall, some first floor space, and would be only very slightly smaller in footprint to the existing Hall. The use of an oak frame, brick infill and lime render would help the Hall achieve energy efficiency. The roof, which appeared large in the drawings, would have as much presence when finished.

Gill thanked Brian for the description and introduced Suzie Powell-Cullingford, to describe the Trustees' fundraising efforts

Suzie thanked those present for their patience during the meeting. The Trustees were due to visit GBC to engage in Pre-Application advice on the proposed scheme. The total cost to build the new Hall, including professional fees, construction, demolition, landscaping and car parking, and a contingency fund were estimated to be in the region of £1m. Excellent advice from surveyors had been received, and the Trustees were looking at jigsaw funding the project through a mixture of grants, fundraising, and loans. It was sincerely

hoped that the community would work together to help to create a successful project. A 'buy a brick' scheme was due to be launched alongside a new website. Suzie asked the audience for fundraising ideas.

Several representatives of local organisations chipped in with ideas for fundraising events, including holding auctions, naming rooms after benefactors, researching grants, comedy evenings, and discos. The Accordion group, one of the existing Hall users, pledged to hold an event to raise £1000 for the project

Gill wrapped up the presentations from the speakers and invited questions from the audience

A local resident strongly supported the proposal, yet had misgivings over the proposed layout of the site and the plan to keep the existing Hall open during construction. It was suggested that further local consultation was required

A representative of the History Society posited that it was a shame that the Museum would only be seen from an angle from the street

A business owner queried where people would park their vehicles during the construction period

A resident asked whether the existing Hall could be fixed up

Gill agreed that there would be further consultation with both residents close to the site and the wider village. The current drawings were part of the Trustees' Feasibility Study. The design made the best use of the site as a whole, and the History Society's Museum was an integral part of that. Parking issues in the Village would be eased by the development. It had been found that the existing Hall was beyond repair.

The parish council Chairman thanked the evening's speakers and all attendees. It had been an interesting and lively evening and it had been useful to hear so many people's opinions.

The meeting closed at 2100hrs.

Signed:

Date: