

BEAUDESERT & HENLEY IN ARDEN JOINT PARISH COUNCIL



MINUTES – ORDINARY MEETING JPC

The Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting, using Zoom technology, on **Monday the 21st of September 2020**, at 7.00pm.

Signed - 

Parish Clerk & Proper Officer

Date: 24.09.2020

Covid-19 Restrictions

Due to ongoing restrictions created by HM Government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the public are invited to join in the proceedings using zoom interactive conferencing, simply by contacting the Clerk by email – clerk@henley-in-arden-pc.gov.uk - telephone - **01564 637 607** - or in writing at **179 High Street**. Full minutes of all meetings will be published on the JPC website.

NB: If HM Gov restrictions ease sufficiently, this meeting may be reconvened as a public meeting at a venue to be selected which will meet SD policies.

Present: Cllrs E Field [Chair] R Hubbocks, V Hubbocks, A Okey, J Kingsnorth, J Jones, T Woods, K Easton, M Bainbridge. [Later joined by Cllr M Jennings, District]

9 Members of the public were also present – Mr D Broadbent, Mrs S Harfield, Mr R Cox, Mr R Hutchinson, Mr, and Mrs R Hinton, Mr S Dorow, Mr R Cooper, Mr, & Mrs D Jackson and Mr Jon Butler.**

Public Participation Session:

The Chair invited members of the public attending the meeting if they wished to speak. Mr D Broadbent aided by Mrs Harfield, raised a question as to the validity and legality of the manner in which the JPC approached SDC with a request and then reversed that request for possible amendment to a standing permission for the town flagpole [16/01167/FUL]. The Chair promised that further information about the alleged misconduct would be provided at a later point in time. Further concerns about JPC conduct were also raised by the same members of the public, the Clerk has been advised by an Officer of WALC that recording of these later comments is not required in these Minutes. Mrs Harfield asked again that a response from the Chair should be forthcoming and was told that this would be provided at some point later.

The Chair then asked if the Council would be agreeable to bringing forward Item 6.00 on the agenda as there were a number of members of the public who wished to comment, **all Councillors** agreed to the movement of the Item. Cllr Okey advised the Clerk that she had been contacted by Cllr Jennings for entry into the meeting.

Item 6.00 [Brought forward for the convenience of the public]

The Chair invited the Clerk to report to Council and the public gallery on the outcome of the poll. The Clerk referred all to the supporting document, posted on the JPC website which detailed the outcome, he then described briefly that the poll of opinions had resulted in 81% of those who responded in favour of Option 1, 18% in favour of Option 2 and 1% in favour of Option 3. He went on to explain that the return rate was 24% which was reasonable for this type of ballot. He confirmed that this result would be posted on the SDC Planning Portal, in support of the JPC objection already in place and in response to an amendment in the Planning request [20/00066/FUL] recently published by SDC. The Clerk took the opportunity to report on the second part of the ballot, that of a feedback request from residents about

how the services under the Covid crisis may be improved this coming winter, again he promised that this would be published for public scrutiny in due course. Three members of the public gave their thanks to the JPC for mounting the ballot. The Chair requested that all assembled revert to the agenda proper.

Item 1.00

Apologies

No apologies were received..

Item 2.00

Disclosure of Interest or Written Representations

Cllr E Field stated she had an interest in Item 14.00 and would not take part in the discussion or outcome of the item. Cllr Bainbridge sought to remind the JPC that she was a trustee of the HWMT and Memorial Hall, which may be part of the discussion under Item 8.

Item 3.00

Approval of Minutes of Last Ordinary Meeting 17th August 2020

The Chair stated that she had read the previous Minutes and found them accurate, asked if there were any other comments, there were none. **It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the above meeting were confirmed as a true record and could be signed by the Chair.** This motion was proposed by Cllr Easton, seconded by Cllr Okey and the minutes were approved by all members present barring Cllr R Hubbocks, who was not in attendance at the meeting on the 17th of August.

Item 4.00

District and County Councillor's Reports

Cllr Horner was not present, but his report is printed below.

County Councillor Report – September 2020

Government in Westminster is due to release a white paper of local government reform next month and I have reported previously the County Council will be debating the merits of creating unitary authorities in Warwickshire this month. A unitary authority is a single council that assumes all the duties of the County Council and the District Councils. Parish Councils would remain as they are. The choice before the Council seems to be boiling down to either one unitary council covering the whole of Warwickshire or two unitaries, one covering Stratford and Warwick Districts and one covering Rugby, Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire. When this matter was debated about 5 years ago the Conservative group voted for one unitary and Labour and Liberal Democrats voted for two unitaries. One unitary was estimated to save Warwickshire residents about £25 million a year and two unitaries saved around £13 million a year. At the time there was no appetite in Westminster to push through unitary government and so nothing happened. However given the impact of Covid19 on the Government finances we can expect more enthusiasm for cost saving and so must assume something will happen. Arden Division Clerks and Chairs will be meeting on October 7 and will be receiving a special briefing on the role and activities of the police Rural Crime unit, a regular update on the performance of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and a County officer will discuss how Parishes and the County can work together on roads maintenance, speeding and flood alleviation. During my time as County Councillor I have received many justified complaints about speeding and road safety, roads maintenance, flooding and anti-social behaviour. Last winter's weather and the more recent severe thunderstorms and Lockdown have highlighted shortcomings in the County's response to these issues. There are options that are open to the Parishes to address this. Parishes could fund their own dedicated team of private community officers to suppress anti-social behaviour and prosecute speedsters, and they could also hire contractors as "lengthsmen" to carry out roads and flood maintenance. The downside is that it would require everyone paying a higher Parish precept, but this is a choice we will have to make if we want to improve things. Paying a higher County precept would not guarantee the money would be spent in the Parish. John Horner Tel. 01926842068.

The Chair invited Cllr Jennings to speak, a transcript of his report follows:

District Councillor Report (01/09/2020) – Matt Jennings
District Council related matters

Local Govt Changes – There was talk of an imminent white paper being published by the Government on what could be the biggest re-organisation of local government in almost 50 years. It seems that every council are commissioning studies at the moment to look at options for the future of their areas (looking at single or dual unitary authorities) however it is unlikely to come out now till later next year now – especially with County elections being held in May. When it does eventually come out there will of course be an extensive period of public consultation across Warwickshire. I (and I am sure John) will keep you up to date as things develop.... should he be re-elected of course.. which I am sure he will...!

Visitor Centre – If you are so inclined the Stratford Visitor Information Centre is opened – Secure screens, one-way system, & social distancing measures have been introduced – all part of the ‘New Norm’

Elizabeth House is open to customers Monday to Friday 10am – 2pm – if you are going remember to take & wear a mask. The contact centre (via telephone) is of course still open during normal hours.

Annual Council – This was postponed back in May and finally took place last week – Chris Kettle (Tanworth-in-Arden) was elected Chairman.

SDC Covid Cases – In the last week in the District there has been 12 cases per 100,000. This has doubled from August. This works out to 2 to 3 new cases per day being identified. Daily hospital admissions have started to go up. In large conurbations outside the district these numbers have been going up very sharply including Solihull which has had a 534% rise – I don’t mean to be alarmist but the second wave is definitely coming so it certainly worth considering getting measures on the back burner so we are ready for all eventualities.

The Bad News – Stratford District has 21,200 on furlough and 5,500 on SEISS (Self Employment Income Support Scheme) – As a % of the working population this is the highest in the Coventry & Warwickshire LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) area – approx. 43% of the working population. The number of Unemployed currently stands at 3,065 unfortunately I foresee a huge rise in the number come October / November with the end of the furlough system.

Christmas Markets – Unfortunately due to Covid the Victorian Christmas markets has been cancelled. As I am sure you are all aware this is happening across most of the country.

Little bit of Good News - The Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) has agreed its priority list of infrastructure projects to receive Government funding as part of the *Getting Building Fund*. The Stratford Green Corridor Scheme is one of those (An area stretching from the Fisherman’s car park on the Warwick Road through the centre of Stratford) – this will revitalise derelict land and create a new tourist attraction for the region.

The First phase of Stratford’s new Canal Quarter development was given the go ahead by planning - the project will create jobs, enhance biodiversity and enable the canal to be celebrated through the creation of the canal side park.

Henley in the Press - It was good to the Henley Kitchen & Bakery in the press recently being praised for the way it adapted in the lockdown. Well done Lisa (Hamilton).

Venture House

Whilst their hotdesking and meeting facilities remain closed due to Covid-19 their 1st floor serviced offices remain accessible. The VH Team continue to work remotely supporting local businesses in the form of business advice and signposting, start-up support, plus online workshops and networking.

If you are considering starting a business, want help to grow your business or are experiencing challenges within your business, please get in touch with them.

Cllr Bainbridge asked Cllr Jennings, as the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, why emphasis was directed to towards improvement of Tourism, when reports that Stratford had recently witnessed a number of tourist-based businesses fail, this adding to the already high rate of unemployment [Highest in Warwickshire]. She further asked why the SDC could not diversify in other areas other than tourism. Cllr Jennings, felt that tourism was the answer to improving employment in the area. Cllr Bainbridge remarked that he was still promoting tourism as the route to more employment rather than other economic development plans, Cllr Jennings said that *economic development* was indeed part of his Portfolio and that he would be working hard to develop other strategies within his scope. Cllr Bainbridge reiterated that she hoped that he would do so and not rely entirely on tourism.

Item 5.00

Clerk's Report

The Clerk outlined the finance commitments, including creditors recently paid and those waiting approval for payment. **It was RESOLVED** to authorise payments listed and additionally an invoice from Came & Co, the JPC liability insurers, for a VAT free payment of £2,255.00. The Clerk reported that this invoice was the last of a three-year rolling contract and that insurance cover would be reviewed for 2021-2022 in September 2021. The motion covering ALL payments was proposed by Cllr Bainbridge, seconded by Cllr R Hubbocks, and carried unanimously. The Clerk also reported that SDC had returned comments to the NDP working party for amendment and that was now under consideration. The Chair asked that these commentaries be circulated to all officers. The Clerk further reported that the JPC and the public at large must be aware of a White Paper which will be published, probably early in 2021, which proposes major changes in local government and devolution of powers from large principal authorities to small parish councils. The Clerk said he would be liaising with both District and County Officers to make sure that the JPC were kept full updated with the progress of the document, he summarised by saying that his wish was that the JPC may win benefits such as local management of housekeeping which, so often, was not provided adequately enough by SDC and WCC.

Item 6.00 [Moved to first item]

Update on ballot launched by the JPC for the opinions of the electorate regarding WCG Sports Ground [Clerk]

Cllr Jennings who had joined the meeting after this item had been discussed, stated how disappointed he was to have not been part of that discussion. The Clerk reiterated on the salient points of the results. It transpired that Cllr Jennings had looked at the report on the JPC website and had taken the trouble to prepare his own take on the figures, he went on to say that due to the low turnout [24%] his interpretation, as he said, offered in a spirit of equality, the Clerk has chosen to print his take also in a spirit of equality, as follows:-

Cllr Jennings proposed the following:

This is quite an emotive subject to some. As it is non-political and about a local issue you should get a very high response rate. 1500 voting forms x 2 votes per form = 3000 possible votes yet only 600 responses were received which is disappointing. If my maths and % are correct you are saying :

| | |
|----------|-----|
| Option 1 | 486 |
| Option 2 | 108 |
| Option 3 | 6 |

By someone not voting they are showing that they do not have a view on it – so therefore 2406 have shown that they do not have an interest in the matter (option 3)

| | |
|----------|------|
| Option 1 | 486 |
| Option 2 | 108 |
| Option 3 | 2410 |

Is therefore a more accurate reflection of the figures :

This means that roughly

16 % believe in option 1

4 % believe in option 2

80% have no interest in this matter (option 3)

Statistics can be used in many wonderful and different ways !!!!

Cllr Jones, pointed out that 81% of the respondents voted in favour of Option 1, for good or ill, and that the Chair of the NDP Working Party, who had said at an earlier meeting that it was the view of a minority group can now be discounted and that the JPC can ask that the wording in the NDO reflect this result. Cllr Woods pointed out that it was not helpful to talk about the *whole number* of those approached but more those who *responded* in terms of percentages.

Item 7.00

Update on Survey on Covid support and other issues affecting the vulnerable in Beaudesert & Henley. [EF]

The Chair stated that the Clerk had covered most of what had been learned from the feedback, and asked Cllr Jones whether the project for a HELPLINE for Henley residents was in place. Cllr Jones said that he and Cllr Woods were due to test the system shortly.

Item 8.00

Discuss, update, and record the JPC representatives for each community organisation [EF]

Chair asked what progress had been made. Cllr R Hubbocks, reported that SCAN had no plans to re-convene, Cllr V Hubbocks made a similar comment regarding the Evergreens. Cllr Okey updated on the Heritage Centre, still not meeting with trustees so no plans to open any time soon.. HWMT via Bob Morgan, has asked for help from Cllr Okey in reviewing Sports Fields accounts once finalised and has requested that she assist with reviewing rental payments from clubs onsite to consider if the site is likely to remain viable in the future. Cllr Bainbridge said that she understood that she was the JPC representative as of the last AGM, so would seek clarification as to who would actually be in the role and that Bob Morgan would be approached for this purpose. The Clerk said that there was a preference for a non HWMT trustee to be the JPC representative, and she would gladly step down, but would of course remain as a trustee. Cllr Easton reported on the Library, she had been updated by Judith Lindley, her account is printed below:

The Library has done a detailed risk assessment for re-opening and it has been forwarded to the Methodist Church (our landlord) for comment/approval. A one-way traffic pattern has been worked out. A counter screen, face shields, distancing tape and hand sanitizer are on order with grant assistance from the Wootton Wawen Parish Council. Volunteers have been polled to see how many of them feel able to return.(around 20 at the moment) We expect to re-open gradually starting with 2 to 3 hours per day on 3 days. We will finalize the hours at our next Directors' meeting. Volunteer re-training will then be organized. Volunteers have been sent draft copies of safety procedures. Directors' meetings are being held outdoors and since the board has 5 members at the moment we can stay within the rule of six. Our 8th AGM on 10 August was limited to Directors, with all Friends of the Library being invited to vote on resolutions and election of Board Members by proxy. Once the screen is delivered and in place the Library will be deep cleaned again. A Legionella test has been conducted and is satisfactory. We go into the library at least once a week to maintain our responsibilities under our Liability Insurance. We look to re-open in early October; this depends on timely delivery of the screen and scheduling with our cleaning contractors. Meanwhile, I will relay your enquiry to the other Directors and the Company Secretary. Please relay our thanks to the Council.

Cllr Okey asked the Clerk of the letter regarding the second tranche had been sent out, he said not and that he planned to report on this under Item 5.00. {he wrongly referred to Item 6.00] **It was RESOLVED** that the content of the letter was acceptable, the motion to approve the letter was proposed by Cllr Okey, seconded by Cllr Easton, the motion carried unanimously. Cllr Bainbridge asked for the list to tabled, this follows. Cllr Jones reported on a meeting with the Court Leet, the scouts and the Christmas Lights committee. Cllr Okey reported that the latter were struggling with the funding and may ask the JPC for more funds but that she would suggest that the JPC work worth them to raise funds from local business. Cllr V Hubbocks said she would be meeting with the committee for lights the following week and would raise the subject with them. Chair asked that Cllr Hubbocks report back to the JPC. Cllr Bainbridge reported that the school was back in the Memorial Hall, along with two other users but casual bookings were not being accepted. She asked that the JPC if using the hall would observe the rules in place for Covid. Finally, Cllr Field reported on Neighbourhood Watch, saying that Annette Walker was retiring and offered JPC help in assisting them, she awaits a reply. Further, Henley in Bloom were grateful JPC were taking an interest and thanked the JPC for recent works carried out by the PayBack team, Henley in Bloom may approach the JPC next year for a grant. The WI said that they would very much like a plot at the allotments and Cllr Okey mentioned the community area which may lend itself to cultivation. Cllr R Hubbocks suggested that the WI visit the plot to see if they might be prepared to take it on. Cllr Okey will organise the viewing.

Item 9.00

Preparation of Grass Cutting Sub-Contracting Engagement Form for 2010-2021 [Clerk]

The Clerk said that the form [now part of Councillors' Handbook] for tenders was ready apart from a minor adjustment here and there and that Cllrs might now suggest suitable contractors so that formal enquiries can be sent out in readiness for the grass cutting contract to be placed in Spring. **It was RESOLVED** that the JPC approved the format and content of the form for use in obtaining competitive tenders, proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Easton, and carried unanimously.

Item 10.00

Play area inspections [EF]

Chair reported that THREE contractors had responded to the JPC enquiry for this important service, namely - Kompan, annual charge **£936.00** Morral annual charge **£1,200.00** Playforce - **£1,325.00**.

Cllr Jones said she had queried the need for an inspection quarterly and that the JPC insurers were satisfied with an annual inspection. He felt that the winter quarter where usage drops would be wasteful. Cllr V Hubbocks disagreed and was joined by Cllr Bainbridge, both felt that quarterly inspections were necessary. Cllr Woods said that she found it strange that the insurers were happy with just an annual inspection. There was a general exchange between all officers, Cllr Okey, felt strongly that once a year was sufficient so would abstain from voting on the motion. Cllr Okey reminded all that an inspection was now overdue, and that decision should be made. Chair agreed with Cllr Okey, most then agreed with a quarterly. **It was RESOLVED** that the JPC would go forward with Kompan, engaged on a quarterly basis. This motion was proposed by Cllr Kingsnorth, seconded by Cllr R Hubbocks, and carried in favour; Cllrs Okey & Jones abstained. The Clerk will go forward with engaging a contractor.

Item 11.00

Town Signage Report [AO]

Chair requested that Cllr Okey informed the JPC on progress. She reported that the notice board for the Mount would require planning permission, but the Medical Centre was an upgrade and the Clerk reported that he had approached SDC and that he had no objections provided that the JPC would continue to keep the area in good order. Cllr R Hubbocks asked if the Clerk would check again with the SDC, the Clerk suggested that the emails with SDC be circulated to all. The Clerk said he would seek permissions for the Beaudesert Lane site. Cllr Okey asked that the JPC proceed with the Medical Centre, Chair asked the Clerk to go back to SDC in order to be certain that we are proceeding properly and in accordance with conservation area regulations. Cllr V Hubbocks raised the issue about whether the outdoor gym should be included on the board as it had not been approved. Cllr Okey said she would change the signage. All agreed that all signage must be unequivocally approved by SDC. Further comments were raised by Cllr Bainbridge that the board for the Medical Centre was not Heritage Based, as it had shops and pubs listed. Cllr Okey agreed to change the title. New designs would be looked at again, the Clerk mentioned the proposed signage would be featured in the Henley Focus and maybe it would prudent to wait for public opinions. Cllr Okey asked if the invoice for artwork etc, can be settled, the Clerk asked that the invoice be circulated to all for approval.

Item 12.00

Play area for children and outdoor gym [AO]

Cllr Okey reported that certain of the apparatus required remedial repairs, said that she had a local man prepared to carry out repairs to any damaged equipment and that he would assess the work needed and carry out the works when children were not present. Further information on this issue will be provided by Cllr Okey.

Item 13.00

HANDBOOK V1 [Clerk]

The Clerk reported that he had spoken at length with the Internal Auditor and based on proposed changes to the financial regulations, in particular the power of delegation for spend given to the Clerk. The proposed amendment is as shown on the website as a supporting document, ref 'Item 5 FIN REGS' The Clerk asked that all officers now look at all aspects of the Handbook in readiness for adoption and resolution if appropriate at the October Parish Meeting.

Item 14.00

Website [TW]

The Chair asked not to be part of this discussion under interests rules. Cllr Woods referred to all the documents she has emailed to all. She reported that she and the Clerk had met with two candidates for the work, namely HTDL and Luke Field, that there was a desire to keep the work in Henley, she reported that she thought that two sites may be a practical approach, one formal and carrying JPC business, the other more relaxed and dealing more with visitor information. Cllr R Hubbocks said he thought separate sites were a good idea, the corporate site **should be made secure**. The Clerk said they had stressed the need for better security as the website was regularly hit with postings from Russian based messaging, which had to be deleted frequently. Discussion took place on the merits of both service providers, and that perhaps further briefing to both may be useful. All agreed that further discussions will be arranged by the Clerk and Cllr Woods and a further report be circulated. Cllr Woods asked that some urgency be placed on this procedure as she was concerned that we may fall into arrears on the compliancy regulations applying to websites. The Clerk will update all on his revised approach to both service providers. Cllr Woods, concluded that she needed a consensus on whether two websites would be planned. **It was RESOLVED** to go forward with TWO SEPARATE SITES, one corporate based, one commercially based. The motion was proposed by Cllr T Woods, seconded by Cllr V Hubbocks, and carried in favour.

Item 15.00

Royal British Legion Henley [RH]

Cllr R Hubbocks, reported that all branches of the RBL have been notified by letter [Parade Policy] as to where their responsibilities may lie during Covid restraints. This letter is on the website under 'Item 15, RBL'. Cllr Hubbocks confirmed that no parades would be allowed. The Chair reported that Rev John Ganjavi was planning a service which may take place in the open and the Clerk was asked to liaise with the Vicar and report back to the JPC. Cllr R Hubbocks asked that the Clerk act quickly as 11th November was not far away.

Item 16.00

Sub-Committee Reports – [JJ, AO, TW]

All reports can be found on the website. Cllr Woods asked that officers provide as much information about JPC activities so that this may be disseminated with the public through social media etc. Cllr Jones was working well with PayBack and was finding more and more work for them to get involved in around town. Cllr V Hubbocks reminded all that signage was needed on the Croft car park, the Clerk reported that this was covered in a feature in the October Focus to push matters along. The Clerk asked if members could engage in thought about these measures, Cllr Jones reminded all that a decision was reached by the JPC that charges would not be considered. The Clerk awaits supporting data from the officers.

Item 17.00

Councillor Training – Mr Bill Robinson – [Clerk]

The Clerk reported that he had spoken with Mr Robinson and that for the moment, the 30th was still viable. Cllr Bainbridge reminded all that they must adhere to the rules in place at the Memorial Hall. The Clerk was asked about the content of the training course. He explained that it was all about being a 'Good Councillor'. He went on to say that if he had not heard from SDC by the 25th of September, the JPC would need to co-opt two new officers.

Item 18.00

Items for information only.

Cllr R Hubbocks reported that the northern footbridge at Riverlands needed urgent repair works. Cllr Jones said that he was looking into the issues and would advise an action plan. Other matters included Cllr R Hubbocks mentioned he had contemplated resigning from the JPC for personal reasons but would not take any action on this until after the co-opting process was completed. Cllr V Hubbocks reported that the notice board near her address was in a poor state. This will be placed as an Item on the October meeting. The Chair thanked public and officers for their contributions.

Meeting ended at 9.45pm. Date of next meeting: Monday October 19th at 7.00pm

*** Omitted from draft copy of minutes, to be note on agenda 19.10.2020*