**HILTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 3rd November 2020**

**at 7pm by remote conferencing facility (Zoom)**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Justine McGuiness (Chairman) (JMcG) Catherine Langham (Vice- Chairman) (CL) Shulla Jaques (SJ) Clive Jones (CJ)) George Sotiriadis (GS) Marion Walbridge (MW)), Unitary Councillor Jill Haynes (JH)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** One member of the public, Mr. David Green, Clerk

1. **WELCOME & APOLOGIES:** Apologies were accepted from Cllr Northover. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Parish Council meeting.
2. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS:** The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting held on the 6th October 2020 were agreed and signed the Chairman.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** JMcG and GS declared a personal interest in item 4.1
4. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST PC MEETING/CLERK’S REPORT:**

**4.1 Water/Sewerage issues:**

The Chairman noted the detailed explanation of the mains connection process by David Martin of Wessex Water at the last PC meeting and will be posting video of this to the Parish Council website. CL believed that the next stage is to request Wessex Water to conduct a viability study. The Chairman suggested that this should involve Melcombe Bingham, Ansty and Hilton as a single entity. CJ suggested the Environment Agency (EA) should be asked to provide a viewpoint, though the Chairman noted that they had been invited to do so in the past but had not made anyone available. It was noted that requesting a viability study may reduce the possibility that the EA would take action for non-compliance with the General Binding Regulations. It was noted that infrastructure costs are likely to be between £650,000 and £ 700,000 per kilometer. The Clerk confirmed that the dwelling infrastructure charge which householders must meet is currently £251, although there is a potential abatement of this; the cost of pipework from a dwelling to its boundary must be also be met by the householder. Wessex Water will though provide up to 10 metres of ‘lateral’ pipework from a property boundary to the mains. CJ briefly explained the differences between anerobic, septic tanks, aerobic treatment plants and cesspools; air/oxygen is required to be delivered to the plant to comply. It was RESOLVED to seek further information from Wessex Water with reference to conducting a viability study.

**4.2 Play area consideration**

The question of providing play area facilities had been raised by a resident during the first Covid-19 lockdown. It was agreed that there the nature of the long villages and the lack of any available or suitable land were major obstacles to taking this idea forward; it was agreed to keep this subject on a ‘watching brief’.

**4.3 Phone box - update and next steps**

CL noted that some villages had used redundant phone boxes as ‘seed exchanges’. SJ suggested that the idea of using the box as a tourist information facility should be re-visited. It was agreed that CL would ask Paul Calver, who initially proposed the idea, if a design for racking or shelving could be provided.

**4.4 Website updates – agreed policy**

The Chairman noted that the Clerk had maintained the Parish Council business section of the website but enquired as to whether others could be involved in updating other parts of the site, perhaps someone not from the Parish Council. Ian Bryan offered to have a look at this with JMcG/GS.

1. **UNITARY COUNCILLORS REPORT:** A written report from JH had been received prior to the meeting. JH reported rising numbers of Covid-19 cases in Dorset in the previous week, up from around 260 to 1000 or so, mainly in East Dorset and in the Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch areas. JH was very grateful for the way that communities have been brought together during this period but noted the very serious consequences of the situation for this region in the tourism and hospitality sectors, and the general failure of ‘Test & Trace’ in containing the disease.

JH noted the immediate funding deficit of some £4 million, and the difficulty this has caused, given that a deficit budget cannot be legally set. The difficult financial situation having been compounded by Dorset having the second lowest central grant in the UK and the second highest Council tax as a consequence. The general overspend of £23 million can only be found by cutting jobs or services, not by increasing Council Tax.

CL enquired of the use that is made of car-parking charges, which have now been extended. JH explained that these charges are used to fund the cost of running the car-parks, but it was a difficult issue, particularly in seaside towns, where there was a fine balance between attracting visitors/supporting businesses, and maximising revenues. JH did say that Dorset Council is looking at introducing a ‘residents parking permit’ to encourage use of local town centres.

JH also noted that Dorset Council is engaging in a ‘total asset review’ with a view to rationalising its estate, including redundant land and buildings.

1. **OPEN FORUM:** There were no issues were raised.

**7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS, DECISIONS & ISSUES:**

The Clerk noted that the Dorset Council planning portal is still non-functional and that no consultee referrals are being made, a search has to be made for any potential applications.

There were no further updates or decisions concerning Hawkesfield or the Heathers to report.

1. **FINANCIAL REPORT:** 
   1. **Finance summary:** The Clerk reported that the current account bank balance stood at £ 8.913.55. the Nationwide balance at £ 5,085.15, and the general reserve at £ 10,970.20.
   2. **Retrospective payments authorised:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Amount** | **Supplier** | **Reason** |
| 13/10/2020 | £ 167.40 | HMRC | PAYE |
| 30/09/2020 | £ 227.20 | David Green | Pay October 2020 |

It was noted the Clerk had passed the CiLCA qualification to be Certified,

and a pay increase under the terms of his contract was APPROVED.

* 1. **Further Budget consideration**

It was agreed to defer any further discussion concerning the budget until the December meeting. CL will be submitting a grant application on behalf of the Church.

* 1. **Replacement Laptop**

The Clerk reported that he had received recommendations for suitable replacements but these were no longer available. He suggested that he should be permitted to find a suitable replacement in the region of £600-700 and arrange for this to be set-up. VAT would be recoverable in relation to the laptop purchase. This expenditure was APPROVED.

**9. HIGHWAYS & RIGHTS OF WAY:**

**9.1 Melcombe Bingham Bus Stop proposal – further consideration**

MW had spoken to the owner of the Village Green, but he has not committed to agreeing to this proposal. MW did note that few buses appear to be stopping there. There will be a Village Hall meeting where the matter will be discussed further. The Chairman commented that perhaps the need is not there and it was agreed to defer consideration of this matter to a later date.

**9.2 Note of Thanks to Cllr Jaques**

CL proposed that the thanks of the Parish Council to Cllr Jaques for her excellent work in repairing the Ansty Cross fingerpost be minuted.

**9.3 Ansty Cross mirror request**

GS has received an enquiry regarding the possibility of installing a mirror at Ansty Cross to make exiting the junction safer. It was agreed to seek the landowner’s permission.

1. **CORRESPONDENCE:**

**10.1 Census 2021 assistance request –** The Chairman had agreed to act as a liaison point for census assistance.

**10.2** **Clean Stream working group request** – it was suggested that Anna & Roy Davies may be able to assist with this request.

**10.3 Ash die-back –** it was noted that a landowner had agreed to look at the issue concerning some of his trees and this would be followed up. CJ noted that this was serious matter which should be given urgent attention and there were also reported instances of the condition of roadside ash trees on the road towards Combe Wood.

**10.4 Wildflower planting sites suggestion** – MW reported further planting of wildflowers at the Village Hall was not possible. CJ suggested that planting could take place along some public footpaths. It was agreed to compile a list of suitable sites and bring this to the next meeting.

**10.5 Village Bus Services** – only one expression of interest has been received by the Clerk

1. **ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA:** 
   1. Further Budget consideration
   2. Grant application
   3. Broadband/fibre registration numbers update
   4. Phone Box update
   5. Wildflower planting sites

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 20.30

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING –** Tuesday 1st December 2020, by Zoom

Signed ………………………….…...…...……(Chairman) Date ……….………………………