

Normandy Parish Council

Serving Our Community through working in Partnership

Minutes of a **MEETING** of **NORMANDY PARISH COUNCIL** held at **NORMANDY CRICKET CLUB** on **THURSDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2021** at 7.30 pm.

Members present Tony Coomber, Geoff Doven, Mark Galloway, Paul Howarth, Bob Hutton, Amy McLeod, Philippa Mitchell, Ben Pryke and Pat Tugwell

Non-members present David Bilbe (GBC Councillor), 7 members of the public

C-88 APOLOGIES

Cllr Keith Witham (SCC) sent apologies. The Locum Clerk was present via remote means to take the minutes.

C-89 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

C-90 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Council meetings held on 26 August were approved as a true record.

C-91 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

C-92 NORMANDY POND ASSOCIATION

The Chairman introduced Mrs Anne Adey from the Normandy Pond Association. She provided a brief history of the pond, including its achievement of a national award. She explained the trustee arrangements, and introduced the other trustees present at the meeting, and the changes currently being made. Three further trustees are required, and Members were invited to suggest any suitable persons. The current Treasurer of the Pond Association handed out information to Members regarding suggested changes to the trust deed and details of the finances.

The Chairman confirmed with Mrs Adey that the Pond Association were requesting the new constitution be considered and agreed and to advertise for new trustees.

C-93 REPORTS FROM OTHER AUTHORITIES

(a) Guildford Borough Council

Cllr David Bilbe reminded Members he was always happy to take any questions on any subject. He reported on the potential closure of the Tourist Information Centre in Guildford, questions being raised about the state of the council's finances particularly in relation to the sale of an asset, and the car free day held in Guildford on Sunday.

(b) Surrey County Council

Cllr Keith Witham sent apologies for the meeting but had sent a written report to the Locum Clerk which was circulated to Members in advance of the meeting, along with an update provided today on the Westwood Road works (appended to minutes).

C-94 BONFIRE AND FOREWORK EVENT

Cllr Pryke provided an update on progress with the event, including arrangements for the evening for the sale of food, drinks and flashing toys either directly by the council or via other stall holders paying a percentage of their profits to the council. The working group have a list of actions to complete over the coming weeks and it was agreed that further volunteers were needed to help on the night.

RESOLVED: Members agreed (1) to hold a split display with initial low noise display followed by a louder display after a short break and (2) to invite the WI to support the event as in previous years.

C-95 GUILDFORD BID FOR CITY STATUS

The Locum Clerk circulated in advance the request for support from the Leader of Guildford Borough Council.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to support the proposal and Cllr Coomber agreed to draft a reply.

C-96 NORMANDY BOWLS CLUB

The bowls club have requested permission to put a petanque court on the side of the building. The details of the request were forwarded to Members in advance of the meeting.

RESOLVED: Members agreed with the proposal subject to the expectation that facility being accessible to the public, it is adequately maintained and that the bowls club ensuring any planning permission required is obtained.

C-97 COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

The working group provided an update on progress with their various areas. A more comprehensive report will be delivered to the November council meeting, to include proposals for a communications plan, village survey, technology update and future plans for the website.

C-98 OTHER COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP UPDATES

(a) Estates & Facilities Committee

Cllr Mitchell reported that lots of follow up information has been circulated to Members, including issues with the state of the football pitch and future plans for facilities for junior teams. The fees for Manor Fruit Farm tenants have now been approved by the Finance & Governance Committee. Cllr McLeod is continuing to liaise with the contractors regarding the bins, and Cllr Coomber is awaiting responses from the final few allotment holders he has contacted.

(b) Finance & Governance Committee

Cllr Coomber reported that the committee were awaiting the financial reports to allow each committee to review its expenditure and make plans for next year's budget. The Locum Clerk confirmed the information had been collated and sent to RBS for adding to the software package and how would circulate as soon as complete.

(c) Human Resources Committee

This update will be included in agenda item C-102.

(d) Events Working Group

There were no further updates from the working group, with future events to be addressed after conclusion of the bonfire and firework event.

(e) Manor Fruit Farm Working Group

There were no further updates from the working group.

Cllr Galloway reported that he had asked the Locum Clerk to include a Highways update on future agendas. In the meantime, he requested Members view the information he has shared with them and provide any feedback.

C-99

TRAINING

(a) Legionella

The Locum Clerk had circulated in advance of the meeting details for an online training course at a cost of £30. Cllr Doven agreed to complete the course and the Locum Clerk will provide him with the full details of how to register.

(b) Playground inspections

Further to a previous offer from him, it was agreed that Cllr Mitchell will approach John Pick from Normandy Village Hall and check if he is still willing to complete the training, with the Parish Council covering the cost.

(c) Councillor Skills

The Locum Clerk had provided the link to the various online councillor training course available. He explained there was also the option of a face-to-face bespoke session for Normandy, which would be cheaper and provide more focussed attention on relevant questions for the council. It was agreed that a bespoke session on a Thursday evening would be most beneficial, and the Locum Clerk was asked to obtain some possible dates.

C-100

FINANCE

(a) Conclusion of Audit

The Locum Clerk had circulated in advance of the meeting the external auditor's report. This highlighted the previous issues identified by the internal auditor over the last few years and confirmed evidence and adequate explanations had been provided to show the corrective actions taken by the council. The notice of conclusion will be published on the council website, and the Locum Clerk was asked to provide a brief commentary summarising the findings and progress made.

(b) Invoices for payment

The Locum Clerk circulated in advance of the meeting a list of invoices due. Cllr Mitchell requested that the Locum Clerk ask Nurture Landscapes for a copy of their works schedule to accompany future invoices.

RESOLVED: Staff salary payments for September were approved, along with the payment schedule as below:

Payee	Purpose	Amount
CME Digital	Wordpress Maintenance – Aug & Sep 21	£216.00
Printways	The Villager	£361.00
Flashpoint Fireworks	Firework display	£1,600.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP	External audit fee	480.00
Nurture Landscapes	Grounds Maintenance - Aug 21	£1,082.22
Anna Beuden	Salary – Sep 21	£238.60
HMRC	PAYE Q2 2021	£179.00
Andy Beams	Locum Clerk – Sep 21 + reimburse dog bags	£2,296.64
HMRC	VAT Refund for Puttenham	£1,681.72

C-101

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

C-102

HR AND STAFFING

(a) Ongoing staffing matters

The Chairman updated Members with the actions taken which had been agreed at the previous meeting. She agreed to contact the council's HR advisors to seek clarity on the timescales for any further action to be taken.

(b) Advertised vacancies

The Chairman confirmed that the interview panel of Cllrs Hutton, McLeod and Tugwell were interviewing one candidate for each position on 6 October. Their recommendations as to any offer of employment will be circulated to all councillors via email, with these then confirmed at the next council meeting.

C-103

CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

A land management issue near Normandy Pond was raised, and Members had been provided with some history to the events by Cllr Mitchell, who had trawled through the paper records and email files. After discussion, it was agreed to defer to the Estates & Facilities Committee to come up with a management plan for the area, and to ensure that any future activities are carried out in conformity with the plan.

C-104

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND/OR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

Cllr Coomber asked the Chairman for feedback following her meeting with other local councils. She reported that there had been a lengthy discussion regarding the planned extension of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and provided details of the handyman employment undertaken by Worplesdon Parish Council, where the Clerk has offered to work closely with the new Clerk once appointed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.07 pm.

1. SCC local community grants ...

As your County Councillor, I can sponsor grants for local projects, and so I am always keen to hear about potential local projects.

Applications are now open for groups that have received funding before. The maximum is usually £250.

So, if you are involved in a local group which could do with financial help, please email me. The project will usually be for either equipment, or a "one off" expense, it can't normally be for routine running costs. PLEASE ASK ME! Email: keithwitham1@hotmail.co.uk Let me know what the project is, and £how much.

2. Bus services ... your chance to have a say ...

Surrey County Council wants your views on how bus services can be made better. Please look at this BEFORE 10TH SEPTEMBER!

A new National Bus Strategy - Bus Back Better - was published by the Government. As part of this, SCC needs to set out the service improvements we would like to see here in Surrey and wants to know what you think.

Please let SCC know what is important to you. To complete the survey, and for more information: <https://orlo.uk/5zcD0>

3. More superfast broadband for Surrey on the way ...

Surrey is comparatively well-served by Superfast broadband, with high download speeds in over 98% of premises in Surrey. This is thanks, in part, to Surrey County Council (SCC)'s Superfast Surrey Programme which provided upgrades to more than 84,000 premises between September 2012 and December 2020.

But broadband and mobile technologies have continued to improve. And the impact of the Covid19 pandemic has highlighted the need for faster speeds, particularly for the 2%. Surrey wants to support the roll out of new, faster gigabit-capable broadband. So, SCC has established a Digital Infrastructure Steering Group to monitor provision across the County and to take forward initiatives to accelerate the rollout of digital infrastructure.

More than 100,000 more homes and businesses across rural parts of Surrey are set to be upgraded to lightning-fast gigabit broadband as part of the government's Project Gigabit programme – bringing a boost to people in the many villages around Guildford which will help create jobs, power up businesses and allow everyone access to vital services at lightning-fast speed as part of the Government's mission to build back better from. The procurement for this work should start in August 2022. For more information: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/business-and-consumers/digital-infrastructure-coverage-in-surrey>

Normandy Gigabit Project

I recently met Amos Ankrah, who is a resident in Normandy and is coordinating further high speed broadband in Normandy for those that were not included in the core scheme.

With the Core Project now up and running there is a realisation that there are properties in Normandy that are connected to other phone boxes which are not a part of the Core Scheme. Some of these properties also receive poor internet which is also eligible for the voucher scheme. Amos is working with the parish council and others to work out how to gather the information of those that would be interested in the upgrade in these areas as well as getting project sponsors in the area who can go to neighbours to talk about the project and register interest. The easiest way to find out whether you qualify or not is to see if you have access to Virgin Media. If you can access Virgin for your internet – you do not qualify. If you cannot access Virgin Media and lie outside of the Core Scheme (a list of addresses can be found here:

http://www.thetechnologyguru.co.uk/normandy_gigabit_broadband_project.html?post_id=34015) Amos already has a list of residents that were interested that fall outside of the core scheme and will ensure are included in Phase 2. Should you not have already done so please get in contact by emailing him at amos@thetechnologyguru.co.uk or please leave a comment on <http://thetechnologyguru.co.uk>

4. Climate change SURREY ACTION ...

Some people talk a lot about the need to tackle Climate Change. But I think what matters is ACTION, not just promises or talk. So, you may be interested to know:

Surrey County Council is committed to working with its partners and local communities so that together we can build on our progress so far and successfully reach Net Zero.

So far, we have:

- Committed £48million - ensuring all Surrey buses are ultra-low/ zero emission vehicles
- Investing over £6million in Active Travel measures
- Converting Surrey's 89,000 streetlights into LEDs (see separate item)

- Developed our draft Surrey Transport Plan - have your say here - <https://bit.ly/3A0mAhj>
- Obtained £14million of government funding to help low income households improve the energy efficiency of their home

Find out more here <https://bit.ly/2VrBIFH>

5. Changing to LED's ...

As referred to above, Surrey County Council is committed to tackling the Climate Emergency and have set out an ambitious plan to be a net-zero county by 2050.

One of the ways SCC is doing this is by changing the 89,000 streetlights into LEDs which is predicted to use 65% less energy and save £2 million every year! We're nearly halfway there with over 37, 500 now converted to energy-efficient LED.

The website has lots of tips and advice about what you can do to reduce your carbon footprint along with information about climate change: <https://orlo.uk/bvRmE>

6. Surrey's response to the Afghan refugees ...

Given the scenes on our televisions of desperate Afghans seeking to leave their country, there is a renewed focus on what Britain is doing to help refugees, asylum seekers and others. This has focused on repatriating British citizens who were in Afghanistan and arranging visas and flights for those Afghans who were working for the British Forces together with their families.

But this is not new. I have referred in previous e-newsletters to the legal responsibilities placed on Councils regarding unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. As at 18th August, Surrey County Council was looking after 88 children under eighteen who are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (in total, not all from Afghanistan).

Surrey also has a care leaving service to 313 children who were previously asylum-seeking children which, legally, SCC must offer to young people up to the age of 25.

Surrey County Council Children's Social Services currently have 73 children and young people whose country of origin is Afghanistan.

The 11 Borough Councils in Surrey are the local housing authorities (not SCC) and have been asked how they can help regarding accommodation. At the time of writing, I'm aware that Guildford Borough Council are in discussion with the Ministry of Defence. For more information about Surrey's response: <https://news.surreycc.gov.uk/2021/08/27/afghan-refugees-in-surrey/>

The origins of the recent Afghanistan campaigns in which the British military participated alongside the USA and others, were of course following the 2001 terrorist attacks on the New York twin towers on "9/11". And in the light of recent events, western countries will need to redouble their defences against terrorism.

7. Surrey Police Commissioner criticises Stonewall ...

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey, Lisa Townsend, has made a blistering attack on Stonewall for promoting 'dangerous transgender ideology that threatens the safety of our women and girls'.

Good for her. It's about time "political correctness" was challenged. I thought you may like to see this link to this report in the Daily Mail.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9915637/New-Surrey-Police-Commissioner-attacks-Stonewall-promoting-dangerous-transgender-ideology.html>

To find out more about the Office of the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner and contact details see: <https://www.surrey-pcc.gov.uk/contact/>

8. Update re Westwood Lane

I updated the Parish Council last week regarding Westwood Lane footpaths. I've been advised by Surrey Highways that the proposed footpath resurfacing of most of the rural section of Westwood Lane has been deferred from 2021-22 to 2022-23. Whilst that might not be welcome, the good news is that Highways have said they should be able to renew the residential footpaths of Westwood Lane (eg from the junction of Flexford Road/Green Lane East to the railway bridge) IN ADDITION TO most of the rural stretch. In reality the end of 2021-22 is March 2022, and the start of 2022-23 is April 2022. I have asked that both set of works be undertaken as early as possible in 2022. With regard to the condition of the road surface, Highways are also surveying about 200 roads for the next phase of road resurfacing, including Westwood Lane.

Further update on Westwood Lane received 30 September:

The works are scheduled to start on 12/10/21. Sometimes our plans have to change, often due to bad weather or problems on other works in the same programme which can have a knock on effect. If anything changes with the details of these works, we will let you know.

** Any opinions contained within the report are those of Cllr Witham and not of Normandy Parish Council*