

THE IVERS PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OPEN SPACES AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29th MAY 2024 AT 7.00PM AT THE HUB, PARISH COUNCIL OFFICES, 45B, HIGH STREET, IVER.

Present: Cllrs Peter Kinchin (Chair), Julie Cook, Peter Stanhope, Adam Burke, Ciarán Beary, Kevin Brown, John Rossetti and Sarah Hutchins.

Also in attendance: Jeremy Day, Deputy Clerk – Open Spaces & Highways.
There was 1 member of the public present. Cllr Graham Young was also present.

016/24 **ELECTION OF CHAIR OF THE OPEN SPACES & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE**

The Chair called for nominations for Chair of the Committee. Cllr Peter Kinchin was nominated by Cllr Ciarán Beary and seconded by Cllr Adam Burke. Cllr Kevin Brown was nominated by Cllr Peter Stanhope and seconded by Cllr Julie Cook.

A named vote was called for.

A vote took place for Cllr Peter Kinchin to be Chair.

In favour: Cllrs Kinchin, Burke, Hutchins & Beary.

Against: Cllrs Brown, Cook, Rossetti & Stanhope.

In the event of a tied vote, the current Chair, Cllr Peter Kinchin exercised his right to a casting vote and voted in favour of himself.

Cllr Peter Kinchin was elected Chair of the Committee for 2024/25.

017/24 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR OF THE OPEN SPACES & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE**

The Chair called for nominations for Vice Chair of the Committee. Cllr Sarah Hutchins was nominated by Cllr Peter Kinchin and seconded by Cllr Ciarán Beary. Cllr John Rossetti was nominated by Cllr Peter Stanhope and seconded by Cllr Julie Cook.

A named vote was called for.

A vote took place for Cllr Sarah Hutchins to be Vice Chair.

In favour: Cllrs Kinchin, Hutchins & Beary.

A vote took place for Cllr John Rossetti to be Vice Chair.

In favour: Cllrs Burke, Rossetti, Cook, Brown & Stanhope.

Cllr John Rossetti was elected Vice Chair of the Committee for 2024/25.

018/24 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Wendy Matthews.

019/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

020/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Standing Orders were suspended at 7.05pm

A member of the public raised an issue that was not related to any matter on the Agenda and was subsequently advised to bring to the attention of the next Full Council meeting.

Standing Orders were reinstated at 7.07pm

021/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27th MARCH 2024

The minutes of the meeting on the 27th March 2024 which had been received at the Full Council meeting on 15th April 2024 were agreed. It was:

Resolved that the minutes were a true record of that meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chair and put in the minute book.

022/24 PLAY AREA INSPECTIONS

The Deputy Clerk reported that the Annual Play Area Inspections had been carried out during May and the reports received. Initial analysis indicated that there were no major concerns other than those the Committee was aware of and that the benefit of having the Deputy Clerk and Deputy Head Groundsman accredited as RPPI Operational Inspectors was an advantage. The Deputy Clerk agreed to producing an action plan to share and then put a summary of the reports on the OS&H SharePoint before the next Committee meeting.

023/24 INAPPROPRIATE USE OF IVER HEATH RECREATION GROUND

The Deputy Clerk presented an issue that has occurred a number of times at Iver Heath Recreation Ground regarding horse and carts using the ground which has caused minor damage to the grass. It is suspected that the carts have been lifted over the existing low level wooden bollards. A question was raised as to whether a bye-law was in place to prevent this and the Deputy Clerk took the action to investigate this. The Deputy Clerk mentioned that a local Parish Council had higher bollards than those at both the Ivers Recreation Grounds and would take a look at these and look at the costs. Both these items to be brought back to the next Committee meeting.

024/24 TREE WORKS AT COTTAGE IN THE WOODS PATH (IVER HEATH) AND AREA OUTSIDE 45B, HIGH STREET

The report of the Deputy Clerk was received concerning tree work required at these two locations and it was Agreed that the Deputy clerk seek three quotes for the work to be brought to the next meeting. The Deputy Clerk made a recommendation to the Committee that following a decision to carry out tree works which will mean a significant portion of the budget for 24/25 will have been spent and therefore consideration will be needed to vire money to this budget line in consultation with the Full Council and the Responsible Finance Officer.

025/24

FINANCIAL COMPARISON REPORT

The Financial Comparison Report to 22nd May 2024 was received.

026/24

DEPUTY CLERK UPDATE

The verbal report from the Deputy Clerk was received which included the following items:

- The Deputy Clerk reported that his operational focus was on day-to-day management, in conjunction with the Deputy Head Groundsman to ensure Parish Council Open Spaces are maintained to their current high standards and that Council equipment is fully in use and spares required are in stock.
- The Spraying Programme for Oak Procession Moth is being carried out and is underway to be completed in June.
- The form for the final 25% of the Charging Point grant has been submitted.
- Alternative quotes are being sought for a cheaper quote for the stress testing for the TSID. Cllr Cook has assisted greatly with identifying the priority locations.
- A new bench has been installed at the top of Stonecroft Avenue in Iver Village and this has been well received by the community.
- The Deputy Clerk will bring this forward to July with further ideas concerning lower level and different types of flowers / wildflowers. It was reported that the verge containing a large amount of wildflowers at the top of Colne Orchard was cut by Bucks Council.
- The Deputy Clerk is progressing further the ideas from the Recreation Ground Usage survey and will bring forward to the July meeting.
- The Tree work at St Leonard's Mound is completed and feedback received has been very positive. There is some remedial work to be carried out to the steps which will be done by the Grounds Maintenance Team as priorities allow. Cllr Matthews had reported that the community were very keen to be help with the regeneration of the area. Cllr Young added some views concerning the future usage and that the residents' Association were talking to the local nursery and further ideas will be progressed from that discussion.
- The Deputy Clerk drew the Committee to the attention that a local Football club (adult club) had made an approach to the Council regarding the use of Iver Heath Recreation Ground pitches regularly. Discussions are on-going.

027/24

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Thanks to the Deputy Clerk and the Grounds Team for the continued work in making sure Parish Council Open Spaces are maintained to a high standard.
- A welcome to the committee and a thanks for their continued support in delivering for our community.

028/24

WEBSITE/PRESS RELEASES

To continue to ensure the website reflects progress on current activities that are underway.

029/24

RIVER COLNE, SLOUGH ROAD – JSM LTD REQUEST FOR DISCHARGE OF WATER ON PARISH COUNCIL LAND

The Chair confirmed that 2 meetings had taken place with JSM (A presentation on the 27th March ahead of the Committee meeting & a Teams meeting on 20th May) and at the last meeting of the committee it was agreed that a decision would be made at this meeting.

After a discussion which included the following points, a decision was taken to defer taking a decision at the meeting until further information was received and an extraordinary meeting of the committee be called.

- Reference was made to the legal document and it was noted that the document will be reviewed by a Solicitor at the expense of JSM.
- It was confirmed that use of the Siltbuster was part of the decision to allow this activity to go ahead. It was further pointed out that if the Parish Council doesn't agree to the overall activity taking place on Parish Council land that JSM are allowed to locate the Siltbuster on this piece of land.
- There was a discussion regarding the impact on the trees on that piece of land. It was pointed out that a request for information about this was asked for but not yet received.
- The point that further clarification can be sought once a decision has been made.
- With reference to trees, it was suggested that the Parish Council should be aware of the impact on trees. This was agreed.
- Aspects of the Method Statement regarding vegetation was discussed and queries regarding the measurement distances along with the validity of the information provided which was dated July 2018. A view was shared that the documentation was highly inadequate.
- It was stated that the Parish Council had the intention to ensure that the ecology was protected.
- It was suggested that clarity was still required concerning the route of the cable. An opportunity exists to seek clarity of this through the provision of the legal documentation and detail is to be explicitly clear on this.
- Further ecology issues from the documentation concerning Otters & Water voles and their habitat. Great Crested Newts are known to inhabit the area of the Iver Environment Centre also, but the ecology study does not state this. Information concerning the protection of the Great Crested Newt was shared by a member of the committee. The legal position of the Parish Council to agree to this activity relating to the legal protection was questioned. A view was shared that the report was inadequate, and no documents had been received directly from the Environment Agency. The view was that the Parish Council have not seen what permissions of licences have been given and granted.
- A further comment regarding the out-of-date documentation was highlighted by a member of the Committee.
- The Officer present made an Officers Recommendation that after 2 previous opportunities to ask questions and there were still outstanding issues from those that members of the committee should consider giving a decision that the Parish Council were not giving permission for this activity to go ahead on Parish Council land pointing out that a lot of Officer time had been taken up with this. A member of the committee stated that the position may be that the Parish Council isn't refusing the grant permission more that more clarity is needed. The Officer suggested

that another Teams meeting was a possibility but generally this was not seen as a favourable way forward. It was however confirmed that receiving answers was imperative to the decision being made.

- A view was shared that the Parish Council should not grant the request until further clarity was sought.
- The Chair of the committee suggested that a list of queries outstanding is agreed and that these are given to JSM to provide clarity. This suggestion was challenged with concerns of the legality of entering Parish Council land without permission being granted.
- A motion was raised that the Parish Council goes back to contractor and require certain documentation to be provided within 14 days and from there a decision can be made and if the documentation is not provided that the decision of the Parish Council is not to grant permission. It was proposed that clarification around the Great Crested Newt & Otter habitation was vital, Environmental Agency reports, a draft Easement documentation, a tree and Vegetation Plan, draft licences around the use of the Silter on Parish Council land, a commitment that the Parish Councils legal costs be covered and an accurate plan of the cable to be provided. The Officer pointed out that a Motion was tabled and a vote on it was required at that point. The motion was seconded and after a vote it was **RESOLVED** to move that Motion as a decision of the Committee.
- A suggestion by the Chair and supported by Committee members was that after the 14-day period given to obtain this information an extraordinary meeting was called to make a decision based on the further information provided. The Officer present recommended that the meeting be called as soon as possible to ensure the statutory notice period was given and the resource of Officers available to be present. If called, the summons required attendance and the meeting take place if quorate and a decision taken based on the situation at the time. A view by the Officer present was that the contractor may have an alternative plan if the decision of the Parish Council is not to grant permission.
- The Officer present clarified the decision and position.
- The matter concerning permission for the Siltbuster to be on Parish Council land was raised. After clarification of the process involved in making decision on this aspect of the activity was agreed to defer this too. A point was raised and a consensus given that the Parish Council needs to also understand if any disturbance of wildlife will take place with the Siltbuster being in place.
- The Officer recommended that as the Locum Clerk had been involved and the Deputy Clerk didn't have a great level of expertise and a lot of Officer resource had been taken up in this matter that he discussed this with her once she was supporting this Parish Council again from week commencing 3rd June. The Chair agreed this was a good way forward.

The Deputy Clerk stated that there was no need to transact item 16 as it was only relevant if a decision had been taken under point d) of item 14 and therefore there was no need to transact item 15 to exclude the press and public.

A recommendation was made by a Committee Member that the Agenda item at 14 d) be modified to allow a discussion at item 16 to take place. The Officer gave advice that the Agenda had been properly & legally published

and therefore the meeting needed to transact the business as per the Agenda but a further discussion outside of a Council meeting could take place but that no decisions could be taken outside of a properly brought Council or committee meeting.

030/24

CLOSE OF MEETING

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.05pm

Signed Chairman

Date: