

Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council, on Wednesday 11th September 2019, held at Tidmarsh Village Hall.

Present:

Councillors Jon Chishick, Sima Elliot, Andrew Madden, Colin Pawson, Jonathan Pearson (chairman) and Steve Webb.

In attendance:

Jennie Currie (Clerk)
District Councillor Gareth Hurley
0 members of the public

19/33 Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

19/34 Declarations of Members' Interests for this meeting

No declarations of interests were received.

19/35 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED that subject to item 19/37ii be amended to St James' Close, that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24th July 2019 were a true and accurate record and were signed by the chairman.

19/36 Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 14th August 2019 be adopted.

19/37 Matters arising from the minutes

Members noted that the new litter bin had been delivered. Cllr Pawson offered to investigate getting the bin installed.

Cllr Pearson informed Members that new lines had been painted for a no loading area at the Lamborghini garage. Cllr Hurley added that photographic evidence of inconsiderate parking needed to be submitted to West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) to enable Officers to take action. There is a wider issue of parking in Pangbourne.

19/38 Reports

i. District Councillor's report

District Councillor Gareth Hurley presented a verbal report including:

- Parking issues in Pangbourne, WBDC will be carrying out a survey of motorists.
- WBDC's Chief Executive Officer will be visiting the ward and questions can be agreed in advance.
- Cllr Lynne Doherty appointment as the new Leader of WBDC.
- PC Harper's death whilst on duty at Sulhamstead.
- WBDC's arrangements for the UK leaving the European Union.
- Opportunity for District Councillors to submit a Member's Bid for match funding of capital projects.
- WBDC will be debating the Heathrow expansion plans on Friday 13th September.



19/38 Reports

i. District Councillor's report continued

- Series of complaints regarding the Lloyds Chemist in Pangbourne and requested feedback.
- Reminder that the garden waste collection service needs to be renewed and the District-Parish Conference would be held on 26th October 2019.

Members then raised the following items:

- The footpath from Tidmarsh to Pangbourne needs the vegetation cutting back and would benefit from being widened. The Parish Plan suggested a shared footway. It would also benefit when a crossing where the footway swaps from one side of the road to the other. – Cllr Hurley suggested this could be raised with the CEO.
- There is no bus service in Tidmarsh. – Cllr Hurley explained that the 143 Pangbourne service was funded by the parishes it serves.
- Neither the Clerk or Members had received advance notice of Gigaclear's roadworks, should they be informed – the Highways team were meant to be passing on this information.
- Does WBDC kept a proportion of Business Rates. – Cllr Hurley would report back.
- Residents are concerned that private water supplies are drying up. – Cllr Hurley would read Cllr Madden's report.
- Concerns raised about the Sulham Lane/Hill blind spot on T-junction. Could the sight lines be improved or change the give way priority. Also concerns raised about potential increase usage of Nunhide Lane (Sulham Estate private road), especially if the proposed residential development north of IKEA goes ahead.

ii. Parish Councillors' reports

Cllr Madden reported that a parishioner was concerned about how information received by the Parish Council is passed on. The Chairman would write to the resident to reassure her. The matter would be discussed at a future meeting.

Cllr Chishick would be attending the NAG meeting on 2nd October 2019.

iii. Clerk's report

There were ongoing issues with the bank account and Cllr Pawson's signature not matching what was held on record. The Clerk would investigate dual authorisation online banking to enable the Council to make electronic payments. The Clerk would send out a reminder of items for the agenda of the forthcoming meeting.

19/39 Highways and footpaths

i. VAS equipment

Cllr Pearson had looked at the VAS equipment and noted that there were multiple faults. Cllr Pearson would confirm with WBDC that the Parish Council owned the equipment.

RESOLVED that a budget of £200 would be allocated for repairs to the VAS equipment.

ii. New kissing gates

The gates had not been delivered. The Clerk would chase the supplier.

iii. Salt/grit bin levels

Cllr Pawson reported that the bin on Tidmarsh Lane needed to be filled. This is the only bin in the parish.

RESOLVED that the bin would be refilled by WBDC and the Parish Council would be charged.

iv. Mill Lane

Cllr Elliot reported that the vegetation on Mill Lane needed to be cut back around the signs near Keeper's Cottage. Cllr Elliot would report this to WBDC.



19/40 Environmental Matters

Sulham Brook water level issues, Weed growth, Pang Valley Flood Forum and Thames Water
Cllr Madden had been approached by a number of residents and having investigated the matter circulated a report at the meeting which is attached to the minutes as appendix A.

Cllr Madden would continue to liaise with Kay Lacey and gather more information regarding organising a working party to tackle the weed clearance.

Cllr Elliot had approached the new residents at the home of the former Flood Warden and would visit them again.

19/41 Millennium Green

i. Fortnightly checks report

The recent checks had highlighted a number of maintenance issues. It was noted that the container should not be locked as the equipment inside should be freely available for parishioners. Cllr Pearson requested details of the manufacturer of the basket swing to enable him to replace the missing part, the Clerk would check the financial records for the information. Cllr Elliot would speak to Brian Murby (grass cutting contractor) and ask if he could undertake any of the hedging and minor tree works, alternatively the Clerk would contact other contractors.

ii. Update on new bin

The bin had been delivered. Cllr Pawson would investigate getting it installed by the contractor who installed the bin by the bus shelter.

19/42 Future meetings

i. Priorities for 2019-20

To be deferred to the next meeting.

ii. Ideas for increased public engagement at the Parish Assembly

To be deferred to the next meeting.

19/43 Presentation gift for Mike Broun

Cllr Madden had sourced the engraved tankard. Cllr Pawson would arrange the date, time and location of the presentation, which would include former Councillor John Haggerty.

19/44 Financial matters

i. Approval of payments

RESOLVED that the following payments be authorised:

Pre-agreed payments for September 2019			
Payee	Description	Total amount	VAT
Clerk	July Home office allowance (standing order)	25.00	0.00
Clerk	July Salary (standing order)	223.02	0.00
Clerk	August Home office allowance (standing order)	25.00	0.00
Clerk	August Salary (standing order)	223.02	0.00
Proposed payments			
Payee	Description	Total amount	VAT
Clerk	Stationery, postage and hall hire	30.69	0.00
J Butler	Telephone box repairs	37.96	6.32
A Madden	Presentation gift reimbursement	41.75	6.96
Total		£606.44	



Close of meeting

It was noted that the next ordinary meeting of the Council would be held at 8pm, on Wednesday 13th November 2019. The Planning Committee would be meeting on Wednesday 9th October and 13th November 2019 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10.32pm.

Signed: J. C. K. Date: 8/1/2020

[Handwritten signature]

Update for Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council

September 2019

1 Water Supply issues and the Sulham Brook

[REDACTED] (The Coach House, Sulham Lane) raised concerns regarding excessive weed growth in the river and the fact that the Brook is dry near her property which she has never previously seen. She was concerned that her well might be at risk of running out of water.

Subsequently Joyce Ayerst (Rectory Lodge) reported that her private well had dried up. Concern was raised that it was due to Thames Water taking excessive amounts of water from their boreholes in Pangbourne. Kay Lacey (Chair Pang Valley Flood Forum[PVFF] and Pangbourne Flood warden) contacted Thames Water and a member of the Groundwater team came and visited both [REDACTED] on Friday afternoon. It was confirmed that although the Brook is very low, and groundwater levels are low everywhere at the moment, that the lack of water at the Rectory was that property only and was a problem with their well. [REDACTED] is now having a new well installed. The level of the groundwater at the Coach House was measured and was confirmed as sufficient so as not to cause concern.

Note: Thames Water used to take regular groundwater readings at the well of the Coach House. The TW engineer is going to look up the previous readings and let us know how it compares to the present.

Note: The Thames catchment has had below average rainfall for 8 of the last 12 months and groundwater levels are low across the catchment. Thames Water do have to reduce their abstraction rates at Pangbourne when river levels fall below a certain point. That trigger point has recently been reached and abstraction has been reduced. However, Thames were pumping less from their boreholes even before the constraint kicked in in anticipation of this.

The PVFF have also recently noticed that there was an unusual pattern showing on the EA's Sulham Brook gauge with daily peaks and troughs even with no rainfall – www.floodalleviation.uk (click on dashboard. The Sulham Brook gauge data is in purple). It would appear that something or someone may be abstracting upstream of the gauge in sufficient quantity to affect the flow in the stream and cause the fluctuations in level as shown on the graph. It has been confirmed that the peaks and troughs do not correlate with Thames Waters' pumping timetable so the PVFF have asked the EA to investigate further. There is still flow in the Brook at the EA gauge but it dries up completely some 60 yds downstream of that point.



2 Weed Growth

Kay Lacey has been in contact with the EA to try and arrange for them to come out and have a look at the excessive weed growth near the Coach House, Rectory Lodge and around the Mill area. A visit from Jamey Street, the local ops manager looks to be forthcoming around the end of Sept – we are waiting to get a final date from him.

However – it is unlikely that the EA will have the time, manpower or finances to actually do additional weed clearance. Kay has suggested that all parishes that are in the PVFF form their own work parties (or “dredge gangs” as the Stanford Dingley one is known as) and get a group of local residents together to tackle the weed. Kay and Stephen Billyeald (also a Pangbourne Flood warden) have offered to come and help out although both are away until the end of September. It is suggested that the “Gang” meets once or twice a year and does a morning of weed clearing before repairing to the pub for refreshments – thereby making it a more social event. At the moment George Davidson does the weed clearing on his own, but he has now moved back to Scotland so this is not a practical solution going forwards. Safe working practice would also require that there are always at least two people to work in or near water.

3 Pang Valley Flood Forum

The PVFF’s Defra funded Natural Flood Management Project continues to be rolled out. The first set of around 40 “leaky dams” has been installed on the River Bourne, thanks to the support of the Englefield Estate. Reading University are working as a project partner and have put monitoring equipment in as well. Work is now ongoing with the second landowner to plan where to put the next batch of leaky dams. The idea behind this project is to try and reduce the risk of flooding by mimicking nature with large woody logs in the stream. The log dams are “leaky” so that normal flows pass under or through very easily and it is just the excessively high rainfall events where the dams work to “slow the flow” of the water as it is travelling down the watercourse. There is a video of a BBC South Today news story showing what is being done on the PVFF website www.floodalleviation.uk - click on videos.

4 Thames Water

Thames Water are going to be undertaking some improvement work to the Sulham Brook catchment as part of their commitments under the Water Industry National Environment Programme. They will using the contractor Five Rivers and should be starting late September or early October. The work will include improvements to the cattle crossing area on Sulham Estates land at the upstream end of the Brook, plus removal of a small redundant weir downstream of the Sewage Treatment works in Pangbourne and installing some riffles and berms in the stream between the A329 and the railway culvert at Pangbourne to improve the flow for fish.