

Minutes – draft, Revision 1

Ampfield Annual Parish Assembly: Monday 20 May 2024

Held in Ampfield Village Hall, 7:30pm to 8:50pm

Present

Members of Ampfield Parish Council:

Chairman Bryan Nanson – Chairing the Meeting
Vice Chairman Chris Ling
Cllr Julian Jones
Cllr Graham Roads
Cllr Julie Trotter

Others:

Electors of the parish - 11
Cllr Alan Dowden (Hampshire County Council)
Cllr Sally Yalden (Test Valley Borough Council)
Clerk to Ampfield Parish Council Kate Orange

- 1 (24) Chairman of Ampfield Parish Council, Cllr Bryan Nanson, opened the Meeting and welcomed the electors and other attendees.

Apologies

- 2 (24) Apologies were received from Louisa Rice of Test Valley Borough Council, Cllr Martin Hatley, Cllr Kate MacCallum, Cllr Jason Reeves.
3 (24) It was noted that this was the first Annual Parish Assembly which Cllr Martin Hatley had missed since 1980.

Previous Minutes

- 4 (24) The Meeting agreed the Minutes of 22 May 2023, and a copy was signed by the Chairman.

Borough Councillor's Report

- 5 (24) The report from Borough Councillor Sally Yalden was published in the Spring Newsletter and a copy is attached to these Minutes.
6 (24) Cllr Yalden added to her report, that the next stage towards the revision of the Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) Local Plan 2040 was that the consultation was now closed and representations would be reviewed by TVBC. A further consultation would take place in 2025.

County Councillor's Report

- 7 (24) The report from County Councillor Alan Dowden had been published in the Spring Newsletter and a copy is attached to these Minutes.
8 (24) Cllr Dowden emphasised some points made in his report and added to it, due to the serious position at Hampshire County Council (HCC). There was to be an election for the Leader of the Council due to the resignation of Rob Humby for family reasons. Cllr Humby had made attempts to aid the recovery of HCC's finances, but £132m needed to be saved. This must be through cuts to services. The main reason was the way central government had chosen to distribute funds. Children's and Adult's Services were suffering. Eight care homes would be closed, two would be improved and two new ones built, so that more complex needs could be met. Reserves were being used to fund normal services.
9 (24) Cllr Dowden had been saddened to hear of the theft of lead from the roof of St Marks Church, where he had been married. He had offered some of his Councillor allowance to assist them.

Parish Council Finances and Administration

- 10 (24) Cllr Nanson reported on finances and administration for Ampfield Parish Council:
- a. The Audit of 2022-23 was complete and no matters of concern had been identified.
 - b. The parish council precept for 2024-25 had been set at £44,768, and overall increase from the previous year of 3.91%.
 - c. It was necessary to build up reserves for future maintenance of new facilities such as the pavilion, which will need increased spending on repair and replacement in the future. A proportion of funds went towards this.

Ampfield Parish Council Planning Committee

- 11 (24) Cllr Nanson reported on the Planning Committee of Ampfield Parish Council:
- a. The Committee continued to meet regularly in order to decide comments on planning applications for the parish council.
 - b. On several occasions in the past year, Cllr Nanson and other councillors attended and made representations at meetings of TVBC Southern Area Planning Committee (SAPC).
 - c. The retirement village at Ampfield Meadows was a major project in the parish and still under consideration. Cllr Nanson had attended the SAPC at which a planning application was considered and spoken in support of the objections raised by residents of Flexford Close.
- 12 (24) There were questions and comments from electors on planning matters:
- a. An elector stated that they believed there was a possibility that land off the A3090 in the East of the parish may become available for purchase and that the parish may have the option to purchase it. However, the response from parish councillors at the previous Annual Parish Assembly had been that should the land be offered as a donation (funded by residents) to the parish council, it may be possible that it could be accepted for community use.
 - b. An elector stated that their understanding was that the land would be retained by the current owner.

Friends of Chapel Wood

- 13 (24) Cllr Graham Roads reported on the work of the Friends of Chapel Wood.
- a. Photographs were displayed showing a bonfire following clearance work; the burial ground, where the cruciform box hedge was to be replaced with more resilient yew; the extended glade area, providing more room for community use such as the fete; steps and a path which had been constructed last year.
 - b. Cllr Roads noted that the real story of Chapel Wood is the Friends who work to make the wood a facility for the parish. He thanked the volunteers on behalf of the parish council for the fantastic job they do, noting that we were lucky to have them looking after the woods.
 - c. Cllr Roads noted that the Friends of Chapel Woods work parties were on the second Saturday of each month, and new volunteers were welcome to attend.
 - d. Cllr Alan Dowden added that he admired the Spring flowers in Chapel Wood, particularly in the burial ground.

Transport and Highways

- 14 (24) Vice Chairman Chris Ling reported on highways matters.
- a. Ampfield Parish Council owns and maintains a number of bus shelters. Lately we had focussed on cleaning. We tried to remove graffiti as it appeared.
 - b. The Lengthsman scheme, which gave around 30 hours per year of work funded by HCC, had been at risk of ending, but a new parish council would take on the administration and so the scheme could now run in 2024-25.
 - c. The parish council had been requesting that HCC install a pedestrian island crossing at Green Pond Lane on A3090 for several years. Cllr Sally Yalden was now assisting in pressing for this.
 - d. The parish council owned speed indicator sign is moved between various locations such as Baddesley Road, Hook Road, Jermyns Lane and A3090.
 - e. The parish council had purchased Speedwatch equipment using funds from the HCC highways budget arising from s106 contributions from developments in the parish. This equipment could be

used by trained individuals in designated sites, with the approval and support of Hampshire Constabulary. The details of speeding vehicles were recorded by the camera, which could be operated by just two people. A test session had taken place earlier in the month, and seven vehicles had been identified travelling at more than 35mph (the fastest of which was 46mph) in an area with a 30mph speed limit.

- 15 (24) Vice Chairman Chris Ling reported that following two recent road-traffic accidents on the A3090 east of the village of Ampfield, both of which had fatalities, Ampfield Parish Council had issued a paper to HCC outlining the history of road-traffic accidents on that stretch of road, and also some details of collisions or near-collisions with deer. Anecdotally perhaps two-thirds of people who used that stretch of road could report having had deer cross in their path. It was noted that the cause of the recent accidents would be covered in the inquests.
- 16 (24) There were questions and comments on highways matters from electors, which Chairman Bryan Nanson noted would be taken up with HCC.
 - a. On the speed limits on A3090, East of Ampfield village:
 - i. Following recent road accident fatalities, an elector had reminded HCC recalled that their stance on the reduction of speed limits had been that there would be a change only if there were more fatalities.
 - ii. Cllr Alan Dowden was aware that the 'casualty reduction team', comprising members of HCC and Hampshire Constabulary, were reviewing the situation. They base their decisions on data. The officers would meet with members of Ampfield Parish Council, who could represent the concerns of residents.
 - iii. Cllr Ling noted that when there had been a fatal accident in 2018 HCC did not consider the deer as a factor as they had found a defective tyre. This accident would no longer influence decisions due to the date.
 - iv. Near misses were not recorded therefore were not considered in decisions.
 - v. A resident on A3090 had recorded and photographed every deer casualty on the road for three years and submitted the details to HCC, who were therefore aware of the involvement of deer in accidents on the road. The need for re-assessment was pressing, with two fatal accidents in a fortnight.
 - vi. Stuart King of Ratlake Hall wished to record an incident that he, as a qualified driving instructor and advanced driver, experienced when he came out of his drive around three months previously. Within two seconds a car was close behind, the driver of which got out and banged on the window of Mr King when Mr King had to stop for a truck. Mrs King has had similar near misses. They have to cut the grass verge themselves to improve visibility. Their boundary wall was damaged by a vehicle recently. They attribute these incidents to the high vehicle speeds.
 - vii. An elector noted that portable skid-warning signs on A3090 have been there for 6 years. It was noted that these could be recorded as fly-tipping if HCC had not removed them when requested.
 - b. On the safety of Hook Road:
 - i. The footway was too narrow considering that the national speed limit applied. There had been no change to the road or footway following the construction of Broadgate Farm, which had 150 residents.
 - ii. There were three different speed limits, which, it was felt, were confusing. The junction with Broadgate Farm was right by the point of change from 40mph to 60mph, therefore traffic was travelling fast past the entrance.
 - c. On a request for reflective entrance-marker posts to be erected at Morleys Lane:
 - i. It was noted that, following the Annual Parish Assembly in 2023, the parish council had requested posts to be fitted, but HCC had not responded.
- 17 (24) A further view was raised by Ian Case on the problem of deer on the A3090, which was agreed would be discussed by Ampfield Parish Council, who would respond to Mr Case:
 - a. There should be a deer fence on both sides along the A3090.
- 18 (24) There was discussion about the access to Ampfield Woods.
 - a. Electors raised points:
 - i. Ian Case noted that there was a right of access in Ampfield Woods, but the Forestry Commission's placing of large boulders in the vehicular entrances had limited the availability of

parking. Cllr Roads noted that this had been done to ensure that trucks and heavy forestry equipment could use the entrances. It was noted that there had been much activity by the Forestry Commission in recent years. The Chairman said that the issue would be discussed by the Parish Council, which would respond to Mr Case.

- ii. Cllr Graham Roads reported that the Forestry Commission had agreed to grant a permissive path which would come out of the woods on Jermyns Lane opposite the Straight Mile service road. The parish council would find out what processes and agreements were needed in order for the path to be officially designated and put into use.
- iii. Cllr Roads reported that the a second path had been requested, from Potters Heron to the burial ground. This request was on hold for the time being as there were too few staff at the Forestry Commission for them to carry out the health and safety assessment.

Other Reports

- 19 (24) Borough Councillor Sally Yalden reported on behalf of Louisa Rice, the Community Engagement Officer for Test Valley Borough Council. Louisa was working on the 'Thriving Communities' project. Various people had attended a workshop to discuss what was important to Ampfield, and whether improvements could be made; they talked about what was currently happening, what was needed, sharing information, grants to St Marks to make their space more available, repairs to the village hall, and sustainable energy. It was noted that the parish council was hardworking and dedicated. Traffic speeds had been identified as a concern; s106 agreements could be used for traffic calming although HCC had not agreed. It was hoped that residents felt that they were part of a community. The project would facilitate communication between TVBC and HCC. The next steps would be another workshop to establish what could be done by TVBC about the issues raised.
- 20 (24) County Councillor Alan Dowden (also a Councillor for TVBC) noted that TVBC were in a better position financially than HCC, due to the sale of council houses to housing associations, and some business investments which raised more money than Council Tax for them.
- 21 (24) An elector asked why the planning tool had gone from the parish council's website. It was acknowledged to have been a useful tool, however, it had been removed by the website provider when they began to charge for the website last year. It was possible to receive notifications of applications via TVBC's website.
- 22 (24) An elector thanked the parish council for the provision of the playground at the recreation ground.

Any Other Competent Business and Open Session

- 23 (24) The following matters were raised by electors and discussed:
 - a. Ian Case noted his sadness at the forthcoming closure of Ampfield Primary School, and the parish council had supported the closure. He requested that the reason for this to be noted in the minutes. He had made a freedom-of-information request when he was a governor of the school, which had revealed how many qualified teachers were employed in non-teaching posts at HCC. The officer overseeing the closure was a member of the RICS. He said that the Faber family would sell the school building. He said the parish council did not help the school to stay open and had not attended the presentation.
 - i. Chairman Bryan Nanson noted that the parish council had not so much supported the closure, as not opposed it in the light of evidence provided. Cllr Nanson had a one-to-one briefing from the HCC officer who oversaw the consultation.
 - ii. The HCC officer ran through evidence which was later presented at a public meeting. The Council received all of the written information, but the public meeting had clashed with an ordinary meeting of the parish council, therefore most members of the council were unable to attend – but Cllr Roads had attended the presentation and concurred with Cllr Nanson. The benefice had requested the review and did not object to the closure.
 - iii. The reason for the closure was the fall of the roll to 26 children, only two of whom were resident in the parish. It was deemed that the curriculum could not be adequately delivered to such a small number of children in spite of the link to Hursley School.
 - iv. There was no shortage of primary school places in the area. Pupils would move to Hursley or elsewhere in the area.

- v. Having regarded the evidence provided in the consultation, the parish council could find no reason to object.
- vi. The decision not to object was in line with the stance of the LEA and the benefice.
- b. An elector requested an update on item 11 of the previous minutes: had TVBC planning enforcement visited the place where industrial activity was alleged to be unlawfully taking place?
 - i. The parish council had not been updated of the latest position by TVBC, which the elector felt was a failure in the lines of communication between the parish and borough councils. However, the parish council had not so far been inclined to make a formal complaint due to relations generally being good between the two councils.
 - ii. Vice Chairman Chris Ling noted that there was good visibility of the site because there was an informal footpath running adjacent, storage facilities were being offered on Facebook, and TVBC had been directed to this evidence by the parish council.
 - iii. The elector said that TVBC had issued a 'Notice to Inspect'. Cllr Yalden would look into this.
- c. An elector enquired as to whether anything was known about the sale of the former Keats' building – nothing was known.
- d. Some ash trees at Ratlake had been found not to be suffering from Ash Dieback disease, albeit one of them had subsequently fallen and blocked the entrance to the Yellow Dot nursery.

Close of Meeting

24 (24) Business was concluded and the Meeting was closed at 8:50pm.

Chairman

Date

Appendix

Hampshire County Councillor's Baddesley Division Report 2023/24

Hampshire County Council tax will increase this year by just under 5%, raising the band "D" Council tax to £1,460.25 which is an increase of £69.45.

All councillors know the system of local government finance is broken and has been for a very long time; caused by cuts to government grants since 2010 and largely unfunded social care pressures. Pressures which have been exacerbated by post-covid demand across children and adult services.

Those services which still survive today are continually getting worse each year.

There will be a further £700K of cuts to Voluntary Organisations in Hampshire. This will have significant consequences; volunteers are the essential component that have kept many services available to residents.

Unless the upper tier Councils receive more government funding next year Hampshire County Council will not be sustainable. The Government have treated Hampshire very badly indeed.

The latest impact on families who are just about managing ,is the further increase in the cost of school dinners. Many families are really struggling to make ends meet with the cost of living crisis.

Despite the above, in the parish of Ampfield I have achieved work to be carried out on the highway of the A3090 through the Operation Resilience programme. The Ampfield care home developers have also assisted by financing the new "lighting scheme" on the Baddesley Road, this has now been started and should be completed this year.

All areas of Hampshire have suffered potholes and Hampshire's Highway's Department have received a large amount of complaints about damage to vehicles. Getting them repaired is a lottery, as there are so many, but I have worked tirelessly to get them fixed within the Baddesley Division.

HCC Cllr Alan Dowden

Baddesley Division