

HOPTON AND COTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES FROM THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 3.2.21

Present: Cllr Gilbert (Chair), Cllr Brindley, Cllr Rogers, Cllr Spennewyn and County Cllr Francis

There was supposed to be a presentation from Daniel Cooke about the 2021 Census and its implications for parish council but Mr Cooke was not present

Public Participation: one member of the public was present

21/31 To receive apologies: Apologies were received from: Cllr Brown-Bullivant, Cllr Turner, Cllr Wood and borough Councillors Harp and Beatty although Cllr Beatty sent in a full report from SBC

21/32 To receive Declarations of interest: There were no Declarations of Interest

21/33 To consider Requests for Dispensations under the localism Act 2011: no Requests

21/34 To consider co-opting a local resident: Steven Spennewyn was duly co-opted, unanimously

21/35 To consider and agree the minutes of the ordinary meeting on 13.1.21: It was RESOLVED to accept the minutes. PROPOSED by Cllr Rogers. SECONDED by Cllr Gilbert

21/36 To consider the Clerk's report: The Clerk's report was considered

21/37 To consider an update by a Borough Councillor: No Borough Councillor was present

21/38 To consider an update by the County Councillor:

Various Highways issues were discussed:

- Speeding and pot holes on Within Lane
- Flooding in front of the village hall. Highways has admitted that it is their responsibility to sort this out but there is no time frame at the moment.
- Rock fall onto the village green. The Borough Cllr is now aware of all of the issues but there is no timescale to sort out this very expensive and potentially life-threatening problem
- Speeding and overgrown hedges on Wilmore Hill Lane – this problem will be solved by the end of April although there is an acute problem outside one house which is problematic because of the health of the occupier and Highways is seeking legal advice about this.
- The two gullies which regularly flood even though they were jetted recently – an inspector is due to come out but there is no time scale at the moment

21/39 To consider an update on previous council decisions, resolutions or issues:

20/195 To consider an update on the progress of the Lease which the parish council will offer the village hall committee: The Trustees had received a copy of the Draft Lease and have made comments which will be firmed up during the next Village Hall Committee Meeting and then be put to the parish council for consideration.

20/196 To consider an update on speeding and overgrown hedges on Wilmore Hill Lane and two gullies which flooded recently even though they had been jetted: see note above

20/203 To consider if there are any Councillors who have changed their email addresses to a council email address: there still remains just two Councillors who have done this.

21/16 To consider a progress report concerning obtaining a business credit card: the Clerk enumerated all the problems experienced at NatWest but she has had a phone call to say that the credit card application has been successful. There was a general consensus that if it has not arrived before the next pc meeting, HPC will switch to the Unity Trust Bank

21/40 To consider setting provisional dates for the Annual Meeting of the Parish and the Annual Meeting of the Council. N.B. The Annual Council Meeting can be conducted remotely but the Annual Parish Meeting cannot: no date was set for the Annual Meeting of the Parish but it was agreed that the Annual Meeting of the Council should take place at the beginning of May's ordinary council meeting which is scheduled for: 5.5.21

21/41 To consider the fact that HPC's accountants are finishing on 31.3.21: another company has already been chosen on the recommendation of the Internal Auditor: Bradley's Accountants

21/42 To consider a resolution to pay for Microsoft Teams Meetings, thus allowing anyone to phone into a meeting using a landline / mobile: It was decided not to go down this route as the Councillor who is experiencing technical problems has agreed to buy a smart phone.

21/43 To consider an update on the situation with Community Vouchers for Fibre To The Premises: this was discussed during Public Participation. The local resident concerned should continue to get as many people as possible to register an interest. An extra layer of support is required to achieve this for the traveller sites. Help will be given to this community and ways of reducing the overall charge by OpenReach will be explored.

21/44 To consider a five-year long-term plan for the council: The Clerk picked out 9 possible projects, only two or three of which could be started this year:

- Building a dementia-friendly community
 - Combating climate change
 - addressing the problem of social / rural isolation (possibly, but more research is needed)
- HPC's response was that the Clerk should publish all nine possible projects and Councillors should suggest ways in which they could be achieved

21/45 To consider increasing Public Participation from 10 to 20 minutes: This idea was rejected

21/46 To consider having a monthly e-newsletter for residents. N.B. if this idea is adopted, to consider increasing the Clerk's hours by 30 minutes per week: There was no enthusiasm for this. Some Councillors acknowledged the importance of communication with the local community. However, there was a decision to wait until after the next Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Meeting to make a decision on ways forward as Communication will feature

21/47 To consider ratifying updates to HPC's Financial Regulations: The clerk took everyone through the changes recommended by NALC and the SLCC, pointing out particularly:

- if a parish council wants to sell or buy land, it should not do so until there is a robust business case and some level of consultation with the electorate

- in the normal course of a year, there should be a pay review for employees.

N.B. When this last point was discussed, it was decided to appoint an Employment Committee

21/48 To consider the results of the Local Needs Survey which has now been analysed, to consider the next steps in view of the results and to consider where to advertise the results as here has been public interest in this:

It was decided to form a New-Build Committee which will consist of the joint project-managers (Cllr Rogers and Village Hall Trustee Chris Ramster), the Chairman of the parish council a local architect and the clerk.. The Chairman to pass on the contact details of the architect to the Clerk. The Clerk will put the results of the Survey on the web site.

21/49 To consider an update from the Bovis Homes Estate: The parish council has put in a complaint about the management company to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and we have found out the conditions that were placed on this planning application. Those conditions have been sent to two of the Councillors who live on the estate.

21/50 To consider an update from the Neighbourhood Plan Committee: The Clerk said that everything is going well and that NP Meeting 4 is scheduled for 18.2.21. A new Neighbourhood Plan Member of the Working Group will be co-opted onto the committee at that meeting. The content of the Neighbourhood Plan Material on the council web site has been updated.

21/51 To consider an update from the Chairman of the Village Hall: the village hall committee will meet soon. The committee will be mainly concerned with the Lease and with the new portacabin.

21/52 To review the way that HPC employees are paid: the Clerk said that paying two people's wages by cheque and one person's wages in cash are problematic because it involves a visit to two banks and two visits to the village. HPC's solution to these problems was to pay all three employees by standing order and a suitable, signed letter, has now gone to the bank to enact this.

21/53 To set dates for the rest of the HPC meetings this year: the first Wednesday of the month

21/54 To note the correspondence which has come in: the correspondence was noted and it was decided to satisfy one request from SBC to place adverts on notice boards and on the web site, concerning what high streets can now offer online. The town centres concerned are Stone, Eccleshall and Stafford. This is part of an initiative to help local businesses.

Items 21/55 to 21/57 were confidential and concerned: authorisation of payments, noting of Financial Statement 51 and an update on a vexatious complainant: the payments were authorised, the Financial Statement was noted and it was decided what to do about the vexatious complainant

21/58 To set a date and time for the next parish council meeting: 3.3.21 at 6.30 p.m.

21/59 To consider setting a date for Village Hall Meeting 15: Tuesday 9th February at 6.30 p.m.

Payments that were approved at the meeting:

£166.00	annual subscription to the SLCC	£995.54 salaries for January 2021
£31.44	one month's internet connection	£80.00 petty cash 30-admin, 50-cleaning