

HOPTON AND COTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 7.4.21 AT 6.30 P.M. (ONLINE)

Present: Cllr Gilbert (Chair), Cllr Brown-Bullivant (Vice Chair), Cllr Brindley, Cllr Lamond, Cllr Rogers, Cllr Spennewyn and Cllr Wood

Public Participation: one member of the public was present

21/92 To receive apologies: no apologies were received

21/93 To receive Declarations of Interest: No Declarations were received

21/94 To consider requests for Dispensations under the Localism Act 2011: No requests were received

21/95 To consider and agree the minutes of the ordinary meeting on 3.3.21 and of the extraordinary meeting on 24.3.21: Concerning the 3.3.21 meeting, it was RESOLVED to accept the minutes. NOMINATED by Cllr Rogers. SECONDED by Cllr Gilbert. Concerning the 24.3.21 meeting, it was RESOLVED to accept the minutes. NOMINATED by Cllr Rogers and SECONDED by Cllr Gilbert.

21/96 To consider the Clerk's Report: the Clerk's report was considered following the order of the agenda.

21/97 To consider an update by a Borough Councillor: No Borough Councillors were present but Cllr Beatty had sent in a report

21/98 To consider an update by a County Councillor: no County Councillor was present

21/99 To consider an update on previous council decisions, resolutions or issues:

21/43 To consider an update on community vouchers for FTTP: The Clerk gave an update, saying that we have now received an initial price of fitting FTTP to the properties that have registered an interest and this works out to be quite expensive for each of the properties concerned, even after taking grants in to account. We have got to do some further work on the travellers' sites to get an overall picture

21/81 To consider employing someone to do a door-to-door survey: The Chairman said that we must proceed with the door-to-door survey. The point was made that, in addition, the Neighbourhood Plan would be mounting a large exhibition in the village hall in the summer. There also needs to be an exhibition on the new estates.

21/100 To consider a request for a donation to Salt Burial Ground: It was RESOLVED to give a donation of £250. NOMINATED by Cllr Gilbert. SECONDED by Cllr Rogers

21/101 To consider planning application 21/33996/OUT on land adjacent to Stone Cottage, St Thomas, Beaconside, for a small residential development including one additional access to the site: There were no objections to this application

21/102 To consider adding a clause to Standing Orders to the effect that no meeting should last more than two and a quarter hours with fifteen minutes grace meaning that the total maximum amount of time for a meeting should be two and a half hours: It was RESOLVED to add this clause. PROPOSED by Cllr Gilbert. SECONDED by Cllr Rogers

21/103 To consider the draft Terms of Reference for the NBWG to see if they are fit for purpose and, if so, to consider changing the Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG) to fit in with the ones for the NBWG where appropriate: All Councillors had seen the draft Terms of Reference for the NBWG and approved them. The main differences between these and those of the NPWG is that the voting arrangements have changed and the Terms make reference to several documents which have protocols to adopt when there is a new-build and large sums of money are involved, for example, an undertaking to abide by Government Procurement Rules etc.

21/104 To sanction that appointment of Cllr Spennwyn to the NPWG: Everyone approved of this appointment

21/105 To consider a request to take action following a dispute subsequent to the recent pollarding of trees in the village: A resident is very upset by the content of a billboard message which the eco-warrior has put in her front garden, the content of which has been reported to the police. It was agreed that the parish council can do no more.

21/106 To consider asking Staffordshire County Council to close that section of Hopton Hall Lane which runs along the top of the village green, on the grounds that it is dangerous because of three rock falls so far: the exact nature of the problem was explained and photos of the crumbling bedrock were shown. The Clerk read out an objection to requesting the road closure. It was decided that the Clerk should send the photos to Highways and ask for something to be done. If nothing is done then HPC should employ its own structural engineer to carry out a survey so that we will know whether the road is in danger of collapse

21/107 To consider sending a letter of thanks to “Stafford Litter Heroes” who were seen clearing up rubbish at Hopton Pools: It was agreed to send the letter

21/108 To consider a local resident’s suggestion that the parish council should go onto Twitter, Facebook and Instagram: The Clerk said that HPC can’t go onto any of these platforms without adopting a media policy. She had sent round a typical policy earlier that day and picked out the main points which were:

- If a Councillor goes onto one of these platforms and posts a personal comment – he/she should sign themselves with their name without the term Councillor in front of it.
- If however, a Councillor wishes to make a comment which is representative of parish council opinion, then the Cllr should send the comment to the Assistant Clerk for vetting first.
- No serving Councillor should make any comment which brings the parish council into disrepute.

Facebook should be considered first followed by Instagram. It was agreed that the Clerk should reproduce the Media Policy that she has, adapted to HPC. The Asst. Clerk said that he was prepared to spend some time on this and one Councillor warned that the amount of time spent on social media needs to be monitored because it could be time-consuming.

21/109 To consider an update from the Bovis Homes Estate: Cllr Wood said that there have been successful meetings with both Bovis Homes and the SDL Management Company which now has a steering group with a tracker. So there have been some positive steps, particularly concerning Bovis who seem to be more proactive and communicative. However “The proof of the pudding is in the eating”. The situation has to be monitored and there needs to be timescales. Some good work has been done in the last few weeks. There is an agreement that Staffordshire County Council can adopt the roads as long as Bovis continues to maintain them for the next 12 months. The two Councillors who live on the estate are happy to send in a report prior to a meeting.

21/110 To consider an update from the NPWG: There is still a lot to do but the group have more or less agreed the objectives and when these have been finalised, Urban Vision will come in and write the corresponding policies. It is these policies which SBC planners should look at, once the NP has been adopted, when they are judging a planning application

21/111 To consider an update from the Village Hall Committee: The Chairman of the VH Committee spoke about the possible grant from the FA and that if there was to be a brand new portacabin we would be looking at a total cost of £30,000 plus, with site services being a considerable cost.

21/112 To consider an update from the New-Build Working Group: It was established who the members of the group were and what has happened so far. Group members are going to compose drawings of possible configurations for the new village hall, according to the Local Needs Survey results and other sources, ready for the next meeting. Then the public will be consulted and, if necessary, there will be a second survey.

21/113 The rest of the meeting was confidential and involved increasing the Clerk’s salary by two spine points (from point 11 to 13) from April 1st 2021 and by two further spine points (from point 13 to 15) from April 1st in 2022 so that there is more parity with the Assistant Clerk’s salary. The other confidential items were: authorising that month’s payments and noting financial Statement 53. The payments were authorised and the Statement was noted.

21/117 To set a date for the next parish council meeting: The Annual Meeting of the council will take place at 6.30 p.m. on Wednesday 5th May and it will be immediately followed by an ordinary meeting of the council.

Payments were as follows:

£840.00	Pollarding two willow trees	£25.00	SPCA training webinar (Councillor)
£30.00	SPCA training webinar (Clerk)	£31.44	One month’s internet
£884.39	HMRC Tax on salaries	£250.00	Salt Burial Ground