

HOPTON AND COTON PARISH COUNCIL

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING (VIRTUAL)

WEDNESDAY 5th MAY 2021 AT 7.00 P.M.

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

Public Participation: there were some people in the public Gallery but they had spoken during the Annual Meeting of the Council which took place immediately before this meeting

21/136 To receive apologies: there were no apologies. The Borough Cllrs and County Cllr did not send apologies but they were not expected to attend the meeting because of Purdah. (elections)

21/137 To receive Declarations of Interest: there were no Declarations of Interest

21/138 To consider Requests for Dispensations under the Localism Act 2011: no requests

21/139 To consider and agree the minutes of the ordinary meeting on 7.4.21: It was RESOLVED to accept the minutes. PROPOSED by Cllr Gilbert. SECONDED by Cllr Rogers

21/140 To consider the Clerk's report: the Clerk's report was considered, following the agenda

21/141 To consider an update by a Borough Councillor: No Borough Councillor was present but Cllr Beatty had sent in a report (Clerk to circulate)

21/142 To consider an update by the County Councillor: No County councillor was present

21/143 To consider an update on previous council decisions, resolutions or issues:

21/81 To consider employing someone to do a door-to-door survey: the Clerk re-iterated that the parish council still had not seen this survey which the Chair said he would compose and the fact that, because over £500 was expected to be spent on it that it was important to:

- Advertise the job, possibly to agencies that are set up to carry out surveys
- Consider quotations for the whole job which is to conduct the survey at up to 800 houses
- Receive three quotations and choose which person/agent is most suitable for the job

21/144 To consider approving the Annual Governance Statements: the Clerk had already sent out an explanation of what the Statements mean and how HPC had satisfied these requirements this year. That document was flashed up on the screen and comments were invited. It was RESOLVED to approve the Governance Statements. PROPOSED by Cllr Gilbert. SECONDED by Cllr Spennewyn

21/145 To consider approving the Annual Accounting Statements: Councillors had already seen the statements and a summary of this year's accounts ('20/21). There was a brief explanation by the Clerk. Something new was the fact that 3 of last year's boxes had been re-stated to take into account that the village hall accounts were not part of these statements for the very first time. It has separated completely from the parish council. In order to have "like-for-like" statements, some of last year's figures had had to be re-stated, thus allowing a true comparison between the 2019/20

figures and the 2020/21 figures. The Clerk mentioned that in only two cases there were significant differences between the two sets of figures. The explanation for these variances were flashed up and the Asst clerk explained why these variances existed. It was RESOLVED to approve the Annual Accounting Statements. PROPOSED by Cllr Gilbert. SECONDED by Cllr Rogers

21/146 To consider the Lease and the Management Agreement sent to HPC by its solicitor and to help answer the 4 questions posed by the solicitor: Some Councillors questioned why repairing clauses had to be in the Lease (It is called a Full-Repairing and Insuring Lease) and the Assistant Clerk who had to study Leases as part of his job, explained why. The Clerk made the point that it was far too late to change the type of Lease as £1,300 worth of work had already been “spent” as the work had already been commissioned following a democratic decision on the part of the council. It was also agreed that the documents were very complex and that it would be better to devote a whole meeting to these: 25.6.21 at mid-day

21/147 To consider an email sent to the council concerning the state of the village and the flooding issues on the village green and outside the village hall: the following points were made:

The council went through each highways-related point and explained why things are as they are and what the council is doing about the problems. The Clerk will send a full reply to the resident.

Flooding at the village green. This has only recently begun to happen because of an excess of water appearing to come from the area of the back wall. Unfortunately, if the water follows its natural course, it floods the hard-standing at the back of the green where there are two benches, making it impossible for local people to sit on them. Spotting this the Best Kept Village Team has dug a 15 metre trench all along the back wall and this has alleviated the situation on the hard-standing but it now means that water cascades down the road leaving a trail of mud behind it. The Clerk to report this to Highways

Flooding in front of the village hall. (all across the road which makes it impassable at times) There is a terracotta pipe which acts as an outlet from the field into the ditch. Highways says that it is their responsibility and recently came to inspect the area, sending an immediate report saying to HPC “Area inspected, no further work, case closed”. What Highways writes is not always what they mean and so the Clerk questioned this - further investigative and remedial work needs to be carried out but they are not sure when this will be done.

21/148 To consider using the £9,380 that is in the Business Reserve account and earmarked for a new village hall, to pay for a professional fund raiser and to consider the reasons for this suggestion: This was agreed by everyone and the Clerk mentioned some likely candidates. By way of an explanation for this need, she said that she had recently “drawn a blank” with both the National Lottery (we had informally asked for £330,000) because wherever in Hopton Parish the new hall was built, it would never satisfy the criteria that there has to be a robust public transport system to support it. Similarly, it had been thought that the HS2 Community and Environmental Fund (CEF) could provide up to £75,000 for up-front costs like architect’s fees. On reading the small print it appears that this is not the case. It can only help towards capital costs. She discovered this when she asked the Community Liaison Officer if it was possible for parish councils to put in multiple bids to this fund. He replied and sent her some documentation that she had never seen before, even though she has been on training courses to do with the CEF

21/149 To consider if Councillors would like to visit a 5G mast: the need for such masts was explained by Cllr Spennewyn and the following Cllrs said that they would like to visit one: Cllr Lamond, Cllr Gilbert, Cllr Wood and Cllr Spennewyn

21/150 To consider an update from the Bovis Homes Estate:

- Cllrs Wood and Spennewyn will be having a meeting with the Community Support Officer concerning anti-social behaviour on the estate
- Bovis is carrying out the tasks that they said they would do
- There is now a better engagement level with the SDL Management Company
- Overall, things are moving in the right direction
- Bovis has undertaken to completely re-do the central green area

21/151 To consider an update from the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group: at their last meeting the group made a lot of recommendations – too numerous to feature in the minutes but these recommendations are attached to these minutes. However, the Clerk did take the opportunity to tell everyone that there will be two large public consultation events: Saturday 17th July at Hopton Village Hall and Saturday 24th July on the green area at Bayswater Square

21/152 To consider an update from the Village Hall Committee: Cllr Rogers, Chair of the village hall committee informed everyone that they had received over £28,000 worth of grants, are waiting to look at the Lease from the parish council, are trying to get internet in the village hall and they are considering obtaining CCTV cameras, particularly since a large window has been broken recently

21/153 To consider an update from the New-Build Working Group: The group has looked at possible plans, is thinking about where the new hall will be sited and is looking at funding

21/154 Correspondence:

Salt Burial Ground	Thank you for the donation
Janet Stubbs	There will be a church plant sale at Hopton Village Hall on Saturday 15 th May
21/34021/FUL The proposed re-development at Stafford Fire Station	To repurpose existing office accommodation into a new fire station etc.

The council had no objections to 21/34021/FUL

21/155 – 6 The rest of the meeting was confidential and concerned the authorisation of payments and the noting of Financial Statement 54: the payments were authorised (see below) and the Financial Statement was authorised

21/157 To set a date for the next parish council meeting: Wednesday 7th July at 7.30 p.m. v. hall

Payments:

1,041.00	salaries	32.40 shortfall on the clerk's standing order payment
360.00	P.O. Box number for the year	144.00 cost of internal audit
34.94	one month's internet	168.00 cost of digital mapping for one year
240.00	last year's external audit	