**Strensham Parish Council**

**Minutes** of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 22nd January 2015 starting at 19:30 in Strensham Village Hall

## Present: Councillors: N P Guilding (Chairman) C White D Wallbank

L Gough A Truscott M Gribble Cllr Ellis

**Apologies:** District Councillor Ron Davis

**In Attendance:** Rebecca Abunassar (Clerk) & 11 Parishioners

**01/15 Welcome & Apologies**

Cllr Guilding welcomed all present and accepted the apologies submitted to the Clerk.

Cllr Guilding asked if any one had an interest in any item on the agenda but no declarations of interest were made.

**02/15 Minutes:**  The minutes of the meeting held on the 6th November 2014 had been circulated. It was noted that the enforcement officer’s name was misspelt and amended no further alterations were requested and they were signed off by the Chairman.

**03/15 Matters Arising and Progress Reports:**

New Homes Bonus: Two quotations had been received for the gates one for £190 from Pershore Fencing and £200 from Keith Hartell. The merits of each quotation were discussed and Cllr Gribble proposed Pershore fencing, all Councillors were in favour, Cllr Gribble to forward quotations to the Clerk.

The Treasurer of the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC), Mr Sawyer, asked to address the Council. He explained that, at the last meeting, the accounts made poor reading. They felt the hall was likely to make a loss in the coming year, due to reduced bookings. At the last Parish Council meeting he requested that some of the NHB be allocated to the refurbishment of the kitchen, but now felt that this could not be justified. He said that they were also looking at safety issues affecting the hall over the next few months and it might be more appropriate to request NHB funding for this. A working group had been put together to look into refurbishment and the safety work required.

The 2nd point he asked to raise was the action being taken to determine what the purpose of the village hall going forward was likely to be as it was in steady decline. A committee was looking at what the future use might be and also what the correct composition of the management committee should be. It was agreed that all user groups or groups with an interest should be on the committee and it was felt that the Parish Council should be represented on the committee going forward. Cllr Guilding asked how frequently they met and was advised every few months but Mr Sawyer expected the member would be required for the business element and not the fund raising event management. Cllr Gribble volunteered to be the Parish Council representative.

Cllr Wallbank asked if the VHMC had an idea of the cost of the urgent work mentioned. Mr Sawyer said it was likely to be £100s not £1000s.

The Clerk advised Mr Sawyer about the community grant scheme that was aimed at village halls and said she would forward the information as it would be a worth while applying for funds and the closing date was the end of March.

**ACTION: The Clerk to forward email on community grant scheme to Gordon. Cllr Gribble agreed to be the representative for the Parish Council on the VHMC and would contact Gordon.**

***ACTION: The Clerk to draft the application forms for the benches and welcome gates on receipt of the quotation from Cllr Gribble.***

*Broadband:*A definite date has still not been provided for the village but Cllr Gough anticipated the Tewksbury side of village would be by June 15 and Defford after that date.

**04/15** **Planning:**

1. To consider any planning applications:

The Highways Authority planning application was considered. Due to its location it was agreed that it would not negatively impact on homes within the parish. It was agreed that no objection would be submitted against the proposed planning application but within the comment the issue of the current lighting and its light pollution would be raised.

Several large applications had been received within the Parish of Ripple and their Clerk had asked that the Parish Council be made aware of the applications. They were discussed and it was agreed that unfortunately there were no real grounds on which Strensham Parish could object so no objection would be submitted.

1. Details of enforcement action:

**Harbour Wood** –

1. Cllr Wallbank updated the Council on the current position; there was an injunction in force due to breach of covenant and an ongoing court case with Mr Reynolds having 30 days to state why he should be allowed to carry on tipping.   
   Cllr Wallbank had written to Graeme Duerden in December about the increase in the number of vehicles tipping in the site and Graeme Duerden responded saying he was going to visit the site. Cllr Wallbank read out the email he had received requesting an update prior to the meeting and Graeme responded that he had not visited and had not been made aware of any additional activity. However, Cllr Wallbank said he reminded him a few weeks ago and also wrote to Cllr Davis but he hadn’t been to see him. He read through his email to Cllr Davis who said that he would report back from the meeting with Planning but nothing has come back and the findings are to be issued this week.

Cllr Gribble asked, should the parish council report to Dig Away that they are driving too fast & using phones whilst driving? A Parishioner commented that the Council were expending energy talking about Mr Reynolds but the problem was really with the District Council and the Environment Agency and it should be investigated as to why they are not willing to do anything to put a stop to it. Cllr Gough responded that the Parish Council have tried to but it had not got them very far. The Parishioner said he would write to Harriet Baldwin and see if she can get it investigated, he asked if people should go to the press and gave an example of a case he had fought in the past.

Cllr Wallbank explained that the Parish Council had gone as far as a Parish Council could go but they were unable to go to the ombudsman but residents could. The parishioner said he thought there were lots of cracks in their arguments that need to be exploited. He said that it was a public amenity offence and therefore it should be investigated. Cllr Wallbank said that under the new enforcement guidelines it was shown as a category B offence, with no firm ruling on enforcement action. Cllr Guilding said that Cllr Wallbank had worked tirelessly on the matter and was doing as much as possible. If the parishioner wished to go to the press as an individual they had every right to.

Cllr Gough said we need to encourage parishioners to report all the vehicles and make as many complaints as possible. Cllr Gribble recommended writing a letter to the contractors. Cllr White advised he had Mr Reynolds’ number if the parish council wished to contact him and request a sweeper.

ii) **New build on Court Rd** – The replacement builders continue to work on the house.

**05/15 District & County Councillors Reports:** for information

1. **District Cllr Ron Davis** – Cllr Davies was not present.

1. **County Cllr Adrian Hardman** – Councillor Hardman was not present.

**06/15 Highways Matters**

a)Reported Highway Matters: The potholes on the footpath had been reported and the Clerk had received the response that it was being passed onto the Highway Agency as it came under Bridges & Structures not roads and footpaths. It was noted that they still had not been addressed but had been spray marked so would hopefully be repaired shortly.  
The tyres tracks on the corner had also been reported to highways but as it was ‘not a public footpath’ they would not be undertaking any repairs. It was agreed to wait until the summer and see whether it is still in a poor state and decide the best action to be taken.

1. Resignation of Mr Williams and recruitment for 2015-2016 - Cllr Guilding had received a letter of resignation from Mr Williams the Parish Lengthsman. He said it was with regret that he accepted it and would like to thank Mr Williams for his hard work over the years. All were in agreement about what a fantastic job he had done and he would be very hard to replace. The Clerk will place an advertisement for the job on the local notice boards and in the bus stop and will also contact the Lengthsman Scheme to let them know there is a vacancy.
2. VAS - Cllr Wallbank said that he had attempted to down load the data from the sign and he realised that it required the clock resetting as it had not been and so the data was meaningless but the clock has now been synced so hopefully it will produce more meaning full data. From the data he had he found it highlighted the majority of traffic was travelling between 30-40mph as it seemed 30-35 miles an hour triggered it as soon as the 30 zone was entered. He will bring the new data to the next meeting. Cllr Wallbank asked for an anti dog fouling sign to deter owners from allowing their animals to foul the pathway. Mrs Sawyer said, from the floor,that signs with \* \* representing eyes are very effective.

**Action: The Clerk to advertise the Lengthsman Vacancy as soon as the new contracts from Highways arrive. Cllr Wallbank to bring the data to the next meeting. The Clerk to investigate antifouling campaigns**

**07/15 Finance:**

1. Payments of Accounts: The Council approved the following payments of accounts:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 06/11/2014 | D wallbank | Screwfix | 539 | 6.99 |
| 05/12/2014 | R Williams | november lengthsman | 540 | 126.00 |
| 08/12/2014 | westcotec | vas machine | 541 | 3450 |
| 10/01/2015 | R Williams | December Lengthsman | 542 | 120.00 |
| 22/01/2015 | R Abunassar | Nov & Dec Clerk Duties | 543 | 240 |

1. Receipts: £2850 New Homes Bonus funding.

**08/15 Correspondence**

a) PACT – The Clerk had received an email about the new police officer that had been allocated to the parish. It was agreed to contact the officer and ask if the parish could start up a neighbourhood watch area as there have been several burglaries in the area, including 3 within the parish. It was agreed to invite the officer to the next meeting because as a community it was felt something needed to be done. It was hoped that the officer would be able to give advice on how a neighbourhood watch could be set up and explain how the police respond to these incidents. It was mentioned that Lower Strensham has an active one and so it would be good to start one up in Upper Strensham.

**Action: The Clerk to invite the new officer to the March meeting and seek guidance on setting up a NHW area.**

**09/15 Date of next meeting:** 26th March 2015 was the date set for the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.

Signed: *Rebecca Abunassar*  Date: 26/01/2015