

BAUGHURST PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
Thursday, 7 April 2022
7.30 pm, Heath End Hall, Baughurst

PRESENT: 4 Parish Councillors, 10 members of the public
Also present: County Councillor D Mellor
Apologies for absence received from Cllrs J Hewitt, P Markwick, P R S Postance, S E Terrett
In attendance: Mrs P J Waterfield, Clerk

1. Welcome

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Martin Slafford, presided, and welcomed all present.

2. Minutes of last meeting on 5 April 2018.

The Minutes of the meeting of 5 April 2018 were approved and signed

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

4. Parish Council Chairman's report

He noted that three years have elapsed since we last held an Annual Parish Meeting, thanks to Covid, and much has changed in that time. We were sorry to lose Councillor Chris Curtis, who died in January 2022, following many years' service to the County, Borough and Parish. We also said goodbye to Colin Grenville, who had given much to the Parish Council, and was the voice of reason. We now welcome two new Councillors, Liz Page and Peter Markwick, and look forward to working with them in the future. We still have two further vacancies in Baughurst Common and Wolverton wards.

Greenham Trust marks its 25th anniversary in 2022 and has come to Baughurst Parish Council to give a short talk about its history and growth as well as how its match funding and grants can make a difference to projects in our community. He welcomed Louise James, Head of Grants at the Trust.

Speedwatch has rarely figured in the last couple of years, as, during lockdown regulations, we were not permitted group gatherings. We also lack a qualified leader, without whom the team cannot operate. However, our existing Speed Limit Reminder sign is being used as a fixed monitor attached to highway posts, as a deterrent to speeding motorists. We are also in the process of purchasing a new autospeed device.

We continue to monitor the condition of highways within the Parish, although the responsibility for their repair and maintenance lies with the county. This year the torrential rain and subsequent flooding has resulted in many potholes, which are reported on a regular basis to the County Council. Particular areas of concern are flooding in Ham Lane, and also on Snakey Lane, opposite The Malthouse, where HCC are investigating.

HCC have advised that their budget will first concentrate on issues which have an impact on health and safety. Any highway problems can be reported to the Clerk, who will arrange for these to be considered by the highway authority.

We continue to comment on planning applications for the area, but, of course, the decision on planning matters rests finally with the Borough Council. There have been a considerable

number of new applications in the area, thanks to the lack of housing supply within Basingstoke and Deane's Local Plan, which have resulted in national guidelines applied rather than local. This has resulted, however, in a payment from Community Infrastructure Levy based on new homes in the parish, of approximately £16,000, and which may only be spent on certain items, such as play and open areas, and village halls.

The Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

A working party from all areas of the community has been formed, and the proposed plan of action covers the two days of the holiday weekend.

Date	Event	
Friday 3 June 2022	St Stephen's Church, Baughurst - Flower Festival!	Free, but donations to charity gratefully received
Saturday 4 June 2022 From 11.30 onwards	A circular walk/run/horse ride from Heath End Hall through beautiful Baughurst scenery. Different routes will apply. Each group will set off at different times, from 11.30 am onwards. This will be bookable in advance	Walkers and runners £3.00; £2.00 if booked before 3 June 2022. Horse riders £3.00.
From 12.00 noon	Lunchtime at the Hall - curries courtesy of Tadley Tandoori	Available to purchase - prices to be advised nearer the time
From 2.00 pm	Tea party on the Hall green, with musical entertainment; memorabilia from the years of Her Majesty's reign, and charitable stalls to visit	Free, but teas, coffees and cakes available to purchase
Time to be confirmed, but approximately 7.00 pm	Watch the 'Party at the Palace' on the big screen at Heath End Hall - this will be bookable in advance, ticket prices to be confirmed	Hog roast with baps and apple sauce available for purchase - bring your own drink, and enjoy the evening at a table with friends
	St Stephen's Church, Baughurst - Flower Festival!	Free, but donations to charity gratefully received
Sunday 5 June 2022 From midday	Heath End hall - street party on the green, or inside if it rains (bookable in advance)	Chairs and tables provided; bring your own lunch and drink and have a street party with others!
6.30 pm	St Stephen's Church, Baughurst 6.30 pm	Service of Thanksgiving for the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, in the presence of the Deputy Mayor of Basingstoke and Deane, Cllr David Leeks
	Possibility of quarter peal of bells being rung	

We have invested in a new laptop and monitor, and at the same time decided to change our providers for both website, domain and email. Our new website can now be seen courtesy of HugoFox, and is still undergoing change.

The Chairman then called upon Cllr Richard Cockle to present the report for Playing Fields and Open Spaces Committee.

Playing Fields and Open Spaces Committee

Pineapple Field

The field is available for hire, and is currently used predominantly by a local junior football team. We are always seeking alternative usage for the field. Anyone interested can contact the Clerk.

Wolverton Field

The playground is used on a regular basis, especially during the summer months. This year some of our play equipment began to show signs of wear and tear, so we have organised the repair of some pieces, and the replacement of others. We have also organised renewal of the bark chippings in the play area.

Long Grove

This local play area is well used, and suffers from occasional graffiti, litter and vandalism. We are in the middle of applying for a grant for restoration of the play equipment, which is now rather dated, and hope this will be accepted. The park is inspected weekly for safety issues, and monthly for general maintenance and repairs to the equipment.

Flytipping

This continues to be a costly and regular exercise, particularly since the closure of the green waste facility at Paices Hill. West Berkshire Council have allowed those who live beyond a 10 mile radius from Wade Road refuse facility to drop their waste at their Newbury site – but this does not, unfortunately, include most of Baughurst and Tadley. Green waste collection is available, for a fee of approximately £30 per year, from Basingstoke and Deane during the summer months. As far as we are aware, although talks continue on a low-key basis, there are no immediate plans to provide a waste facility in the area. Letters are regularly sent out to householders in the immediate surrounding area where flytipping is found.

Trees

We have a number of trees on land owned by this Council, and carry out inspections on a regular basis. We also receive many requests for the felling of trees, particularly those overhanging private gardens, but have a policy of only agreeing to their felling should they prove to be dead, dying or dangerous. Where branches overhang other gardens, we have agreed a policy of paying for 50% of the works, providing the residents concerned use our tree contractor.

All the trees on land owned by the Parish Council have recently been inspected by an approved arboriculturist, and his recommendations acted upon. A large number of trees have been felled or remedially pruned. We have agreed to survey the trees on a rolling programme of 5 years, and the next round will commence in 2021.

Grass cutting

Our new contractor, Idverde, had a rather erratic start to their contract, but gradually settled over the summer months. We originally contracted for a year, but they have subsequently won the three year contract, expiring in 2022, and we look forward to working with them in the future.

Our general maintenance is carried out by our maintenance contractor, but the play areas are inspected monthly on health and safety grounds by Vitaplay, who also carry out all immediate preventative repairs, and replace equipment as necessary. Basingstoke and Deane also carry out a weekly inspection of the play areas, looking purely at prospective safety issues.

The Chairman then asked Cllr Liz Page to read the report for Footpaths Committee.

Footpaths Committee

Covid had taken its toll over the last two years, with no physical meetings; an initial restriction on how far anyone could roam from home, and more latterly, restrictions on how many people could meet together, even in the open air. During this time we lost two stalwarts of the Footpaths committee – Colin Grenville, who left Council, and, more sadly, Chris Curtis, who died recently.

The Parish Council continues to monitor all the footpaths and bridleways within the parish on a regular basis, and meetings of the Footpaths Committee are arranged when the need arises. Problems which do occur are usually concerned with a) the condition of a footpath – usually when it is too wet and muddy to walk upon, or overgrown with vegetation or both, or b) vandalism to fingerposts, signs or posts which have gone missing for one reason or another.

We work closely with the Rights of Way team at Hampshire County Council, who is informed of, and deals with, many of the problems encountered with footpaths. Their only restraint is that of budget, and we are fortunate in having the services of our Hampshire County Council Rights of Way officer, who is committed to the upkeep and maintenance of rights of way in the parish.

One of the roles of the Footpaths Committee is to walk the paths throughout the parish, checking for accessibility and the need for improvements and repairs. Over the past two years we have not managed to achieve this, but look forward to doing so in the near future.

Several bridleways have proved to be impassable due to flooding, and Hampshire Rights of Way officer has been asked to investigate and provide a solution to the problem. In some cases, this has called for a grant application, which this Council and that of Ashford Hill PC gave, and work was provided mainly by volunteers.

Parish Online remains a necessary tool, where the parish 'layer' can show all items relating to the parish. This has proved very useful in identifying rights of way in the parish, in high definition, and will aid the committee in identifying both paths and problems. It has the added advantage that maps can be printed off and used as appropriate.

The Government recently announced the 'Lose your Way' rights of way scheme, where a cut off date of 2026 was originally set for applications for the reinstatement of 'lost' paths. This has since been rescinded, but this Council considers it high priority, and is seeking to amass information from the public on the many paths in the parish which could be formalised into rights of way on the Definitive Map. If anyone knows of any paths which you think should be included, please let us know.

A reminder was given that all users of rights of way should respect the Country Code.

5. Greenham Trust

Louise James, Head of Grants at the Trust, gave a detailed explanation of the background to the Trust, and the work which they currently carry out. The site has a history of being used as a battleground, from the Civil War in the 1600s to use by USAF during the Cold War, and more recently as a site for the protest group Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. The whole site was decommissioned in the 1990s; the MoD sold it, and, after consultations, it was reinstated as a common. BBOWT manage it, together with Greenham and Crookham Common Commissions. Greenham Trust own the business park, purchased at a cost of £7,000,000, with a loan which has subsequently been paid off. The Business Park is used for many purposes, including an Art Gallery, and café. Funds for the Trust come from the subsidised rents of the

buildings, together with grants from West Berkshire District Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. Any community organisation within West Berkshire, or some areas of Basingstoke and Deane, for which there is a genuine need, can make application for matched funding to Greenham Trust. The average grant is between £3000-£5000, but larger amounts may be reviewed and considered for approval. The Trust also have Special Appeals – for example, the Coronavirus Relief Fund, or mental health support. This year, as part of the 25th Anniversary celebrations, a Youth Appeal has been set up. Trees are also being offered this year, of which this Council has already been in receipt, but may request more.

Ms James was thanked for her attendance, and for her very interesting and informative talk.

5. County Council reports

County Councillor D Mellor

Cllr Mellor reported on:

- Hampshire is the third largest shire in the country. 85% is rural. Population is c1.4M, as every year adds another 1000 residents into the over 85 category, it is aging and therein lies a problem for us as almost half of our annual expenditure in the County goes on Adult Social Care, an area where we set our standards high and where our options are few. Quite simply, the urge to release hospital beds is one example where HCC is expected to look after the problem; regrettably our bill for Social Care now exceeds £1Bn. And this impacts on other expenditure.
- Our budget for the next two years reflects a shortfall of some £80M; suffice to say the increase in Council Tax still leaves Hampshire with the second lowest shire council tax. To the future ,we now have some real inflation problems. We innovate to reduce the cost e.g using robots in care homes; building our own Extra Care homes to reduce dependency on high cost private sector; have our own joint recruitment operation (with Kent) for social/care workers and apprenticeships now to ensure good coverage in the future.
- Next on the expense side is of course Children's Services, largely focussed around the 480 or so schools we have in the County (7 in my division). Prior to COVID all the schools were rated as 'Good' by Ofsted although a couple of the schools did /do give concern but not on an education basis. Locally, there was an issue with the Hurst Leisure Centre- part of the The Hurst School – as the locations midweek daytime gym facility aimed at the more mature members of the community was restricted. Quite simply, there was an enormous black hole in the accounts that was getting worse by the day; the school wanted the facility returned to their use and subscriptions being paid were so far below market price/cost that following the membership collapse during COVID there was little alternative. Existing local authority facilities offered an alternative. The new school Head is eager to stop any decline in standards and HCC monitors closely. Other aspects of Children's Service; homes, fostering etc expanded and performance is a leader.
- Highways- Economy, Transport and Environment is involved with £300M+ of new road construction; from Brighton Hill to the M271 and A34 to improve connectivity and remove any congestion. Locally, I am pursuing inclusion of the A340 and possibly A339 for the 'North South' project with Reading Borough/Berks. It is held up as Basingstoke and Deane cannot yet finalise on where all the new housing is going to sit and also the plans to develop Junction 7 of the M3 as a warehouse complex and location for a new hospital. Even more locally HCC undertook full 'resilience' (effectively a complete new road surface) along the length of the Wolverton Road eclipsing some drainage problems and hopefully removing the need for any maintenance for a few years. The A340 was also similarly treated; prior to the recent storms and with traffic much reduced during the pandemic, potholes although still evident were repaired- staffing issues etc meant that they were actioned more slowly than wished as indeed were other minor jobs but all

emergencies were met. It may surprise some attending that the majority of repairs one sees on the roads in my division are due to utility issues.* we do however respond to several 'pothole' online reports in a methodical manner and perform as well as any shire in this respect.

- The biggest issue of course is Climate Change and everything has to be assessed for impact on Climate Change. HCC is well on its way to meeting the net zero target for the County by 2050; some challenge as although the County is 85% urban; although we can be self sufficient for domestic energy etc we have to consider points such as Hampshire having the world's second largest cruise terminal; Hampshire is home to Britain's armed forces; Hampshire (Fawley) houses the UK's largest pipeline; we have a lot of other industry not always synonymous with low energy etc . Still, doing well and reducing carbon by the month. HCC website is comprehensive and there are few shire doing better . To the future, there will of course be some more solar farms in the County; perhaps more onshore 'wind farms'. Every aspect of the new Local Transport Plan being presented in the Autumn will be relating to Climate Change. Electrification of all buses; EVCP's and Parking focus; more cycleways/walkways. Of interest is the new Bikeability scheme with the schools; training up some 9000 school students to ride properly. Ultimately there is an objective to reduce car usage in the County but with some c. 480000 journeys to work each working day, only a massive increase in bike usage and improved public transport will make an indent. Electric cars still need roads and places to park and recharge and that is a big challenge at the moment with trials using some 1200 points now in place in addition to the small local facilities as in North Tadley. As to whether the systems are to be ultimately developed by the fuel companies or large car park orientated companies such as the Supermarkets is one of the considerations. Car sales in the South reflected last month as the first where electric cars overtook fossil fuel vehicles in terms of sales; as to when they will be delivered is another matter !
- HCC has continued with a generous grants system for those in need; opened Community Pantries in many locations as well as continued with support to all charities through the centralised Community First section. Free School Meals/vouchers during holidays continues as well as subsidizing Holiday activities are now ongoing. Tadley /Baughurst has good employment statistics; a small amount of FSM vav other areas in the County/Borough. |IOf course current economic conditions with energy costs/ COL etc will mean there is no let up on demand for welfare.
- Public Transport/ during the pandemic of course the bus frequency for the No 2 was cut- with often no passengers on board off peak buses, the cut back was logical and supported. We are now back to a full service-0 odd bus cancellations due driver/COVID problems but nothing of concern. The service remains /high frequency /fast/clean/low emission and quality seating and although of note is a request for the re instatement of the service to Reading, this would be in line with any West Berks wishes. It can be explored; of interest has been the re instatement of a bus service from Fleet/Hartley Wintney to Reading justified by demand. There has been little demand in Baughurst for any Community Transport although good support for the likes of Basingstoke Neighbour care 'taxi' service, especially to help the older members of the community get to their nearest vaccination centre. I was pleased to help.
- HWRC; 3 years ago HCC had just paid another £180k to West Berks for permits to access Newtown Road. I was very involved in getting HCC to continue with this in the interests of the local community. In 2021, HCC , having consistently offered West Berks (as we do with Dorset and some other communities over the County borders) a reciprocal facility and because we had no financial justification nor had we availability of funds for such, HCC decided it could not continue. Alternative small sites were explored just off the A339; totally unsuitable and believe me the adverse reaction by local residents to having a tip so near to their residence would have been very negative based on initial

comments and as the Borough had previously turned down a planning application for development of one of the sites, it was logical not to continue with the exercise. What have we now; Wade Road operating at full speed with an excellent, now permanent, booking system allowing high frequency visit; still access for Baughurst residents to any of the 26 tips in the County; a facility still at Newtown Road (WB) at a cost of £7 for those who found the journey and cost of such to Wade Road prohibitive /too much although we now understand that West Berks access data reflects a figure of more than 50% below what they had estimated when the County was paying for the access; ...and other benefits such as access to Padworth tip in WB for the Tadley and Baughurst residents who prefer that. The Borough has reinstated the garden waste kerbside collection service and general feedback is that there is no longer an issue. Of note the West Berks residents can only use Newtown Road...not Reading etc.

- Future projects in hand.....On Street Parking /EVCP's are going to be a massive item in Tadley and to a lesser degree in Pamber. In respect of the latter, recharging at home has satisfied nearly all owners to date. Strategy expected later this year. Additionally, there is now a major "20mph review" underway, more driven by emissions as much as road safety and this will be completed in the Autumn. It will be evidence based and primarily is looking to see if there is any value in reducing in selected areas the current 30mph limit down to 20mph. Of course I am well aware of the input over the years- and the lack of accidents as well- by some members of the Baughurst community and some speed check data will no doubt be part of the evidence.

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As a County Councillor, I am assigned other duties as follows;

- 1/ Member of the Hampshire Pension Fund Board which also incorporates a position on the 'responsible investments' committee; a £10Bn fund with several members in Baughurst!
- 2/ Member of the Hampshire Isle of Wight Fire Rescue Services Authority
- 3/ Member of the Audit Committee
- 4 / Vice Chair of the Economy/Transport and Environment Select Cttee.

For the record, I am also one of the three Borough Councillors representing Tadley and Pamber.

As an aside, I responded to the questions posed by the somewhat limited members of the public at the meeting on the following matters;

- a/ Violet Lane; problems on the road surface etc resultant from diversion traffic caused by an emergency problem with a utility company
- b/ trees...volume affected by storm and also the County Council planting a million more as part of the 2050 vision and , more imminently, providing some trees for the Jubilee celebration.
- c/ Flytipping; HCC and B & D have been very successful with prosecutions leading to jail sentences; usual 'Man and Van' misbehaviour etc. Residents must be aware of the cost of clean up based on where the tipping is executed.

6. **Electors' Question time**

A resident raised the issue of the poor state of repair of Violet Lane. County Councillor D Mellor agreed to investigate the situation and report back.

8. **Charities' report**

Funds for the Sir George Brown charity remain good, at £614,228. Income has come from the sale of the original 4 almshouses left by Sir George Brown in the 17th century, the proceeds of which have been carefully reinvested. These monies should be spent on the 'needy of Wolverton'. Provision had been sought by the trustees for rural affordable housing on part of the site of Wolverton playing field, but the site does not apparently meet the required standards of

BDBC. A further application for a mix of affordable and market value housing is currently in place for land adjacent to 'The George and Dragon' country house pub at Wolverton Townsend.

9. Parish Council accounts

This year we raised our precept to £48985. On a Band D property, this meant an increase of approximately £1.10p per household per month. Precept requests for previous recent years were as follows:

2020	£48500
2021	£48985

Expenditure for the past year has been roughly divided as follows:

Recreation Grounds	Grass cutting, hedge cutting, tree pruning and felling	£28420
Pineapple field	Electricity, cleaning, maintenance, mowing, repairs, sports equipment, water charges	£633
General Administration	Subscriptions, postage and phone, hirings, Clerk's salary and allowances, office equipment	£31408
Chairman's allowance	Remembrance Day wreath	£40
Free 2p	For the benefit of the inhabitants of the area	
Highways and rights of way	Bus shelters, noticeboards, street signage	£150
Grants		£0
VAT	Which is reclaimed	£5634
Approximate total		£66285

Our income for the year is approximately £73,816 including the precept.

10. The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.