Notes for Parish Council minutes – meeting held via Zoom 10 December 2020

In attendance:

CD, GH, MMcC, TC, SBM, Gill Hill

1. Apologies – none.
2. Amendments to the September minutes were discussed and agreed, and a revised version was circulated to councillors after the meeting.
3. Declarations of interest – none
4. Matters arising:
   1. Stewart Bremner-Milne will look at the necessary repairs to the noticeboard after Christmas.
   2. A newsletter could be added to our new website, but announcements are being loaded onto the old website for the moment.
5. District Council Report (Gill Hill)
   1. Planning to support vulnerable people is underway.
   2. A Covid-19 testing centre is being set up in the car park in Woodford Way, and will be open very soon.
   3. All meetings will continue to take place on Zoom for the foreseeable future.
   4. A Public Works Board loan may be available for the weight restriction work (CD).
6. County update - no report
7. Treasurer’s report:
   1. MC still has the cheque books as there has been a hitch at the bank regarding the change of responsibility. SBM is following this up.
   2. A draft budget for the 2021-22 financial year was circulated by SBM before the meeting and was discussed, particularly comparing Crawley with other similar Parish Councils in WODC. Using precept data for 2018-19 and the 2011 census, Crawley is the 13th smallest parish for the number of households, 10th smallest for the number of residents and 8th cheapest for the precept per household.
   3. Although we received the £350 grass cutting grant in 2020-21, we should expect this to cease soon, and probably this year. Therefore to enable the parish council to continue to meet its estimated recurring expenditure from the precept it was proposed, and agreed, that it be raised to £2,100 for the 2021-22 financial year.
   4. Given the current situation with regard to the weight restriction work, it is unlikely that it will commence during the 2021-22 year.
8. Role of clerk:
   1. Sheena Derry joined the meeting and said she would be willing to undertake the secretarial aspects of the clerk’s role, but is less sure about the legal side of the role.
   2. CD explained there is free training available and offered to set up a Zoom meeting between Sheena, Keith Butler (WODC’s electoral officer) and Sheena to discuss.
9. Weight limits and traffic calming:
   1. A Zoom meeting was held on 3 November to discuss the current situation.
   2. Liam Walker has suggested Crawley and Minster Lovell could make a joint application but must have funds already in place for the work.
   3. A fund-raising project was launched in the village to raise loans, with 10% being gifted and interest has been noted from some individuals.
   4. Geoff Barrell has said that no s106 funding will be agreed until there has been a general assessment of weight limits in the whole local area, therefore our project must wait until this general assessment is done. MMcC has drafted a letter to all residents explaining the change. It was agreed this should be printed and distributed as before.
   5. MMcC has been trying to contact officers at OCC to discover the timescale for the general assessment and who is leading the review. Burford’s weight restriction is likely to be on an 18 month trial, and if it is found to be unjustified it may be removed and then we may not need to proceed with our project in Crawley. It is likely to be at least 12 to 18 months before we know any more.
10. Footpath outside cottages on Leafield Road – we have no spare funds for this at present. SBM will email Liam Walker to ask what monies he has available to help with this project.
11. Crawley Inn:
    1. Concern was expressed regarding caravans/mobile homes parked opposite Crawley Inn which appear to have power and water connected and seem to be staying there long-term, which is in breach of planning regulations.
    2. CD will draft a letter to WODC formally requesting them to look at the situation.
12. Future meeting dates, all on Zoom until further notice:

* 18 March 2021
* 13 May 2021 (Parish Meeting)
* 24 June 2021
* 23 September 2021
* 09 December 2021

1. AOB
   1. CD asked whether drains and gullies in the village have been cleared, and was told they had, although problems still occur. Gill H says this work is on a 4 year rolling programme, which is insufficient for a village like Crawley as all roads go downhill to the village centre and flooding occurs. MMcC said that the drainage system has failed so we may need new drains, but this is a major project, and we need the involvement of a highways inspector to look at the problem with us, and Liam W’s involvement may be needed too. MMcC will take this forward.
   2. It has been requested that the names on the war memorial should be cleaned. The War Memorial Trust can help. CD will take this forward and will consult a stonemason in the first instance.
   3. Thames Water’s pumping operations in Dry Lane are noisy at night and are obstructing traffic. Work is due to start on 14 December to line the sewers to prevent groundwater leaking into them – if this is successful then the pumping operations should no longer be necessary.
   4. James Walker has agreed to modernise and run our website – it was agreed we should ask him to do this, and it was noted that he has already made a promising start for us.