



ARDINGLY PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk: Bernadette Cox
c/o The Post Office, 37 High Street, Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6TB
Tel: 01444 226 209 Email: ardinglypc@hotmail.co.uk

Minutes of the Remote Extraordinary Ardingly Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 26th May at 6pm on the Microsoft Teams Platform

Present

Councillor D. Stutchbury (Chairman)
Councillor C. Hotblack (Vice Chairman)
Councillor J. Aloof
Councillor P. Burr
Councillor R. Chalk
Councillor B. Gass
Councillor J. Horsman
Councillor K. James
Councillor J. James
Councillor B. Strutton
Councillor G. Taylor

In Attendance

Mrs. B Cox (Parish Clerk)
Anne Bott (SSALC)

1566.1 Public Questions

There were nine members of the public present and the following questions/matters were raised.

Will Meldrum questioned the Parish Council on their recently circulated SA25 Survey, in particular the Parish Council's role in the development of SA25. The Chairman gave a brief overview of the DPD process and explained that all responses including those from the Parish Council are sent to the inspector at government level who has the final say as to the allocation for SA25. Will asked if the Parish Council's agenda in terms of SA25 was to support a failing business (the Showground) or to protect the best interest of the village. The Chairman denied that the Parish Council were looking to support a failing business.

Margaret Meldrum raised the issue of the recent Tennis Court closure she acknowledged that she was aware that there was work being done to get them cleaned and open but asked how long this work was anticipated to take as she was considering joining Balcombe Tennis Club so she could play. Will Meldrum asked who decided they were unsafe. The Chairman explained they were told by the Tennis Club that they aren't safe. The Clerk reassured the Meldrum's that she intends to have multiple quotes available for the June 2nd Meeting as the Parish Council has heard this issue is important to the village and once a quote has been improved and the works completed the courts will be open very soon after. The Chairman suggested that potentially they would be open in the next two weeks.

Fiona Rocks raised the issue of the reservoir, she explained there had been cars parked all along College Road and West Hill during the good weather and that the reservoir had been so busy that social distancing can only be impossible, she felt the Parish Council should be considering these issues.

It was agreed that the Clerk will liaise with South East Water to see how these issues are being addressed by them and to confirm when the Car Park will be open as it was felt this will ease the traffic issue. It was also agreed the Clerk will contact Highways and look to have a Parking Attendant allocated to West Hill.

<p>1567</p>	<p>Procedural Matters 1567.1 There were no apologies for absence 1567.2 There were no declarations of interests 1567.3 The Chairman proposed that due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under agenda items 1568.3, 1568.4 and 1568.5 matters of a legal nature/affecting staff/ sensitive commercial nature – the press and public should be excluded from this part of the meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Chalk.</p>	
<p>1568</p>	<p>General Matters 1568.1 To approve the costs for the support provided by Anne Bott (SSALC) at this Extraordinary Meeting Councillor Taylor asked that it be noted prior to the vote that Anne Bott is a neutral advisor, and also Deputy CEO of SSALC and has the benefit of legal expertise, previous employment as a Monitoring Officer and is fully aware of the issues to be discussed. The Parish Council unanimously RESOLVED via roll call vote of all Councillors to APPROVE the costs for the supported to be provided by Anne Bott for the purposes of this meeting. 1568.2 To review and approve the renewal quote for the Parish Council Insurance Policy The Clerk asked if all Councillors had received and read the Insurance Renewal Documents and it was confirmed they had. The Chairman proposed that the Parish Council accept the 3 Year Fixed Rate option and a vote was taken. The Parish Council unanimously RESOLVED via roll call of all Councillors to ACCEPT the 3 Year fixed rate insurance renewal option. The Clerk excused herself after this item as she felt she had a conflict of interest with the remaining items on the agenda.</p>	

1568.3 To discuss and agree how to “handle” the solicitor fees incurred prior to the formal engagement of the solicitors by the Parish Council

A member sought advice on interests and AB provided guidance on both the Code of Conduct and pre-determination/bias.

Cllr Hotblack advised a non-financial interest and indicated he would abstain from voting. Cllr Chalk did not vote.

Members considered and discussed the reasons set out in the Confidential Report relating to this Agenda Item (produced by Cllr Kathryn James).

The Parish Council RESOLVED having taken account of the information included in the Confidential Report and further advice received the Council agreed, in the overall interests of the Council, to retrospectively authorise the settlement of Surrey Hills Solicitors fees and charges for the period 20th-30th April 2020 of £975.00 plus VAT.

1568.4 To discuss and agree the process to be followed in relation to the grievance procedure

Members considered the Confidential Report attached to this Agenda Item. Cllr Hotblack declared a non-financial interest and abstained from voting Cllr Derek Stutchbury and Cllr Rowena Chalk did not vote.

Ardingly Parish Council RESOLVED –

- (i) To adopt the revised Grievance Policy including the option to appoint an external hearing panel, if appropriate;
- (ii) To agree appointment of HR Services Partnership in accordance with the terms set out in the attached Confidential Report;
- (iii) To appoint a Grievance Committee in accordance with the terms set out in the attached Confidential Report;
- (iv) To address the fees and charges under Agenda Item 1568.5.

Ardingly Parish Council further RESOLVED

To appoint Cllr Kathryn James, Cllr Barry Gass and Cllr James Horsman as members of the Council's appointed Grievance Committee.

1568.5 To discuss and agree the need for an increase in the current agreed ceiling for external professional fees in relation to the grievance process

Members considered whether the level of Professional fees currently contained in its budget was sufficient to obtain legal and other advice, as appropriate, to ensure the Council acts in accordance with legal requirements.

Members agreed to (i) accept the quote by HR Services for services as set out in the Confidential Report attached to Agenda Item 1568.4 (ii) settle all fees and charges due to Surrey Hills Solicitors from 20th April – 30th April and from 1st May to date and (iii) increase its Professional Fees budget by £10,000 for support in seeking professional advice, as appropriate.

