

SARRATT PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE SARRATT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN SARRATT VILLAGE HALL – TUESDAY 10th October 2023

Present: Cllr Sarah Dobson – Chair
Cllr Angela Coakley – Vice Chair
Cllr Simon Diggins – Highways
Cllr Michael Lowry – Policy and Resources
Cllr Lee Farman - Planning
Cllr James Alder – Deputy Planning

In attendance: 8 members of the public
District Cllr Philip Hearn

23/236 APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Apologies were received in advance from Cllr Garvey.

23/237 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

23/238 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A member of the public advised they would like to ask a question relating to Fir Trees, Dawes Lane and was happy for this to be taken under the Planning section of the meeting.

23/239 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the last Council Meeting on the 12 September 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting. There were no matters arising.

Proposed: Cllr Alder; Seconded: Cllr Lowry

23/240 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES WHO HAVE ATTENDED MEETINGS ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr Farman attended a meeting between himself, Tony Bond and Paul Phipps regarding the land at Fir Tees, Dawes Lane. To be covered under Planning.

Cllr Dobson and Cllr Garvey attended a meeting with the Forestry Commission. To be covered under Environment.

The Clerk attended the Joint Parishes Meeting at Three Rivers, and provided her report before the meeting. Matters covered included:

- A presentation from David Lloyd, Herts Police and Crime Commissioner, who commented that Parishes should pay for their own PCSO by increasing their Precept. Council noted that some of the other Parishes already did this, and traditionally Sarratt had always shared a

PCSO with Abbott's Langley or Croxley. It was also noted the Clerk had already established a good relationship with the current PCSOs.

David Lloyd also advised there is little 'high harm' or very active crime situations in this area, but across Herts there are five burglaries a day. There is an increase in petty crime, but again, there are very low levels in this area.

It was also recommended PCSOs are invited to Parish Council meetings.

- Forthcoming special events:
 - Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the D Day landings next year – 6th June. Many areas are having gas powered beacons. SPC considered this but felt this would be too expensive.
 - Chorleywood – Halloween “terrifying trail” on the Common
 - Abbots Langley – Fireworks 3 November
 - 30 November – TRDC Christmas Lights and Carol Concert
 - Watford – end December Winter Fun Fair – Santa's Grotto – Entertainer
 - TRDC Winter Fair, Christmas lights, Band in Watersmeet from 24th to 26th November

23/241 CLERK'S ACTIVITIES

Clerk's report of activities – September

Sign of the Times.	This job remains to be completed. The weather has delayed efforts to erect the finger posts.	Clerk/AW	Interim payment made. Andrew Whitewood, Parish Warden and Nick Mortimer to undertake the work.
Tidying up the overgrown signage	Although I still await TPO permissions, we can take some remedial measures	clerk	Andrew Whitewood and Parish Warden – will do some minor work to free signs from being obscured – bus stop larger overhangs
TPO'd tree works	Application made for work to the Willow at Morton's Pond Also trees at the bus stop	Clerk	Permission received for the Willow. Quotation for this work requested.
Fallen trees Commonwood	There are four trees, either completely fallen or riding on the tree next to them in Commonwood.	Clerk	Quotation for this work requested. However, some of this work will be dependent on the recommendations from the Forestry Commission on the 10-year Woodland Management Plan.
Ash Die Back Assessment TEN YEAR WOODLAND MANAGEMENT	There are a number of trees within Commonwood suffering from Ash die back and are in a variety of states of decay	Clerk	Meeting on the 9 October concluded we need to commission a new Tree Assessment survey – hopefully this can be done more cost effectively than previously.

Parking at Dell Cottages	Multi car ownership of one resident causing difficulties for others	Clerk Cllr Diggins	Photos. A letter will be written asking for consideration when parking to both residents and the safety of children trying to use the pavement adjacent to the Cricketers Pub.
KGV signage	Following complaints of dog fouling	Clerk	Free signage has been sourced by Tom Shurville and will be added to the front, rear gates and the fence of the tennis club.
Grants	Re-applying to the National Lottery and Veolia	Clerk	Re-applied to the Lottery Will not complete the application to Veolia as it is too time consuming
Community Page in Spotlight	I am trying to instigate a community page in Spotlight for commencement in November issue – this to include complaints, issues and good news	Clerk	This could include a regular spot for New Road Surgery – this is to be discussed with the Spotlight editors and Holy Cross.
Meeting with Herts ROW	Met with Julian Thornton re ROW works and New Hall Farm	Clerk	Footpath volunteers are feeding back for the Winter Maintenance schedule. Placement of kissing gates – perhaps at any point where a ROW alights onto a roadway. New Hall Farm installing electric gates – but will ensure there are passing places for pedestrians and horses
Grants	Received two requests so far	Clerk	Scheduled to send reminders this week for the 20 October cut off date.
Information Board for the Pump & North End of the Green	Initial design quote from the River Chess designer was very expensive	Clerk	Now working with Mike Edmund on sourcing the historical data and potentially the design.

PLANNING

23/242 TO RECEIVE THE LEAD COUNCILLORS REPORT

Cllr Farman took questions from the member of the public in attendance regarding Fir Trees, Dawes Lane. She asked why she was prevented from selling her land to an open market. Cllr Farman explained that many people's land exists with covenants upon them, however, this does

not prevent their sale or development. It has to be borne in mind but does not present a barrier to moving on.

Cllr Farman pointed out that planning laws are changing and that there are decisions being taken by TRDC that are surprising. The Clovercourt decision, for example, effectively ignored development on Green Belt and an area of designated importance to nature and biodiversity.

TRDC's existing Local Plan has expired and therefore they do not have a 5 year supply of land.

- SPC noted that the Fir Trees site is effectively a brownfield site within the village due to its past use and current state.
- The Parish would be broadly supportive, in principle, to the residential development of Fir Trees subject to the application complying with the Neighbourhood Plan policies and notes that it is likely that the two traveller pitches would need to be included in any application. SPC would not be able to provide any specific response until it sees a submitted detailed application.
- SPC recognises that if a suitable housing option is not achieved that some other potential future outcomes for this site may be less desirable for the Parish.

Cllr Farman advised the Neighbourhood Plan has received an initial review by the External Examiner who has identified some amendments she deems necessary before she can approve the plan. She has therefore paused her examination to allow the working group to address these changes and they hope to submit an updated version to the External Examiner by mid November for her to confirm the changes meet her requirements. The plan will then need to go out for a further Reg 16 consultation at District Level before going back to the External Examiner for her formal review and hopefully approval in January, ready for a Parish Referendum in February. TRDC have already confirmed they will pay for an out of cycle referendum, so hopefully this can go ahead then and not be delayed till the local elections in May.

23/243 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- [Demolition of existing conservatory, single storey rear extension and existing rear chimney and construction of single storey rear extension; internal alterations and alterations to fenestration.](#)

Great Sarratt Hall Cottage, The Green, Sarratt, WD3 4PD - 23/1561/FUL

SPC: No objection. We encourage the applicant to use the opportunity of these works to significantly improve the energy efficiency of the dwelling.

- [Demolition of existing outbuilding with garage and construction of replacement outbuilding with garage.](#)

Wheeler's Cottage, The Green, Sarratt, WD3 6BJ - 23/1517/FUL

SPC: No objection. We encourage the applicant to exceed the building regulations energy efficiency requirements for this development.

- [Listed Building Consent: Reinstatement of boundary wall and timber gate](#)

1 Church End Cottages, Church Lane, Sarratt, WD3 6HE - 23/1507/LBC

SPC: We strongly support this application and request that the LPA make it easy for any potential future additional protection elements to be added to this site to help prevent car accidents causing harm to these listed buildings.

- [Certificate of Lawfulness Proposed Development: Replacement of the existing play equipment.](#)

King George V Playing Fields, George V Way, Sarratt - 23/1512/CLPD

As SPC is the applicant, we cannot comment on this one.

- [Construction of single storey rear extension and removal of rear dormer window with associated internal alterations.](#)
Cottage, Great Westwood, Bucks Hill, WD4 9AD - 23/1179/FUL
SPC: No objection on the basis that is a small extension that normally would be allowed under permitted development. We do note that there have been a number of additions to dwellings on this site, raising some potential concerns that this could lead to overdevelopment when considered as a whole.
- [Listed Building Consent: Construction of single storey rear extension and removal of rear dormer window with associated internal alterations.](#)
Cottage, Great Westwood, Bucks Hill, WD4 9AD - 23/1180/LBC
SPC: No objection on the basis that this dwelling does not appear to be as historically significant as other buildings on this site and it is a small extension that matches the existing building design and look. We do note that there have been a number of additions to dwellings on this site, raising some potential concerns that this could lead to overdevelopment when considered as a whole.

23/244 PLANNING DECISIONS

Recent TRDC decisions:

- [Demolition of two existing buildings and construction of a new single storey detached building to provide replacement crew quarters and shop including associated hardstanding and landscaping](#)
Lees Wood Scout Camp Fir Tree Hill Chandlers Cross Hertfordshire 23/1278/FUL
SPC: No objection on the basis of the small increase in footprint is justified by very special circumstances. We support the development of this community facility and support their efforts to source some materials onsite, improve the openness off the site, future plans for this building to become off grid and continue rewilding activities.

TRDC: Approved

- [Part Retrospective: Change of use of part of existing barn from Agriculture to Residential \(Use Class C3\).](#)
Ravenswood Farm Church Lane Sarratt Rickmansworth Hertfordshire WD3 6HL 23/1078/RSP
SPC: We strongly object to this application on the basis that it effectively creates a new dwelling in a Green Belt location and would extend the inhabited boundary of the village.

TRDC: Refused

- [Variation of Condition 2 \(plan numbers\) pursuant to planning permission 21/2234/FUL \(Demolition of the existing dwelling and construction of a replacement four-bedroom dwelling with car parking, landscaping and associated works\) to include replacement of gutter, increase in width of chimney, provision of front portico and plant room to basement level, external materials including render, internal alterations and alterations to fenestration.](#)

Corner House Redhall Lane Chandlers Cross Rickmansworth Hertfordshire WD3 4LX
23/1192/FUL | Received: Mon 17 Jul 2023 | Validated: Mon 17 Jul 2023 | Status: Decided

SPC: No objection

TRDC: Approved

- [Listed Building Consent: Variation of Condition 2 \(plan numbers\) and 3 \(Materials\) pursuant to planning permission 12/0818/LBC \(Rear extension to museum barn to provide a garden room and erection of detached gardeners store\) to change the materials of consented extension](#)

Great Westwood Bucks Hill Kings Langley Hertfordshire 23/1167/LBC

SPC: No objection

TRDC: Approved

- [Variation of Conditions 2 \(plan numbers\) and 3 \(Materials\) pursuant to planning permission 12/0816/FUL \(Rear extension to museum barn to provide a garden room and erection of detached gardeners store\) to change the materials of consented extension](#)

Great Westwood Bucks Hill Kings Langley Hertfordshire 23/1166/FUL

SPC: No objection

TRDC: Approved

- [Infilling of natural depression/re-profiling of field with soil from construction of attenuation pond, construction of a temporary access from north of development site onto Little Green Lane to facilitate access for attenuation pond construction and amendment to the details/design of the attenuation pond.](#)

Land North Of Little Green Lane Killingdown Farm Little Green Lane Croxley Green Hertfordshire 23/0319/FUL

SPC: Objection. Object on the basis of what seems an unjustifiable activity on an open space in Green Belt with no special circumstances to override disturbance to Green Belt. We are also concerned about the impact the proposed works will have on biodiversity of the site and additional potential consequences.

TRDC: Approved

23/245 PLANNING ENFORCEMENTS

A full list of the current TRDC Enforcement Cases can be found on the SPC website.

23/246 PLANNING APPEALS

Cllr Farman advised there was no further update on the current Appeals:

- [APP/P1940/W/22/3311477](#) / [APP/P1940/W/22/3311479](#) - Burlington Property Group appeal by inquiry – in progress
- [APP/P1940/X/22/3302179](#) – Ramilies – in progress
- [APP/P1940/D/23/3316019](#) - The Old Dairy, Micklefield Hall – in progress
- [APP/P1940/D/23/3314390](#) - 3 The Briars (side extension) – in progress

It was noted that the formal site visit on 2 November for the Burlington Appeal will not be an opportunity for SPC or parishioners to 'lobby' the Inspector and residents should be aware of this.

ENVIRONMENT

23/247 TO RECEIVE AN ENVIRONMENT REPORT

As there is no Environment Councillor at present, Cllr Dobson asked if there were any matters for consideration. There were none.

23/248 RECENT MEETING OF THE 10-YEAR WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Cllrs Dobson and Lowry met representatives of HCC Countryside Management Team (Andrew Taylor) and the Forestry Commission (Orri Steven and Gareth Biggins) at Commonwood on 9 October to discuss the 10-year Woodland Management Plan. Andrew assisted SPC in being eligible for a grant of £1,500 for completion of the plan and submitted the plan on our behalf to the Forestry Commission. Johnny Ball is our local Woodland Officer at the FC, but due to his current workload, Orrie is reviewing the plan on his behalf. He was impressed by the diversity of habitat in Commonwood, but noted there is a great deal of Ash Die Back and this ought to be treated as a separate issue to general woodland management. There is a red zone (within a tree length from

the roadside), and the trees within this posing a risk to public safety need to be addressed. Selective clearing of taller trees should be carried out to allow light to penetrate the canopy encouraging undergrowth. SPC could sell good timber obtained in this way to help finance the tree work, which at ca £500 per tree, means implementing the Woodland Management Plan will be costly and not possible within its annual budget each year. Orri will send SPC comments following his review of the plan. SPC can then submit a further iteration of the plan, but this does not mean going back to the start of the process again. Once the FC has approved the plan they will issue felling licenses for the work to be undertaken. This can be done by FC approved contractors which the HCC Countryside Management Team can help source. An approved plan will also enable SPC to apply for grants to pay for executing various parts of the plan. SPC can also then claim the £1,500 for completing the plan. Orri also noted that as the last Tree Risk Assessment Survey was completed in 2019 SPC should arrange an update. SPC will seek to achieve this at a lower cost than in 2019.

23/249 5 YEAR LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Deferred to the next meeting when Cllr Garvey is present.

SUSTAINABILITY

23/250 TO RECEIVE THE LEAD COUNCILLORS REPORT

Cllr Garvey submitted in advance of the meeting covered the following:

- Meeting held with Alex Laurie (TRDC Tree Officer) at the Dawes Lane, Downer Drive crossroads, and he agreed that TRDC would supply and plant 2 extra trees to replace the 2 that have died.
- Chiltern Society have agreed that their ranger, Nick, plus some extras, will do the work at Morton's pond for us, for no charge!!! Details to follow.
- Approx one year on, the new fruit trees on the Parish allotment, funded by the Tree Council, are thriving, and have been mulched by interns from Mission EmployABLE. The large overgrown green gage and the other existing fruit trees have also been pruned and mulched.
- Roger Dudley has supported funding a booklet/leaflet and signage for the King Charles III Coronation Walk with the £1000 raised by from the village Coronation Event last May. He has suggested an inaugural walk as a way of drawing it to peoples' attention.

HIGHWAYS

23/251 TO RECEIVE THE LEAD COUNCILLORS REPORT

Cllr Diggins reported on the recent fatal accident on Sarratt Road, advising that at this stage it would not be appropriate to comment on the cause or circumstances leading to the accident. There has still been no come back from HCC Highways on the recording of incidents at the Coltspring bend, or further action to address the issue. Council were supportive of the residents imaginative use of fairy lights on the bend to create an illuminated Chevron. Cllr Dobson commented that the official chevron sign seen on the approach from Sarratt was actually quite small and could HCC Highways not install a larger sign. It was noted it's important highway instruction signs must not be obscured by bushes etc, so that they are visible and this is the responsibility of HCC Highways, but if necessary we could ask our Parish Warden to tackle this. Speed reduction signage must be provided for Coltspring Corner, and although it would be preferable that this would be minimal, it is essential.

23/252 PARKING ON THE GREEN

It was reiterated that a letter-drop to all homes and cars parking on the verges, along the service road adjacent to The Green, must be made again, to prevent further damage.

23/253 SPEED RESTRICTIONS PROPOSALS

After extensive discussion, Councillors agreed to support a blanket 30 mph speed limit throughout the Parish. This will require a Road Traffic Order to be raised with HCC Highways, which can take 18 months to come into effect. Cllr Diggins will progress this. It was also agreed to purchase some advisory '20 IS PLENTY' signage for particular spots, such as the stretch of road in front of the School and Village Shop. These could also be offered to residents to use on their verges and wheelie bins. The Clerk will obtain some quotes on '20 IS PLANETY' posters.

Cllr Farman asked if we can find any data on speeds recorded on The Green by the Police during their recent speed monitoring exercise. The Clerk was also requested to re-activate the data download from the Vehicle Activated Signs at either end of the Green.

23/254 CONVERSATION WITH COUNTY CLLR PHIL WILLIAMS ON VARIOUS HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Cllr Dobson spoke our County Councillor Phil Williams, who is also the Lead Councillor for Highways at County level about the following issues:

- Car parking on the grass at the Green end of Alexandra Road, particularly by Thrive Contractors – Cllr Williams is happy that this area is bordered by short wooden posts which he may be able to fund from his Locality Budget and will speak to Erulp with regard to getting approval to act.
- Blocked drain at Morton's Pond and flooding at 25 to 29 Church Lane – Clerk / Cllr Diggins to log these on the HCC Highways portal.
- Speeding along Deadman's Ash Lane – it was agreed to re-evaluate the signage issue as some are missing and some obscured. Cllr Dobson to notify Cllr Williams.

POLICY AND RESOURCES

23/255 TO RECEIVE THE LEAD COUNCILLORS REPORT – Q2 RESULTS REPORT

Cllr Lowry commented that SPC actuals for the half year at 29 September totalled £49,168. Due to useful receipts this quarter, our Actuals against Budget are at 49.8% - very much on track as we are half way through the year.

23/256 BANK TRANSACTIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2023 ...£13,159.89

This month had three particularly large amounts to be paid. £3000 was paid to Sign of the Times as an interim payment (£2,500 remaining) for the fingerposts; £2,500 which represents an unexpected demand from TRDC's legal department for a contribution to legal fees associated with the Deed of Variation work on KGV. There was also the insurance renewal of £2,500 – although this actually represents a slight decrease.

On the receipts side, SPC received the half year precept amount of £53,106 which appeared earlier than usual this year. This brought our balance to £98,171 and SPC was able to transfer £10,000 into the long-term savings account.

The bank transactions for September were reviewed and endorsed.

Proposed: Cllr Farman; Seconded: Cllr Diggins

23/257 GRANT REQUESTS FY 24/25

SPC has received two applications so far – from the Days Alms Houses for £2000 for their maintenance fund, and from Mothers and Toddlers for £900 for rental of their meeting venue. A reminder to other grant applicants has gone out in Spotlight and is on the website along with the application form.

23/258 FY 24/25 FIRST DRAFT BUDGET

Overviewing all the cost centres, it was Cllr Lowry's consideration that costs will increase by 2.5% across the board in the coming year. Although inflation is forecast to be as low as 1%, it is felt that this cannot be taken as a certainty. Until this year, SPC has not raised its precept, and has found itself short of funds. It is a generally rule of thumb to allow small annual increases in the precept

to absorb any underlying inflationary activity. Cllr Lowry proposes an increase in the precept of 1%. Councillors commented that they would rather Cllr Lowry raised the level of increase, rather than being overly cautious. Cllr Farman commented that SPC would react to changing circumstances.

23/258 INITIAL DRAFT – 5 YEAR LONG TERM PLAN

Cllr Lowry has allowed a 2.5% increase per annum in expenditure across the cost centres. He has increased the budgeted amount for maintenance of the playground. In years 2 and 3 the increase will be 2.5% and in years 4 and 5 – 3%. SPC do not want to be in 'the red' although we can call on our reserves of £68,000. Reserves are normally kept at 50% of the precept. Cllrs asked whether we should be more aggressively increasing the reserve, but on the whole, breaking even was a worthy aim.

ACTION: Can we look forward, to anticipate large expenses over the next two years?

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS UPDATE

23/260 TO RECEIVE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REED'S REPORT

The report was given by District Cllr Phil Hearn. District Cllr Ciaran Reed will attend as many days as possible of the Burlington Appeal reserve days on the 31st Oct and 1/2/3rd Nov. The TRDC Conservative Councillors spoke to Gagan Mohindra, our MP, who suggested that should the Appeal go against TRDC/Sarratt, there are routes to challenge the decision – however, Cllr Reed felt that these would be very expensive. Cllr Hearn also commented that HCC should be remediating the signage in Deadmans Ash.

ACTION: The Clerk to provide both Cllr Reed and Cllr Diggins with the details of the resident in Deadman's Ash who raised the speeding issue.

The development of the car park at the rear of Croley Train Station continues.

23/261 KGV DEED OF VARIATION UPDATE

SPC has been required to pay £2,500 to TRDC for the legal fees associated with the Deed of Variation. Without this payment they refused to do any further work on the Agreement. Cllr Dobson will chase TRDC if an updated version of the Agreement is not forthcoming in the next couple of weeks.

23/262 KGV PLAYGROUND UPDATE

Cllr Dobson shared the final design of the playground, which has been updated to ensure the colour scheme (lots of green) is appropriate for a rural location. The full cost of the project, with all issues addressed (colouring, accessibly assured etc.) is £193,000 which includes £32,000 VAT. TRDC have awarded a grant of £170,000, which has been added to £10,000 from SPC of their own CIL funds. TRDC also provides a 10% buffer of £17,000 for any cost increases post awarding of the grant. SPC should hear imminently the outcome of the application to the National Lottery for a further £10k, but if unsuccessful the buffer from TRDC will mean the full cost can be covered. SPC should hear back by the 9 November on the application for a Certificate of Lawful Development, and if approved, works should commence early in the new year.

23/263 SARRATT REMEMBRANCE SERVICES

Andrew Whitewood will ensure the 'Tommy' WW I statue is installed by the War Memorial a week before Remembrance Day. SPC will be laying a wreath at the service on the Green on Saturday 11 November. The Remembrance Service at Holy Cross is on Sunday 12 November.

23/264 CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk has received a request for a wedding to use sparklers in the Dell. Council agreed to this, subject to buckets of sand /water being provided for the spent sparklers, which must be cleared away. SPC will reserve the right to make a charge for any clean up work it is required to do post the event if not completed by the wedding organisers.

23/265 COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

There were none.