

Shere Parish Council



FULL COUNCIL MINUTES Wednesday 5th July 2023

Present: Councillors R Davey, C Carlisle, P Tompkins, M Keeble, G Reffo, B Harrap, J Cross, W Esplen and J Hutton

Guildford Borough Council (GBC) Councillor D Newson and Surrey County Council (SCC) and Guildford Borough Council (GBC) Councillor Bob Hughes (with apologies for arriving part way through)

Clerk & RFO S Hoyland. Nine members of the public

23.43 To accept apologies and reasons for absence in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s 85(1) (LGA 1972) Councillors M Taylor-Cotter, P Carter, B Andrews and R Smith. Guildford Borough Council (GBC) Councillor & Surrey County Councillor Bob Hughes gave apologies as he was going to arrive late.

23.44 Approval of the Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on [8th June 2023](#) Approved and signed as a Correct Record

23.45 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) Declarations by Councillors on any of the agenda items below in accordance with The Localism Act 2011, ss.27-34 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012. (SI 2012 No. 1464) – **None**

Item 23.50 (a) A short update was given on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Credits from Leigh Thornton Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) was brought forward on the agenda. [This presentation was given:](#)

The following questions were asked and answered:

- Q. Won't the rigid formular lead to criticism of the system, as what is being measured is natural and imperfect and will this undermine the validity of the system?
- A. A rigid formular is not ideal to measure an organic process and could be abused but it is the best system at the moment and is constantly evolving. Metric 4 is the current system and that is due to be upgraded shortly
- Q. Councillor J Cross clarified the system
- A. The money received for the credits is no longer going to be ring fenced to deliver the habitat gain but the landowner is responsible for delivering the gain and must show progress over 5-year intervals
- Q. What enforcement would there be?
- A. The enforcement would be by the local authority in the same way other enforcement takes place but could also be outsourced to other professionals such as the SWT
- Q. Are there different levels of biodiversity and distinctiveness
- A. Yes, there are different levels of distinct habitat – the highest level cannot be destroyed by developers. The cost of the credits depends on demand and scale. The Environment Bank could look at land and lease it off the parish council, manage the biodiversity and credits and pay an annual rent. Any lease given for the land would have to address the legal position of the BNG credits. The council could keep the land and pay a person/company to manage it. It could be good to sell some credits in November and invest the capital.
- Q. How would the credits be advertised?

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- A. From November, they will be added to the platform and effect become a brokering platform. The aim would be for the credits to be bought at a local level.
- Q. Will the development in Guildford or Wisley need the credits?
- A. Larger developments have less demand as they can create habitat on the site and the developments are often built on low quality habitat.

Leigh Thornton recommended waiting until November and, in the meantime, would amend our current metric on Peaslake Farm to Metric 4 for the Parish Council.

Chairman R Davey thanked Leigh Thornton for his presentation and he left the meeting.

Item 23.49 Broadband for the Surrey Hills (B4SH) was brought forward on the agenda. [This presentation](#) was given.

Councillor James Hutton arrived 8.12pm

Surrey County Council (SCC) and Guildford Borough Council (GBC) Councillor Bob Hughes 8.20pm

The following questions were asked and answered:

- Q. A member of the public was impressed with the service
- A. B4SH only want to dig once so they would leave a connection at every boundary should the houseowner change their mind or new owners want it. It was a community lead company and wanted to do the work in partnership with residents. For work across gardens, they would either make a small charge or the householder would dig the trench.
- Q. What happens with the telephone?
- A. The same number could be transferred and it would come along the fibre instead of a copper wire.
- Q. What is the cost of a connection? And do you need a gig up and down?
- A. £45 per month and that cost has not increased. How much you need depends on the demographic of your household. A gig up and down means that multiple users can be active with no slowing of speed. The broadband speed is also a major factor for potential house buyers. It is also future proofed and can be upgraded if and when required.
- Any surplus cash will be used on the community where the cabling has been installed.
- Q. How deep are the cables in a garden?
- A. It would be over a spade depth and can be as deep as necessary.
- Q. Can installation be from other directions other than the back of the property?
- A. Yes, it is possible but each connection would have to be looked at.
- Q. Any problems can be repaired easily using advanced diagnostic equipment – no call centre involved you ring through to the people who can fix it.
- Q. Can it go under paving and can the Wi-Fi inside the house be boosted?
- A. Yes, it would be able to go under paving and the signal can be boosted using normal methods and they can recommend a company.

Chairman Roy Davey thanked them for coming along and said the parish council would promote them and circulate the contact details.

23.46 Brief Report from Surrey County Council (SCC) Councillor on matters from Surrey County Council affecting Shere Parish. The following items were reported by Surrey County Council (SCC) and Guildford Borough Council (GBC) Councillor Bob Hughes:

- There was another planning application at Kings Court. It was on the agenda for Guildford Borough council on the 19th July 2023 and SCC & GBC Councillor B Hughes would be speaking against it.
- The Highways engineer was still working on the points brought up at the site meeting in Holmbury St Mary but it was a complicated area and they were trying to find solutions
- The rolling closure of Horsham road was being investigated as it would mean no buses for the two-month period and Councillor Hughes hoped to find an alternative to a full road closure.
- Yellow lines for Shere are still being pushed forward

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- The planning application for Winterfold Forest was for filming that had already taken place and was late due to a mistake that it was sent to Waverley Borough Council. It was confirmed that Shere Parish Council would like reinstatement and enforcement if necessary. Councillor G Reffo asked for any correspondence between the Clerk and interested parties over the filming. The Clerk replied there was no relevant correspondence as communication was at a short notice Teams meeting but agreed to check for anything relevant.
- Councillor G Reffo asked SCC & GBC Councillor B Hughes to investigate the missing Peaslake Sign for Walking Bottom, which highways has and the reinstatement of the white lines on the sharp bend by the access to Peaslake School, which had been requested and not completed. It was **Noted** that the shared path on Peaslake Lane also required reinstatement but SCC Highways had marked this as a priority 4 and no date had been given on when the work would be undertaken.

23.47 Brief Report from Guildford Borough Council (GBC) Councillors on matters from Guildford Borough Council affecting Shere Parish

Councillor D Newson gave the [attached report](#) and also gave an update on EV Charging along the kerbside and agreed to send the following link for information: [Electric vehicles and our on-street chargepoint rollout - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/electric-vehicles)

23.48 Questions or requests from members of the public to the Council in relation to the business on the agenda or future items for discussion. It was **Agreed** that questions could be asked during the item on Peaslake Farm Fields

23.49 Broadband for the Surrey Hills (B4SH) was discussed earlier in the agenda

23.50 Peaslake Farm Fields:

- a) A short update was given on Biodiversity Net Gain Credits from Leigh Thornton, Surrey Wildlife Trust earlier in the agenda
- b) To [review research undertaken into uses for Peaslake Farm Fields](#) – Councillor G Reffo circulated the results of research undertaken by Peaslake Community Councillor. 108 replies had been received and the following was identified as priorities for the respondents:
 - Preserving and protecting the character of the fields
 - The importance of the fields to the beauty of the landscape
 - No public access or parking except for Peaslake Village Fair
 - Remain in agricultural use
 - To enhance the biodiversity & Wildlife, grazing, food production and orchard
- c) To consider community proposal for Peaslake Farm Fields – Councillor G Reffo began by saying that it was a great quick response and suggested that they are given the three months requested to formulate a full plan and work on the structure for the management of the fields. **Agreed** a three-month period (until the October council meeting) for them to work on the details of the community proposal. It was confirmed that it was a community project and that they were not looking to make money or concerned with the BNG credits but would like greater coordination with the parish council. It was also **Noted** that the initial plans for the flood prevention works should be available by October from Surrey County Council.
- d) To consider lease proposal from local farmer – any details to be discussed after exclusion - It was **Noted** that the council had to decide on their approach to the BNG credits potentially available on Peaslake Farm before any lease or agreement is formed. In the meantime, council was happy for Coverwood to continue to take the hay from the farm

23.51 Finance matters

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- a) **Approved** [Lloyd's income of £1,501.43 and Lloyd's expenditure of £42,909.88](#) and [Unity Bank Interest of £229.13](#) for June 2023 (Appendix 1)
- b) **Noted** bank reconciliations and statement balances (including credit card) for month ended June 2023 (Appendix 2)
- c) **Noted** [income and expenditure against budget](#) and [earmarked reserves](#) to end of June 2023 (Appendix 3)
- d) **Noted** VAT expenditure for June 2023 ([Appendix 4](#))
- e) **Considered** [Grant Application from Friends of the Hurtwood \(FoTH\)](#). It was **Noted** that the FoTH last submission to the Charities Commission showed a considerable reserve against expenditure and that their finances were in a better position than the Parish Council's. Councillor G Reffo stated that the FoTH do a very good job with biodiversity, wildlife and flood defences as well as dealing with the fly tipping. Councillor P Tompkins replied that she was surprised they asked for the grant but acknowledged that they do a valuable job and hopes to be able to support them in the future. **Agreed** a token grant of £250, acknowledging their work with the fly tipping but at the moment the parish council was only able to give a grant similar to the other local parish councils.
- f) **Ratified** the supply installation and removal of Christmas trees in Shere and Gomshall of £545 ex VAT G Rapley and to continuity check, put up and take down Christmas lights £1,040 ex VAT G Rapley in Shere and Gomshall from Earmarked Reserves North Ward Funds

23.52 Finance Committee Meeting, 28th June 2023 – Received and [Approved minutes \(Appendix 5\)](#)

23.53 To consider the following items and agree resolutions where appropriate:

- a) Zero Carbon Guildford – a short report was given by Councillor B Harrap who attended the meeting. The following was reported:
 - Albury Parish Councillor A McCann would like to see a common approach between Tillingbourne Parish Councils to improve carbon footprint
 - Surrey has a high carbon footprint and there is not much action being taken but they have increased waste recycling in households to 70%
 - There is a local solar panel scheme, [Solar Together](#) – group buying for solar panels and battery storage systems. There had been some criticism of the scheme due to bad service but Councillor W Esplen reported he had had a very good service
 - The Percy Arms in Albury were installing electric vehicle chargers and more installations were being considered by SCC locally. It was **Noted** by Councillor J Cross that the fast chargers were needed. SCC & GBC Councillor B Hughes replied that there would be a mix of chargers available in the future
 - Councillor B Harrap reported that funding was available from SCC of £2,000 - £4,000 for small community biodiversity projects – to look out for our green spaces
 - Councillor M Keeble reported that solar panels had been installed on Shere Memorial Hall and that the process has been complicated, so he was putting together an information pack for other trustees of community buildings who may be considering solar panels
- b) Co-option of three Parish members to the Borough Council's Corporate Governance and Standards Committee for the period 2023- 2027 – to consider the [personal statements](#) and vote for up to three candidates – **Agreed** to vote for P Tompkins, S Schofield and T Wolfenden
- c) To consider investigating charging for Shere public toilets – Councillor G Reffo asked that we look again at potentially charging for the toilets in Shere. Peaslake residents had asked if a public toilet would be possible but given the cost of providing the ones in Shere this was not likely to be possible. The Clerk explained that due to the layout and internal condition that charging at this time may not be possible. A full refurbishment was investigated several years ago which resulted in a potential cost of £60,000 - £80,000 for a full refurbishment, listed building and

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planning consent and installation of a payment structure. GBC Councillor D Newson said they were not in a good state, there was indication that the cleaning was not being done sufficiently and she suggested the businesses may help to pay for the provision of toilets. Chairman R Davey said that there was greater usage of the toilets since covid and it was recognised that refurbishment was needed if there was a way to fund it. **Agreed** to review the cleaning and arrange a meeting to discuss potential ways for improvement in the short term and the long term and investigate any funding options.

- d) Alleviating car parking pressure in Peaslake village centre at weekends - Councillor G Reffo explained that there was significant pressure for car parking in Peaslake at weekends. She asked for Council support to approach the FoTH to create overflow parking through the gate at the Walking Bottom Carpark, before the Pond, with potential to charge for parking. The creation of more car parking would hopefully relieve the pressure of the centre of Peaslake and allow more no parking signs to be erected. **Agreed** Councillor G Reffo and P Carter to approach FoTH regarding overflow parking and to discuss charging, although it was recognised that there were concerns from residents regarding charging, as it could encourage more on street parking.

23.54 Police Matters - to consider any matters that need to be brought to the attention of the Police – None

23.55 Date of next meeting: 7.30pm Wednesday 6th September 2023 at Shere Village Hall, Gomshall Lane, Shere

23.56 Exclusion of the Public and Press (Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960) – Excluded the public and press for the following item of business because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

23.57 Shere Car Park – to report meeting on the 4th July with Shere Recreation Ground Trustees – A proposal for a voluntary parking charge had been put forward by the Trustees. This proposal was considered by Full Council. The Council sent thanks to the Trustees but unanimously **Agreed** to continue with adjudication as per the original agreement to implement formal charging in the car park for visitors.

23.58 Human Resources Committee Meeting, 28th June 2023 – Received and Approved minutes, with the removal of the word ‘performance’(Appendix 6) and Agreed all recommendations

Meeting Closed 10.30 pm