

**Minutes of the Graffham Parish Council Meeting Held on 17 March**  
**2023**  
**at Graffham Recreation Ground Pavilion**

**1 Attendance Apologies for Absence**

In Attendance: Colin Barker, Patrick Churchward, Simon Mackie, Roger Coakes, Howard Charman, Nick White, John Bracey, Sandy McQueen

Also in Attendance: District Councillor Alan Sutton, County Councillor Tom Richardson, Louisa Thomas (Clerk) and 4 members of the public.

Apologies received from: Jon Warren

**2 To Receive Declarations of Interest, Notification of Changes to Members' Interests and Consider any Requests for a Dispensation**

There were none.

**3 Public Session (Members of the Public may speak for up to 5 minutes at the discretion of the Chair)**

The oil spill was the first item to be discussed – A member of the public addressed the meeting and suggested that the oil spill occurrence at the property 'Blytheswood' has yet to be dealt with properly. They stated that the on-going works at the property do not appear to be co-ordinated, with each contractor employed seemingly working independently. Consequently the entrance of the driveway and the adjoining roadway are repeatedly being covered in soil & clay, with the road surface suffering badly as a result.

A member of the public also raised concerns with regard vehicles being forced to park close to the corner opposite the Graffham Village Shop, which it was reported as being very dangerous to all road users. Vehicles are being forced to park on the junction due to the large vehicles belonging to workmen from 'Blytheswood' parking outside the property on Selham Road. Another member of the public also queried as to whether planning consent would be required for large commercial vehicles to be constantly parked outside the property.

It was suggested that correspondence from villagers be forwarded to both Tom Richardson County Councillor and to District Councillor Alan Sutton to look into this matter and follow up. It was also noted that the concrete supports for the safety rails at The Brook had been driven into – County Councillor Tom Richardson suggested that this matter should be reported on the County Council's website. County Councillor Richardson also mentioned that enforcement powers could be implemented in order to maintain public road safety with regard vehicle parking.

It was also reported by a member of the public that the hedges in the village still need properly maintained & cutting back – County Councillor Tom Richardson mentioned this maintenance is the landowners' responsibility.

**4 Approval of Minutes from the Parish Council held on 20 January 2023.**

The minutes were signed and approved.

**5 County Councillor Reports**

The speed limit through the village was discussed, as was the current closure in Midhurst town centre due to the recent fire at the Angel Inn. County Councillor Tom Richardson suggested that the A286 could be closed for a week or two due to the fire. He stated that English Heritage and the fire service are currently working on it as the structure of the Angel Inn needs to be made safe. Diversions are likely to be in place for a while. These are however exceptional circumstances and residents need to be patient.

The recent attempted car-jacking in the village was then discussed. Councillors Sutton and Richardson have both been involved in assisting the victims. They stated that it was an extremely nasty and violent crime and that the 1 hr 20 minutes from the 999 call was unacceptable, given that it was 2 single women who had been attacked. There is to be an internal enquiry by the Chief Constable into the delay. They will report further once the information has been received.

## **6 District Council Report**

The District Council elections are coming up shortly and Councillor Sutton told the meeting that he will be standing again. He thanked the GPC for the relationship over the last 4 years and that Councillor Richardson would be also standing to be a District Councillor at the forthcoming elections.

## **7 Chair's Announcements**

Chairman Mackie told the meeting that the GPC had successfully recruited Louisa Thomas to the role as Parish Clerk and formally introduced her to the other Councillors.

## **8 Planning Applications**

One planning application had been received (SDNP/22/00373/FUL) – Tangletrees. Some of the Councillors present raised their concerns with regard the overall increase in the size of the proposed development, being 87.23% larger than the existing footprint - as well as its possible encroachment onto agricultural land, therefore potentially a change of use of the land. There was also some concern about flooding.

The comments on the planning permission should be submitted to the website – the construction should have a CEMP – construction management plan – which would cover noise, dust etc secured by conditional consent. The vehicular access and verges should remain in the condition they are currently, with works vehicles notified of the restricted access

The applicants have suggested that they will restrict the removal of soil from the site as much as possible, with re-use being optimised.

The Councillors then discussed who would be responsible for repairs to the access road as this has never been resolved by the previous owners. It was stated that it is a byway as well as access to the recreation ground. GPC will monitor the condition of the road. It was mentioned that the road floods so this might be an opportunity to fix that.

A majority of the Councillors agreed to support the plan providing certain matters were considered by the Planning Authority, but with recommendations that the development must comply with SD30, does not encroach onto agricultural land and that materials in the planning consent are not altered.

Councillor Macqueen agreed to prepare an appropriate response to the Planning Authority in the usual way.

**9 Payments and Bank Reconciliation**

This is to be deferred to the next meeting.

**10 Variance Report**

This is being deferred to the next meeting.

**11 Traffic/Speeding**

It was unanimously agreed by the Councillors to take the necessary steps to try to get the village speed limit reduced to 20mph. It was suggested that the village speed limit be set at 20 mph and 40 mph on the approach roads from the A roads etc ie from Duncton, A272, A285 and A286. Councillor Richardson suggested that the 20 mph limit be sited from the first house within the confines of the village.

Councillor Richardson stated that we do not have to have buffer zones ie it can be 40 mph then 20 mph. He stated that the most cost-effective way for this to be rolled out is for the 5 parishes to work together – Graffham, East Lavington, West Lavington, Lodsworth and Heyshott. If those village are incorporated, then one application can be submitted which would involve fewer signs and therefore save money.

Councillor Richardson suggested a working party to support the application and to then contact the Community Highways Scheme. However there is a waiting list for this for funds to be made available to pay for the proposed change of speed limit.

Councillor Ricardson said that Petworth's speed reduction has been approved but funds to carry it out need to be sourced first so it takes time. He remarked that the signs would cost around £1,000, painting the road costs around £100 for each one but there is a cost reduction if more are carried out. Until they have the whole plan, the company will not be able to quote the exact amount accurately.

On the question of enforcement, Councillor Richardson stated there will be benefits and that the majority of drivers will comply with the reduction. He also remarked that Speed watch can keep an eye on it initially and that it will reduce the roads becoming "rat-runs" too as satnavs will record these as slower routes. He also said GPC should look at maps of the whole area and then mark what GPC would like and where.

The costs of reducing the speed limit was discussed. The cost of the TRO increases the cost but it could be for all 5 villages instead of just Graffham hence reducing the cost per village. Councillor Richardson also reported that some of signs could be amended, rather than buying new signs. He stated Graffham spreads across a large area so there would need to be a large amount of repeater signs. He also suggested that 20 mph limit could also be painted on the road as well as the signs.

**12 Highways and Footpaths**

Councillor Churchward mentioned the potholes at Topleigh Stables etc were particularly large. Councillor Richardson reported that the Highway Steward has assured him that from April they will use jet patcher lorries which will blast out the debris and tar and in-fill with asphalt. This will be a permanent repair, rather than the current patches. All of the Graffham roads are due to be resurfaced too. Councillor Churchward has been

investigating some of the stiles in the village and has written to the relevant landowners but the landowners have failed to respond. Councillor Richardson requested that he be forwarded the emails and he will forward them on to relevant parties.

The wooden bridges crossing some of the footpaths and bridleways are in a need of maintenance and that wellington boots were needed to cross some of them. One of the village landowners is worried that planks etc will affect the wild flowers. The byways ranger had been due to visit the site in October but had failed to attend. Councillor Churchward handed the email he had received discussing the footpaths and bridleways to Councillor Richardson, who will look into the same.

Chairman Mackie reported that the road outside the Woodman is still badly flooded. Councillor Richardson agreed to investigate what is happening about this being fixed. He suggested that a CCTV survey might be needed. He also remarked that the drainage is so old that no one knows what is there and how the drains link etc. Councillor Richardson will email the Highway Steward and ask what is happening.

Councillors Richardson and Sutton then left the meeting.

### **13 Recreation Ground**

It was reported that work on the playground is on-going. It will incorporate a sensory garden as part of the playground, using natural products and less formal equipment including a patio.

It was reported that there is the possibility of a ladies' football team using the pitch. On the question of cost, Councillor Bracey advised that the funds are being accessed from the SIL fund, of which the patio is £2,000 and the total cost is £5,500. The other improvements to the recreation ground which had been discussed previously were in the region of £18,000.

### **14 Empire Hall**

Councillor Churchward reported that this is going really well.

### **15 Selham and Ambersham**

Nothing of note has been reported.

### **16 War Memorial**

One of the Councillors stated that the payment needs to be approved to the tree consultancy firm of £720 before work can begin. Chairman Mackie stated that it has been approved but needs to be paid forthwith.

### **17 Noticeboards**

It was suggested that the flagpole be erected before HM Coronation in May at a cost of £500 including fitting. It was commented that payments of over £500 must have GPC's prior approval.

Councillor Coakes thought that the noticeboard had already been ordered and that the previous Clerk had sorted this. The noticeboard will again be discussed at the next meeting.

- 18 HM Coronation** – Marie Bracey (not present at the meeting) has offered to organise a celebration in the area around the Empire Hall for the Coronation in May. It would need a road closure and funding of around £250. GPC agreed to provide funding. It was suggested by Councillors that it is held between the Empire Hall and the Foresters pub and that the Foresters could therefore run an outside bar. GPC requested that Marie be thanked for her hard work in organising this event for the village.
- 19 GPC/ELPC Website**  
The Clerk said that due to issues with the laptop that the website had yet to be updated but that it would be amended soon.
- 20 GPC Laptop, Printer and Software –**  
The Councillors unanimously approved the purchase of a laptop, software and printer for the Parish Clerk.
- 21 Next Meeting Dates**  
It was suggested that the next meeting, which would be the Annual GPC Meeting, would be held in the week commencing 15 May 2023 after the local elections.