

PARISH CONFERENCE

THURSDAY, 11 JULY 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Christine Bateson (Co-Chairman) and Graham (Co-Chairman)

Also in attendance: Councillors Samantha Rayner and Ewan Larcombe, Ken Robertson (Eton Town Council), Stephen Hedges (Cox Green), Ian Harvey (Cox Green), Ruth Davies (Sunningdale), Allison Sharpe (Sunninghill and Ascot), Amanda Robson Brown (Bisham), Mary Cooper (Bisham), Mandy Brown (Cookham), Margaret Lenton (Wraysbury), Allen Corcoran (Datchet) and Linda O'Flynn (Datchet).

Officers: Andy Jeffs, Shilpa Manek, David Scott, Jenifer Jackson, Christopher Wheeler and Duncan Sharkey

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Bateson welcomed everyone to the Conference and introductions were made.

Chris Graham, acting Vice Chairman welcomed all to the Conference.

Chris Graham informed the Conference that the new Chairman of DALC was Anne-Catherine Buxton so she would be Co-Chair at future Parish Conference meetings.

Chris Graham welcomed the two new Parish Councillors from Eton Town Council and Cookham Parish Council.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence received from Councillor Dudley, Ken Elvin, Bray, David Burfitt, Hurley, Susan Cook, Bray, Sandra Baker, Hurley, Bob Austin, Eton Town Council and Martin Coker, Cookham.

MINUTES FROM LAST CONFERENCE

Resolved Unanimously: that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2019 be approved.

The Conference asked that the Berkshire Youth Service item be added to the next Conference agenda.

ACTION: Add Berkshire Youth Service item to the next Conference agenda.

UPDATE ON HALC/BALC MATTERS (15 MINS)

Chris Graham gave an update on HALC to the Conference. The points covered included:

- HALC were now administering the BALC queries and also financials.
- The queries were being monitored to look for consistent queries to see if these could be resolved.
- The invoices for subscription had all been received.
- An update had been made on the free training.
- The website was still being updated by our HALC contact, Amy Taylor.

- Slough Borough Council were trying to remove all parish councils, this judicial review was quashed.
- The BALC AGM will be on 13 November 2019.
- The national association AGM will be on 28 October 2019.
- Some of the Parish Councils highlighted that as they were large, it was more costly to join and therefore difficult to get the councillors to agree. The Conference were advised that this was under active consideration and would be addressed at the AGM in November 2019.

CIL PAYMENTS SCHEDULE UPDATE (10 MINS)

Jenifer Jackson, Head of Planning, informed the Conference that Chris Joyce had been appointed as the CIL Manager. Many of the Parish Council representatives had met Chris Joyce at the Parish Stakeholder Group. The recommendations of the process review carried out by an external consultant were being implemented. There were a number of other reasons why the current process had not run smoothly such as staffing, administration to collect the levy, the governance and the Exacom database system which had imported all applications from the IDOX planning system rather than just those that were CIL liable so currently cleansing the data on the new system and the team were dealing with a backlog of invoicing and collection.

Chris Joyce had written to all Parish Councils updating them on neighbourhood portion payments and would want to meet all Parish Clerks. Chris Joyce was working on a briefing note as what is covered through the levy was not always clear. Jenifer Jackson reiterated the written apology for the delay in communicating the amount of Neighbourhood CIL for each parish and in making the related payments, which is now underway.

Stephen Hedges, Cox Green Parish Council Clerk, suggested that since there was now a Parish Stakeholder Group that discussed all planning areas in a lot of detail, these items should not be on the Parish Conference agenda. The Parish Stakeholder Group had a representative from each Parish Council who could report back to their individual council.

Resolved Unanimously: that planning matters be considered only by the Parish Stakeholder Group and not Conference; this be tried for two meetings and then discussed again.

PARISH CHARTER REVIEW (15 MINS)

Andy Jeffs, Executive Director, thanked the Conference for all signing the Parish Charter. The Parish Charter had been live since 1 May 2019 and was up for an early review on 31 August 2019 to ensure that it was working in practice. The review process had already been agreed. A working group had worked on putting the Parish Charter together and would reconvene after August 2019. The group would discuss if the Parish Charter was working and if it was appropriate.

ACTION: Any comments to be emailed to Andy Jeffs on andy.jeffs@rbwm.gov.uk or the full group by 31 August 2019.

ACTION: To add this item to the next Agenda

CABINET REPORT ON PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN - 24 HOUR POT HOLE RESPONSE(10 MINS)

Chris Wheeler, Service Improvement Manager, informed the Conference the Cabinet had approved the recommendations in the report on the 30 May 2019. The recommendation was

to approve a revision to the Highways Maintenance Management Plan to enable every carriageway pothole on the Highway over 40mm, or footway defect over 25mm to be repaired within 24 working hours regardless of the category of road, at an additional annual cost of £450,000 per annum.

Chris Wheeler highlighted parts of the report including the benchmarking survey and how we scored on it and other suggestions of filling potholes were discussed, such as spray injection patching, which could have a high cost saving, low carbon footprint, no waste produced and could help with climate emergency. Volker were the company that managed the service contract.

Other points raised by the Conference included the following:

- What the process was for utility network works. Chris Wheeler informed the Conference that utility companies need to book road space with the council and get a permit. Chris Wheeler asked the members to report any over-running jobs to RBWM-Permits@RBWM.gov.uk
- How could the damaged footpaths be reported? Chris Wheeler informed the Conference that this would fall under the 24 hour recommendation especially if it was a health and safety issue.
- The best way to report issues was through the website.

MAINTENANCE OF HEDGES AND VERGES PROGRAMME (10 MINS)

Chris Wheeler, Service Improvement Manager, informed the Conference that there were two areas, one was the planning programming for hedges and bushes on the highways. This was done between April and September every year, before spring and then again in September. The other area was private vegetation on the highways, which would require contacting the landowner to carry out the work. A robust streamlined process had been developed in the last year for this. In this process, an initial letter was sent to the landowner and if nothing was done, a final notice was sent, if still nothing was done, the council would carry out the work and then charge it back to the landowner. If the council had difficulties in finding the owner, a property search would be carried out.

Stephen Hedges, Cox Green Parish Clerk suggested that a leaflet be produced to advise residents of their responsibilities.

Chris Wheeler informed the Conference that if there were any broader issues, an email should be sent to highways@rbwm.gov.uk. However the most effective way of getting individual cases resolved was to report on the website.

This would include obscure road signs, cycling routes, other hedges or verges.

TRAVELLER LOCAL PLAN - ISSUES & OPTIONS PUBLIC CONSULTATION (15 MINS)

Jenifer Jackson, Head of Planning, informed the Conference that a council consultation had taken place earlier in the year. The council were now reviewing the responses and still doing a lot of Borough Local Plan work. A meeting would be set up with Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury parish councils.

Chris Graham asked if any work had been done with other boroughs in looking for a transit site. Jenifer Jackson informed the Conference that it had not been highlighted that this borough needed a transit site. The council were working with the neighbouring boroughs but not much progress had been made as yet.

UPDATE ON TRAVELLER INCURSIONS (10 MINS)

Chris Wheeler, Service Improvement Manager, informed the Conference that work had been carried out to secure sites. A report had been prepared to investigate sites. Nine sites had been identified, seven were complete and the two further sites were being prepared with placing bollards or building trenches. This would not totally ensure the incursions would cease but would make it more difficult. These were RBWM sites, mainly parks and open spaces.

Chris Graham asked about the Holyport Green site, Jenifer Jackson was unaware of this application and would look into this and let Chris Graham know.

ACTION: Jenifer Jackson to get back to Chris Graham on the Holyport Green site.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY (10 MINS)

Andy Jeffs, Executive Director, informed the Conference that a resolution had been resolved at Full Council on 25 June 2019.

The full discussion could be found within the Council minutes on the website.

It was suggested at Full Council that a cross party working group be set up to carry out an in-depth review of the council and its current carbon footprint. The plan was to set up the group, to carry out a consultation, a draft plan to be developed and then brought back to Full Council within 12 months of 26 June 2019.

Chris Graham asked if parish councils could be present on the working group. Duncan Sharkey, Managing Director, informed the Conference that the parish councils would not be on the core working group but would have an opportunity to contribute during the process.

ACTION: To have this item on next Conference Agenda

DATE OF NEXT CONFERENCE

Chris Graham informed the Conference that the next date for the Conference fell into the school half term. Chris Graham requested that another date be found for the next Conference.

ACTION: Clerk to try and find and secure another date for the next Conference.

Chris Graham suggested to the Conference that a report be written for all items on the Agenda to inform parish councils of what was the subject that was due to be discussed.

ACTION: Clerk to ensure that all agenda items had a written report.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 8.35 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....