

**HOLMWOOD PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2023**

Present: Mr Keith Carter Chairman
Mr James Afford Vice Chairman
Mrs Mary Mansell
Mr Ian Fairbrother
Mrs Rachel Snook
Mrs Jan Russell Parish Clerk

In attendance: District Councillor Hobbs (part).

Apologies: Parish Councillor Jordan. Surrey County Councillor Stephen Cooksey. District Councillors Malcomson and Wellman.

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2023.

The Council agreed the minutes of the Full Parish Council meeting to be a true representation of the meeting and were approved by all Councillors.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM 20 JULY 2023.

Mill Road Junction/A24: The Chairman confirmed that a meeting had taken place on 4th October 2023 with Surrey County Council's Senior Traffic Engineer. Councillors Carter and Afford attended the meeting to discuss the markings on the junction which are confusing. Before any decisions are made to change the junction, a traffic survey must take place. Surrey County Councillor Stephen Cooksey has agreed to fund this survey, but it will not take place until the 2024/25 financial year.

Water Works Warwick Road: This work continues and there is still no indication when it will be completed.

3. VILLAGE HALL

Councillor Carter informed the Council that an estimate to deal with the cracks in the outside wall of the hall had still not been received. As the cracks appear minor and within the rendering, it was not considered necessary to commission a surveyor to oversee this work. It was noted that the hatch into the kitchen still needs to be completed as do the repairs to the kitchen floor. Although an insurance claim had been made to cover the floor repairs, they are essential and should be dealt with promptly. Until these repairs are undertaken, the hall does not comply with fire regulations. It was agreed the Chairman would contact the Trustees stressing that the Parish Council was not satisfied with the way essential repairs were being dealt with and therefore will consider withdrawing as Managing Agent.

4. CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

Wicksteed had supplied a price for a replacement non-bump see saw. Although the cost included the removal of the old apparatus and installation of the new equipment would cost £9,885.00 excluding VAT.

It was agreed that other companies would be approached to quote for similar equipment. This item would be included on the January 2024 agenda.

5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- MO/2019/1641 - Carpel House, Horsham Road, South Holmwood. Importation of material to increase level to unused land to create benefit and to cover exposed sewer pipe. Refused by Mole Valley District Council. Appeal Lodged. Mole Valley and Holmwood Parish Council responded to PINS. REFUSED (AND DISMISSED ON APPEAL). Enforcement issues continue.
- APPEAL - MO/2022/0824 - Land adjacent to Foxmead, Horsham Road, South Holmwood. Erection of a detached 3-bedroom chalet style dwelling, with associated parking and access from existing drive. REFUSED (AND DISMISSED ON APPEAL).
- MO/2023/0034 - Stable House, Anstie Grange, Betchets Green Road, South Holmwood, Dorking, Surrey, RH5 4LG. Erection of part single/part two storey extension. Insertion of 2 No. dormer windows to replace roof lights. Approved with Conditions.

6. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION:

The Chairman addressed the Council saying that he had been asked if a public EV charging point could be considered for the village. Councillors suggested the cost would be very high and emphasised that there were no streetlights in the village, so installation could be problematic. Location would be another obstacle as there were no public car parks in the village. It was agreed that this would be discussed further. Councillor Afford would obtain an estimate from Pod-Point for a commercial charger and Mole Valley would also be contacted.

7. NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTIONS:

With the co-option of new Councillors the distribution list for Parish newsletters was discussed. The list was updated by agreement and will be circulated. The Parish Council is grateful to everyone who volunteers to deliver this twice-yearly newsletter and a special letter of thanks will be sent to Pat Christmas.

8. NATIONAL TRUST AND I D VERDE

The National Trust's Lead Ranger for Holmwood Common had contacted the Parish Council with comments regarding works in and around the village. An update was given regarding the NT licence for groundwork and mowing. The Chairman will discuss the conditions with Mr Henry Barnard as some proposals are not acceptable to the Parish Council.

The Lead Ranger gave an email address for any future works that the Parish Council considered needing NT attention, and the Clerk will use that, asking for the fencing around the pond to be reinstated. The lack of fencing in this area is considered a serious hazard especially in winter months when the road in this area freezes.

The contract with I D Verde was discussed. The company was in breach of the current contract as it had not carried out works as agreed. For safety reasons it had been necessary to employ an independent contractor to cut the hedge around the playground. The Councillors agreed that I D Verde's contract be terminated forthwith. This is an opportune time to try and appoint a new contractor and the Clerk will make the necessary enquiries. It was agreed that a price be obtained for 2024 season and if the work is satisfactory, the contractor will be invited to tender for a five-year rolling contract.

To date no correct invoices have been received from I D Verde. The outstanding amount is £6,446.59 after deducting the cost of the playground hedge cutting by Clover. The Clerk will contact I D Verde advising that the contract will be terminated and request an invoice to be issued for the outstanding payments.

9. FINANCE

(i) Financial Statement and bank reconciliation

The Unity Trust Current Account balance will be £18,871.27 once the November invoices are passed for payment. Unity Trust has deducted £13.50 Service Charge from the Current Account.

The NatWest Reserve Account balance at 31 July 2023 was £15,552.03.

To date there is £309.76 VAT to be reclaimed.

The precept for 2024/2025 was mentioned. This must be agreed at the January 2024 meeting when the precept request will be signed. To date, the uplift on the concurrent grant is thought to be 3% but Mole Valley will confirm the exact percentage when the precept form is received.

The Parish Council had laid a Poppy Wreath at the Remembrance Day service, and it was agreed by all Councillors that a donation of £25.00 be made to the Royal British Legion.

(ii) Invoices passed for payment:

Invoice No	Payee	Amount	Cheque No	Purpose
823191	Wicksteed	£802.62	Unity	Roundabout repairs
2002	Clover	£552.00	Unity	Hedge cutting
6244	Image Co.	£115.00	Unity	Autumn Newsletter
	Unity Trust	£13.50	DD	Service Charge
	Royal British Legion	£25.00	Unity	Poppy Wreath donation

War Memorial

Councillor Fairbrother asked who was responsible for cleaning the War Memorial. Several comments about the condition had been made during the Remembrance Day service recently. Councillor Mansell said that the War Memorial had been cleaned about 10 years ago by Archer Stone, a professional memorial cleaning company. The Parish Council had been advised at that time that as the Memorial was made of Portland Stone it should not be cleaned too often as it takes the top surface off, making the engraved names hard to read. The Memorial had not been built on a firm foundation which allowed the stone to absorb moisture making the surface appear dirty. Fumes from passing traffic also added to the dull appearance.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Council will meet again on 4 January 2024 at 7:00pm.