

## HOLMWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY MEETING HELD ON 30 MAY 2024 AT HOLMWOOD VILLAGE HALL

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

Apologies: District Councillor Jordan. County Councillor Stephen Cooksey, District Councillors Claire Malcomson, Rosemary Hobbs and Clayton Wellman.

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2023 were signed at the meeting held on 20 July 2023.

#### **2. Chairman's Report**

The good order of Council's finances has been maintained and verified by the auditors. Precept for the coming year has been reduced to £12,500. This is still expected to cover the costs of running the Council. The Council has moved its accounts to Unity Trust Bank in order to be able to operate them online, which was proving impossible with the previous Bank.

Planning applications have continued to be reviewed by Council and any comments passed to Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) for their consideration. The question of the Carpel House rejected planning application by MVDC and the subsequent appeal refusal has continued to take up Council time. This is entirely in the hands of the MVDC Enforcement Team. A further year has passed with no progress to resolve this issue which is still causing upset to local residents. The Council has continued as Managing Agents of the Village Hall although the Trustees have taken on more of the responsibility of its running. Maintenance continues to be the main outlay for costs, control of which by the Trustees. Following the fire safety survey undertaken in the previous year, the kitchen hatch has finally been replaced and the electrical safety upgrade completed. The repair to the floor in the kitchen is yet to be actioned whereby the trustees are in the hands of their insurers awaiting agreement for funding. The Council has had a representative attending Trustee meetings.

The Children's Playground continues to be in the care of Council, and we have this year been able to install a new see-saw. Safety inspections have continued but in the next year will be undertaken by Sovereign Compliance. Emptying of litter bins in the park has not been satisfactory this year although this has now been resolved with Mole Valley Park's Department taking up responsibility.

The safety at the A24 road junction with Mill Road has continued to concern the Council. Representations have again been made to SCC Highways regarding the new layout. A meeting between Council representatives and SCC Highways chief traffic engineer took place to ensure that SCC were fully aware of the dangers the current layout posed. To date no further action has taken place other than a traffic survey promised to start the process of re-alignment should it be considered appropriate by SCC Highways.

Footpath 528, from Betchetts Green Road towards the Cemetery, has been of concern to Councillors due to the failure, by Southern Gas, to reinstate the surface following their ground works in the area. Neither the National Trust, whose land this footpath is on, nor SCC have accepted liability although it has been noted that work by a NT volunteer has commenced resurfacing.

Parking in the village continues to be a concern. This was exacerbated by SES Water undertaking replacement of piping throughout the village, whereby certain roads were closed. The inclusion of EV charge points in the village was debated but it was considered impractical due to space restrictions.

Throughout the year we have continued to ensure that the War Memorial and the Vanderbilt Memorial have been maintained to adequate and safe standards. Grass cutting and maintenance of hedges etc, elsewhere in the village, had been undertaken by ID Verde. The contract with ID Verde has since been cancelled by Council due to failure by Verde to satisfy the contract conditions. Council have thus employed Clover Grounds Maintenance to continue with our requirements.

The National Trust, whose land we maintain on their behalf, has now issued the Council with a licence to undertake maintenance. They have amended the details of what we are allowed to do which have been passed on to Clover for compliance. Council consider the new details to be restrictive and will have a detrimental effect on the quality of maintenance previously undertaken.

The Council has adopted the Transparency Code of Conduct as handed down from the County association.

Two Newsletters were produced this year.

Two long serving councillors stood down. Two new councillors have been co-opted to fill the vacancies and Robert Jordan and Les Lester have taken up their posts.

As chair, I would like to express my thanks to all councillors and the clerk for their support throughout the year enabling this Council to run its business smoothly and efficiently.

### **3. Questions from the Floor**

None