



# North Hinksey Parish Council



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## Minutes of the Meeting of North Hinksey Parish Council held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 8pm via video conference

**Those Present:** Cllr Kay (Chairman), Cllrs Allen Bastin, Berrett, Blase, Church (apologies from 8.25pm), Dowie, Dykes, Fairclough, MacKeith, Potter, Rankin

**In Attendance:** Sharon Henley (Locum Clerk), Helen Broughton (Locum Clerk Designate), County Cllr Judy Roberts, District Cllr Emily Smith. There were four members of public.

**20/23: Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Jones, District Cllr Debby Hallett.

**20/24: Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda:** Cllr Kay declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9 as a member of the Botley Bridges Steering Group. It was also noted that five members of Council had a non-pecuniary interest in item 10 as members of the Seacourt Hall Management Committee (Cllrs Kay, Berrett, Potter, Fairclough and Dowie).

**20/25: Approval of the Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020 Part 1:** Draft 5 had been circulated and this version was unanimously approved.

**20/26: Approval of the Draft Minutes of Committee Minutes:**

1. Communications Committee 15<sup>th</sup> April: These were unanimously approved.
2. Allotments Committee 16<sup>th</sup> April: These were unanimously approved.
3. Recreation & Amenities Committee 30<sup>th</sup> April: These were unanimously approved.
4. Environment & Wellbeing Committee 14<sup>th</sup> May – A final draft version circulated by Cllr Kay with minor amendments was accepted as the final version. Proposed by Cllr Kay and Seconded by Cllr Church, approved unanimously.
5. Remembrance Day Committee 18<sup>th</sup> June: Version 3 had been circulated and was unanimously approved.

**20/27: Urgent Business Approved by the Chairman of the Parish Council:** There was none.

**20/28: Matters raised by Member of the Public:** The following had been circulated as a Supplementary Agenda item:

A question from Dr Andrew Pritchard had been received via email prior to the meeting. Dr Pritchard attended the meeting to put the question directly to Council:

As one of many parishioners who are worried about the future of the 4th Oxford Scout Group when the lease from North Hinksey Parish Council on the Scout Hut runs out after 30th June 2020, I would like to ask why the Parish Council has left it until 3 working days before that date to "consider" (25 June 2020 meeting, item 20/41) actions related to the lease. Who are the members of the Committee who are dealing with this important issue, and why have they not come up with proposals that all Councillors can devote adequate time to consider before the meeting on 25th June, and make their decisions?

In view of the financial implications of any decisions upon the Parish Council and Parish Councillors, why has this item been left to the end of what promises to be a very long meeting, when it is possible that Councillors' attention may be limited?

The Chairman's had already responded via email but also read his response at the meeting as follows:

Unfortunately it appears that you have misunderstood the current situation slightly, which is not surprising given that it is highly complex and you are viewing it from outside of the process, but I will attempt to provide some clarity here.

Firstly this matter has been considered in full Council meetings for well over a year now, rather than being handled by a particular Committee, therefore proposals are not being put forward to Council by a Committee as you suggest. As you will be aware, all discussions in Council are recorded in the minutes which are available to view on the NHPC website, so you are able to review all relevant matters there.

It is unfortunate that we have reached the current position, however I should point out that since the Scout Group withdrew from discussions in November 2018 we have on numerous occasions tried to encourage them to meet to try to make progress on outstanding issues, but without success. We also suggested a public meeting in May 2019 as a way forward, but again that offer was not taken up.

I can put your mind at rest that issues relating to the lease have actually already been considered by NHPC in detail in several meetings, particularly in the full Council meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> April under agenda item 19/185 (minutes attached). In that meeting NHPC agreed to formally offer the Scout Group two alternative options for an initial 1year lease to follow on from the current lease. The possibility of further extensions was also mentioned. To date no reply to this offer has been received from either the Scout Group or the Scout Association.

As such the ball is currently in their court, and at this Council meeting we are not considering any additional actions to be taken by NHPC before the expiry of the current lease in a few days' time. What we will be doing is trying to establish the necessary actions for NHPC to take in response to any of the possible actions that the Scouts might take at this stage in the proceedings.

The Chairman also confirmed that he would be happy to provide further clarification by email following the meeting if any was required.

**20/29: Questions raised by Councillors:** There were none.

### **20/30: Reports from County & District Councillors**

**Report by County Councillor Judy Roberts** following on from a written report circulated by email prior to the meeting.

#### Traffic and Highways

Botley Road Corridor implementation has started with Phase 1.1, the Seacourt Park and Ride entrance. The link to these plans contains a pdf file at the end which has the details of what they intend to do.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-major-projects/BotleyRdProjectoverview.pdf>

The Yellow lines in North Hinksey Lane and Lime Road were not on the first virtual meeting but Cllr Roberts has discussed the consultation responses and this item is on the agenda for the 16<sup>th</sup> July.

The consultation for the 30 mph on Cumnor Hill opened on the 4<sup>th</sup> Jun and closes on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July. We need as many positive responses to this as there have been some objections to this. If Cumnor Hill is 30mph, we are more likely to get the 20mph by the shops. This item is also on the Agenda for the 16<sup>th</sup> July.

#### Botley Library

There were no immediate plans to reopen Botley Library but after the PM's statement on Tuesday, they are planning to reopen libraries across the County in a phased manner.

Cllr MacKeith raised controlled parking zone queries and highlighted that the Botley Traffic Advisory Committee were meeting the following Wednesday to make decisions about traffic in parish.

**Report by District Councillor Emily Smith** further to a written report circulated at the beginning of the month:

- The Government had announced that play parks could re-open on 4<sup>th</sup> July.
- The Community Support Hub was co-ordinating volunteer groups who were helping isolated people. The team had been staffed by volunteers so far but the District Council was making the team permanent for the next 18 months at least.
- The District Council were about to consult on the Corporate Plan and would be looking for feedback from the Parish Council and residents.
- Business support grant funding was available for local businesses. The eligibility criteria had now been widened and a second round of funding would start on 29<sup>th</sup> June for one week. Grants were to support measures such as social distancing with money available until the end of the financial year.

#### **20/31: Review of Actions**

19/49 **LM Field Zip wire repairs** – carried over

19/70 **Pavilion Planning Application** – phase 2 tender carried over

19/98 **Burial facilities** – carried over

19/113 **Key Objectives** – to be covered later in the meeting

19/158 **COUNCIL MATTERS:**

##### **1) Measures to counteract the impact of the Coronavirus covid-19:**

Resolution (a) Zoom account - not yet been resolved, to be completed soon

Resolution (d) cheque signatory - -not yet resolved - Cllrs Potter, Fairclough and Rankin to be cheque signatories.

##### **7) Neighbourhood Plan letters to the Vale and Government** – carried over

19/176 **CLERK'S REPORT: Complaint to Police ref use of MUGA** - additional signs had been actioned by Cllr Rankin

19/178 **COUNCIL MATTERS**

##### **8) Request from Citizens Advice North Hinksey for financial support** - carried over

20/14 **CLERK'S REPORT:** all of these items have been actioned

- Clerk to circulate to Councillors the FOI requests received from James Wynne

- Seacourt Hall wi-fi – the Clerk to contact County Council again to progress.

- Clerk to pay annual invoice to SHMC for Seacourt Hall rental.

- Clerk to request grant application form from Botley Bridges.

20/15 **Council Motions: Liaison with Sovereign Housing** – actioned - Cllr Berrett confirmed that three residents had taken up the wi-fi hot spot and a long term solution was being worked on

20/16 **Council Matters: Establish fee for completion of end of year accounts by outgoing clerk** - actioned

**20/32: CLERK'S REPORT;** Locum Clerk Sharon Henley reported the following:

1. **Locum Clerk Role:** Sharon was leaving her Locum role to take up a permanent position but would be drafting the minutes of this meeting as her last action prior to handing over to new Locum Clerk Helen Broughton. Councillors would be discussing a permanent replacement at item 20/34 no. 7.
2. **Re-opening of the playgrounds / play equipment:** Government regulations were now allowing this to happen from the 4<sup>th</sup> July but play equipment safety inspections and new signage were going to be required before opening. In addition the caretaker was currently away. Cllr Potter added that the grass was being cut tomorrow and arrangements were in place for the quarterly play inspections and any repairs requirement. Further discussion to agree a re-opening date to take place at the July Council meeting.
3. **Training.** OALC were running an on-line Chairmanship Skills course from 11am-1pm on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July at £30 per session. There were also Zoom courses on Councillor Fundamentals, The Experienced Councillor, Chairing & Facilitation Skills, Financial Management for Councillors and Budgeting and Financial Control. Sharon to circulate further information on all courses via email. Councillors were asked to contact Helen as soon as possible if they would like to book the course on the 15<sup>th</sup> of by the end of w/c 29<sup>th</sup> June for all other courses. A budget is available for training which hopefully will cover all requested course costs.

**20/33: COUNCIL MOTIONS:** There were none.

## **20/34: COUNCIL MATTERS**

### **1. Annual Internal Auditor's (IAA) Report**

#### **a. Consideration of the Independent Internal Auditor's (IIA) Report 2019/2020 (Paper 1) and Proposals for dealing with internal auditor's recommendations (Paper 1a)**

By law the Parish Council must consider the report of the IIA and any recommendations contained in it. It must be minuted that the report has been considered and the actions taken by the council. The IIA's internal audit report for 2019/2020 had been circulated and Councillors were asked to CONSIDER it and any RECOMMENDATIONS made by the IIA.

Cllr Kay advised that all recommendations had been addressed in his Paper 1a and he ran through these. The following points were raised:

- With reference to the IA's assertion that it could not be proven when the Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights had been added to the website, Cllr Berrett confirmed that this information had been available on the 'back end' of the website and could have been provided by her on request but unfortunately this did not occur during the Internal Audit process. A robust procedure for recording the placement of the Notice on the website was now in place.
- Paper 1a proposed that the frequency of VAT reclaims should be reviewed by the new RFO with a view to deciding whether to make them 6 monthly. Cllr Fairclough proposed that the frequency was immediately changed to 6 monthly and this was seconded by Cllr Bastin and unanimously APPROVED.
- The requirement for the RFO to initial invoices for payment had not happened before and this was proposed by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Fairclough and unanimously APPROVED.
- The Risk Assessment review did not happen within the financial year due to the meeting being postponed because of Covid-19. It had since been reviewed and approved and it was proposed to further review an updated version again shortly before the end of this financial year. This was proposed by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Potter, Cllr Dowie voted against, Cllr Allen abstained with all other Councillors approving. The resolution was APPROVED.
- The website needed review in accordance with the Website Accessibility Regs and Transparency Code 2015. Cllr Kay advised that specialist help may be required, and Kitson Consulting had already quoted for this work. It was proposed by Cllr Kay that Cllrs Berrett and Kay should oversee a review, reporting in to the Communications Committee, with a

budget of £100 agreed for specialist support for around 3 hours work should that prove necessary. This was seconded by Cllr Dykes and unanimously APPROVED.

- Item 5 confirmed that the Asset Register had been updated and reviewed.

Councillors agreed the Internal Auditor's report as proposed by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Dykes. Cllr Dowie voted against but all others voted in favour so the resolution was APPROVED.

**b. Consideration of Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20 (Paper 3 – page 3 of 6)**

Councillors to REVIEW and NOTE responses made by Internal Auditor in page 3 of the Annual Return. Councillor Kay proposed, seconded by Cllr McKeith. Cllr Dowie voted against and all others were in favour so the motion was APPROVED.

**2. Annual Governance Statement (Paper 3 – page 4 of 6)**

It is a requirement of the annual audit process for the External Auditor that Councillors acknowledge their responsibilities as indicated in the attached Annual Governance Statement, (Section 1, page 4 of 6 of the Annual Return). To meet this requirement Councillors were asked to AGREE the responses given so that the Chairman of the Parish Council and the Clerk could sign that section following the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Dykes. Cllr Dowie voted against and all others were in favour so the resolution was APPROVED.

**3. Consideration of the Audited Final Accounts and Annual Report for 2019/2020 (Paper 3 a-g) and the RFO's Out-Turn Report 2019/2020 (Paper 4)**

Councillors were asked to CONSIDER and AGREE the attached reports/comments:

a) The attached statutory Annual Report which contains the audited accounts for 2019/2020. Cllr Kay confirmed that the figures had been agreed in the April meeting and proposed the motion, Cllr MacKeith seconded. Cllr Dowie voted against and all others were in favour so the resolution was APPROVED.

b) The Responsible Finance Officer's report in relation to the 2019/20 accounts. Cllr Kay proposed approval of the report, Cllr MacKeith seconded. Cllr Dowie voted against and all others were in favour so the motion was APPROVED.

**4. Local Councils in England Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 (Paper 3 – page 5 of 6)**

The completed and duly certified annual return for North Hinksey Parish Council has by law to be submitted to its external auditor, Moore within the specified timescales.

Councillors MUST CONFIRM that the audited accounting statements shown in Section 2 – Accounting Statements (page 5 of 6) in the statutory Annual Return for 31 March 2020, were seen and APPROVED by council. The Responsible Finance Officer to present the signed and dated statement to the meeting for completion and signature by the Chairman following approval. The paper had been completed and signed prior to the meeting by the outgoing RFO Colin Ryde. Cllr Kay checked Councillors' understanding of the statements and the proposed responses. The approval of the draft statement was proposed by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Dykes. Cllr Dowie voted against and all others were in favour so the resolution was APPROVED.

All documents making up the AGAR return had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting by email. Cllr Kay confirmed that wet copy signatures would be applied to the approved papers following the meeting as required by the External Auditor. A scan of all signed AGAR return papers to be submitted to the external auditor via email prior to the end of the month.

**5. Confirmation of the following Committee Vice Chairmen**

**5.1.** Finance & General Purposes Committee - This was confirmed as Cllr Kay (as Chair of NHPC).

**5.2.** Planning Committee – This was confirmed as Cllr Kay (as elected in Committee).

**5.3.** Remembrance Day Committee – This was confirmed as Cllr Dykes (as elected in Committee).

Cllr Church left the meeting at 8.25pm having previously offered his apologies.

#### **6. Election of Committee Vice Chairmen.**

In light of queries about the lack of clarity surrounding the voting procedures Cllr Kay stated that a review of current Standing Orders would take place, with suggested revisions brought back to full Council for consideration at a later meeting. For this agenda item Cllr Kay proposed the method of voting where all candidates would be voted for simultaneously, with one vote per Councillor for a single candidate in cases where multiple candidates were nominated. Only Councillors who were members of the Committee would have a vote for that Committee's Chairman as usual. The resolution was seconded by Cllr Potter. Cllrs Allen and Dowie abstained and the remaining Cllrs voted in favour. Therefore, the resolution was APPROVED.

6.1. Allotments Committee. Cllr Fairclough was nominated and received two votes in favour with Cllr Dowie abstaining. Cllr Fairclough's nomination was APPROVED.

6.2. Communications Committee. Cllr Potter was nominated and received four votes in favour, with Cllr Dowie abstaining. Cllrs Potter's nomination was APPROVED.

6.3. Recreation & Amenities. Cllr Blase was nominated and was unanimously APPROVED.

6.4. Environment & Wellbeing: Cllr Bastin was nominated and received five votes in favour. Cllr Dowie abstained. Cllr Bastin's nomination was APPROVED.

#### **7. Clerk / RFO replacement.**

Update from Councillors Kay, Fairclough, Rankin and Potter. Cllr Kay thanked Locum Clerk Sharon Henley for her hard work and welcomed new Locum Helen Broughton. They had now advertised for full time permanent replacement Clerk on the NHPC/SLCC and OALC websites and also in the Oxford Mail paper and on-line ads. All Councillors were asked to publicise the position. Details on the NHPC website, with a closing date of 17<sup>th</sup> July. It was hoped to interview and appoint a new Clerk/RFO to start in August.

#### **8. New NALC Model Member Code of Conduct consultation. Paper 2.**

Cllr Kay encouraged Councillors to make their own submissions, although he thought that Council may wish to comment as a whole on proposals that each Council had their own Internal Resolution procedure to address Code of Conduct breaches. NHPC had previously been advised that this should be handled by the District Council. Cllr Kay proposed that the Clerk respond on behalf of NHPC to query this aspect of how internal processes would work and any responses received to be circulated to Councillors. Cllr Fairclough seconded and the resolution was unanimously APPROVED.

#### **9. Request for a grant from Botley Bridges. Papers 5 a-e.**

Councillors CONSIDERED a request from Botley Bridges for a grant of £5,000 to be paid from the major grants budget. Sue Dowe and Karen Starr attended this part of the meeting on behalf of Botley Bridges, and confirmed the following:

- Botley Bridges current budget was around £20,000 but they had received a rent holiday of £1-2k during Covid.
- They had requested grants from Cumnor PC, NHPC, Doris Field Trust and the National Lottery. They usually received around £5,000 from parental contributions but had lost some of these over last few months due to Covid. Therefore they required around £15,000 per year in addition to parental contributions.

Cllr Potter confirmed that supporting Botley Bridges had been a key objective of the previous Council and provided a similar grant to help establish the charity. Cllr Kay confirmed that the grant request would have come in earlier in the year but NHPC did not have allocated grant funds in place to accept a grant request of this size before the start of this financial year.

Cllr Fairclough proposed to award the £5,000 grant and this was seconded by Cllr Blase. Cllrs Allen and Kay abstained, Cllr Dowie voted against and all others were in favour so the resolution was APPROVED.

**10. Coronavirus-19.**

Cllr Berrett reported that the crisis response was now a lot quieter but that responders were still working. The Community Fridge was supporting several hundred people weekly. Cllr Bastin proposed to grant a further £1,000 to be used for funding the continued provision of toilet rolls and Cllr MacKeith seconded with all others in favour other than the 5 SHMC members abstaining so the resolution was APPROVED.

**11. Key Objectives. Paper 6.**

Cllr Berrett confirmed that this exercise was to update Key Objectives set 4 years ago by the previous Council and read out summary of the key objectives.

Cllr Dowie raised concerns that NHPC should ensure that core operations were working properly prior to agreeing Key Objectives, however Cllr Kay pointed out that the issues he listed were legal requirements rather than 'Key Objectives'. Cllr Blase thought that the objective to 'help make our community carbon neutral' was challenging but Cllr Berrett confirmed that the intention was to 'help' rather than actually achieve carbon neutral status.

After further discussion it was agreed that Cllr Berrett should further review the Key Objectives based on discussions in this meeting and add a further objective to review Standing Orders with a particular emphasis on information sharing good-practice to ensure maximum transparency. Timelines should also be added to objectives. The updated document to be discussed at the July Council meeting.

**12. Kennington Health Centre. Paper 7.**

Councillors discussed whether the closure of the Kennington Health Centre was a realistic proposition in the absence of a formal statement on the subject. However, it was thought that a letter raising concerns about any proposals would not have a negative impact, even if there were no immediate plans for closure. Cllr Kay proposed that the Clerk write to Layla Moran MP and Julia Dandridge of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group to raise the matter and express the Council's concerns. This was seconded by Cllr MacKeith. Cllr Dowie abstained and all other were in favour so the resolution was APPROVED.

**13. Tree survey. Papers 8 a, b & c**

Cllr Potter confirmed that three contractors had been approached but only two had responded, with similar quotes. Both quotes were to identify any trees with health and safety concerns, especially within public areas. There was £3,000 in the budget (currently in Earmarked Reserves). She outlined the Clerk's summary of the two quotes. Councillors voted for each of the two contractors and it was AGREED to accept the quote from the Whole Tree Company. Cllr Potter and the Clerk to arrange for the tree survey to take place at the earliest opportunity.

**14. Neighbourhood Plan.**

Update from Councillor Kay. Agreement had been received from the Vale on many items in finalising the referendum version of the Plan but Vale Planners were now working on the South Oxon Local Plan and slow to respond. He would update Council when there was further progress.

**15. Seacourt Hall.**

Cllr Berrett reported that a management committee meeting had taken place the previous week. The government had announced that village halls could re-open on 4<sup>h</sup> July, but it had been decided not to

re-open until at least 1<sup>st</sup> Aug to enable signage and cleaning to be arranged and also to allow the Community Fridge to continue . There would be another meeting of the management committee in July. Halls were still not allowed to open for group exercise so may need to open in a staggered way, and users were being approached to establish their plans for restarting.

#### **16. Botley Centre redevelopment.**

Cllr Kay noted that this had been included in the County Councillor's report, with Phase 1 anticipated to be completed by the end August or possible a week later. Cllr Berrett thought that a Farmer's Market may come to the site. Cllr Kay advised that there would be a further Community Liaison Group meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> August with a report back at the September Council meeting. No further information had been provided by Mace on Phase 2 so Council could not comment on it.

#### **17. Matthew Arnold School Lease: Paper 9.**

Cllr Potter had circulated the current agreement and confirmed that a decision was not needed at this meeting about extending the agreement but ideally that would occur before the next school year. It was proposed to grant a lease for a four year term to reflect the length of each Council term and the school had agreed to that in principle. The School had requested access throughout the school day to the MUGA and football pitch but it was pointed out that NHPC receive income from weekend groups so end of the day access may not be possible. In addition, it was important to consider the condition of the pitch as use following poor weather could affect this. Councillors were asked to liaise with Cllr Potter via email with any concerns and the decision to be considered again at the July meeting.

#### **20/35 Accounts for Payment:**

See supplementary agenda for full list of payments. Cllr Kay advised that two items required adding – the Botley Bridges grant approved at this meeting and a previously approved grant cheque for North Hinksey Volunteers at £200 which had not been raised. Cllr Dowie required confirmation requested details of a payment relating to the Allotments and was advised to write to the Clerk and Cllrs Kay and MacKeith.

**20/36 Other Documents & Letters Received:** There were none.

**20/37 Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 8pm. Venue tbc but likely to be via Zoom.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 22.09 hours.

#### **End of Open Meeting**

**The Chairman, Councillor D. Kay then informed the meeting that Council was required to pass the resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Section 1, extended by the Local Government Act 1972, Section 100, that the following items are confidential as they involve consideration of advice from NHPC's solicitors, and as such the press and public are excluded from this part of the meeting.**

**Councillors SUPPORTED the resolution.**

All members of public were requested to leave the meeting at this point.

## PART TWO - Confidential Meeting

Councillors were reminded that papers/discussions under this heading are and must remain confidential, unless the Parish Council agrees to release them into the public domain. Any disclosure of confidential papers or discussions without the express permission of Council is a breach of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and its Standing Orders.

**Those present:** Cllr Kay (Chairman), Cllrs Allen, Bastin, Berrett, Blase, Dowie, Dykes, Fairclough, MacKeith, Potter, Rankin.

**20/38: Apologies for Absence:** Apologies had been received from Cllr Church and Jones.

**20/39: Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda:** There were none.

**20/40: Approval of the Draft Minutes of the Annual Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020 Part 2 Confidential Session.** Part 2 minutes were APPROVED by all councillors other than Dowie and Allen who abstained.

### **20/41: Scout Hut Lease. Paper 10**

Update from Councillor Kay and the Clerk on further communications from the Scout Association and 4<sup>th</sup> Oxford Scout Group, plus any further legal advice from Knights.

Cllr Kay confirmed that all recent correspondence from the Scouts Association and the 4<sup>th</sup> Oxford Scout Group had been circulated to councillors, along with any responses sent. He confirmed that he would also circulate the latest advice received from Knights following the meeting - this advice was read to Councillors in the meeting. The Clerk had acknowledged receipt of all emails received from the Scout Group and it was agreed that no further responses should be sent to them by NHPC at this stage.

Legal advice had been received from Knights Solicitors on the three possible options going forward and this had also been circulated.

**Councillors to consider and AGREE further appropriate actions based on the three possible situations occurring at the end of June, namely:**

(a) **a legal challenge to the Section 25 Notice has been made by the Scout Association.** Cllr Kay outlined that NHPC would need to file a defence and consider making an application for security for costs. If this was not done and costs were assigned to NHPC which the Scouts could not pay then NHPC would not receive any money. This was a standard process which needed to be arranged at the outset. It was asked whether funds would be met by NHPC or by the insurers. Cllr Kay confirmed that insurers would be advised of the matter but that NHPC did have funds available which could be reallocated if required in the July Council meeting.

**Resolution: NHPC to ask Knights solicitors to make an application for security for costs should a legal challenge to the Section 25 Notice be made by the Scout Association.** This was proposed by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Rankin, Cllrs Dowie and Allen voted against and the remaining councillors were in favour. The resolution was therefore APPROVED.

(b) **no legal action has been mounted and a 1 year lease has been requested by the Scouts.** Cllr Kay advised that in this situation NHPC would simply arrange for a lease to be renegotiated very quickly and a time period could be agreed for this.

**Resolution: Should no legal action be mounted by the Scout Association, but a new 1 year lease (as offered previously by NHPC) be requested by them then NHPC would give the Scouts a deadline of the end of July to agree the new lease and sign it.**

This was proposed by Cllr Kay and seconded by Cllr Fairclough. Cllrs Dowie and Allen voted against and the remaining councillors were in favour. The resolution was therefore APPROVED.

(c) **no further action has been taken by the Scouts at all.** The Solicitor had advised that NHPC could take possession by asking the Scouts Association to deliver up possession.

**Resolution: That NHPC ask Knights Solicitors to contact the Scouts Association within seven days after 1<sup>st</sup> July to confirm whether proceedings have been issued.** This was proposed by Cllr Fairclough, seconded by Cllr Potter. Cllrs Dowie and Allen voted against and the remaining councillors were in favour. The resolution was therefore APPROVED.

It was considered that it might be appropriate for the Scouts Association to be informed of decisions made in the Confidential Session of this meeting prior to the end of the month when the current tenancy agreement would expire.

**Resolution: To ask Knights Solicitors to convey information and decisions from this Parish Council meeting to the Scout Association. This would be bullet points only showing the relevant resolutions agreed during Part 2 Confidential Section which would be circulated as a draft to Councillors and then sent to Knights to convey to the Scout Association:** Proposed by Cllr Kay, seconded by Cllr Fairclough and agreed unanimously. Cllr Kay to action this with the Locum Clerk.

In addition, it was recognised that the District Council should be kept informed if legal proceedings are initiated.

**Resolution: The Chair to write to Vale of White Horse District Council to advise them of the situation if legal proceedings are initiated by the Scouts:** Cllr Kay proposed, Cllr Fairclough seconded. All other councillors agreed apart from Cllrs Dowie voted against and Cllr Allen abstained. The resolution was therefore APPROVED.

Cllr Kay suggested that Council should identify named Councillors to be authorised to liaise with Knights Solicitors in conjunction with the Clerk and to coordinate the process necessary for the response to any legal challenge, should it be forthcoming. Cllr Dowie was offered the opportunity to take part but declined and stated that he did not want to be part of group that was helping to terminate the Scouts' protected tenancy

**Resolution: That the Clerk, in combination with Cllrs Kay, Fairclough and Potter, is authorised to liaise with Knights Solicitors and to coordinate the process necessary for effective response to any legal challenge, should that be forthcoming.** Cllr Kay proposed, Cllr MacKeith seconded, all others voted in favour apart from Cllrs Dowie and Allen who voted against. The resolution was therefore APPROVED.

Cllr Kay advised all Councillors that it would be inappropriate for them to take any actions that would undermine the position of the Council in any legal proceedings that might occur. This would be both from a viewpoint of not publicly challenging a position agreed by Council on any issue, and also in terms of potentially risking a loss of Council funds, which Councillors are responsible for managing.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 23.06 hours.