

**Wokingham Without Parish Council
Minutes of the Council Meeting
Held on Monday 6th April 2020**

Via Zoom Video Conference

Commencing 7:30pm and concluding at 8:40pm

- Present:** Councillors J Cannon, D Dye, R Fenny, L Foxwell, C Lancaster, D Latimer, N Martin, K Newland, A Plume, J Rogers, P Stephen and S Turtle. Katy Hughes - Clerk, Sharon Way – Assistant Clerk. Borough Councillors A Ross and C Bowring.
- Apologies:** Councillor B Gough and Borough Councillor P Helliard-Symons.

At the time of this meeting both NALC and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) have asked local councils to stop holding any physical meetings or gatherings. This includes full council, committee meetings, annual parish or council meetings. In order to comply with NALC guidance, this meeting was undertaken using Zoom video conferencing.

In line with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meeting) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, Part 2, item 5: 5.—(1) A reference in any enactment to a meeting of a local authority is not limited to a meeting of persons all of whom, or any of whom, are present in the same place and any reference to a “place” where a meeting is held, or to be held, includes reference to more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers.

19/217 WELCOME

Cllr Newland welcomed everyone to the meeting, and noted appropriate microphone etiquette for the video conference.

19/218 ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Gough and Borough Cllr Helliard-Symons.

19/219 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

19/220 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

19/221 BOROUGH COUNCILLORS BRIEFING

Cllr Bowring noted that WBC officers are working very hard under difficult circumstances to ensure the vulnerable residents are taken care of. The April planning committee meeting has been cancelled.

Cllr Ross stated that the planning department is still working, so planning applications should progress normally. As much as possible all WBC officers are working from home. Many officers have been seconded to jobs considered to be more vital during this crisis.

19/222 CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk has received notification from Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) of a successful prosecution at the Pine Copse site and noted that an email with full details had been circulated to all members. Cllr Fenny asked the Clerk whether in addition to the fine, the actions which

resulted in the enforcement order had been required to be rectified. The Clerk referred Cllr Fenny to the circulated email for any available information.

The Clerk is receiving regular news updates from WBC in relation to the Coronavirus situation. Jan Nowecki, (Wokingham Town Clerk) is representing the town and parish councils at the WBC meetings and is reporting information to us on what is happening. The Clerk is circulating the information that can be shared.

It is possible that WWPC may be approached to provide facilities for activities such as blood donations – the Clerk will circulate any information or requests if they are received.

WBC has established a community hub operating from St Crispin’s School. WWPC has some stored items (e.g. toilet rolls) from the halls that could be donated. Members are invited to consider this and notify the Clerk of their views.

The Clerk is working with the Deputy Clerk – Finance and the accountant (via email) to sort out the AGAR for the year – it is unclear at present how this is going to work, since it needs to be approved by council and signed by the Chairman, Clerk and Internal Auditor. The Clerk is awaiting further guidance from PKF Littlejohn on this, but in the meantime, is gathering the additional documents and evidence that are required to be sent with the completed annual return forms.

Regarding staffing, the three administrative staff are all working from home and are visiting the office to collect post etc as regularly as possible. In order to abide by social distancing rules, the three grounds team are working in rota, with one member of staff in each morning (Monday to Friday) checking over the Pinewood site and memorial hall regularly. Our litter warden is still working but on a reduced schedule, focusing mostly on emptying bins, since there has been a reduction in roadside litter. He works alone, but measures are being taken to limit any risks to him e.g. through the provision of hand sanitizer, wipes for the Kubota etc.

Regarding the Pinewood site, the site itself remains open, allowing access to the allotments. Evening locking of the site has been brought forward to 9pm. The playgrounds have been taped off since 24th March, and are being checked daily (Mon – Fri) by the grounds team. Motorcycles are still operating ad-hoc as they are able to provide CBT updates for key workers as required. Bin collections have been suspended / reduced and the cleaning schedule for Pinewood Hall has also been suspended.

The Memorial Hall is locked but is being checked regularly and taps run etc to reduce the risk of any legionella issue once restrictions are lifted.

Cllr Rogers asked whether the recycling bins at Pinewood were still being collected. The Clerk stated that the clothes banks were locked, but the bottle banks were still being collected. Cllr Stephens noted that the coffee pod recycling bin appeared to be overflowing onto the surrounding ground. Cllr Ross noted that all collection arrangements were in place while the Veolia staff remain available.

19/223 VERBAL REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL MEETINGS

Cllr Newland held a meeting with the Boxing Club, also attended by Cllr Ross, Avoen Perryman of England Boxing and WBC officers Beverly Thompson and Craig Hoggeth. Ms Thompson agreed to have the Head of Capital Projects carry out some estimating of the various options on behalf of the club. There was debate over the level of information that Sports England would require, with some disagreement between Ms Thompson, who stated that planning permission would be required before a request could be considered, and the Area Representative of the Boxing Association, who stated that this would not be necessary for the boxing club. Ms Thompson also

agreed to talk to the WBC planning department to establish whether there was likely to be any objections to an extension to the club. Cllr Newland agreed to progress the current lease work.

Cllr Newland was also asked whether WWPC would be willing to provide some of the matched funding. Cllr Newland requested members' views as to whether WWPC should in principle be prepared to provide some of this matched funding. Each member in turn was asked to give their views. Although members were generally supportive of the improvements to the boxing club facilities, several noted that it was a low priority given the current circumstances and the likely financial crisis to follow. Cllr Plume stated that WWPC needed to consider whether the project would comprise a refurbishment e.g. to the toilets / shower facilities or a significant extension to the building. Depending on the level of refurbishment / extension, cost could be in the region of £80k to £150k+. Cllr Foxwell noted that the toilet / shower facilities are currently in a poor condition. Cllr Rogers questioned whether the level of funding WWPC could consider would be sufficient to facilitate the project going ahead, but wished to be proactive in support of the Boxing Club.

Cllr Newland proposed that the preparation of a decision paper on this matter should be postponed until after the coronavirus crisis. Cllr Ross supported this view.

Cllr Newland reported that WBC officer Craig Hoggeth had agreed to put together some parameters for a 'lift and shift' clause, which he believed would be acceptable to Sports England.

Cllr Newland reported that Ms Thompson raised the matter of safeguarding of children on the boxing club site. Cllr Newland has subsequently written to WBC setting out the actions WWPC have undertaken to safeguard children on the site and clarify matters which are not WWPC responsibility. No feedback as yet has been received from WBC.

A meeting has been held to discuss website development, attended by Cllrs Foxwell, Plume, Stephens and the web developer. Cllr Stephens reported that a good discussion was held and a mock-up prepared. The developer is now working on the site.

19/224 UPDATE ON POND AT HONEY HILL

Cllr Martin stated that Mr Hall was committed to improving the pond but this work was unlikely to proceed in the short term due the coronavirus situation.

Mr Hall chaired a Honey Hill resident meeting attended by Cllrs Martin and Foxwell, which discussed the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. Many residents wanted to get involved in the neighbourhood plan. The group plan to appoint a representative who will summarise their views and be a point of contact on the neighbourhood plan. Cllr Newland stated that this approach would not work and he would discuss this further with Cllr Martin outside the meeting.

19/225 DEVELOPMENT IMPACT ON LOCAL TREES AND HEDGEROWS

Cllr Martin stated that this was going to be raised at the Wokingham District Veteran Trees Association AGM, which had been postponed until after the coronavirus crisis.

19/226 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Cllr Newland stated that the shooting club have asked for financial support for finishing some work on their building, and based on existing agreements WWPC appear to have an outstanding financial commitment. Cllr Newland will discuss this with the Clerk and bring the conclusion to the next meeting.

With respect to the WWPC budget, Cllr Newland stated that a major budget review will be held around the middle of the year.

With respect to the AGM which would have been the next meeting, in compliance with guidance and new legislation this will not now take place and members who have been elected will remain in those positions. Cllr Newland will discuss and agree with the Clerk the arrangements for holding an AGM after the immediate crisis.

Cllr Newland thanked the office staff for continuing under difficult circumstances. He also thanked members for the number of new initiatives that were coming forward.

19/227 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION AT FUTURE MEETINGS:

Cllr Stephens outlined a proposal for an e-zine news sheet to provide a practical guide to where to go for a wide range of useful information, much of which would be of particular value during the current crisis. It would also provide a source of knowledge and information about local facilities and resources. This will be publicised on the WWPC Facebook page and encourage recipients to share both electronically and via printed copies. Members are encouraged to share relevant information with Cllr Stephens and the Clerk.

With respect to the pond at Honey Hill, Cllr Dye noted that some time ago a Wokingham Without Environment Group wanted to take over looking after the pond but Mr Hall did not permit this. However Cllr Dye did not consider the location was suitable for use by the public.

Cllr Rogers noted that there was a lack of water in Dickie's pond at Pinewood and action may need to be taken to rectify this.

19/228 MEETING CLOSED AT 8:40 PM

Date of next meeting – Meeting of the Parish Council at 7.30pm on Monday 11th May 2020 via Video Conference (subject to there being no lifting of restrictions on meetings by this date).

Signed:

Date: 11th May 2020