

Wokingham Without Parish Council
Minutes of the Council Meeting
Held on Monday 13th January 2020

In the Howard Palmer Room, St Sebastian's Memorial Hall, Nine Mile Ride

Commencing 7:15 pm and concluding at 9:47 pm

- Present:** Councillors L Foxwell, B Gough, D Latimer (arrived 7:25pm), N Martin, K Newland, J Rogers (arrived 7:40), P Stephens and S Turtle. Katy Hughes - Clerk, Sharon Way – Assistant Clerk. Borough Councillor Michael Firmager (left 7:40).
- Apologies:** Councillor D Dye, R Fenny, and A Plume. Borough Councillors C Bowring, P Helliar-Symons and A Ross.

19/156 WELCOME

Cllr Newland welcomed everyone to the meeting.

19/157 TO RECEIVE A SHORT PRESENTATION FROM BOROUGH COUNCILLOR MICHAEL FIRMAGER

Cllr Firmager introduced himself as the member for the Sonning and Warren Ward and Chairman of the Borough Parish Liaison Forum. He is currently visiting the towns and parishes of the Wokingham Borough in order to develop better relationships and communication and encourage parish councillors to make suggestions for topics for discussion at the forum. The intention is that the forum is driven by the towns and parishes rather than the borough. Cllr Firmager noted that the Clerk had raised two issues – CIL and planning enforcement - as being of particular interest to the parish, and noted that the forum can direct parishes to appropriate borough officers / lead members.

Cllr Newland noted that because the forum is often held on the first Monday of the month, this always clashes with the parish council meeting. Other possible options for the meeting day were discussed briefly.

The intention is that towns and parishes will feed ideas to the forum in order to form an agenda of 2-3 items to be discussed at each meeting.

Following further discussion, the Clerk suggested that a workshop should be organised to review the purpose of the Borough Parish Liaison Forum, i.e. a means of communication, a means of policy making etc. Cllr Firmager noted this suggestion.

Cllr Firmager left the meeting at 7.40pm.

19/158 ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Dye, Fenny and Plume. Borough Cllrs Bowring, Helliar-Symons and Ross.

19/159 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

19/160 TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2ND DECEMBER 2019

Cllr Newland invited comments from the floor. None were received.

RESOLVED: Minutes of the 2nd December 2019 were AGREED and signed.

19/161 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF 2ND DECEMBER 2019

None.

19/162 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

19/163 BOROUGH COUNCILLORS BRIEFING

None.

19/164 CLERKS REPORT

On 6th December the Clerk attended the SLCC branch training day in Thatcham – discussions were held on climate emergency.

On 10th December the Finance Working group met to review budget proposals.

Also on 10th December, Cllrs Foxwell, Plume and the Clerk met with planning officers to discuss the parish office planning application (covered in section 20/10).

On 13th December Cllrs Turtle, Fenny and Foxwell attended a public consultation event for the neighbourhood plan, held at the Oaklands School's Christmas fair.

Cllrs Newland, Foxwell, Plume, Fenny and the Clerk attended the Parish and Borough Ward member meeting on 16th December (covered in section 20/10) - minutes of this meeting will be circulated to members.

On 17th December the Clerk and Cllr Newland met with the WWPC solicitor for a lease update (covered in section 20/10).

On 18th December a Legionella Risk Assessment was carried out at Pinewood – the report is expected in the next couple of days.

The South Wokingham SDL forum meeting will be held on Tuesday 14th January at the Memorial Hall 6-8pm. The Clerk has organised a stand to talk to residents about the new community centre and the Neighbourhood Plan. The Clerk will organise sign-up sheets for the Newsletter and capture interest in involvement in the neighbourhood plan.

The Internal auditor is in the office on 14th, 15th and 16th January - the Clerk requested that members call ahead if planning to visit the office on these dates.

The Grants Award Event will be held on Monday 20th January at 2pm in the Howard Palmer Room. This year the event has been separated from the parish meeting in order to comply with best practice.

The CPC / WWPC Liaison meeting will be held on the evening of 20th January, starting at 7.30pm in the Howard Palmer Room. Cllrs Rogers and Foxwell are attending and there is one vacancy - any member who wishes to attend should contact the Clerk. Regarding the agenda it was suggested that Old Wokingham Road should be an item. Members were encouraged to contact the Clerk with any further items for the agenda. Cllr Newland emphasised that the Liaison

meeting should be the formal element of contact between the parish councils, which can then create joint working groups to address specific collaborative projects in detail.

The Fit For Life one year anniversary event will be held in the Memorial Hall on Wednesday 22nd January 10.45 am to 12.15 pm.

On the morning of 23rd January, Proludic will be carrying out a site visit for the playground equipment installation

Community Clean-up day will be held on 2nd February. The aim is the clear up of pathways in the vicinity of the Heathlands Road traffic lights, as this is a walking route to school. Cllrs Rogers and Fenny will be attending and other members were encouraged to attend. The event will be advertised in the local community and it is hoped that members of the public will participate.

Date for diary: Tuesday 17th November – Community Volunteer Awards. This is on the agenda for the CPC / WWPC Liaison meeting.

The Website Working Group met to discuss the work needed to bring the website up to the required accessibility standards. The opinion of the group is that a new website is the preferred approach rather than an upgrade of the current site. The Clerk has held discussions with a website provider and hopes to bring a paper to February Council to get this underway.

The Public Spaces and Amenities Working Group met on 10th January to discuss issues including the pond, land at the Memorial Hall and the Pinewood Car Park. Recommendations were made on several actions which will be presented as papers at the February meeting.

19/165 VERBAL REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL MEETINGS

- i) On 9th December the Clerk met with the WBC Biodiversity Officer. The meeting concerned the requirements for developers with regard to biodiversity offsetting and net gain. A bill currently going through parliament will require developers to deliver a net biodiversity gain. There is potential for councils that own land to increase the biodiversity of this land and generate income for the parish by offsetting. The Clerk will provide more information when it is available.
- ii) On 10th December the Clerk, Cllrs Foxwell and Plume met with WBC planning officers regarding the parish office. Planning will not be granted to extend north or east. The application has been revised to a smaller scale development, which provides the administrative space but not the large meeting space. A small meeting room will be provided. Revised proposals will be put to council for a decision.
- iii) On 13th December Cllrs Foxwell and Turtle attended the Neighbourhood Plan stand at the Oaklands School Fair. The parents were friendly and there was good publicity for the new playground.
- iv) On 16th December Cllrs Newland, Foxwell, Plume, Fenny and the Clerk attended a Parish and Ward Member meeting. There were updates from Borough Councillors. Possible improvements to the Pinewood Head Lease were raised. Cllr Ross has asked the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and others in WBC to have a meeting to discuss the desired changes. Cllr Newland has been invited. Cllr Newland has no expectation for progress on this issue until Pinewood becomes part of the WBC Leisure Strategy, WWPC take ownership of the site or WBC members instruct officers accordingly. These discussions are not affecting ongoing work on the new leases.

- v) On 17th December a meeting was held with Blandy and Blandy on the Pinewood lease. Cllr Newland expressed a wish for the leases to be signed by 1st April. The Clerk advised that the sub-leases should be sent to tenants by the end of this week. Once tenants' comments are received, amended sub-leases will be sent to WBC together with the signed head lease. WBC will review and if happy will sign and date the sub-leases which then come into force. Cllr Newland expressed concern for the time this process will take, given that there are many actions which are outside our control.

19/166 FOOTPATH 10 IMPROVEMENTS

The Clerk provided an overview of the background to this request. At the September meeting the Council agreed to allocate £2500 of CIL to a WBC request to fund improvements to Footpath 10. The actual quote is £495 higher and WBC have approached WWPC to fund the additional amount. The Clerk advised that if the additional funding is not agreed there is a reasonable risk that the works will not happen, and the losers will be our community. Members noted that a significant element of the WWPC adopted strategy is to encourage use of footpaths.

Cllr Newland noted that if the original proposal had been for £3000 it is likely to have been approved. It is also reasonable for WBC to have provided a quick comparative cost estimate for the initial request and to firm this up prior to the final decision. He therefore considered that it should be agreed.

Cllr Stephens expressed his view that the process undertaken by WBC had been unprofessional.

Cllr Rogers expressed her agreement to the additional funding provided the project was properly executed. The Clerk will set up a meeting to better understand the details of how the project will be run to ensure there is an adequate plan in place. The Clerk will also discuss improvements to the overall process to ensure that this type of project can be procured with greater clarity and professionalism in the future.

Following a proposal from Cllr Turtle and seconded by Cllr Newland it was:

RESOLVED: The additional funding of £495 for Footpath 10 was PASSED by a majority

19/167 BUDGET 2020-21

The Clerk made a presentation on the budget recommendation for 2020/2021, starting with highlights for the 2020/21 budget (excluding CIL).

Major variances in projected outturn income and expenditure for 2019/20 compared to budget were presented, which broadly balanced with an overall projected net cost saving of £1125.

The Clerk then presented the CIL balance and Reserves balances, followed by a discussion of the key points for the 2020/21 budget. Budgeted expenditure included a capital spend of £20k for a replacement tractor and trailer as the current equipment is close to the end of its useful life.

The Clerk outlined the reasoning behind the recommendation to increase car park rent by 2%, lettings charges by 2.5%, and service charges by 3.5%.

The Clerk further outlined the reasoning behind the working group's recommendation to increase the precept by 8.9% to a band D rate of £60.78, a rate still in the mid-range for towns and parishes in and around Wokingham.

Finally the Clerk discussed the potential risks affecting the 2020/21 budget.

Following a proposal from Cllr Martin and seconded by Cllr Turtle it was:

RESOLVED: The recommended increase in lettings charges, car parking costs and service charges from April 2020 were AGREED.

Following a proposal from Cllr Turtle and seconded by Cllr Foxwell it was:

RESOLVED: The recommended Capital Expenditure programme was AGREED.

Following a proposal from Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Foxwell it was:

RESOLVED: The recommended Precept level for 2020/21 to balance the budget was AGREED

19/168 FINANCIAL INFORMATION - papers circulated prior to meeting

- a) Report on outstanding balances was received and noted.
- b) Cheques for signature and payments both made and still to be made were approved and signed. No queries were raised.
- c) A detailed income and expenditure report and financial performance against budget report was received and noted.
- d) A report of total salary expenditure to date for the year was received and noted.

19/169 PLANNING/LICENCE APPLICATIONS

No	Site	Comments
193169	1&2 East Lodge Ludgrove Wokingham RG40 3AD	No comment
193168	83 Ellis Road Crowthorne RG45 6PJ	No comment
193192	81 Ellis Road Crowthorne RG45 6PL	No comment
192742	The Barn House Waterloo Road Wokingham RG40 3BY	WWPC have reviewed this application and have the following comments: 1) The documentation provided does not enable a really clear understanding of the proposed development and is not up to the standard of normal applications. 2) It would appear that the intention is to turn a detached garage into residential accommodation but not clear what this accommodation is and whether it is one or more dwellings. 3) The poor information means you could speculate on the reasons behind this proposed development. 4) It would seem prudent therefore to request a better clarification of what is proposed and also to investigate the appropriateness for this site, which is currently a residential property without any evident commercial activity, and furthermore care should be taken to ensure that the intention for this is not to create small independent accommodation units which might be let out, therefore constituting a significant change of use.
192875	19 Old Wokingham Road Crowthorne RG45 6SS	Concern was raised with regard to a potential terracing effect - the gap between this property's boundary line and that of no. 23 falls short of the local policy recommendation of 1 meter.

19/170 CHAIRMAN’S COMMUNICATIONS

Cllr Newland stated that all items of Chairman’s Communications had been covered earlier in the meeting.

19/171 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION AT FUTURE MEETINGS:

Cllr Martin will discuss the pond at Honey Hill with the owner of Squires / Mark Hall and report back at a future meeting.

Cllr Stephens noted the poor state of the Pinewood Centre with conspicuous banners, rubbish and tipping. The Public Spaces and Amenities Working Group had agreed that this would not be permitted to continue. The Clerk will write to all tenants in strong terms and with a firm deadline and report back at the next meeting.

19/172 MEETING CLOSED AT 9:47 PM

Date of next meeting – Meeting of the Parish Council at 7.30pm in the Howard Palmer Room on Monday 3rd February 2020.

Signed:

Date: 3rd February 2020