

**Wokingham Without Parish Council  
Minutes of the Council Meeting  
Held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

**Via Zoom Video Conference**

Commencing 7:30pm and concluding at 9:07pm

**Present:** Councillors J Cannon, D Dye, R Fenny, L Foxwell, C Lancaster, D Latimer, N Martin, K Newland, A Plume, J Rogers and P Stephens. Katy Hughes - Clerk, Sharon Way – Assistant Clerk. Borough Cllr A Ross.

**Apologies:** Councillors S Turtle and B Gough. Borough Councillors C Bowring and P Helliars-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.**

**20/68 WELCOME**

Cllr Newland welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**20/69 ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Turtle and Gough. Borough Cllrs Bowring and Helliars-Symons.

**20/70 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**20/71 MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- a) Cllr Newland invited comments on the minutes of the meetings held on Monday 3rd August 2020. No comments were made.

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

**RESOLVED: Minutes of Monday 3rd August were AGREED**

- b) Matters arising from the minutes of the above meeting.

Following the council’s approval in August of a tapered return to rents at Pinewood, thanks have been received from the following tenants:

- Pinewood gymnastics
- Judo
- model railway
- miniature railway

- motorcycles
- Jayne Coleman
- EBOS
- Pinewood Café

## **20/72 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None

## **20/73 BOROUGH COUNCILLORS BRIEFING**

Cllr Ross reported that the Heathlake car park work is moving setting a start date.

Cllr Ross had been trying to find out if and when the planning applications for the South Wokingham SDL and SDR will be coming before the WBC planning committee. It is unlikely to be during October. Cllr Ross will keep WWPC informed.

Cllr Fenny asked for Cllr Ross' views on the new planning regulations consultation. Cllr Ross noted that there are some good things being proposed in terms of planning regulation, the concerns are regarding the proposed 'algorithm' which if applied would result in over double the amount of housing per year going forward. A letter will be sent to residents encouraging them to write in to show their concern with this proposal.

## **20/74 CLERKS REPORT**

Outdoor Exercise Permits: The Clerk had a presentation on this from WBC at a recent Clerk's Forum. WBC have introduced permits for PTs running outdoor classes in 8 park areas managed by WBC. Permits are currently free but WBC is considering introducing a charge for this, possibly from January 2021. If it goes ahead, they would like the towns and parishes to consider coming on board. The Clerk will circulate further information when it is available.

Cllr Martin requested clarification regarding the outdoor permits. The Clerk stated that WBC had seen a significant increase in people using its outdoor spaces for running personal training and exercise classes, potentially without necessary insurance or in a Covid-safe way. The use of permits is an approach taken by other local authorities.

Walk to School Week: Some of the local towns and parishes are supporting their local schools for 'walk to school week', commencing 5th October. The Clerk asked whether members want to consider this. The organisation Living Streets that run this initiative, sell classroom packs, banners and other incentives, or WWPC could look at an alternative approach (as suggested by Cllr Cannon) whereby a small financial incentive is provided for local schools. The Clerk will contact schools and work up a proposal.

Bigshotte Park: Anti-social behaviour has been an ongoing issue at Bigshotte throughout the summer. Recently a further issue has been caused by a rider with a pony and trap using the park area for exercise, leaving tyre and hoof prints on the pitches. Local residents have met with WBC to look at options for installing a gate.

Office re-opening: Once the schools return, it is planned to start re-opening the office w/c 14th September. It will likely be two or three mornings a week, with one member of staff in to cover these days initially, and this will be reviewed regularly. The size and layout of the office make it difficult to maintain social distance. WBC office at Shute End is not currently planned to be re-opened, so it is anticipated that an increase in residents (both locally and possibly further afield)

will look to purchase further supplies of bin bags, garden sacks and green food waste bags. The office team will need to manage this along with its workload.

Cllr Fenny congratulated the Clerk and office staff for the proposal to open the office.

Community Awards: Because of the ongoing restrictions, the demographic and issues with securing use of a larger venue, CPC have taken the decision to postpone the bi-annual community awards, originally scheduled for this autumn, to 2021.

Heathlake car park resurfacing: Simon Bartlam at WBC has forwarded the quotes and advised that he intends to accept the quote from Berkshire Asphalt, to resurface the car park. The Clerk has asked for our contact details to be passed to them and, if possible, will source a quote for repairing the potholes in the Memorial Hall car park at the same time.

Benches and bins: Four of the new benches from J&J have been installed on the meadow area and near the football pitch. This week, tree works in the toddler play area necessitated the need to move the two wooden benches, and these were found to be quite badly rotten. The two remaining J&J benches will be used to replace these. The Clerk will look into purchasing a further couple of this style of bench to add additional seating in the Adventure Play area (probably in time for Spring 2021).

The Clerk has also sourced some quotes for a couple of new bins, in a similar style to the new benches, to locate in the meadow area.

#### **20/75 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE / OTHER MEETINGS**

- A) Buildings, Halls and Facilities Working Group- site visit to Pinewood Hall – 12<sup>th</sup> August. The Clerk and Cllr Foxwell visited Pinewood Hall and the Clerk is now preparing a report on areas in a poor state of repair and requiring investment. Consideration will be given to packages of work that can be complete during holiday periods.
- B) Finance Working Group – 13<sup>th</sup> August. The Clerk reported that this meeting looked at the current situation regarding the loss of income and plans for restoring income sources.
- C) Public Spaces and Amenities – 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> August (site visits). The Clerk reported that the site visits had been held in order to develop a plan for day-to-day management of the pond, covered in the paper to be discussed later in the meeting.

#### **20/76 COUNCIL INSURANCE RENEWAL**

The Clerk reported that the current insurance policy runs until the end of September.

A revaluation report was commissioned for the Pinewood assets and the Memorial Hall, which has considerably increased the cost of replacing the buildings. This will increase the cost of the insurance renewal.

The Clerk proposed that the Finance Working Group is given the authority to decide which of the three quotes received will be accepted.

The Clerk noted the current policy cost and what had been budgeted for 2020/21 to allow for an inflation-based increase. The policy renewal quotes received range from approx. £12,400 to £15,000.

Cllr Fenny noted that WWPC do not have to accept the revaluation, and questioned whether current building rates are higher than normal due to Covid.

During discussion members suggested several questions to be asked of the surveyor who carried out the revaluation, in order to establish whether the revaluation is reasonable.

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

**RESOLVED: The proposal to delegate to the Finance Working Group consideration of the revaluation report, potential savings, and authority to accept a policy renewal quote was AGREED.**

**20/77 CIL EXPENDITURE**

- i) To approve items of 2019-20 expenditure to be transferred from CIL (see appendix 10 of the agenda). The Clerk clarified that these are items that have been paid for out of the regular 2019-20 budget, but the accountant has confirmed can legitimately be reclaimed from CIL.
- ii) To approve the transfer of £34,593.22 (in addition to any sums approved in item 10(i) above) from the council's CIL account to the council's current account to reflect 2018-19 CIL expenditure. The Clerk clarified that these are items that WWPC has already agreed would be funded from CIL, but the council's approval is required to transfer the funds between the council's accounts.

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

**RESOLVED: The CIL Expenditure proposals as given in appendix 10 of the agenda, were agreed.**

**20/78 POND PROJECT**

- i) To approve a proposal from the Public Spaces and Amenities Working Group to undertake works to the pond (see appendix 11 of the agenda).

The Clerk outlined the proposals to improve the sustainability of the pond area as given in the paper in appendix 11. These works are intended to allow the pond to sustain itself during the summer and alleviate flooding during the winter. The pond will be monitored to establish the effectiveness of these measures prior to considering more expensive works.

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

**RESOLVED: The proposal to undertake works to the pond, was AGREED.**

- ii) To approve a proposal from Cllr Stephens to formally approach L&G to request a financial contribution towards the pond works.

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

**RESOLVED: The proposal from Cllr Stephens to formally approach L&G to request a financial contribution towards the pond works, was AGREED.**

**20/79 TREE WORKS**

To approve a quote for works to trees on the Pinewood site recommended in the March 2020 tree survey (see appendix 12, 12A and 12B of the agenda).

Cllr Dye requested clarification of which trees required works. The Clerk identified that several

trees were identified as requiring works by a consultant in late March. Cllr Dye requested work to be carried out on a chestnut tree which is overshadowing walnut trees near the allotments.

Cllr Fenny asked which quote was being approved. The quote from Arborfield tree care has been approved.

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

**RESOLVED: The quote for works to trees on the Pinewood site recommended in the March 2020 tree survey, was AGREED.**

#### **20/80 TRACTOR REPLACEMENT**

The Clerk noted that replacement of the tractor had been budgeted last year and incorporated into the precept accordingly. The tractor is now breaking down frequently and becoming unusable. There is a budget in place and the Clerk proposed to seek quotes and order it providing the quotes remain within budget.

The Clerk agreed to circulate quotes to members for their comments. The old tractor will be traded-in.

Cllr Newland stated that given the likely timescales for organising the replacement the final decision should be brought back for agreement at the next meeting, unless matters became critical in the interim in which case an 'offline' decision may need to be made.

#### **20/81 CHANGES TO THE PLANNING SYSTEM**

The Clerk stated that the consultation period is 12 weeks from the 6<sup>th</sup> August. WBC have not yet published an official response to the consultation paper. The Clerk proposed that members read the document and submit any comments to the parish office, where the views will be collated into a collective response.

The local Clerks are in discussion with Clare Lawrence at WBC to establish whether a collective response from the town and parish councils would be a useful approach.

If members wish, the Clerk will set up a meeting to review the document.

This approach was agreed.

#### **20/82 PLANNING**

Cllr Fenny noted that he had been trying to obtain confirmation from WBC of the number of park home licences that will be granted at the Pinecopse site, and has been told that this number will not be released until the licences have been granted. However, the owners have been marketing 28 units on the site.

Cllr Lancaster stated that if answers are not being received, this issue must be formally raised with the Chief Executive. The Clerk agreed to write and send this letter.

#### **20/83 HALL RE-OPENING**

The Clerk stated the Pinewood Hall and the Memorial Hall opened as of 7<sup>th</sup> September. Existing hirers have been contacted to establish bookings. Some groups are unable to book but others have restarted hiring. The Clerk noted that the current charging structure charges are the same for the Howard Palmer room as for the main hall, however the Howard Palmer room has smaller

capacity due to Covid, and it is therefore not viable at the current rate. The Clerk therefore requested the ability to vary hall hire charges for St Sebastian’s Memorial Hall, at the Clerk’s discretion, in order to retain as many hirers as possible.

Cllr Newland commented that it was important to make it very clear that this would be a temporary situation to give flexibility, and that the standard hire rates have not changed.

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

**RESOLVED: The Clerk’s authority to vary hall hire charges for St Sebastian’s Memorial Hall, at her discretion was AGREED.**

**20/84 CHAIRMAN’S COMMUNICATIONS**

Cllr Newland gave an update on the current situation with regard to the subleases.

**20/85 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION AT FUTURE MEETINGS:**

None.

**20/86 MEETING CLOSED AT 9:07 PM**

**Date of next meeting** – Meeting of the Parish Council at 7.30pm on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Signed: .....

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020