

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

**Via Zoom Video Conference**

Commencing 7:30pm and concluding at 9.55pm

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

**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.**

**20/119 WELCOME**

Cllr Newland welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**20/120 ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dye, Gough and Foxwell and Borough Councillors Helliar-Symons and Ross.

**20/121 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**20/122 MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- a) Cllr Newland invited comments on the minutes of the meetings held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020. No comments were made.

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

**RESOLVED: Minutes of Monday 2nd November were AGREED**

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

Cllr Plume referenced minute 20/109 regarding St Sebastian’s Playing Field Trust and asked whether Cllr Newland had found any additional information. Cllr Newland confirmed he had gone back through his records, but had found nothing specific on the matter, however he recalled that a large number of recommendations for additional information were made at the 2018 meeting.

**20/123 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None

## **20/124 BOROUGH COUNCILLORS BRIEFING**

Borough Councillor Bowring had nothing specific to report. Cllr Stephens commented on the numerous road closures / road works in the Wokingham area and asked Cllr Bowring for comment. Cllr Bowring stated that there had been some emergency works required by the utility companies.

Cllr Cannon referred to the development of Byway 28, which would allow people to walk and cycle from Crowthorne to Wokingham town centre without traffic interruptions. Cllr Bowring stated that Cllr Ross was involved in this project and he would ask Cllr Ross to report back on it.

Cllr Newland referenced the requests by WBC for project support from CIL funding and stated that the requests were lacking in detail which makes it difficult for WWPC to properly consider the proposals. Cllr Bowring would take this comment away and consider how the level of information can be improved. Cllr Plume mentioned that information exchange had improved through the borough councillor briefings and suggested it would be good to get a similar system started again, e.g. via Teams or Zoom. He requested that Cllr Bowring consult with Cllrs Ross and Helliars-Symons and propose some suitable dates.

Cllr Rogers stated that she understood the WBC Problem-Solving Task Group would be meeting in December to consider the issues at Bigshotte Park. The residents want to know why WBC is not considering a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) and this needs to be an agenda item at the meeting. Cllr Bowring will follow up on this issue with Cllr Ross.

Cllr Stephens raised the issue of the development at Gray's Farm, and stated his view that WWPC needs to be involved and know more about WBC plans in order to develop, for example, the Neighbourhood Plan. This point was supported by Cllr Newland. Cllr Fenny stated that WBC should be clear about plans for Gray's farm in order to justify to residents that this development provides value for money.

## **20/125 CLERKS REPORT**

The Clerk congratulated the Assistant Clerk on passing the ILCA course.

Following a site visit and check for sizing, the new tractor has been ordered. The trade-in price for the existing Kubota G21 ride on mower was £3,000 so this brought the price down to just under £17,500K plus VAT. The Clerk is awaiting confirmation of delivery date. Cllr Plume thanked the Clerk for her efforts to obtain the best price for the tractor unit.

Christmas trees have been installed and lit-up at the Parish Office and at Greenwood Road. They will be featured in the newsletter and on Facebook, with thanks to Squire's Garden Centre and Rogers Hardware Store for their help and contributions.

Following guidance from ACRE, St Sebastian's Memorial Hall has re-opened to hirers from Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December and Pinewood hall, which remained open during the last lockdown for the Flying Start nursery, opened for other hirers. The Clerk will continue to monitor the situation closely and follow the guidance received from ACRE / CBAS.

Regarding budget works, the Clerk is currently looking at projected outturn for 2020-21 and proposed budget for 2021-22. A meeting with the Finance Working Group will be held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December starting at 11am in the Howard Palmer room. Cllr Foxwell has sent her apologies and the Clerk asked whether any other member would be able to attend this meeting. Cllr Martin volunteered to attend.

The Clerk reported that a vehicle has damaged a wooden gate post at Pinewood on Thursday evening. The Clerk received a call on Friday from the driver and is currently sourcing quotes to get the damaged post removed and a new post installed. Cllr Turtle questioned whether 'no entry' signage was in place. Cllr Newland confirmed that signage was in place and asked the Clerk to check cleanliness and visibility.

Town and parish clerks and WBC have been working jointly on a parish charter for partnership working. This will be sent to the parishes for approval, and the Clerk will circulate it to members once received. Cllr Rogers noted that significant work had been undertaken in the past regarding working together with WBC with respect to CIL, and that similar points had been written into the document that was prepared at that time.

Borough Cllr Helliard-Symons has notified the Clerk that from 9<sup>th</sup> December there will be an online process for applying for blue badges. If members receive any enquiries on this matter they can contact the Clerk for more information.

## **20/126 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE / OTHER MEETINGS**

- A) Climate Emergency WG meeting (9<sup>th</sup> Nov). Cllr Cannon referenced the minutes of the meeting that had been circulated to members. The impact of remote working on CO<sub>2</sub> across the borough was discussed. All WBC council meetings would continue to be held remotely and working from home is being encouraged. Woodley Town Council gave a presentation on their declaration of climate emergency. The bulk of the meeting concerned the climate emergency task and finish group and their action plan, which noted the important role of parish councils. Cllr Newland asked whether anything discussed could feed into the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Cannon mentioned green planting and solar farms. Cllr Stephens asked whether hydrogen fuel was mentioned, and Cllr Cannon stated this was not. Cllr Martin mentioned that electric vehicles were not so anti-polluting as is being stated and the risk of fire in electric vehicles is a real risk.
- B) Energy Audit meeting (17<sup>th</sup> Nov).  
The Clerk reported that a meeting was held with Ian Gough, Energy Manager at WBC, to discuss an application for funding for decarbonisation of public buildings through Salix. Mr Gough advised that the scheme was significantly oversubscribed and priority funding was aimed at schemes at a higher level than the WWPC scheme. It was therefore concluded that it was not pertinent to pursue an application. Mr Gough offered to carry out an audit of the Memorial Hall as a free of charge service. This will be carried out next week and should provide 'quick wins' that can be undertaken to reduce energy consumption and identify some longer term decarbonisation investment projects which may qualify for future grant funding.
- C) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (26<sup>th</sup> Nov).  
Cllr Stephens reported that the meeting established a platform for future work and that a key aspect was obtaining input from parishioners. Ideas for achieving this input were discussed. Cllr Plume stated that an initial vision needed to be worked on.
- D) C.R.O.W. AGM (30<sup>th</sup> Nov).  
Cllr Rogers reported that she had raised the issue of use of the land at the Memorial Hall. Some useful ideas had been presented and the Clerk is compiling a list of relevant organisations to contact. The re-issue of the grant cheque is being resolved with the assistance of the Clerk.

**20/127 PARISH GRANT PROGRAM 2020-21**

With reference to the decision paper (appendix 9 of the agenda), the Clerk stated that the grants working group had met to discuss the applications received. The Clerk noted that some regular grant applicants had not applied this year because Covid restrictions had impeded their normal activities. As a result, the amount of money requested is lower than usual.

Cllr Fenny raised the matter of support for children who did not get free school meals during the October half term. The Clerk stated that an offer was made to the food bank to fund advertising, but this was not needed. Also, the parish office collated information regarding locations offering free meals and presented it through social media. Cllr Rogers noted that the Clerk had recently circulated a press release from WBC, which has received funding to provide vouchers to all children eligible for free school meals over the school Christmas holiday.

Cllr Plume stated that although only half the available grant funds had been allocated, requests for funding are often received later in the year and that regular recipients of funding may come forward when they are able to re-open.

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

**RESOLVED: The proposal for grant payments for 2020-21 was AGREED.**

**20/128 PINWOOD HARDSHIP FUND**

The Clerk provided an overview of the decision paper (appendix 10 of the agenda).

The matter was discussed by members but no agreement to proceed was reached.

Cllr Newland stated that due to the issues raised by members the decision paper must be revisited. A revised paper will be submitted at the next meeting.

**20/129 PINWOOD LEASES**

Cllr Newland stated that all the leases were sent to WBC on 30<sup>th</sup> November. The issue of the removal of the Land Compensation Acts clause was raised as part of the response and WBC has responded, rejecting the proposed qualification to the break clause. WBC stated that they required the break clause to be retained to ensure that no organisation should be capable of thwarting the action of WBC if they choose to close the site.

Cllr Newland stated that WWPC needs to understand whether the break clause takes precedence over the 1954 Landlord & Tenant Act.

**20/130 SPORT AND LEISURE IN WOKINGHAM WITHOUT – DISCUSSION PAPER**

Cllr Newland outlined the background reasons for preparing the discussion paper (appendix 12 of the agenda), which proposes to consider sport and leisure holistically, and asked whether members felt this was worth pursuing.

Cllr Plume noted that a coherent sport and leisure policy required knowledge of the proposals for Gray's Farm. Cllr Newland noted that due to delays with the SDL no work on Gray's Farm was currently being undertaken by WBC. However other related matters, e.g. the land at Memorial Hall, need to be dealt with.

Cllr Stephens stated that the development at Gray's Farm was key and WWPC should become involved as deeply involved as possible.

Cllr Turtle was supportive of the paper since it facilitated prioritisation and consideration to the short, medium and long term, and that, in the absence of any further information, Gray's Farm should be considered as a playing field area.

Cllr Rogers supported revisiting the Vision document to include Arts.

Cllr Newland asked whether a working group should be formed as proposed in the paper. Cllr Fenny was supportive of the formation of a working group to progress the use of the land at the Memorial Hall. Cllr Newland agreed, but stated that this should be considered in the wider context of sport and leisure in the parish. Cllr Stephens agreed that the new working group should focus on the land at the Memorial Hall and volunteered for this group. Cllrs Turtle, Fenny and Rogers also volunteered to sit on the working group.

The Clerk stated that the role of the working group would be to develop a set of ideas for the potential use of the site and eliminate uses that cannot be achieved.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the working group be formed specifically to consider the use of the land at the Memorial Hall, comprising Cllrs Stephens, Turtle, Rogers, and Fenny. The Clerk will organise a date and time for the first meeting.

With respect to the application from St Sebastian's Sports Trust, Cllr Newland proposed that the Clerk prepare a written response referencing the meeting held with the Trust on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at which significant feedback and advice was provided.

#### **20/131 CIL CO-FUNDING REQUESTS FROM WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Regarding the California Country Park proposal, following discussion it was agreed that due to the lack of information it was not appropriate to pursue at this time.

Regarding the Wayfinder proposal, following discussion it was agreed that this was not suitable for a rural parish.

A discussion was held regarding the proposed pedestrian / cycleway along Nine Mile Ride from the double roundabout to the railway bridge. It was agreed that this development met many of WWPC's objectives and although it was outside the parish it should be encouraged. The Clerk stated that she would work with Finchampstead Parish Council and WBC as the highways authority and seek to secure external funding sources to take the project forward. The project may therefore be funded from multiple sources including CIL. The Clerk will arrange a meeting with the FPC Clerk and the WBC cycling officer and move this forward in conjunction with FPC.

Regarding the car charging proposal, the Clerk clarified that this is aimed at on-street charging points, but it is not clear where these will be located. Winnersh parish council have initiated work to look at installing charging points, and have found a framework which they will circulate to the other clerks that may identify funding sources and allow WWPC to install charging points at suitable locations within the parish, e.g at Pinewood. Cllr Fenny expressed support for the provision of EV charging points at Pinewood. Cllr Stephens questioned whether installation of EV points provided good value to WW parishioners. Cllr Turtle suggested that the response should be that if the EV points are to be located within the parish then WWPC would consider a proposal. Cllr Plume stated that the working group looking at the use of land at Memorial Hall should consider the installation of EV points as this would support the case for provision of parking spaces. It was agreed that the Clerk would request that WBC provide more information about this proposal and would also request assistance in identifying companies to work with / funding sources etc to facilitate installation of EV charging points within the parish.

**20/132 PINWOOD BANNER POLICY**

The Clerk stated that this policy required its annual review and proposed that the next review period should be extended to two years.

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

**RESOLVED: The Pinewood Banner Policy was RE-ADOPTED and the period until the next review would be two years.**

Cllr Stephens asked why the banner policy was not being enforced, for example with respect to the football club. The Clerk stated that she had liaised with Martin Turner regarding this issue who had responded that the banners secured funding from sponsorship, reported positive inclusive and anti-racist messages and that they were neatly placed. Cllrs Stephens and Turtle stated that the policy should be enforced and the banners removed. Cllr Newland stated that any club wishing to deviate from the policy should write formally to WWPC stating reasons for this for consideration by members.

**20/133 PLANNING**

The content of appendix 15 of the agenda was noted. Cllr Newland invited members to provide further comments, none were given.

**20/134 PLAYGROUND SURFACING REPAIR**

Cllr Newland referred to the decision paper (appendix 16 of the agenda). The Clerk confirmed that several companies were in the process of preparing quotations for the works, and the purpose of the paper was to obtain approval to enable the works to be carried out as quickly as possible. Cllr Stephens suggested the budget should be increased to £5000 to provide contingency.

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

**RESOLVED: With an increased budget of £5000 the decision paper for the playground surfacing repairs was AGREED. Also, delegation of the authority to select and appoint a contractor to the Clerk and Cllr Stephens was AGREED.**

**20/135 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**20/136 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION AT FUTURE MEETINGS:**

Cllr Newland stated that the following items would be discussed at the next meeting –

- Enforcement of the banner policy
- Finances

Cllr Fenny asked whether Cllr Turtle would be progressing the air raid shelter work. Cllr Turtle advised that the building was a rare example of its kind, so for historical reasons it had not been demolished. Work to prevent deterioration has been carried out and it has now been restored, with the idea of using it as a museum. The work had been stopped pending resolution of the Pinewood leases. Cllr Newland stated given positive progress on the leases that this work should now be progressed.

**20/137 MEETING CLOSED AT 9.55 PM**

**Date of next meeting** – Meeting of the Parish Council at 7.30pm on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021