

**Wokingham Without Parish Council  
Minutes of the Council Meeting  
Held on Monday 1st March 2021**

**Via Zoom Video Conference**

Commencing 7:30pm and concluding at 9.07pm

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

**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.**

**20/173 WELCOME**

Cllr Newland welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**20/174 ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Foxwell and Gough, and Borough Councillor Bowring.

**20/175 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**20/176 MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- a) Cllr Newland invited comments on the minutes of the meetings held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021. No comments were made.

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

**RESOLVED: Minutes of Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February were AGREED**

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

Cllr Turtle discussed the History Book and the extensive voluntary work involved in preparing this document. Cllr Turtle expressed her disappointment that the parish council had not formally thanked the group which had worked so hard to deliver this book. Cllr Newland stated that he considered this to be an oversight and confirmed that he had instructed the Clerk to prepare a letter of thanks on behalf of the council. Cllr Cannon offered to write a press release to be sent to the local press. Cllr Newland stated that it was a very good piece of work and the volunteers that had written it would be formally thanked.

Cllr Plume proposed that the council formally record its thanks to the History Group for their work to prepare *A History of Pinewood Sanatorium*.

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

**RESOLVED: WWPC wish to convey thanks and appreciation to the History Group for their work in the preparation and publication of *A History of Pinewood Sanatorium*.**

A member referred to the Chairman's Communications which had recorded the use of the scout gang show hut for the storage of hay bales. It was stated that the building had been used for the storage of hay for personal use, possibly without the Scouts' knowledge, and that the Pinewood Scouts and the organiser of the district Gang Show should both be notified. Another member noted that this constituted a severe fire safety risk to the whole of Pinewood and that this must be considered in the future actions on this matter. The Clerk was asked to write and inform the Scouts of the council's concern over the use of the building for hay storage.

#### **20/177 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None.

#### **20/178 BOROUGH COUNCILLORS BRIEFING**

Cllr Helliari-Symons stated that the blocked drain causing flooding on New Wokingham Road was being addressed by the relevant WBC officer.

The road surface breaking up on the Nine Mile Ride between Honey Hill and TRL has been reported to WBC.

Cllr Helliari-Symons noted that leaves have been left for months on the footpath at the top of New Wokingham Road. Cllr Helliari-Symons is working to get this cleared away.

Cllr Plume noted that the road between Honey Hill and Nine Mile Ride has had a historic incident of a burst water pipe where a sink hole developed and would suggest that this is quite urgent. The urgency was noted by Cllr Helliari-Symons.

With respect to the leaf problem, Cllr Rogers noted the significant issue with leaves on the pavement along Nine Mile Ride, so this should be addressed at the same time as the New Wokingham Road footpath.

Cllr Fenny stated that WBC needed to have a defined maintenance strategy.

Cllr Ross stated that he was chasing WBC to find out when the flooding issue at St Sebastian's Mansions would be dealt with. Cllr Fenny also noted the flooding issues on Nine Mile ride between the Heathlands Junction and Heathlake.

Cllr Ross stated that on 24<sup>th</sup> March the WBC Planning Committee will be held on the SDL and SDR. This will be a significant session and Cllr Ross hoped that the agenda would be issued at least a week beforehand.

With respect to Bigshotte Park, WBC have held a meeting to discuss actions in support of local residents. A report was issued following the meeting and local residents have given their comments on this report. Once the council has provided a response to the residents' comments, Cllr Ross considered that this should be shared with WWPC. Cllr Helliari-Symons stated that the goal posts at Bigshotte Park are to be removed as they are considered a safety hazard.

Cllr Plume referenced an email he had forwarded to Cllr Ross regarding Heathlands Road drainage and flooding and asked whether there was any progress on this. Cllr Ross understood that this issue had been cleared but it would continue to be monitored.

Cllr Stephens raised publicised issues surrounding the proposed Grazeley development and asked how the parish and borough councillors could work as a team to prevent excessive development in Wokingham Without. Cllr Ross stated that a lot of work is being undertaken to protect the borough by having an active local plan. The WBC team will look at sites within settlements and the SDL. This work needs to be completed as soon as possible to allay local fears and ensure the local plan is in place. Cllr Stephens noted concerns that plans for green recreational space at Grays Farm will be swallowed up by housing. Cllr Fenny noted the WBC Facebook posting which referred to sites at Arborfield and within the SDL. The link provided by the WBC officer referred to 'within and around the SDL', and this was confirmed by the WBC officer. Cllrs Ross and Helliar-Symons were not aware of the reference to 'around the SDL', and thanked Cllr Fenny for bringing this to their attention. Cllr Ross stated that it may be a reference to the proposals for Oakwood, which is outside the SDL.

Cllr Newland noted ongoing concern regarding encroachment of development into Wokingham Without which provides necessary green space between Wokingham, Bracknell and Crowthorne.

Cllr Plume reminded members that social media does not constitute formal notice.

Cllr Helliar-Symons stated that if an application is outside the SDL the expectation would be that it would be refused, and that the green gap between Wokingham and Bracknell must be maintained. Cllr Lancaster stated that a clear understanding of the nature and value of the gap was important.

Cllr Stephens requested information on the plans for Grays Farm. Cllr Ross stated that Grays Farm had been purchase by WBC as the location for the playing fields, and that he was not aware of proposals for any other use.

## **20/179 CLERKS REPORT**

The Clerk stated that steps are being taken to plan the re-opening of the Memorial Hall, potentially from 12<sup>th</sup> April, and Pinewood Hall to other hirers (running children's activities). In the meantime, security and the grounds team are making regular checks on the buildings – some minor roof repairs have been completed and a small area of internal redecoration will be completed prior to 12<sup>th</sup> April.

The Clerk stated that surfacing repairs in the adventure play area (tunnel mound) have now been completed.

The Clerk stated that Annual PAT testing has been completed.

The Clerk reported that over the weekend of 19<sup>th</sup> /20<sup>th</sup> February, the rabbit sculpture was dragged from its usual location into the stream and has suffered some damage. It is now being stored in the area behind the workshop to dry out and determine whether the damage can be repaired.

The Clerk stated that the latest quarterly financial paperwork Internal Check (October to December) has been completed by Cllr Rogers.

The Clerk stated that following correspondence with one tenant and a query back to WBC a previously refused Covid support grant application will be reconsidered; the outcome of this is currently awaited.

The Clerk stated that Thames Water are investigating a blockage in the drains under Pinewood, serving the Hollies cottages.

The Clerk has received an invoice from WBC for business rates for the Pinewood car park. The Clerk has contacted the business rates team and is waiting for a response back as to why this charge is now being levied.

The Clerk noted that there will be a meeting this month with the Pinewood Allotment Association and WBC allotment officer to view the fencing at the Pinewood allotments. The Clerk is working with one of the association members to put together a specification for a fencing replacement project, with a view to obtaining quotes and putting a funding bid to WBC for existing S106 funds. The proposed fencing would look similar to the fencing which runs along the J&J site.

The Clerk stated that consultation has opened on the draft neighbourhood plan for Finchampstead and the draft neighbourhood plan for Ruscombe. The referendum for the Crowthorne Neighbourhood Plan will be held on 6<sup>th</sup> May.

The Clerk noted that thanks had been received from all the grant recipients for the annual grant payments.

The Clerk stated that the following meetings are upcoming:

- Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March – Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting
- Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> April – meeting with WBC planning officers and PROW team to review future footway and cycleway connectivity into the SDL.

## **20/180 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE / OTHER MEETINGS**

A) Footpath meeting with Loddon Valley Ramblers (9<sup>th</sup> February 2021)

Cllr Newland noted that a report on this meeting had been included with the Agenda, and requested comments. Cllr Turtle stated that the group are doing great work and the meeting was very informative.

B) Website 6-month review meeting (10<sup>th</sup> February 2021).

The Clerk stated that following the meeting the developer is now working on suggestions for minor improvements and encouraged members to provide any comments as part of the process of continuous improvement of the site.

## **20/181 PLANNING**

A. To receive comments from members on current planning applications.

The Clerk stated that comments received from members had been collated and circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Clerk invited further comments and stated that if none were received the prepared comments would be submitted. Cllr Lancaster confirmed his agreement to the comments that had been circulated.

Cllr Plume raised the matter of the new proposal for 95 homes to the South of the Oaklands activity centre and asked whether there should be another meeting to prepare a WWPC response. Cllr Lancaster agreed that there should be a meeting and Cllr Newland requested that the Clerk set this up at a time when Cllr Lancaster could attend. The Clerk noted the consultation deadline of 17<sup>th</sup> March and proposed Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> as the date for the meeting.

## 20/182 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

A. To receive a report on outstanding balances (see appendix 10A)  
No comments were made.

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

**RESOLVED: The report on outstanding balances was AGREED**

B. To approve payments both made and still to be made (see appendix 10B)  
No comments were made.

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

**RESOLVED: The payments both made and still to be made were AGREED**

C. To receive a report of income and expenditure to 31st January 2021. Note: total salary expenditure to date for the year appears under code 4000 (see appendix 10C)

No comments were made.

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

**RESOLVED: The report of income and expenditure to 31st January 2021 was AGREED**

D. To review a list of regular payments arising from a continuing contract, statutory duty or obligation and approve payments for 2020-21 and 2021-22, within the approved budget, in-line with Financial Regulation item 5.6 (see appendix 10D)

No comments were made.

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

**RESOLVED: The list of regular payments arising from a continuing contract, statutory duty or obligation and approve payments for 2020-21 and 2021-22, within the approved budget, in-line with Financial Regulation item 5.6 was AGREED**

E. In line with the council's adopted Financial Regulations items 6.7 and 6.8, to authorise the council's continued use of Direct Debits, Standing Orders and BACS payments for settling invoices for the period March 2021 to February 2023.

No comments were made.

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

**RESOLVED: The council's continued use of Direct Debits, Standing Orders and BACS payments for settling invoices for the period March 2021 to February 2023 was AGREED**

## 20/183 INTERNAL AUDIT

The Clerk referred to the Internal Audit Report circulated as appendix 11 of the agenda. The auditor identified a small number of minor issues and steps have been put in place to resolve these issues.

Cllr Newland invited members to comment on the audit report and none were made.

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

**RESOLVED: The Internal Audit Report was AGREED.**

## 20/184 PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT

Cllr Newland referred members to the papers given in appendix 12, 12A and 12B of the agenda. The Clerk stated that after the Public Spaces and Amenities working group initiated the proposal to replace the basket swing it became apparent that other items of work needed to be done within the playground and that it was more cost efficient to carry out several items of work at the same time. Quotes were requested from three suppliers and have been received from two of

them. The proposal is to approve in principle to proceed with one of the quotes, with Cllrs Plume and Turtle, with the Clerk, having the final decision which of the two, if either, to select. This is intended to enable the playground to be open by May half term.

Cllr Plume noted that it would have been preferable had the working group not been bypassed, but that there were good reasons for proceeding in this case due to the cost saving that could be achieved, and the desire for the work to be done prior to the half term.

Cllr Turtle noted that these are maintenance and repair items rather than new projects.

Cllr Plume stated that if any members were unhappy with the process that had been followed the proposal would be withdrawn.

Cllr Newland invited questions or comments and none were made.

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

**RESOLVED: The proposal to extend delegated authority granted at the February council meeting to replace additional playground equipment was AGREED.**

## **20/185 REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF DOCUMENTATION AND POLICIES**

Cllr Newland referred to each policy, as given in appendix 13 of the agenda, and invited comments from members:

- A. Annual leave policy and procedures for casual and part time staff  
Cllr Rogers requested clarification on the annual holiday. The Clerk confirmed this was to Green Book standard holiday.
- B. Anti-fraud and corruption  
No comments.
- C. Code of Conduct for members  
The Clerk stated that the parish is obliged to adopt the local authority code of conduct. A consultation on the WBC policy has been completed, however a revised WBC code of conduct has not yet been published, so a new policy may be adopted in 2-3 months' time. Cllr Newland noted that the code of conduct will be updated because it does not yet cover how a breach of the code of conduct will be handled.
- D. Complaints Procedure  
No comments.
- E. Co-option Policy  
No comments.
- F. Data Breach Policy  
No comments.
- G. Disciplinary Policy and Procedure  
No comments.
- H. Equality and Diversity Policy  
No comments.

- I. High Consequence Infectious Disease Policy  
No comments.
- J. Investment Strategy  
No comments.
- K. Retention of documents and records management policy  
No comments.
- L. Small Grants Policy  
Cllr Rogers noted a typographic error. The Clerk stated that the policy will be revised to reflect the current practice of sending grant applications to the Grants Working Group for review, followed by the application and any recommendations of the Grants Working Group being put to the next council meeting.

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

**RESOLVED: The documents and policies as amended by the comments above were AGREED.**

**20/186 STORAGE AT PINWOOD**

Cllr Newland outlined the decision paper given in appendix 14 of the agenda, to approve the submission of a planning application for storage units at Pinewood.

Cllr Newland asked whether an electricity supply would be required. The Clerk stated that a permanent power supply would not be required.

Cllr Newland asked why the planning consent was requested for 3 years. The Clerk stated that it had been suggested that the application was more likely to be successful if the time period was limited. Cllr Lancaster stated that this was quite normal for structures that are considered to be temporary. Cllr Newland stated that the timescale was likely to affect the amount the council would be willing to spend on the storage units.

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

**RESOLVED: The recommendations of the decision paper included as appendix 14 of the agenda were AGREED**

**20/187 PINWOOD LEASES**

Cllr Newland stated that he had written to members on 23<sup>rd</sup> February with an update regarding Pinewood leases.

**20/188 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

Cllr Newland asked the Clerk to update members on the current position with regard to meetings. The Clerk noted that the coronavirus-related regulations that permitted digital meetings run until 6<sup>th</sup> May. The information released by the Government on 22<sup>nd</sup> February suggests that face-to-face council meetings could restart from step 2 (potentially 12<sup>th</sup> April), providing the necessary stage criteria is met. However multiple households cannot meet without social distancing until 22<sup>nd</sup> June at the earliest and that the Howard Palmer room is insufficiently large to accommodate this for council meetings.

The April meeting can legally be held via Zoom and the Clerk suggested that this is done, to allow time for suitable planning. If the May meeting is held in person it will need to be in the Main Hall and the start will therefore need to be deferred to 8pm to allow preparation of the hall following

completion of the previous activity. The Clerk will write to members with confirmed arrangements in due course.

Cllr Newland proposed that the April meeting is held via Zoom and the arrangements for the May meeting are agreed at that time when further regulations or guidance may be available.

Cllr Rogers suggested that in May/June a 'blended' meeting could possibly be held where, for example, members of the public attend via Zoom with members attending in person. This may have implications on the equipment required in the hall.

Cllr Plume suggested that purdah approaching the May elections means that Borough Councillors may not be attending the April meeting.

Cllr Stephens stated that physical meetings should not be held until members are fully vaccinated.

Cllr Newland noted that the Clerk is proposing that the Annual Parish Meeting is held via Zoom. The Clerk noted that Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March has been pencilled-in for the APM. The date of the APM was discussed and it was agreed that the APM would be held on 15<sup>th</sup> March. An external speaker was discussed.

**20/189 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION AT FUTURE MEETINGS:**

Cllr Fenny stated that the WBC statement regarding '...within or around the SDL' was made on the WBC website under 'current master planning work'.

**20/190 MEETING CLOSED AT 9.07 PM**

**Date of next meeting** – Meeting of the Parish Council at 7.30pm on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021