

**Wokingham Without Parish Council  
Minutes of the Council Meeting  
Held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

**Via Zoom Video Conference**

Commencing 7:30pm and concluding at 9:52pm

**Present:** Councillors J Cannon, R Fenny, L Foxwell, N Martin, A Plume, J Rogers, P Jordan and S Turtle. Katy Hughes - Clerk, Sharon Way – Assistant Clerk. Borough Councillor A Ross plus 1 member of the public.

**Apologies:** Councillors C Lancaster and K Newland and Borough Councillors C Bowring and P Helliar Symons.

**21/136 WELCOME**

Cllr Plume welcomed everyone to the meeting. Cllr Plume stated that the meeting was being held via Zoom due to the high prevalence of Covid in the community. Since the regulations require all decisions to be ratified in-person, the decisions at this meeting would be limited to recommendations. Cllr Plume stated that an in-person council meeting comprising at least a quorum of members would be organised as soon as possible after the current meeting to ratify all recommendations.

**21/137 ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Lancaster and Newland and Borough Councillors Bowring and Helliar-Symons.

**21/138 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Jordan declared an interest in the discussion on Pinewood rent and services charges for the 2022/23 budget, in her capacity as a tenant of the site.

**21/139 MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- a) Cllr Plume invited comments on the minutes of the meetings held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021. No comments were made.

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

**RECOMMENDED: Minutes of Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December be AGREED**

- b) Matters arising from the minutes of Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December.  
None.

**21/140 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None.

**21/141 BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' BRIEFING**

Cllr Ross noted the ongoing consultation being held on the WBC Local Plan. Cllr Ross also stated that WBC was preparing for the budget, scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> February. Thirdly, Cllr Ross noted WBC's ongoing concern regarding the high Covid infection numbers in the borough. Cllr Ross then invited questions from members.

Cllr Plume stated that council met to discuss the Local Plan Update and a response will be tabled for recommendation for approval later in this meeting.

Cllr Rogers noted that Grays Farm was missing from the Leisure Strategy. Cllr Ross stated that this issue had been raised with WBC.

Cllr Plume mentioned that WBC took the decision to cancel the Pinewood Forum meeting, which had been organised before Christmas for the purpose of discussing the Local Plan Update, due to the rise in Covid infections. Cllr Plume stated that WBC still intend to hold the forum meeting once Covid situation improves. Cllr Ross stated that he would be willing to attend this meeting as a representative of Wokingham Borough Council if Cllr Kaiser was unable to attend.

## **21/142 CLERKS REPORT**

The Clerk referred members to the report circulated as appendix 7 of the agenda.

The Clerk stated that the orchard fencing works are scheduled to start week commencing 24<sup>th</sup> January subject to delivery of the fencing. Additionally, the fencing on both sides of the entrance to Pinewood has been replaced.

Cllr Turtle requested confirmation that the Clerk was in contact with the football club regarding the orchard fencing. The Clerk confirmed that she was liaising with the football club, and that measures to protect the orchard trees would be undertaken during the works.

Regarding the laurel bush, the Clerk confirmed that this would be removed when the fencing was available to replace it. This would be completed before the end of February, in order to prevent any issues with nesting birds.

## **21/143 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE / OTHER MEETINGS**

### **A. Meeting with Eddie Napper – 14<sup>th</sup> December**

The Clerk stated that the location of the drainage issue had been clarified with Mr Napper as the section of the Nine Mile Ride on the west side of Heathland Road, and that the drains had been cleared. Cllr Fenny confirmed that the drains had been cleared but that flooding was still occurring. The contractors carrying out the works had informed Cllr Fenny that additional drainage works were required, but no further information had been received from Mr Napper. Cllr Fenny stated that members should follow this up to ensure the necessary works are carried out.

The Clerk stated that Mr Napper had confirmed the need for a capital programme for comprehensive drainage works in the vicinity of Heath Lake.

Cllr Fenny referred to the project to install smart traffic lights at the Heathlands Road junction. Cllr Fenny had written to Cllr Pauline Jorgensen to ask when this work would be carried out, but no response had yet been received.

Cllr Plume emphasised the need for the council to build a good working relationship with Mr Napper.

Cllr Turtle suggested that the council should request a timetable for the drainage works. The Clerk confirmed that this information had been requested from WBC before Christmas but no information had yet been received. The Clerk will follow-up this matter with the WBC officer.

Cllr Foxwell stated that works being carried out by WBC in the next financial year would not be confirmed until their budget had been agreed.

### **B. Draft budget review – 14<sup>th</sup> December**

Cllr Plume stated that the matter would be discussed under item 11 of the agenda.

C. Meeting with WBC PROW re Byway 28 – 17<sup>th</sup> December

The Clerk stated that Southern Gas Networks (SGN) are planning to carry out work in the vicinity of the Byway 28 surfacing upgrades, so the upgrades will not start on the affected parts of Byway 28 until there is more clarity about what is happening. The Clerk is organising a meeting with the WBC officer who agrees highways permits, Andrew Fletcher and SNG to understand the detailed plans for these works.

D. Local Plan Update meeting – 6<sup>th</sup> January

Cllr Foxwell stated that there was broad agreement between those who attended the meeting, and that there were just a small number of changes to the comments prepared by the Clerk following that meeting.

Cllr Plume thanked the Clerk and Assistant Clerk for preparing the presentation and all members who submitted comments. Cllr Turtle stated that past experience of the interface between WBC and BFC on the Old Wokingham Road indicates that it is very difficult to influence actions to be taken by BFC (e.g. speed limit reduction), and that this should be included in the council's comments.

The Clerk stated that an initial draft had been circulated to members. Any additional comments will be added, the wording refined between the Clerk and Cllr Turtle, and a final draft submitted by email for members' approval. The approved version will be circulated to Pinewood clubs and published on the WWPC Facebook page.

Following a query from Cllr Fenny, Cllr Foxwell stated that the Borough Councillors had published a leaflet declaring their opposition to development of both sites.

**21/144 GRANTS 2021-22**

Following discussion, this item was deferred to the next meeting for further information to be added to the decision paper.

**21/145 BYWAY 28**

The Clerk referred members to the decision paper included as appendix 10 of the agenda which amended the maximum budget for the works for section A to B of Byway 28. Cllr Plume invited comments from members, no comments were received.

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

**RECOMMENDED: The amendment to the decision paper for works to Byway 28 as given in appendix 10 of the agenda be AGREED.**

**21/146 BUDGET 2022-23**

- A. Members noted the council's projected outturn for 2021-22 as detailed in appendix 11A of the agenda. The Clerk noted that the figures were initially prepared in November 2021 and the Covid situation has materially changed since that date, and this had resulted in hall hire cancellations during December. However, overall, it is expected that there will be an increase in income compared to budget expectations. The Clerk provided an overview of the areas of expenditure less than budget.

The Clerk provided an overview of current and projected CIL expenditure. The Clerk noted that it was estimated that £115k of the remaining CIL balance would need to be spent by September 2022, and good progress was being made on significant projects

including the Pinewood Hall refurbishment and the car park expansion at the Memorial Hall.

Following discussion, Cllr Rogers proposed that the first decision should be voted-for in two parts. The first, to confirm that the capital expenditure programme comprises of three items – the Pinewood Hall refurbishment, the Memorial Hall car park expansion and the completion of the Byway 28 works and the second, to confirm that the capital expenditure for the 2022-23 financial year will be met from CIL.

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

**RECOMMENDED: The amendment of the first decision as given above be AGREED**

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

**RECOMMENDED: The capital expenditure for the 2022-23 financial year comprising the Pinewood Hall refurbishment, the Memorial Hall car park expansion and the completion of the Byway 28 works be AGREED**

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

**RECOMMENDED: The proposal that capital expenditure for the 2022-23 financial year will be met from CIL be AGREED**

B. To note the council's reserves balances (appendix 11B)

The Clerk presented the projected reserve balances and noted that this was based on a higher level of income which may not actually be achieved given the current Covid situation. The Clerk noted the earmarked reserves. The Clerk stated that a decision was required on the recommendation of the Finance Working Group to move a sum into a new earmarked reserve 'health safety and security' covering the risk of an incursion and clean-up costs. The proposed sum to move to the reserve was £10k. Cllr Rogers also outlined the justification for establishing the new reserve.

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

**RECOMMENDED: The proposal that an earmarked reserve 'health safety and security' is established with an initial sum of £10k be AGREED**

C. To receive and approve the recommended budget for 2022-23 (appendix 11C)

The Clerk discussed the recommendations of the Finance Working Group with respect to hall hire charges. Decision 3A was that the letting charges are increased by 5% largely due to increases in utility costs and cleaning costs. Decision 3B was that the charges for hire of the Howard Palmer room are reduced to two-thirds of the charge for the main hall to encourage use of the smaller Howard Palmer Room.

Cllr Fenny queried whether the proposed increase was sufficient, given the projected increases in utility costs. The Clerk stated that the replacement windows should provide more energy efficiency, and that there was a contract in place with the utility company fixing rates until August 2022 and Spring of 2023 for electricity and gas respectively. Additionally, the new Nest system allows the heating to be set to suit when the building is in use. The Clerk stated that these measures will mitigate some of the impact of energy price rises.

Cllr Plume invited members to comment further on decisions 3A and B, no further comments were received.

The Clerk discussed the basis for decision 4, to increase Pinewood rent by 4%. The Clerk stated that the rents have not increased since 2019 and that the proposed increase had been kept as low as possible whilst covering the increases in costs. Cllr Plume noted that if the new lease is signed then Pinewood rents will be set at the level in the lease agreement.

Cllr Plume stated that Cllr Jordan will abstain from voting on decisions 4 and 5.

The Clerk discussed the basis for decision 5, to increase the Pinewood service charge by 5% in order to cover the cost of shared services. This is primarily to cover increases in utility and waste management costs.

Cllr Fenny stated that Pinewood had both commercial and non-commercial tenants, and this should be recognised when considering the rent increases, with different rates applied to commercial and non-commercial tenants. Cllr Plume and the Clerk stated that this had been considered in previous years and that the complexity of this approach had resulted in it being rejected by members at that time. The Clerk noted that larger clubs do pay a higher rent.

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

**RECOMMENDED: Decisions 3A, 3B, 4 and 5 as outlined above be AGREED. Cllr Jordan abstained.**

The Clerk discussed decision 6 relating to the recommended reserve movements to be budgeted in 2022-23. This comprised adding £5k to the Pinewood Centre car park resurfacing fund and £5k to the long-term play provision at Pinewood. The Clerk stated that ongoing repair and maintenance would not be taken from the playground reserve. Cllr Plume noted that there would not always be CIL funds so a reserve was necessary.

The Clerk discussed the legal requirements to hold reserves to cover the cost of holding an election. The Clerk has assumed that the cost of holding an election is the same as last year.

Cllr Fenny stated that by the time the CIL funds had been spent additional housing would be paying precept, therefore it was unlikely that reserves would be needed to fund capital expenditure in the future. If transfers to reserves were not required this may result in less pressure to increase the precept. The Clerk stated that until the CIL funds from the SDL were received they should not be relied upon, as changes to legislation may affect the amount of CIL income in the future. It is also likely that council costs will increase due to the provision of community facilities for the new residents in the north of the parish.

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

**RECOMMENDED: Decision 6 as outlined above be AGREED.**

D. To set the parish precept for 2022-23

The Clerk discussed decision 7, the Finance Working Group recommendation to increase the precept by 4%. This was an inflation-level increase which was a reasonable provision due to difficulty in predicting income and expenditure for 2022-23. The Clerk stated that this equated to a £2.65 per year increase for a Band D property. Cllr Plume invited members to comment, no comments were received.

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

**RECOMMENDED: Decision 7 to increase the precept by 4% be AGREED.**

## **21/147 CIL PROJECTS UPDATE**

The Clerk stated that the surveys for the Pinewood Hall refurbishment had been carried out and the results were expected soon. The ecological survey for the Memorial Hall works has also been carried out and a report is also awaited. The Clerk stated that initial plans for the car park have been received and a Memorial Hall working group meeting will be organised to discuss these. The Clerk noted that other updates had been reported in the Clerk's report.

## **21/148 PLANNING**

- A. To receive and confirm comments from members on current planning applications (circulated 15<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 and 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022).  
Comments were received and confirmed.
- B. To note comments submitted and updates received on planning applications previously circulated via email to members.  
The comments were noted and no further comments were made.
- C. To approve comments to be submitted for the consultation on the Local Plan Update  
The Clerk stated that some minor redrafting will be carried out and a summary added to the beginning of the comments. This will be circulated with a request for members to confirm that they are happy with the draft. The final comments will then be approved at the in-person meeting.

Cllr Fenny stated that it was important to try to engage local residents in responding with comments. The Clerk stated that resident should be encouraged to email their comments to LPU at WBC. Cllr Fenny also emphasised the need to include a comment on the difficulties caused by the boundary between WBC and BFC along OWR.

## **21/149 FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

- A. To receive a report on outstanding balances (as given in appendix 14A of the agenda).  
The report was received. The Clerk stated that payments have been received from the scouts.
- B. To approve payments both made and still to be made (as given in appendices 14B(i) and 14B(ii) of the agenda).
- C. To receive a detailed income and expenditure report and financial performance against budget report to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 (as given in appendix 14C of the agenda).  
The report was received.
- D. To receive a report of salary expenditure year to date (as given in appendix 14D of the agenda).  
The report was received.

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

**RECOMMENDED: The financial information as described in items A-D above be AGREED**

## **21/150 APPOINTMENT OF A TRUSTEE TO THE WALTER RECREATIONAL GROUND TRUST**

Cllr Turtle volunteered to be a trustee.

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

**RECOMMENDED: Appointment of Cllr Turtle as a trustee to the Walter Recreational Ground Trust be AGREED**

**21/151 CHAIRMAN’S COMMUNICATIONS**

Cllr Plume stated the WBC are still showing a commitment to resolving the lease issue.

**21/152 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 7.30 PM ON MONDAY 7<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2022**

Cllr Plume requested that members send any agenda items for the February meeting to the Clerk.

Regarding the in-person council meeting to ratify recommendations, the Clerk agreed to organise a doodle poll for week commencing 17<sup>th</sup> January. The meeting will be organised for a day when a quorum is able to attend.

**21/153 MEETING CLOSED AT 9:52 PM**

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022