

**Wokingham Without Parish Council
Minutes of the Council Meeting
Held on Monday 9th January 2023**

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

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

Present: Councillors L Foxwell, P Jordan, C Lancaster, N Martin, J Millett, J Montgomery, A Plume, J Rogers, S Turtle and Borough Councillors D Davies and P Helliars-Symons. Steve Milton Locum Clerk, Sharon Way – Deputy Clerk. One member of the public – MS

Apologies: Councillors J Cannon, K Newland, K Whitehead and Borough Councillor Chris Bowring.

22/130 WELCOME

Cllr Plume welcomed everyone to the meeting.

22/131 ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Cannon, Newland, Whitehead and B/Cllr Bowring.

22/132 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Jordan declared an interest in Pinewood tenant rates and leases.

22/133 MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

- a) Cllr Plume invited comments on the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7th November 2022.

Cllr Martin requested the deletion of a sentence in minute 22/126. This was agreed. Cllr Rogers noted the incorrect spelling of Grays Farm. The Deputy Clerk agreed to correct this in the final minutes.

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

RESOLVED: Minutes of the meeting, Monday 7th November, as amended above, were AGREED with one abstention.

- b) Matters arising from the minutes of 7th November.

Cllr Turtle queried why a baby changing unit had not been provided in Pinewood Hall. A discussion followed relating to the walls not being strong enough to support the loads required for the unit. Cllr Turtle stated her disappointment that this issue had not been identified at the planning stage.

22/134 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

22/135 BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' BRIEFING

B/Cllr Helliars-Symons noted that fly tipping had occurred at the end of Byway 28. This has been reported to WBC who are currently undertaking further investigations. The general issue of fly tipping and littering in the parish was discussed. B/Cllr Davies agreed to follow-up the installation of a temporary CCTV camera at the location of the latest incident.

It was agreed that litter picking would be raised as an agenda item at the next meeting, and also as an agenda item at the next staffing meeting.

B/Cllr Helliard-Symons stated that borough councillors would be attending a webinar on the new planning legislation and that the slides from this presentation would be forwarded to members.

B/Cllr Davies stated that resurfacing of the Nine Mile Ride has been included in the WBC 2023/24 plan. Whether this work is carried out or not will be dependent on its prioritisation within the plan and the available budget.

B/Cllr Davies stated that the provision of a Men's Shed facility is progressing slowly.

B/Cllr Davies noted that schemes are available to help parishioners in need, for example WBC's 'one front door' initiative.

With respect to the local plan update, B/Cllr Davies has requested a progress update including a timetable from WBC but this has not yet been received. B/Cllr Davies noted that a call for potential traveller sites has been circulated and requested that the council consider preparing a response referencing potential sites that are or are not suitable for expansion.

With respect to sites for general development, it was agreed that Cllrs Rogers and Lancaster would determine what comments, if any, had been previously submitted by the council.

B/Cllr Davies and members discussed the land for sale adjacent to St Sebastian's Close.

B/Cllr Davies noted the proposed development of Crowthorne Care Home. Although not within Wokingham Without this development does impact WW residents and B/Cllr Davies is engaging with the borough councillor for the ward in which it is sited. The Deputy Clerk will circulate the planning application to members to enable WWPC comments to be submitted prior to the deadline.

With reference to Honey Hill, B/Cllr Davies referred to a recent meeting with the WBC executive member to discuss the speed issue. This meeting had been unproductive in terms of reduction of the speed limit, however B/Cllr Davies noted his ongoing support for Cllr Martin. B/Cllr Davies suggested that improved signage may be an option to help the situation. The possibility of a newspaper article highlighting the issue was discussed.

Cllr Plume updated members and borough councillors on the status of the Pinewood Leases.

22/136 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk noted that the Clerk's Report had been circulated to members.

The Deputy Clerk (Finance) has met with the auditor who advised that the council should be insured against data breach, and quotes are currently being sought, which will be brought to the next meeting for a decision.

The Clerk stated that emergency tree works have been authorised due to a cracked branch overhanging the carriageway along Honey Hill.

The Clerk noted that the water leak which occurred at the Memorial Hall before Christmas had been fixed.

The Clerk noted that mattresses that were fly tipped at the Memorial Hall have now been removed by WBC.

The Clerk stated that a new phone system has been installed in the Parish Office.

The Clerk noted that the budget proposals are dependent on rental income based on the new Pinewood leases, so it is important that this matter is resolved as soon as possible.

The Clerk stated that the 2023/24 budget includes for the provision of ramp access to Pinewood Hall.

The Clerk stated that the fire break in the Pinewood Hall roof space has now been installed.

22/137 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE / OTHER MEETINGS

A. Draft budget review, 14th December 2022

Cllr Plume thanked the members who participated in the budget meeting.

22/138 APPOINTMENT OF THE CLERK

Cllr Plume thanked Cllrs Rogers and Foxwell and the Locum Clerk for their work during the interview process.

Cllr Plume stated five applications were received of which three were interviewed. One interviewee was favoured and has been recommended for the appointment by the staffing committee.

The Clerk noted that the decision is subject to receipt of satisfactory references. The Clerk also noted that a three-month notice period is applicable, and that this notice had been submitted.

Cllr Plume stated that the new Clerk will be subject to the standard probationary period of 6 months.

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

RESOLVED: The appointment of the Clerk as recommended by the staffing committee was AGREED and Debbie Gooch be confirmed as Clerk with effect from 3rd April 2023.

22/139 BUDGET 2023-24

The Clerk went through a PowerPoint presentation of the budget recommendations.

1. Members to note the council's projected outturn for 2022-23 as detailed in appendix 10 of the agenda.

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

RESOLVED: The projected outturn for the 2022-23 financial year as detailed in appendix 10 of the agenda was AGREED.

2. Members to confirm the increases in lettings fees, tenant rents and service charges applicable from 1st April 2023

The Clerk discussed the income and expenditure anticipated for 2023/24. Cllr Plume stated that the 2023/24 budget has assumed that letting fees and service charges at both Pinewood Hall and St Sebastian's Memorial Hall will increase by 5%.

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

RESOLVED: The proposal that letting fees and service charges at both Pinewood Hall and St Sebastian's Memorial Hall will increase by 5% for the 2023-24 financial year as detailed in appendix 10 of the agenda was AGREED with one abstention.

3. Members to approve the budget for 2023/24.

Members noted that the documents circulated as Appendix 10A, B and C to the agenda had been prepared prior to the Finance Working Group budget meeting and had been subject to minor revisions following that meeting. Members agreed that any variations would be small and that approval would be made on this basis. The Clerk confirmed that finalised appendices A, B and C would be circulated to members the following day.

Cllr Plume discussed the budget proposals given in Appendix C. Cllr Rogers noted that staff salary increases are determined at a national level towards the end of the budgeted year, and that an allowance of a 5% pay increase had been included in the budget. Cllr Rogers also stated that a risk had been identified with service charges at Pinewood, which is that tenants will be unable to meet energy charges, depending on rates and levels of government support.

The Clerk stated that the total expenditure budgeted for 2023/24 is £471,387 and the total income budgeted for 2023/24 is £218,050, requiring £253,337 to be funded from precept or reserves. The Clerk stated that the Finance Working Group were keen to mitigate the impact of precept increases on residents by limiting the increase to 5%. This would require the transfer of £13,380 from general fund reserves.

The Clerk stated that increasing the precept by 5% would set the precept to £239,957 and bring the Band D rate to £72.37 which is still in the mid-range for the towns and parishes in and around Wokingham.

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

RESOLVED: The budget for 2023/24 as proposed in Appendix 10 of the agenda was AGREED.

4. Members to confirm movement of £13,380 from reserves to keep the precept increase to 5% in 2023/24.

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

RESOLVED: The movement of £13,380 from reserves to keep the precept increase to 5% in 2023/24 as proposed in Appendix 10 of the agenda was AGREED.

5. Members to determine a precept for the year commencing 1st April 2023.

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

RESOLVED: The proposal that the precept will be increased by 5% for the 2023/24 financial year to £239,957 as proposed in Appendix 10 of the agenda was AGREED.

22/140 PLANNING

- A. To receive and confirm comments from members on current planning applications (circulated 14th, 22nd November, 2nd, 16th December, and 3rd January).
Comments were received and confirmed. The Holme Grange School application was discussed. A minor amendment to the wording of the comment was requested. The Newlands Farm application was discussed. Members requested that comments from the previous application should be repeated.

- B. To note comments submitted and updates received on planning applications previously circulated via email to members on the dates specified above (as given in appendix 11B of the agenda).

The comments were noted.

22/141 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- A. To receive a report on outstanding balances (as given in appendix 12A of the agenda).
The report was received. Members noted that a club had an outstanding balance dating from November, which was being followed-up by the Deputy Clerk (Finance).
- B. To approve payments both made and still to be made (as given in appendices 12B(i) and 12B(ii) of the agenda).
- C. To receive a detailed income and expenditure report and financial performance against budget report to 30th November (as given in appendix 12C of the agenda).
The report was received.
- D. To receive a report of salary expenditure year to date (as given in appendix 12D of the agenda).
The report was received.

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

RESOLVED: Items A-D, above, were AGREED

- E. To confirm completion of the internal check for quarter one, carried out by Cllr Martin on 29th November 2022.
Cllr Martin confirmed that the checks had been completed and the accounts were in order.

22/142 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Cllr Plume noted his earlier comments with respect to the Pinewood Leases.

22/143 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 7.30 PM ON MONDAY 6th FEBRUARY 2023

22/144 MEETING CLOSED AT 9:07 PM

Signed:

Date: 6th February 2022