

**Wokingham Without Parish Council
Minutes of the Council Meeting
Held on Monday 6th February 2023**

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

Commencing 7:30pm and concluding at 9:33pm

Present: Councillors L Foxwell, R Fenny, C Lancaster, J Millett, J Montgomery, A Plume, J Rogers, S Turtle and K Whitehead. Steve Milton - Locum Clerk, Sharon Way – Deputy Clerk.
Apologies: Councillors J Cannon, P Jordan, N Martin and K Newland. Borough Councillors C Bowring, D Davies and P Helliard-Symons.

22/145 WELCOME

Cllr Plume welcomed everyone to the meeting.

22/146 ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Cannon, Jordan, Martin and Newland, and B/Cllrs Bowring, Davies, and Helliard-Symons.

22/147 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

22/148 MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

- a) Cllr Plume invited comments on the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9th January 2023.

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

RESOLVED: Minutes of the meeting, Monday 9th January were AGREED.

- b) Matters arising from the minutes of 9th January.

None.

22/149 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

22/150 BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' BRIEFING

No B/Cllrs were present to provide a briefing. Members agreed that a liaison meeting should be organised before the pre-election period starting on 26th March.

22/151 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk stated that Crowthorne Parish Council (CPC) have invited WWPC to participate in a coronation event on 6th May, suggesting a contribution to costs in the region of £500-£1000. Members discussed the need for more details of the proposed event and associated costs. Members noted that the funds would be taken from General Reserves.

Cllr Rogers discussed the possibility of WWPC organised events at Pinewood.

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

RESOLVED: Agreement in principle to WWPC participation in the CPC coronation event, with the amount of financial contribution to be agreed following receipt of details of the proposed event and associated costs, was AGREED by majority with one abstention.

The Clerk stated that the leases are with the tenants' solicitor, and that aside from some minor issues, the legal work should be substantially concluded within the next couple of weeks for submission to WBC

The Clerk stated that a broken tree branch overhanging Honey Hill has been removed by Paramount Tree Care.

The Clerk stated that the leak in the old public toilets at the back of the Pinewood Hall has been fixed.

The Clerk stated that a discarded road works barrier at St Sebastian's Memorial Hall has been reported to WBC.

The Clerk stated that positive feedback has been received from hirers in respect to the 5% increase in hire charges.

The Clerk stated that the fire alarms in St Sebastian's Memorial Hall have been checked and serviced.

The Clerk stated that the air conditioning units in Pinewood Hall have had an initial service. The Engineer has stated that it may be necessary to service the units three times a year. Cllr Plume noted that the units may have picked-up dust during the building works, and that this should be checked before agreeing to a reduced service interval.

The Clerk stated that the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) was scheduled for 20th March, but that members may wish to consider moving the meeting until after the elections. The Clerk suggested a date of 22nd May. The Clerk asked members to consider ideas for the format of the meeting. Cllr Turtle suggested it might be better to hold the meeting before the elections in case there were significant changes to the council membership following the election. Cllr Plume asked members whether they had any ideas for a speaker. Following discussion, members presented no objection to moving the APM to 22nd May.

Cllr Plume stated that the new Clerk will start work and attend the council meeting on 3rd April. This meeting will also be attended by the Locum Clerk.

22/152 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE / OTHER MEETINGS

a) Flying Start meeting, 24th January 2023

Cllr Foxwell stated that the meeting was held to discuss the new terms of the Pinewood Hall hire. The Nursery were happy with the new terms and signed the hire terms document.

b) LESG (Broadmoor Local External Stakeholder Group) meeting, 31st January 2023

Cllr Rogers stated that the old Broadmoor Hospital will be put up for sale. A tour round the new hospital will be held, councillors are invited to attend. Cllr Plume agreed to send the minutes to any interested councillor.

c) Bucklers Park Stakeholder Meeting

Cllr Rogers discussed the drainage issues relating to water and silt run-off from the Bucklers Park site, which enters and damages Dickies Pond, and for the need for Bucklers Park developers (Cala Homes) to take responsibility and deal with the issue. The Bucklers Park developers asked whether there was someone at WBC they could speak to, which is viewed as a positive development.

Cllr Rogers stated that several full applications have been submitted for elements of the development that had previously only had outline planning permission. Cllr Rogers noted that council may wish to comment on these applications, which included additional housing, landscaping and industrial warehouses to the rear of the Golden Retriever.

With reference to the community hub, the building is complete, and BFC are going out to tender for a not-for-profit operator. The tender documents should be available soon.

Cllr Rogers discussed the management issues relating to Bucklers Park SANG land, verges, playground and cycle paths.

d) Signs and Banners meeting, 6th January 2023

Cllr Whitehead stated that the meeting had discussed the need for a co-ordinated programme of improvements to the Pinewood site over 3-4 years, which would fulfil the obligations of the tenants under the new leases.

The Clerk discussed the opportunity, once the Pinewood leases are signed, to both celebrate the event and draw attention to the ongoing obligations of the tenants, for example the overall presentation of the estate and the need for new signage to be approved by the council.

Cllr Lancaster raised the need to review the signage at Pinewood, remove what should not be there and regularise new signage. Cllr Lancaster stated that illegal signage may be removed and subject to fines.

Cllr Plume stated that the Signage Working Group should note the requirements of the current banner policy.

It was agreed that a further meeting would be held in February.

22/153 POLICIES AND DOCUMENTATION TO REVIEW

a) To review and approve the council's risk register for 2022-23 (as given in appendix 9A of the agenda)

Cllr Plume noted that this policy had been amended by the Clerk. Members discussed the content of the proposed risk register. Cllr Plume noted that first aid training was required in 2023 and that members would also be able to attend this training.

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

RESOLVED: The risk register for 2022-23 was AGREED.

b) To review and approve the council's reserves policy (as given in appendix 9B of the agenda)

The Clerk stated the importance of this policy, as sets out earmarked reserves for specific projects that will be taken into account by the external auditor when assessing the overall adequacy of the reserves.

Following a proposal from Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Montgomery it was:
RESOLVED: The Reserves Policy was AGREED.

- c) To review and approve the council's chairman and members expense policy (as given in appendix 9C of the agenda)
Cllr Plume stated that the Chairman's expenses budget should be amended to £250.

Following a proposal from Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Montgomery it was:
RESOLVED: The Chairman and Members' Expense Policy, as amended above, was AGREED.

22/154 INTERNAL AUDIT

The Clerk stated that there were only two recommendations, firstly that serial numbers are included in the asset register and secondly that the council should obtain cyber insurance cover. A discussion followed regarding cyber security and the need to insure against cyber-attacks.

Cllr Plume thanked the office staff and in particular the Deputy Clerk, Finance for their work leading to the successful audit.

Cllr Plume asked whether training should be organised into cyber security for staff and members. Cllr Rogers agreed to send information on the courses identified by Wokingham United Charities. The Clerk also agree to look into suitable courses. Cllr Montgomery would also forward some information.

CYBER INSURANCE

Cllr Fenny requested clarification of the benefit of the additional insurance. The Clerk stated that this was a recommendation of the auditor who had noted the increasing risk of cyber-attack. Having spoken to the council's insurer this risk is not covered by the current policy and an additional 'bolt-on' policy is required.

Following a proposal from Cllr Montgomery and seconded by Cllr Whitehead it was:
RESOLVED: The purchase of additional insurance from BHIB as detailed in appendices 11 and 11a of the agenda, was AGREED by majority with two abstentions.

22/155 PLANNING

- A. To receive and confirm comments from members on current planning applications (circulated 10th, 23rd and 31st January).
Comments were received and confirmed. With respect to the care home application, the Deputy Clerk agreed to contact Finchampstead Parish Council to inform them of WWPC's comments.
- 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 12B of the agenda).
The comments were discussed, and no further comments were made.

22/156 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- A. To receive a report on outstanding balances (as given in appendix 13A of the agenda).
The report was received.

- B. To approve payments both made and payments due (as given in appendices 13B(i) and 13B(ii) of the agenda).
- C. To receive a detailed income and expenditure report and financial performance against budget report to 31st December (as given in appendix 13C of the agenda).
The report was received.

Cllr Rogers queried the large variances in the locum clerk line and the legal and professional fees. The Clerk stated that a separate locum fees code was set up after his appointment.

Cllr Plume noted that there will be legal fees arising in relation to the Pinewood leases, from both the council's solicitors and the tenants' solicitors, which would need to be met from reserves.

A discussion followed regarding solicitor costs to date, possible solicitor costs up to the point of signing the leases, and the budget allowances that had been made for these costs.

It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would review the minutes to determine the point at which members had agreed to fund the tenant's solicitor. The total fees invoiced from that point for both the WWPC solicitor and the tenants' solicitor would be established.

It was further agreed that the Clerk would establish what solicitor fees had been incurred that had not yet been invoiced, and what further fees could reasonably be expected to be incurred to complete the lease work.

- D. To receive a report of salary expenditure year to date (as given in appendix 13D of the agenda).
The report was received.

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

RESOLVED: Items A-D, above, were AGREED

22/157 FLY TIPPING AND LITTER IN THE PARISH

Cllr Millett stated that he had observed that litter around the parish is getting worse and questioned what the council could do to address the issue. Members discussed the problem of litter around the parish and locations where this is most problematic.

The litter-picker role was discussed. Cllr Turtle stated that since the litter picker had been provided with a buggy the litter has stopped being picked-up along the verges and instead the bins that have been provided by WWPC around the parish are emptied.

It was speculated that the largest sources of the litter were from those travelling through the parish in cars, and from school children.

Members noted that, for safety reasons, WBC will not collect litter along the verges, and also WBC do not collect litter during road closures or verge cutting operations.

Cllr Plume suggested an advertising campaign should be organised for the next litter pick to be held on 26th March.

With respect to fly tipping, Cllr Plume stated that in 2019 the cost to WBC for fly tipping was £150,000 with 1298 incidents of illegal dumping.

Cllr Fenny suggested that options for improving the litter picking provision should be considered, for example an additional picker, or changing routes or work methods. This will be an agenda item for the next staffing meeting. It was agreed that the Clerk would discuss the current routine with the litter picker and seek his suggestions for improvement.

Members noted that some bins belonged to and were emptied by WBC, while others were WWPC’s responsibility.

The possibility of an education programme in local schools was discussed. Cllr Montgomery volunteered to speak to Oaklands school.

22/158 CHAIRMAN’S COMMUNICATIONS
None.

22/159 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 7.30 PM ON MONDAY 6th March 2023

22/160 MEETING CLOSED AT 9:33 PM

Signed:

Date: 6th March 2023