

**Wokingham Without Parish Council
Minutes of the Council Meeting
Held on Monday 5th June 2023**

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

Commencing 7:30pm and concluding at 9:40pm

Present: Councillors L Foxwell, P Jordan, N Martin, J Millett, J Montgomery (also B/Cllr) S Turtle and K Whitehead. Debbie Gooch – Clerk and Sharon Way – Deputy Clerk.
Borough Councillor D Davies. (*J Millett left the meeting at 9.00pm*)

Apologies: Councillors R Fenny, C Lancaster, A Plume and J Rogers. Borough Councillor P Helliars-Symons.

23/21 WELCOME

Cllr Foxwell welcomed everyone to the meeting.

23/22 ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Fenny Lancaster, Plume and Rogers and B/Cllr P Helliars-Symons.

23/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

23/24 MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

- A. Cllr Foxwell invited comments on the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15th May 2023.

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

RESOLVED: Minutes of the meeting, Monday 15th May were AGREED.

- B. Matters arising from the minutes of 15th May.
None.

23/25 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

23/26 BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' BRIEFING

B/Cllr Montgomery stated that WBC Democratic Services will be carrying out a review of polling stations later this year (date to be confirmed). B/Cllr Montgomery will propose that this review includes polling stations with contentious locations, such as Oaklands school.

B/Cllr Montgomery stated that Paul Fishwick had confirmed WBC's view that there was currently insufficient cause for a change to the speed limit along Honey Hill, without Thames Valley Police officially recommending this change. Cllr Martin stated that he intended to request a meeting to discuss the matter with Stephen Conway.

B/Cllr Montgomery stated that updates on WBC's litter policy would be provided to the Litter Working Group meeting in July, and that there was nothing to report currently regarding the local plan update.

B/Cllr Montgomery stated he would be meeting with Reverend Simpson-Gray regarding maintenance / boundary issues at St Sebastian's Church.

B/Cllr Montgomery noted that he had reported several road / signage maintenance issues at the junction between Nine Mile Ride and Heathlands Road, and a meeting was planned with Paul Fishwick.

Members discussed speed limiting signage along New Wokingham Road. B/Cllr Davies referred to speed watch and **agreed** to speak to Andy Croy.

B/Cllr Davies referred to the process of Pinewood relisting as a community asset. The Clerk confirmed that a letter had been drafted but email addresses had been withheld due to concerns regarding GDPR.

With respect to Edgbarrow school applications, B/Cllr Davies stated some appeals had been approved, and that the issue needs to be looked at for next year's applications. B/Cllr Davies noted that some children not admitted to Edgbarrow will have to travel long distances to school and that in certain cases WBC are refusing to cover travel expenses.

B/Cllr Davies stated that he was looking at potential sources of development funding.

B/Cllr Davies stated that residents are continuing to report issues with the works being carried out by City Fibre contractors. These issues are being compiled and will be presented formally to City Fibre for action.

B/Cllr Davies encouraged members to report road maintenance issues via the WBC app rather than 'fix my street', as this method of reporting had been shown to produce more rapid results. The Deputy Clerk **agreed** to post this advice on the WWPC website.

B/Cllr Davies stated that Men's Shed are required to carry out a noise assessment, a condition of their planning permission. Members discussed the difficulties and costs of carrying out this check. B/Cllr Montgomery stated that the matter had been raised directly with Stephen Conway.

23/27 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk summarised the report included as appendix 7 of the agenda.

With respect to Pinewood leases, the Clerk stated that tenants' land registry costs would be funded by the council, and this was expected to be approximately £600 in total.

Members discussed the best process for signing the leases. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would write to tenants stating that leases should be signed by 26th June.

Members discussed the football pitch maintenance agreement and the Clerk thanked members for their co-operation. Members also discussed the banners surrounding the football pitch, and it was **agreed** that this issue, together with the signage policy generally, would be added as an agenda item for the next meeting.

The Clerk stated that a meeting had been requested with Flying Start Nursery to discuss ongoing issues relating to payment and compliance with the hire agreement.

The Clerk stated that the cleaning contractor is in the process of appointing a new cleaner and that if this is not resolved in a reasonable time frame a new contractor will be sought. Cllr

Foxwell noted that the contractor was currently in breach of contract due to their failure to provide cover.

With respect to the Circle Hill and Morgan Rec Trust, it was **agreed** that the Clerk would be added as a trustee, in addition to Cllrs Turtle and Whitehead and Phil Metcalf.

With respect to the staffing working group, the Clerk referred members to the template terms of reference from SLCC and it was agreed that four councillors are an appropriate number of members on the group for reasons of confidentiality.

The Clerk discussed the 'asset of community value' draft letter, and it was **agreed** that the 'history society / blast shelter' should be retained on the list. Members confirmed that the draft letter could be sent.

The Clerk stated that a WBC antisocial behaviour team and environmental team visited a site on Sawmill Lane to investigate reported issues with an ongoing business activity. Further updates on this matter will be provided in due course.

23/28 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE / OTHER MEETINGS

A. Meeting with Bob Wade Berkshire Scouts – May 2023.

Cllr Foxwell reported that Mr Wade was seeking assistance from CIL funding to construct a sizable building for the county scouts' organisation. Mr Wade was interested in the St Sebastian's field site and was advised that it is not possible to build on this site. Mr Wade asked whether he could seek planning permission for the field and was advised that WWPC has no power to stop any individual from seeking planning permission.

B. Litter Working Group Meeting – 24th May 2023

Cllr Millett stated that the working group meeting identified the size of the problem and the locations of litter 'hot-spots'. Some ideas were put forward for improving the litter collecting process and a set of actions were agreed. Members discussed possible actions to address the litter problem. A follow-up meeting will be held on 12th July.

C. Flying Start Meeting – May 2023

Discussed earlier (Clerks report)

D. Friends of Heathlake Park – 3rd June 2023

Cllr Foxwell and Cllr Turtle attended this meeting. Cllr Foxwell reported that there is a problem with vandalism and children with catapults killing birds. Cllr Turtle reported that work on the pond is continuing, and the survey and water testing has been completed. It is planned to start dredging in the autumn. When dredging works are completed, work will start on the bridges and footpaths.

Cllr Turtle stated that Cllr Rogers had asked members to be informed of the plan to hold a 'birch bashing' day in the autumn, with the aim of improving the heather by clearing out competing plants such as birch saplings.

23/29 APPROVAL OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

A. To note the receipt of the Annual (Final) Internal Audit Report (note: Interim report circulated to members and reviewed at the council meeting of 6 February 2023 – minute ref 22/154) – as given in appendix 9A of the agenda.

Members noted the receipt of the Annual (Final) Audit Report and thanked the Deputy Clerk (Finance) for her work.

- B. To consider, complete and resolve to approve the AGAR section 1 – Annual Governance Statement – as given in appendix 9B, page 4 of the agenda.
Members confirmed that the Annual Governance Statement had been considered.

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

RESOLVED: The AGAR section 1 – Annual Governance Statement was AGREED.

- C. To resolve to approve AGAR section 2 – Annual Accounting Statement – as given in appendix 9B, page 5 of the agenda.
Cllr Foxwell read out the Annual Accounting Statement. The statement was signed by Cllr Foxwell and the Clerk.

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

RESOLVED: The Annual Accounting Statement was AGREED.

- D. To receive and resolve to approve the unaudited annual accounts at 31st March 2023 – as given in appendix 9D of the agenda.
Members confirmed that the unaudited annual accounts at 31st March 2023 had been received.

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

RESOLVED: The unaudited annual accounts at 31st March 2023 were AGREED.

23/30 POLICIES

Policies 10A, 10B and 10C were discussed. It was **agreed** that name of any individual will be removed from the policies.

10A – Code of Conduct for Local Employees

Members had no comments.

10B – Health and Safety Policy (including lone working)

Members had no comments.

10C – Safeguarding policy for St Sebastian's Hall and Pinewood Hall

Members had no comments.

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

RESOLVED: Policies 10A, 10B and 10C were AGREED.

23/31 ORCHARD MANAGEMENT PLAN

Cllr Foxwell thanked Cllr Turtle for producing the orchard management plan. Cllr Foxwell stated that the governmental guide to community orchards states that the orchard should be open to the whole community, not just those playing a part in its management. Cllr Foxwell also noted that the trees are small and if open access was provided to the public there is a risk the trees could be accidentally damaged or vandalised.

Cllr Foxwell discussed approaches to extend access, for example access for nursery schools for picnics and junior schools for educational visits. Cllr Foxwell noted that although this is currently possible it should be more widely known and promoted, for example on the WWPC website. Cllr Foxwell requested that these ideas were considered by the Orchard Group.

Cllr Turtle discussed the problems created by people climbing over the fence to retrieve footballs and possible actions to prevent this. The Clerk suggested that a sign is required to disclaim liability for risks associated with climbing the fence.

Cllr Turtle stated that clubs should be required to use goal nets to prevent balls hitting the fence.

Cllr Turtle stated that schools have been contacted in the past and **agreed** that further contact should be initiated. Cllr Turtle discussed other actions that had been taken in the past to engage the community, for example individuals sponsoring the purchase of a tree and local garden centres providing stakes and ties.

Cllr Turtle noted that the trees have taken longer to grow than expected and are still vulnerable to damage. Cllr Turtle stated that access to the orchard needed to be managed and discussed the fact that the apples ripened at different times and public access needed to be managed accordingly.

Cllr Jordan stated that the public do not know who owns the orchard. Members discussed the need for signage to explain the ownership and purpose of the orchard. Members **agreed** that a section should be added to the WWPC website including the management plan. Cllr Turtle **agreed** to prepare some wording for the signage.

Members discussed the current greenfly infestation and possible treatment measures such as spraying by the grounds staff. Other maintenance measures were discussed such as the need for watering in hot weather.

Cllr Turtle stated that the lack of space in the orchard could be an issue for picnics and suggested that additional fencing may be provided around vulnerable trees to facilitate access.

The Clerk suggested that local companies may be interested in sponsoring the orchard to help cover costs, with the sponsor's name being added to signage. Cllr Turtle **agreed** to pursue potential sponsorship opportunities.

Cllr Foxwell suggested the planting of wildflowers around the edges to promote pollinators. Cllr Turtle discussed her plans for planting flowers in the orchard.

Cllr Foxwell suggested that children could make insect boxes from bamboo and distribute them within the orchard, as an example of an inclusive community activity. Cllr Turtle noted this suggestion and stated that insects are currently being encouraged through actions such as permitting the growth of nettles.

Cllr Turtle **agreed** to discuss the suggestions with the orchard group and report back to council at the next council meeting.

23/32 PLANNING

- A. To receive and confirm comments from members on current planning applications (circulated 24th and 31st May).
Comments were received and confirmed.
- 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).
Noted.

23/33 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- A. To receive a report on outstanding balances (as given in appendix 13A of the agenda).
The report was received.
- B. To note 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 30th April (as given in appendix 13C of the agenda).
The report was received.
- 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 Jordan and seconded by Cllr Turtle it was:

RESOLVED: Items A-D, above, were AGREED.

23/34 CO-OPERATIVE BANK

- A. To approve a debit card application for Deputy Clerk (Finance) for Parish Office use
- B. To approve addition of Debbie Gooch (Clerk) to bank mandate and approve debit card application for Parish Office use
- C. To approve the removal of the following councillors as signatories from the Co-operative banking mandate:
 - Former Cllr Dye
 - Former Cllr Gough
 - Former Cllr Shill
 - Former Cllr Sturgess

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

RESOLVED: The actions A-C regarding the Co-operative bank were AGREED

23/35 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

None.

23/36 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 7.30 PM ON MONDAY 3rd July 2023

23/37 MEETING CLOSED AT 9:40 PM

Signed:

Date: 3rd July 2023