



In accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 this meeting was held virtually via Zoom Conferencing.

Present: Cllrs Picken, Clint, Starkey, Murphy, Strong, Stevens, McIntosh, Kaiser, Hughes & the Clerk.

Both the Chairman and Clerk were hosts of the meeting.

1/21 To receive and accept any apologies for absence - None

2/21 To receive any declarations of interest on items on the Agenda - None

3/21 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting – to approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18th February 2020 – the minutes were read and approved. The minutes will be signed by Cllr Picken when Covid-19 lockdown ends

4/21 Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting – to approve the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 28th February 2020 – the minutes were read and approved. The minutes will be signed by Cllr Picken when Covid-19 lockdown ends

5/21 Public Participation (allotted time - 5 minutes) the length of time has been shortened for this meeting - None

6/21 Clerks Report –for information only

- The annual litter pick due to have been held on Saturday 28th March 1-3pm was cancelled in line with the Borough Wide litter pick.
- Tipper lorries in Swallowfield Road – Balfour Beatty and WBC confirmed they were not their lorries. It transpired that they were working for Farley Estate who were utilising the Balfour Beatty compound to access their own land.
- The office has a new modem, which has been installed and is up and running.
- There are a number of documents requiring re- adoption. These will be agenda items for the June meeting.
- Pavilion extension update – unfortunately, the bat survey cannot be done at the present time due to the lockdown. This presents a delay in obtaining planning permission.
- The Neighbourhood Plan information has been added to the parish's website www.arborfield.org.uk

7/21 Reports from external bodies:

- Borough Council – Cllr Cowan was invited to attend via Zoom or submit a written report. He confirmed he would be submitting a written report.

- Police – TVP are calling the Clerk weekly as they are unable to visit the Parish Office at this time. Should anyone raise any queries or questions please let the Clerk know so they can be passed on.

8/21 COVID-19 – To receive and consider report on the impact on the Parish Council – the report was noted. The main points are:

- The Parish Council is following guidance provided by Wokingham Borough Council.
- A double sided leaflet was produced by WBC providing information on where residents can obtain help and offer help. Following pleas of help via email and Facebook to deliver the leaflets all except 1 road and 1 small area of houses received a leaflet. It was also displayed in the parish notice boards, posted on the website, and emailed out.
- The Wokingham Clerks forum has been represented at the WBC emergency meetings by Jan, Town Clerk for Wokingham, who continues to feed back to all WBC Clerks.
- John Halsall, Leader of WBC, is providing updates every Monday, Wednesday and Friday following the emergency meetings. These updates are being forwarded on to all Parish Councillors.
- WBC have done an amazing job of pulling together local charities who are working under the Wokingham District Citizens Advice Bureau's umbrella to ensure residents can get help where needed. A number of WBC staff have been redeployed to areas in need.
- Guidance is regularly received from both NALC and HALC and the Clerk has access to the daily updates from the SLCC forum. All are providing invaluable information.

The remainder of the document is in the form of a risk assessment covering actions and notes and is constantly being updated.

9/21 Planning

- **Planning Report** – for information only

○ **Planning application decisions:**

193190 – Land Parcel B, Arborfield – Application for the approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning consent O/2014/2280 for the erection of 48 dwellings on 'Parcel B' with associated internal access roads, parking, landscaping, open space, bridleway, footpaths and sustainable urban drainage (partial resubmission of original Reserved matters application ref: 161747 for land parcels A to G). Reserved matters to be considered – Appearance, Landscaping, Layout, and scale - approved

200420 - Oakland House, Church Lane – Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension with 2 no. rooflights – application was invalidated by WBC as no planning permission for residential use.

200153 – White Heart Grove, Coombes Woodland – Full planning application for the proposed installation of woodland security fencing – refused

Appeal decisions:

191457 – Land off Coombes Lane – Full planning application for the proposed installation of timber stake and plain wire fencing and 2no gates – appeal dismissed

Applications agreed via email due to March meeting being cancelled:

200439 – 18 Tyler Drive – Householder application for the proposed erection of a part single storey, part two storey side extension plus two storey rear extension – no objections agreed via email. Approved by WBC.

200362 – Former Bramshill Hunt Public House – Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey A1 retail unit following demolition of existing public house and ancillary buildings – welcomes changes but raises concerns agreed via email. Approved by WBC

200083 – Sunrise, Eversley Road – Householder application for the proposed erection of a two storey side extension and erection of a single storey rear extension – no objections agreed via email. Refused by WBC.

200474 – 27 Tyler Drive – Householder application for the proposed erection of a front canopy roof to form a covered porch, plus partial garage conversion and changes to fenestration – no objections agreed via email. Approved by WBC.

200603 – Land rear of 20 Anderson Crescent – Full planning application for the proposed change of use of land as a single pitch caravan site, creation of a new access and associated parking – strongly objects agreed via email. No decision made yet by WBC.

For information only:

200621 – Adj 10 & 12 Barker Close – TPO tree works to goat willows - pollard

Appeals

192529 – Plot 7, The Coombes – Full planning application for the rection of a 1.2m fence and gate – representation to the Planning Inspectorate by 1st April 2020 – reiterate previous comments agreed via email and sent to inspectorate

Hearings

191383 – Plot B, Coombes Lane – Breach alleged without planning permission the erection of extension to the water tank building to create an enlarged building – to agree statement for the hearing – adjourned due to Covid-19

190661 – Plot B, Coombes Lane – Full planning application for the proposed wooden security fencing – to agree statement for the hearing – adjourned due to Covid-19

- **Bearwood Nurseries, Church Lane** – following a request at the last meeting to find out what is happening about the enforcement on this site as it remains a complete mess and now has a fence down the middle. WBC have confirmed that it remains firmly in their sights.
- **Arborfield Village Improvement Scheme** - Due to not being able to meet in person WBC are sending over this week initial options. These will be circulated to the steering group members for comment. A Zoom meeting will then be arranged to discuss.
- **To discuss planning applications received by the date of the meeting – to include:**

200787 – 5 Newlands Cottages – Householder application for the proposed erection of a two storey rear extension and changes to fenestration, following demolition of existing single storey rear extension – no objections

200711 – Swallowfield Road – Full planning application for installation of a solar park to include 40000 solar photovoltaic panels, 11 inverter/transformer cabins, a single control building and associated works to include vehicle access and fencing with Environmental Statement –

It was agreed that the Council supports renewable in principle and is supportive of schemes that promote clean and renewable energy but is also strongly of the opinion that any such application must comply with the Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan and the Arborfield Village Design

Statement as appropriate. Specifically, the Council discussed and agreed concerns that it feels must be further addressed before a properly informed decision can be considered. The most apparent of these are:

- The scheme proposes industrialisation of agricultural land. This is contrary to guidance that such developments should use Brownfield sites. The Council feels therefore that other sites locally could be more suitable.
- The ecological, environmental and visual impact is likely to be significant given the proximity of the proposed site to local roads, residencies and the amount of wildlife and habitat that this land supports. Again, the council feels that other sites locally could be more suitable.
- The well-known flood problems that this site experiences in inclement weather is a major concern
- The Parish Council seeks assurances regarding the protection of trees, hedgerows, byways and bridleways, and a commitment that proper investigation and consideration would be given to protect any part of the land that has historical importance.
- The Parish Council requests that any such scheme should include the provision of a bond to be provided by the developer or beneficiary securing sufficient funds to restore the land to its former state at the end of the project.

200891 – 24 Melrose Gardens – Householder application for the proposed erection of canopy roof over front porch, first floor front extension, first floor rear extension, plus changes to fenestration – no objections

Adjoining Parish Consultation – Winnersh

200883 – 1 Upper Terrace, Bearwood Road, Sindlesham – Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey timber store/plant room adjacent to the existing annex, plus demolition of existing utility room internal alterations changes to fenestration on the main dwelling and new entrance gates (part retrospective) – no objections

200884 – Listed Building consent for the above application

- **Any Planning matters considered urgent** - None

F&GP

- **F&GP Report** – for information only
 - The initial 10% of the precept has been received, 40% will be received at the end of April with the remaining 50% in September.
 - The Cheaperwaste contract has been renewed for a further year. They are providing an excellent, efficient service. The contract has been changed to reflect the pavilion being closed at the current time. They have provided credit notes for April for the internal and external nappy waste bins and also the general waste bin. I have asked them to correct this to only be credits for the nappy bins, the Council still requires the general waste bin.
 - The utility contracts for the pavilion have been agreed with Opus instead of British Gas Lite as Opus offered a better deal as an existing customer.
 - The SSE street light maintenance agreement has been signed for a further 2 years.
 - The Ground Maintenance contract has been signed for a 2 year agreement with SCS.

- The noticeboard ordered to replace the existing board at Reading Road by Church Lane will now be delayed due to Covid-19.
- The AGAR paperwork for YE March 2020 has been printed off ready for completing.
- The National Salary Award for 2020-2021 has not yet been agreed.
- The new financial year has been started for PAYE on the HMRC RTI. P60s have been issued to staff.

The following four items were agreed via email as the 17th March meeting was unable to be held due to self-isolation meaning the meeting would not be quorate. A further meeting was unable to be arranged, and held, due to the nationwide lockdown being implemented as of 23rd March. A change to the legislation in order for Councils to lawfully hold remote meetings was not implemented until 4th April. The proposals were circulated to all Councillors via email with a request to respond to the Clerk. The outcomes was subsequently circulated to all. All documentation has been kept should any queries arise.

- **To minute decision to agree rent Increase Proposal from Arborfield Village Hall Management Committee** – all agreed to the rent increase proposal.

The rent will be as follows:

- Yr 1 (ending March 2021) - £3,672
- Yr 2 (ending March 2022) - £3,745
- Yr 3 (ending March 2023) - £3,820
- Totalling £11,237

The payment schedule is as follows: 6 monthly payments of £1,873 starting in April 2020.

- **To minute decision to agree to continue with SCS on a 2 year contract to carry out the Councils Ground Maintenance** – a bill of quantity was received from SCS, Robins Ltd and Countrywide. They varied greatly, mainly due to the football pitch maintenance. This was rectified in order to consider like for like bill of quantities. The Clerk met with all three companies. All three were then asked to provide a best and final offer. It was agreed the Council will remain with its current contractor, SCS, based on their competitive quote, value for money across all the areas, familiarity with the sites and relationship with the Council having carried out the work for numerous years. It was further agreed that the contract would run for 2 years rather than 5 years due to the significant change in pitch maintenance.

All agreed this had been a valuable and in-depth exercise to ensure the Councils ground maintenance provides value for money whilst continuing care of Council grounds.

- **To minute decision regarding temporary rent review for Freckles during COVID-19** – after careful and extensive consideration it was agreed to freeze the rent increase for 2020-21 but reserve the right to compound and apply 2 years inflation for 2021-22, reduce the current rent by 20% and then reduce further to reflect reduction in utility costs and offensive waste bin emptying. The Clerk wrote to Freckles with the above offers setting out the monthly costs up to and including July 2020. Also to clearly advise that it would be a temporary arrangement and if the government advised that schools could reopen earlier the discounted rate increase would revert to the normal daily charge but that the rent increase freeze would remain in place.

The loss of rental income to the Parish Council would be recouped by the reduction in hours of the Handyman who is only carrying out minimal duties during the lockdown period.

It was reported at the meeting that Freckles had rejected the Councils offer stating they were only prepared to pay 25% of the rent during the closed period. All agreed at the meeting that the

Council was not in a position to change its offer as public funds should not be used to support one business and there are many offers of help to businesses during the Covid-19 outbreak from central government and the local authority. The Clerk is to respond to Freckles.

- **To minute decision to publish the Arborfield News online only for the April/May issue and to agree to offer all advertisers a credit against the June/July issue** – all agreed to the online issue and to offer a credit to all advertisers who had already purchased space in the April/May issue. It was further agreed that all advertisers would be offered the opportunity to provide a statement to be published on the website stating their situation during the lockdown.
- **Any F&GP matters considered urgent** - None

Parks

- **Parks Report** – for information only
 - Clothing banks need to be emptied
 - Park currently closed to vehicle access. Playground and equipment closed.
 - Bottle banks still being emptied fortnightly
- **Any Parks matters considered urgent** - None

Risk Management

- **Risk Management Report** – for information only
 - Check lists for pavilion, park, car park, Pound Copse, Old Churchyard, Parish Owned Land, and street furniture carried out on 15th April 2020. Main points to note are:
 - Boiler in the pavilion needs servicing – current landlords certificate expired on 8th April 2020. The Clerk was asked to arrange a boiler service if possible. Cllr Starkey to provide details of Thermo-Tec who are currently working.
 - Security light on end of pavilion needs securing
 - Legs rotting on noticeboard by Church Lane. New board on order – delayed due to Covid-19
 - Bus shelters – need to look through quotes received.
 - Pound Copse – fence post at lay by end entrance rotting – monitor
 - Old Churchyard – several fence posts starting to rot – will require replacement
- **Risk sheets** – to receive completed sheets and review/agree action for any issues raised – all risk check lists except for streetlights were carried out on 15th April. The main points raised are listed above in the RM report
- **Any RM matters considered urgent** - None

10/21 Accounts – To minute decision to agree accounts and payments for March 2020 and to agree accounts and payments for April 2020 – bank statements, reconciliations, Petty Cash and payments for March and April were circulated to all and agreed at the meeting. Cllr Picken and Murphy had authorised the March payments online. Cllrs Picken and Clint to authorise April payments on the bank account the following day. All paperwork will be signed when the Covid-19 lockdown ends.

Payments - March 2020			
BACS	Keep Mobile	£550.00	Grants
BACS	Wokingham Job Support Centre	£100.00	Grants
BACS	Citizens Advice Bureau	£350.00	Grants
BACS	Berkshire Vision	£100.00	Grants
BACS	Link Visiting Scheme	£100.00	Grants
BACS	WDVTA	£100.00	Grants
BACS	Arborfield Military Wives Choir	£250.00	Grants
BACS	Arborfield Social Club	£200.00	Grants
BACS	SCS	£1,492.74	Ground Maintenance
BACS	Tivoli	£68.40	Dog bins
BACS	Vitaplay	£600.00	Pavilion capital - external fenced area
BACS	RES	£214.51	Pavilion safety checks
BACS	Barkham Parish Council	£553.98	Neighbourhood Plan
BACS	Mr M Bodington	£440.04	Handyman / Parks Plan
BACS	Staff Wages	£2,531.81	Staff wages - includes PAYE & Pension
DD	Opus (Gas)	£117.94	Pavilion Utilities
DD	Opus (Electric)	£25.78	Pavilion Utilities
DD	BT	£108.52	Office running expense
DD	Lloyds Bank	£80.79	Credit Card
DD	Cheaper Waste	£248.74	Pavilion/Park maintenance
DD	SAGE	£20.16	Office running expense
DD	CF Corporate	£70.04	Printer
DD	SSE	£348.37	Street lighting

Retrospective Payments for March 2020 - paid on 31st March 2020			
BACS	SSE	£36.94	Streetlight maintenance
BACS	RES	£214.51	Pavilion safety checks (missed off March payment run)
BACS	Berkshire Conservation Volunteers	£57.00	Pound Copse
BACS	Came & Co	£2,250.55	Insurance (April 20 - March 21)
Payments for April 2020			
BACS	SCS	£1,492.74	Ground Maintenance for March 2020
BACS	Tivoli	£68.40	Dog bins
BACS	Mr M Bodington	£311.18	Handyman
BACS	Staff Wages	£2,560.59	Staff wages - includes PAYE & Pension
DD	Opus (Gas)	£117.33	Pavilion Utilities
DD	Opus (Electric)	£27.73	Pavilion Utilities

DD	BT	£118.03	Office running expense
DD	Lloyds Bank	£67.87	Credit Card
DD	Cheaper Waste	£27.20	Pavilion/Park maintenance
DD	Cheaper Waste	£58.34	Pavilion/Park maintenance
DD	CF Corporate	£70.04	Printer
DD	SSE	£128.12	Street lighting

11/21 Correspondence – as per the list below. The Clerk to inform the Dog Warden regarding the letter from Graham Wooley.

Date received	Who from	Content	Minuted date	Minute item
Correspondence for meeting on 17th March which was cancelled				
03/03/2020	Castle Water	Invoice	17/03/2020	Accounts
04/03/2020		Clerks & Councils Direct	17/03/2020	Correspondence
05/03/2020	HSBC	Bank Statements	17/03/2002	Accounts
09/03/2020	Lloyds	Card statement	17/03/2020	Accounts
09/03/2020	Unity Trust	Bank Statements	17/03/2020	Accounts
09/03/2020	WBC	Rate Demand	17/03/2020	F&GP
12/03/2020	Unity Trust	Bank Statements	17/03/2020	Accounts
30/03/2020	SSE	Invoice	21/04/2020	Accounts
30/03/2020	Unity Trust	Letter re interest rates	21/04/2020	F&GP
06/04/2020	Unity Trust	Bank Statement	21/04/2020	Accounts
06/04/2020	Unity Trust	Bank Statement	21/04/2020	Accounts
06/04/2020	HSBC	Bank Statement	21/04/2020	Accounts
08/04/2020	CPRE	Countryside magazine	21/04/2020	Correspondence
09/04/2020	Lloyds	Card statement	21/04/2020	Accounts
09/04/2020	Opus Elec	Renewal	21/04/2020	F&GP
09/04/2020	Opus Gas	Renewal	21/04/2020	F&GP
15/04/2020	Link Visiting Scheme	Grant thank you letter	21/04/2020	Correspondence
16/04/2020	Graham Woolley	Copy letter re dog	21/04/2020	Correspondence

12/21 Website, Emails and Facebook updates –

Website update

The latest issue of the Arborfield News is online along with information about the advertisers who have responded to the Councils offer.

The Neighbourhood Plan information has been added to a separate menu heading.

Email address update - For the time being Cllr Clint has referred to using his own email address. No other issues were raised.

Facebook update - The Parish Council could really do with this up and running especially during the present lockdown. Finchampstead Parish Councils is an excellent example to follow. Cllr Hughes and the Clerk to arrange virtual meeting to get started. Cllr Stevens to join as he administrates the Village Hall Facebook page.

14/21 To discuss and agree future remote meetings including the APF and the AGM and whether to delegate additional powers to the Clerk for the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak lockdown –

Council meetings

Meeting dates will remain as normal during the lockdown period – 3rd Tuesday of the month. Committee meetings if required will remain on the 1st Tuesday of the month.

The Council agreed that Zoom works so will continue with it and a purchased package is not required. Good practice for remote meetings were noted:

- Everyone to identify themselves when joining the meeting if not on video.
- Public participation – ask for questions/comments to be sent in advance or offer opportunity to join by prior arrangement.
- Part II's to be held as a separate meeting.
- Live streaming – WBC Clerks agree this is neither appropriate nor necessary.

Standing Orders need to be amended to reflect the change in legislation to hold meetings remotely and an explanation of how they will be held.

Annual Parish Forum

Finchampstead Parish Council and Wokingham Town Council plan to hold a virtual meeting. All other Parishes within WBC will not be holding an annual meeting this year and will defer business such as minute signing from last year to next year.

It was agreed that there will be no Annual Meeting in 2020 due to the Covid-19 lockdown, but reports will still be collated and published.

Annual Meeting of the Council

This will be held remotely. The election of the Chairman is the first item of business. As the election process for the committees etc can be long the Clerk was asked to prepare and circulate all paperwork beforehand.

Delegation

A number of Parish Councils held extraordinary meetings just before the lockdown and delegated all decisions to the Clerk. This was drastic action and is not now necessary due to the legislation being changed to be able to hold remote meetings.

It was agreed that no delegation needed to be given to the Clerk as holding a remote meeting had proved successful.

13/21 Action List – the action list was run through and updated

14/21 Any items for consideration to include items for the next meeting agenda – information only

- Election of Chairman, Vice Chairman and Committees
- Document re-adoption at the May and June meetings

15/21 Date of next meeting – Annual General Meeting – Tuesday 19th May 2020, 7,30pm via Zoom conferencing

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.08pm