



Arborfield & Newland Parish Council

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Clerk: Mrs Annabel Wood

Minutes of a Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 18th July 2023 at Arborfield Pavilion 7:30pm

Present: Cllrs Murphy (Vice Chair, acting Chair), Starkey, Fox, Stevens, and Strong.

In Attendance: Mrs Wood, Clerk, Mr Watts, the RFO.

Other: One member of the public to give Council an update on the traffic data, and the locum clerk.

211/23 Questions from members of the public in respect of the business on this agenda

There were no questions from members of the public.

212/23 To receive and accept any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Clint.

213/23 To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda

No declarations of interest were received.

214/23 Minutes of Council Meeting

The minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 20th June 2023 were approved with all in favour.

215/23 The draft minutes from the following committees were noted, (as per standing orders all committee draft minutes are presented to full council).

1. Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 8th November 2022
2. Executive Committee meeting held on Monday 3rd July 2023
3. Parks Committee meeting held on Tuesday 4th July 2023

216/23 To consider amendments to Terms of Reference of Committees.

The following recommendations made in the Executive Committee meeting held on 3rd July 2023 were considered and approved by the Council. Terms of Reference and Standing Orders will be updated to reflect these amendments.

1. Parks Committee

- a) Reduce the quorum of the committee from 4 to 3 Councillors.
- b) Remove the item "to review and recommend fees for the use of the Council's facilities".
- c) Amend the item regarding "control spending in Areas of Responsibility" to become: **"To control spending within the agreed limits of the budget in compliance of the Standing Orders"**.

Proposed by Cllr Strong, Seconded by Cllr Stevens, All in favour.

2. Finance and General Purposes

- a) To add to Terms of Reference "To review and recommend fees for the use of the Council's facilities" to Areas of Responsibility in the F&GP Committee Terms of Reference.

Proposed by Cllr Starkey, seconded by Cllr Stevens, all in favour.

3. Planning Committee

- a) To replace the Planning Committee with a Planning Working Party and Terms of Reference to be revised to reflect this change.

Proposed by Cllr Stevens, seconded by Cllr Starkey, all in favour.

217/23 Traffic Surveys – To receive feedback on the traffic surveys by WBC on Church Lane.

Mr Townsend gave feedback to the Council on the recent traffic survey carried out by WBC compared to those carried out by the Parish Council.

This included:

- a) Increases traffic on Oak Drive compared to WBC figures.
- b) WBC traffic modelling has shown the traffic in Church Lane moving to Langley Common Road.
- c) There is three times as much traffic on Church Lane compared to WBC traffic volume figures.

Mr Townsend was thanked for his update, and he left the meeting.

218/23 To nominate Councillors to Committees:

1. Planning Committee

Following the decision for the Planning Committee to be replaced with a Planning Working Party, no committee members were required.

2. Parks Committee - The following nominations were made:

Cllr Starkey – Chair, Cllr Stevens - Vice Chair and Cllr Strong

Proposed by Cllr Stevens, seconded by Cllr Fox, all in favour.

3. Finance and General Purposes Committee - The following nominations were made:

Cllr Murphy – Chair, Cllr Clint – Vice Chair, Cllr Starkey and Cllr Fox.

Following agreement to create a planning working party, the Executive Committee would continue to comprise of the Chair of Council, the Committee Chairs and the lead member for Planning. As the Executive Committee is currently composed of the same members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee it was suggested these committees would meet on the same date.

219/23 The following nominations were made for Councillors to lead on Council Priorities.

1. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) - Cllr Clint
2. Planning – Cllr Fox
3. Council Property – Cllr Starkey
4. Community and Communication – Cllr Strong
5. Environmental Considerations – Cllr Stevens
6. Cost of Living – Cllr Murphy

Proposed by Cllr Fox, Seconded by Cllr Stevens, all in favour.

220/23 Councillors were nominated as a representative to the following external organisations:

Organisation	Parish Council Representative
Arborfield Village Hall	Cllr Murphy
Wokingham Borough Parish Liaison Forum	Cllr Clint Deputy: Cllr Starkey
SpeedWatch	Cllr Stevens
WBC Standards Committee	Cllr Fox
Berkshire Association of Local Councils	Clerk
Rights of Way Representative	Cllr Starkey and Cllr Fox
Old Churchyard	Cllr Strong
Police/Parish Liaison and Rural Crimes	Cllr Stevens
Fields Neighbourhood Action Groups	Cllr Stevens
Roads, Traffic, Transport	Cllr Fox and Mr Townsend
School Liaison	Cllr Clint
Crest Nicholson liaison	Cllr Murphy

It was suggested the Council may need a representative for the Coombes Woodland.
The Clerk was asked to find out if a representative was required for the Alms Houses at Hurst.

221/23 To receive Clerk's report – The Clerk informed the meeting of the date of the joint litter pick with Barkham Parish Council on Saturday 23rd September 2023, 10am-1pm.

222/23 To receive reports from:

- 1) Borough Councillor** – a written report was received which was briefly discussed.
- 2) Police** – A crime report for Arborfield and Newland and Barkham Parish Councils for the period 12/05/2023 – 12/07/2023 had been circulated.

223/23 To receive reports from external meetings attended by Councillors.

Cllr Stevens attended the NAG meeting on 18th July 2023.

The new Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) had attended the NAG meeting and will be invited to attend an Arborfield Village Hall meeting in October. The NAG is hoping to get Borough Cllrs to

attend future meetings. The group working on "Wokingham Community Vision" is continuing. Crime has decreased in the "fields" area.

Cllr Fox, meeting with WBC regarding the build-out at the Village Hall.

The final safety audit of the build outs will be in September/October. An email address was provided to residents to give feedback on the build outs. Residents voiced concerns about how some of the build-outs were potentially dangerous and how there is an increase in traffic volume travelling at speed on Church Lane.

The Council discussed the Arborfield Village Improvement scheme, including the number, position, and lighting of the build outs. It was suggested some are not positioned well and traffic is forced to travel in a head on direction of oncoming traffic. It was discussed how some of the original plans had not been adhered to, for example, widening the pavement outside the Village Hall. Cllrs Fox and Murphy volunteered to work together to propose an alternative solution to the build-out near the Village Hall.

224/23 Council Priorities: To receive updates from Councillors on the following:

1) Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

It was reported there had been a further attempted burglary at the Arborfield Co-op.

2) Planning: Cllr Fox requested that planning matters be considered at this point, which was agreed

a) To discuss planning applications received by the date of the meeting as listed below

NOTIFICATION OF APPLICATION FOR FULL VARIATION OF PREMISES LICENCE - THE BULL (PR0042)

Address: The Bull, Swallowfield Road, Arborfield

Proposal: To add an outside bar facility within existing building to stop customers having to travel to the main bar inside the premises and carry drinks back into the garden.

It was agreed that the council would support this application.

b) To consider the following questions and whether legal advice could be sought to support the council responding to them:

i) To what extent is it valid for the Local Plan Update to include plans to build houses beyond the end of the plan period of 2037/38?

ii) To what extent could the decision to include houses beyond the plan period be challenged and what is the likelihood of making a successful challenge?

c) For Council to consider a request from Councillor Stevens to seek legal advice on the above two questions

The council resolved that legal advice be sought to be given a steer in regard to the questions above.

d) To agree an upper limit of the cost of this legal advice.

The Council resolved to spend an upper limit of £3,000 for such legal advice.

Proposed by Cllr Stevens, Seconded by Cllr Starkey, all in favour.

e) Any Planning matters considered urgent – It was suggested the Council should remain vigilant to the Planning Application for the Langley Common Road Proposal.

3) Council Property – The nursery school were in a position to occupy the pavilion.

4) Community and Communication

- a) The recent resignation of Cllr Kaiser was noted, and a vote of thanks given to him for all his work as both a Parish and Borough Councillor.
- b) The Council were informed the Clerk has notified the Returning Officer at WBC of the last three Councillor resignations. If no polls are called, the Parish Council will be able to advertise the positions as casual vacancies and co-opt at future meeting.
- c) It was suggested that social media needs to be more actively managed, and that Cllr Strong form a working party to generate ideas on how best to attract new councillors to fill the vacancies on the council. The Clerk informed Council she is working on the creation of a Communications Plan.

5) Environmental Considerations

The Council noted the solar panel initiative publicised by WBC and the Wokingham Forest Garden Scheme, whereby trees are given to residents.

6) Cost of Living

The Parish Council continues to signpost people where to get help if required.

225/23 Finance

1) To receive the RFO Report, including the Quarter 1 Spend Versus Budget Report

These were received. The RFO highlighted past expenditure and current payments would be monitored for Castle Water and British Gas. It was suggested smart meters could be installed for these utilities.

2) The Council approved the following proposals of the RFO on the report.

- a) to put the Clerk's monthly salary on a standing order on order to ensure continuous monthly payment.
- b) to set a direct debit to pay Castle Water. Two bank signatories will need to sign the direct debit mandate.
- c) Retrospective approval of £245 + VAT for the increased cost to the emergency light outside the Pavilion front door.

3) The list of Direct Debits and Standing Orders were reviewed and Re-approved by the Council.

4) To approve and sign payments for July – payments were approved, and copies of invoices were signed at the meeting by Cllrs Stevens and Murphy.

5) To receive the bank reconciliation for the month of June.

The RFO explained the only outstanding item was a direct debit of £60 for the Countryside Protection of Rural England (CPRE).

6) To receive an update on the purchase of the Coombes Woodland – Joint with Barkham PC.

Arborfield and Barkham Councils have commissioned searches for the Woodland. It will now be bought as a direct purchase and can become a Charitable Trust in the future if required.

7) To receive an update on Pavilion Phase II Project Update

The Planning Application for Phase II was submitted but could not be accepted as a bat survey had not been carried out, the architect has been unable to arrange one in the time available. Consequently, the application had been withdrawn and a Section 73 application submitted, not requiring a bat survey. When permission is obtained, this will go out to tender for the building works.

8) To update to HSBC Bank signature mandate.

The Council resolved to add Cllr Fox as a signatory for HSBC and remove any other Cllrs as necessary.

Proposed by Cllr Stevens, seconded by Cllr Strong, all in favour.

9) To consider any urgent finance matters – there were no financial matters considered urgent.

A discussion took place about how to promote the newly refurbished pavilion to the public. It was suggested that an event take place on Saturday 12th August at 1pm, which would also be used to promote the vacancies on the council. Residents are to be invited to come along for refreshments, to meet Councillors, and see the building and the plans for stage two. It was agreed that the event be held in the pavilion, and for the clerk to organise. Publicity to include invitation to the press, a photo and plan display and for a report to be prepared for the press and the next edition of the newsletter.

226/23 Parks

1) Parks Repor

Following cars remaining in the Pavilion car park after the time it is locked in the evening, the Clerk has added signs at the park gates reminding people gates are to be locked promptly. The Bull Pub, Arborfield has been asked not to encourage customers to use the Pavilion carpark as an overspill carpark.

2) Feedback from the survey at the Annual Parish Meeting

There was one suggestion made at the Annual Parish Meeting that the Sport Active game should be replaced by outdoor gym equipment.

3) Approval of spend to remove the SportActive game

The Council approved the budget of £1600 plus VAT to remove the SportActive game but decided to wait until the replacement equipment had been decided upon with a view to the removal and installation to occur simultaneously.

4) Any Parks matters considered urgent

There were no Parks matters considered urgent.

227/23 Risk Management

1) Risk Assessments and Checklists

The Council considered the table of risk assessments and checklists showing due dates for each area. and Councillors were asked to complete any Risk Assessment / Checklist assigned to them if overdue. Although Councillors can carry out risk assessments, it was noted they cannot be held accountable for them.

It was noted that the wooden fence at the entrance to Pound Copse Woodland (Reading Road end) has not yet been replaced by the Handyman. Clerk to follow this up.

Cllr Fox is currently reviewing the Risk Assessment process, the suitability of the Risk Assessment and checklist forms currently used by the Council and the Risk Assessments and checklists already completed since 2022. Cllr Fox to feedback any recommendations for improvement. A more robust Risk Management Plan will be developed.

2) Any RM matters considered urgent - no items were raised as being urgent.

228/23 Action list – Councillors were advised to look at their actions on the Action List in SharePoint and update actions when completed.

229/23 Any items for consideration to include items for the next meeting agenda – items suggested for the next meeting agenda were the Joint Litter Pick in September, Co-option of Councillors and, an update to the Pavilion phase II scheme.

230/23 Date of next meeting – The next full council meeting will be a full Council meeting on **Tuesday 19th September 2023.**

There being no further business to discuss the meeting ended at 21:51.