



Arborfield & Newland Parish Council

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Clerk: Mrs Hilary Carless

Minutes of an Executive Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 30th January 2024 at Arborfield Pavilion, 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Clint (Chair), Starkey and Fox

In Attendance: The Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

Public: No members of the public were present.

- 1) Public Participation** (allotted time - 15 minutes)
There were no members of the public present.
- 2) To receive and accept any apologies for absence.**
Apologies received from Cllr Murphy.
- 3) To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda**
No declarations were made.
- 4) To approve the minutes from the last Executive Meeting held on Monday 3rd July 2023.**
These minutes were approved subject to changes to item (7) and (9) and will be signed by Cllr Clint following the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Clint, seconded by Cllr Starkey, all in favour.
- 5) To discuss and agree steps to be taken to fill the councillor vacancies on the Council.**
The Council generated a number of ideas about how to generate resident interest to join the Parish Council. The Council was unanimous in its wish to recruit a residents into the vacant Councillor positions and wishes to ensure that we have representation from all parts of the Parish. This could be communicated by using flyers and holding a meeting with WBC officers and PCSOs to demonstrate what the Council does and how it helps the community. The upcoming launch of the Coombes Woodland volunteering group will also provide a forum to show how the Parish Councils supports residents. The Council will consider holding other such meetings if the initial meeting encourages community interaction with the Council.

6) To discuss and agree how to cover duties formerly undertaken by handyman

The Clerk will add the list of regular handyman tasks to the agenda for the Full Council meeting on 20th February 2024 for review.

Given the lack of applicants for the handyman role, the RFO agreed to investigate the Community Payback Scheme as a means of employing support for maintenance tasks. If this is not viable, the Committee will consider the ad hoc employment of a handyman for 1 or 2 days per month.

It was noted that residents are litter picking around the Park. It would be great to identify who they are so that they could be formally thanked.

7) To discuss any feedback from the Thank You tea

There were fewer acceptances this year and even fewer attendees. The Council considered that this may have been the result of the invitations being issued late and the link being inaccessible in the first communication.

It was noted that next year Greenvelope will be trialled for sending digital invitations. More physical invitations would also be considered. The Clerk will request feedback from invitees about the tea e.g. timing, format etc.

8) Cllr Fox - to present an update on our approach to risk management following his review of our processes

Following his review, Cllr Fox concluded that there were no major omissions in the Council's risk assessment documents. He suggested that it may be useful to generate an asset register which included a risk rating against each asset in order to identify higher risk assets. Councillors will input into the current Risk Assessment document Cllr Fox has created as follows:

- Park – Cllr Starkey
- Pound Copse and Coombes Woodland – Chair
- Old Churchyard and other parish assets (war memorial, phone box, bus shelters, street lights, salt bins, noticeboards) – Cllr Fox
- Pavilion – await completion of works
- Whole Council – Cllrs Murphy, RFO and Clerk

Subsequent to this, Cllr Fox will create a risk matrix and feed back to the Council.

9) Risk Management - Any RM matters considered urgent.

The Clerk outlined a complaint that had been received from a resident of Greensward Lane regarding what the resident considered to be a risk to life if the trees opposite his property fell and hit his house; he requested that the Council remove the top 20' of the trees. An inspection of the trees along the road highlighted that all the trees along the road are of similar height. The arboriculturist undertook a full survey of the Copse in June 2023 and the necessary remedial tree works have been completed; none to the trees opposite the resident's property as there were no issues identified with those trees.. The whole of Pound Copse is covered by a TPO and is designated ancient woodland and designated local wildlife

heritage site. Recently, WBC rejected an application for crown reduction to healthy trees close to properties in another part of the Parish as they make *'a highly positive and significant contribution to the character and appearance of the area'* and *'crown reductions are generally considered inappropriate because they remove a large amount of leafing material which will affect the tree's ability to photosynthesise and sustain themselves. It also causes multiple pruning wounds which will increase the tree's susceptibility to disease and decay and should therefore only be considered where there would otherwise be a risk of failure due to a significant defect.'*

The Clerk will contact the arboriculturist for her opinion and will draft a letter to the resident.

Date of next meeting – The next executive meeting will be held on 2nd April 2024.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting ended at 20.20.