

## TILEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 13 February 2024 in the Main Hall, Parish Office, Calcot

#### Present

**Parish Councillors:** Mr C Taylor (Chairman), Mrs T Downes, Mrs R Reynolds,  
Mrs S Vickers, Mr N Furlong-King, Ms J Stewart

**District Councillors:** Mr C Taylor, Ms J Stewart, Mr B Oloko

**Public:** Four members of the public were present

**In attendance:** Miss J Kirby, Berkshire Youth - presenting  
Miss J Major (Clerk), Miss S Williams (minutes)

Mr Taylor welcomed everyone present and explained that the meeting would be recorded for minute-taking purposes.

#### **24/001 Open Forum**

- a) Members of the public – there were no comments or questions
- b) Councillors – there were no comments or questions

**24/002 Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received from Parish Councillors Mrs R Braine and Mrs P Furlong-King, and District Councillors Ms J Lewis and Mr R Somner.

#### **24/003 Declarations of interest:**

Mrs Vickers declared an interest in respect of item 24/014-9 as she was a nominated Trustee of the Tilehurst People's Local Charity.

**24/004 Approval and adoption of minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12 December 2023:** The draft minutes had been circulated before the meeting. The minutes were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

**24/005 Matters arising:** There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**24/006 Berkshire Youth:** A presentation was given on the provision of youth services in the area by Berkshire Youth on behalf of the Parish Council, with Miss Kirby explaining activities carried out in 2023 and those planned for 2024.

*Miss Kirby left the meeting.*

**24/007 Co-option of a Councillor:** The candidate for potential co-option was unable to attend the meeting and had sent his apologies, so the co-option was postponed until the next meeting.

**24/008 Planning:**

- a) Decisions – see Appendix A
- b) New applications – see Appendix B
- c) Appeal – an appeal made against the decision to refuse planning permission at Cartwheel Cottage, 218 Long Lane, Tilehurst, had been dismissed.
- d) Eastern Area – the Clerk would advise if there was anything relevant on the agenda of the meeting on 6 March 2024 so that the parish could be represented

**24/009 District Councillors' report:** The report would be circulated after the meeting.

Ms Stewart said there would be a meeting to discuss the budget on 29 February. She went on to explain that, currently, the biggest issue in the area was flooding, and that officers had been very responsive to issues. She also reported that MMR vaccines were being encouraged as, although 95% of people had the first, there was a much lower uptake for the second vaccine. The landowners were clearing the old golf course on Pincent's Lane, and residents were very concerned at how much was being cut down and cleared.

Mr Taylor had met with representatives of Save Pincent's Hill, but the discussion had been more about footpaths than the clearance work. He said some residents were facing huge utility bills as a result of discrepancies with smart meters. The matter had been referred to Alok Sharma MP. He had attended the district parish conference and had also taken part in a WBC peer review which was carried out every five years.

**24/010 Clerk's report:** The report which had been circulated ahead of the meeting – see Appendix C. The Clerk confirmed that the £75,000 grant for the new equipment at Cotswold recreation ground had been received from WBC.

**24/011 Maintenance report:** A report had been circulated before the meeting and was noted. The Clerk explained that the report included work carried out by external contractors as well as by the maintenance officers.

**24/012 New equipment at Cotswold recreation ground:** Mrs Downes explained that the installation work had been completed on schedule despite some issues and bad weather. There had been a number of queries as to why there were no backboards on the hoops, and something would be put on the web site to explain that the marks and nets were for netball, not basketball. She noted that the new netball court at Cotswold was the only free-to-use netball court in the whole of Berkshire. It was hoped that a representative of the sport would attend the grand opening in the summer.

**24/013 Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP):** Mr Taylor gave an update explaining that the NDP should be ready for resubmission to WBC in the next few weeks.

**24/014 Resolutions**

**24/014-1 Hall hire cost for the Main Hall, Calcot:** A report had been circulated before the meeting.

It was unanimously agreed that the charges for hiring the Main Hall at Calcot should not be changed.

**24/014-2 Jubilee Annexe renovation work:** A report had been circulated before the meeting.

It was unanimously agreed that the retention should not be paid to the contractor and that, once all the reports (electrical, fire, etc) and any necessary quotes had been received, the situation would be reviewed and a decision would be made as to whether to take legal action.

*One member of the public left the meeting.*

**24/014-3 Proposed Greenham Trust application:** Mr Taylor gave some background as to a proposed application for £10,000 a year for three years to be made in support of youth provision in the parish. The Clerk explained that the wording in the application was almost ready but that there was still work to be done to clarify the financial aspects.

It was unanimously agreed that the application should be made when the Clerk was satisfied that the financial side was correct.

*Mr Oloko and one member of the public left the meeting.*

**24/014-4 Draft Biodiversity Policy:** The draft policy had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk explained that it was now a legal requirement for parish councils to have a Biodiversity policy.

It was unanimously agreed that the draft Biodiversity policy be adopted.

**24/014-5 Communications working group:** Ms Stewart gave some background.

- a) Ms Stewart was unanimously appointed leader of the Communications working group.
- b) The objectives of the Communications working group were unanimously agreed.
- c) It was unanimously agreed in principle that, subject to the adoption of a written policy, a Tilehurst Parish Council Facebook page should be set up.

**24/014-6 Barton Rovers Football Club:** It was unanimously agreed that Barton Rovers Football Club be allowed to use Turnhams Farm recreation ground (for parking) and changing rooms when it held its annual tournament on 13 and 14 July 2024, but that the club should be required to implement further restrictions to prevent inappropriate parking.

**24/014-7 Consultation on WBC 2024/25 budget:** The Clerk explained that as the schedule January meeting had been cancelled due to lack of quorum, comments on West Berkshire Council's "Balancing our Budgets for 2024/25" consultation had been agreed by e-mail in order to be submitted by the deadline.

The comments submitted were unanimously agreed and ratified.

**24/014-8 Standing Orders:** The amended Standing Orders had been circulated before the meeting, and the Clerk went through the proposed changes.

It was unanimously agreed to adopt the amended Standing Orders.

**24/014-9 Tilehurst People's Local Charity nominated trustee:** The Clerk said that no one had been found to nominate as a trustee of the charity. Mrs Vickers explained that, if no one was nominated, the charity would apply to the Charities Commission to remove the Parish Council as a nominating body so that it could co-opt new trustees. This would mean that, in future, the Parish Council would not be able to nominate any trustees.

It was unanimously agreed that the Parish Council did wish to remain a nominating body, and that the Clerk should write to the charity to explain the situation. It was hoped that when additional councillors had been co-opted it would be possible to nominate a trustee.

**24/015 To review the financial position and retrospectively note payments for December 2023 and January 2024:** The information had been circulated before the meeting and was noted.

**24/016 Chairman's remarks:** Mr Taylor thanked everyone for attending and said he hoped there would be two or possibly more co-options at the next meeting.

**The meeting finished at 9.40pm**

**The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 12 March 2024**

**Chairman**

## Appendix A – Decisions

23/01306/FUL	<u>150 Long Lane, Tilehurst</u> Demolition of existing house and erection of a pair of semi-detached 4-bedroomed houses with provision for access, parking and landscaping	<b>Granted</b>
23/02393/HOUSE	<u>37 Compton Avenue, Tilehurst</u> Section 73: Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) of previously approved application 22/01542/HOUSE: Part single part double storey rear extension, double store side extension. Garage will be removed and footprint reduced creating side access. Ground floor internal space creates a utility room and WC, new family room with kitchen diner formed to rear, entrance hall widened and porch has been added to the front elevation. First floor extension and reconfiguration to provide two new bedrooms and en suite.	<b>Granted</b>

## Appendix B – New Planning applications

*The meeting scheduled for 9 January did not have a quorum so was cancelled. Comments on the following three applications were agreed by e-mail and submitted to WBC using the Clerk's delegated authority.*

23/02840/ADV                    Stoneham Grove Care Home, Long Lane, Tilehurst  
Installation of 4x single-sided post-mounted directional signs, 1x set of individual letters

**This Council has no objections to the proposal**

23/02781/HOUSE                18 Conifer Drive, Tilehurst  
Extend only the garage forward by 1.3m of the principal elevation. The roof to be sloping from the base of the dormer window starting at the east end of the roof 8.5m to the west point of the front door where it will be supported by a brick pier. The tiles to be taken from the rear of the property to match the existing. The walls of the garage to match the existing house bricks

**This Council has no objections to the proposal**

23/02658/HOUSE                3 Barley Walk, Tilehurst  
Two storey rear extension, internal alterations and enclose existing porch area to front of property

**This Council has no objections to the proposal**

*New applications considered at the February meeting:*

23/02949/FUL                    Dacre, New Lane Hill, Tilehurst  
Demolish existing bungalow and garage and build three new dwellings (two of them two storeys and one bungalow) with garage

**This Council has no objections to the proposal but would like a better understanding of access to the site and individual property boundaries as these matters are not clear from the plans**

24/00162/HOUSE                60 Warley Rise, Tilehurst  
Loft conversion to create one bedroom and ensuite bathroom, consisting of two small pitched roof dormers to rear elevation and two rooflights to front elevation

**This Council has no objections to the proposal**

24/00196/HOUSE                67 Warborough Avenue, Tilehurst  
Single storey rear extension

**This Council has no objections to the proposal**

## Appendix C – Clerk’s report

### 1.0 Background

1.1 This report provides the Council with information about activities undertaken by the Clerk and other team members and gives updates on other matters of relevance to the Council.

### 2.0 Activity updates

2.1 The contractor appointed to carry out the work in the play area at Calcot recreation ground had been notified, and the order for equipment had been placed. The horse rocker had been ordered separately company with delivery in mid-February. It was intended that all the work would be carried out mid to late March, but dates were yet to be finalised.

2.2 The official opening of the new equipment at Cotswold recreation ground was attended by the Clerk, Mrs Downes, Mr Taylor, Janine Lewis (the WBC portfolio holder), and the contractor on Thursday 21 December 2023. A press release with pictures had been sent to the Reading Chronicle and Newbury Weekly News (the latter published it). An item with a link to the parish council’s web site was included in a WBC residents’ bulletin and on WBC’s web site. A bigger event to mark the occasion is planned for spring/summer when the weather should be better.

### 3.0 Audit and Finances

3.1 The Clerk had released a payment of £54,896.40 which represented a 30% interim payment for the MUGA project. The final invoice for £75,572.92 has now been received and verified and will be settled in due course. A report has been drafted and will be sent to West Berkshire Council requesting payment of the £75,000 funding awarded for this projected.

3.2 The Clerk attended the second Internal Control Audit with Mr Furlong-King. At this session the process for income and payments were examined. The full report will be presented at the March 2024 Full Council meeting, ahead of the final Internal Audit for 2023/24 being carried out.

3.3 On Tuesday 5 December 2023, the government confirmed that council tax referendum principles will not apply to parish and town councils for 2024/25 meaning there is no legal restriction on how much a parish or town council can raise its precept. In the report, the government added the usual caveat that it "*will review the decisions taken by [parish and town councils] when considering referendum principles in future years.*" The full announcement is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-finance-policy-statement-2024-to-2025/local-government-finance-policy-statement-2024-to-2025>

- 3.4 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities recently advised that the appropriate sum for section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for parish and town councils in England for 2024/25 is £10.81.

Section 137 funds enable parish and town councils to spend a limited amount of money, per elector, for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory power.

- 3.5 The Clerk submitted the parish's Precept Demand for 2024/25 to West Berkshire Council, ahead of the deadline of 31 January 2024.

#### 4.0 **Other matters**

- 4.1 Mrs Downes and the Clerk met with the newly appointed Activity and Wellbeing Manager for Everyone Active who have taken over running the Cotswold Sports Centre. At the meeting, Mrs Downes gave an update on Parish Council led initiatives and a discussion took place as to how Everyone Active can become involved in future projects, including resources they may be able to provide.

- 4.2 Mr Taylor and the Clerk attended the Licensing Committee Meeting. The Clerk represented the Parish Council and reiterated its objections to a recent application for a New Premises Licence.

- 4.3 Work has started on drafting the 2023-24 annual report to be issued in May. Any suggestions for content or for layout changes should be passed to the Clerk for consideration.

- 4.4 On Monday 22 January, a local problem (affecting RG1, RG8, RG30 and RG31) led to temporary loss of water supply to the office and halls in Calcot. The Clerk and her team arranged emergency water supplies in order that a hire could go ahead as planned, and to keep the office open.

- 4.5 The Clerk recently attended the Clerk and Officer's Update, organised on behalf of the Berkshire Association of Local Councils. At the meeting, a presentation was given on the impending changes to employment law, including increases to the national minimum wage and changes to flexible working legislation.

As part of a second presentation, it was confirmed that advice queries raised through the Hampshire Association of Local Councils, which they are unable fully to answer, are referred to the legal team at Hampshire County Council as member councils received an hour's free legal advice, per case, as part of the annual subscription fees.

- 4.6 The Clerk and Mr Taylor, who joined remotely, attended the West Berkshire District Parish Conference. The three topics of discussion were the recent flooding response, an Introduction to the new Council Strategy 2023-27 and the recent consultation on the Council Budget for 2024/25.



At the meeting town and parish councils were thanked for their recent feedback on the budget consultation. Attendees were advised that a high number of responses had been received, many of which contained several compelling arguments against the proposed cuts. As a result, West Berkshire Council had decided not to reduce the provision of dog waste and litter bins. However, as this service did need funding, it was likely that town and parish councils would be asked to contribute to it.

No further details were given but, as more information is released, this will be discussed at a future Full Council meeting.

4.7 The Clerk attended the two-day Practitioners' Conference.

5.0 **Further reports**

5.1 The Clerk will provide further updates at the meeting should this be necessary.

5.2 Members are asked to note this report.