

TILEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 12 March 2024 in the Main Hall, Parish Office, Calcot

Present

Parish Councillors: Mr C Taylor (Chairman), Mrs T Downes, Mrs R Reynolds, Mrs R Braine, Mrs S Vickers, Mr N Furlong-King and Mrs P Furlong-King

District Councillors: Mr C Taylor, Mr B Oloko

Public: Three members of the public were present

In attendance: 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.

24/017 Open Forum

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

24/018 Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from Parish and District Councillor Ms J Stewart, and District Councillor Janine Lewis.

24/019 Declarations of interest:

- Mr Taylor declared an interest in respect of item 24/031-6 as he had been a member of the management committee of Tilehurst Junior Youth Club and had made financial donations to the club.
- He also declared an interest in respect of item 24/031-5 as he had made financial donations to support Berkshire Youth
- Mrs Vickers declared an interest in respect of item 24/022 as she was a personal friend of Helen Manghnani, one of the candidates for possible co-option.

24/020 Approval and adoption of minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on

13 February 2024: The draft minutes had been circulated before the meeting. The minutes were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

24/021 Matters arising: Mr Taylor gave an update on progress of the Tilehurst Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), explaining that it should be ready to come back to the Parish Council in the next week.

24/022 Co-option of Councillors:

- a) Mr Taylor invited each of the three candidates for potential co-option to introduce themselves.
- b) It was resolved, without notice, to exclude the public and press. To resolve that, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, section 2(1) that the public and press be excluded and asked to withdraw for item 24/022 c) on the agenda.

- c) Members discussed each of the three candidates. It was unanimously agreed to co-opt Mr Robert Loaring (Tilehurst North Ward), Mr Femi Royal (Tilehurst North Ward) and Mrs Helen Manghnani (Tilehurst Central Ward) to the Council.
- d) The meeting was re-opened to the public and the Press and the Chairman advised the candidates that they had been co-opted.
- e) The new Parish Councillors signed Declarations of Acceptance of Office.

The three new councillors joined the meeting.

24/023 Planning:

- a) Decisions – no decisions had been received
- b) New applications – see Appendix A
- c) Eastern Area – the Clerk would advise if there was anything relevant on the agenda of the meeting on 10 April 2024 so that the parish could be represented

24/024 District Councillors' report: Mr Oloko said that he would send the monthly report to the Clerk after the meeting. He went through the report, highlighting various items of local interest.

He explained that the subscription charge for a green bin would be reduced by £3.00 per bin per year in the new financial year, which was a step towards making green bins free. Mr Taylor said he had been opposed to the decrease and had suggested it would be preferable to put the money (around £57,000 for the year) towards adult social care transport costs. Although there had been some support for the idea, the result of a vote was to reduce the subscription charge.

Mr Oloko said WBC was holding a soil conditioner giveaway on the weekend of 16/17 March.

There was an issue of car meets being held in Arlington Business Park in Theale. There had recently been a multi-stakeholder meeting involving the police to discuss possible ways of preventing the meets. Use of number plate recognition had been suggested and was being considered. The owners of the business park would also be involved.

Residents' views were being sought on the possible location of the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

Police recruitment had been successful, leading to an increase in numbers of police. The next issue was around retention.

Mr Taylor had attended an Eastern Area Planning meeting where the Four Corners traveller site had been discussed. Despite some opposition, the committee had voted in favour of the application.

Tilehurst Parish Council had been criticised on the Save Pincents Hill Facebook page recently. A statement had been issued on the page, and the situation had calmed considerably. Mr Taylor noted that the Parish Council had not been involved in any discussions about the nature or extent of the clearance work carried out, it was a matter for

West Berkshire Council. He also explained that the police were investigating possible damage to badger setts and would take any action necessary. Installation of the fencing had been planned for April but had been delayed.

The Clerk reported that Ms Lewis, who was not able to attend the meeting, had submitted a statement for the meeting. In it she confirmed that she had asked the Countryside Team at WBC to continue to be vigilant on all works at Pincents Hill and she had been assured that there were ongoing inspections of all trees felled. She had asked for specific intervention if the stock fencing is higher than 2 metres (planning permission not being required), if deer were unable to migrate safely around the estate, or badgers and hedgehogs were not able to move freely. She had also asked the team to ensure DEFRA guidelines for sheep grazing (such as access to water, shade and suitable grazing) were followed, and that the correct number of sheep per hectare were introduced and the requirement for daily sheep management (shepherd or ranger) was met.

24/025 Clerk's report: The report which had been circulated ahead of the meeting – see Appendix C.

The Clerk had nothing to add but explained that she had now received a quote for solar lighting at Cotswold recreation ground. She would circulate it after the meeting and it would be a matter for discussion at the next meeting.

Mr Oloko left the meeting.

24/026 Maintenance report: A report had been circulated before the meeting and was noted. The Clerk explained that the maintenance officers were currently working indoors as much as possible, but would return to outdoor tasks when the weather improved.

24/027 New equipment at Cotswold recreation ground: Mrs Downes gave some background for new councillors. She then explained that there had been a strong complaint from a local resident about noise levels from the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). She and the Clerk had met with a landscape architect to discuss possible solutions such as introducing trees/bushes or a 3-metre fence to act as soundproofing. A written report on the pros and cons of various options would be sent to the Clerk.

Mrs Downes said that Netball England had contacted the Clerk as the introduction of a new netball court was very rare and it would like permission to take photographs to encourage other councils to install courts. Unfortunately, it had then been discovered that the hoops were not suitable as netball nets. The installing contractor had been contacted and would discuss with the manufacturer how the situation could be rectified.

Everyone Active had been asked if could hold a key and ensure the gates to the MUGA were locked at night but did not have enough staff to help. Westwood Farm Community Association would be approached instead.

24/028 Internal Control Audit report for 2023/24: The Clerk explained the background, saying that the report did not cover the full year as Mr Furlong-King had taken on the role of Internal Control Auditor only part-way through the year. The report was noted.

24/029 Jubilee Annexe renovation work: A report had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk gave some background, explaining about the recent refurbishment and problems resulting from it.

The fire risk assessment had just been received but office staff had not had time to go through it thoroughly as yet. A report, similar to the one on the condition survey, would be put together and circulated each month as an update on progress with issues raised and actions required.

The electrical installation condition report (EICR) had not yet been received.

Mr Taylor asked if there had been any progress in resolving the problem of the lights flickering when the boiler was on. The Clerk said that various things had been investigated but the cause of the flickering was not yet clear.

Mr Taylor asked if the contractor who carried out the refurbishment was a member of a trade body which might be able to help with any dispute resolution. The Clerk explained that it was, and that the electrician used by them was registered with NIC, but they had shown no interest at all when approached.

24/030 Communications Working Group: Mrs Downes said that a social media policy had been drafted but needed more work. It would be presented at the next meeting.

24/031 Resolutions

24/031-1 Westwood Farm Community Association: A request for use of Cotswold recreation ground on Sunday 1 April had been circulated before the meeting. Clerk gave some background and explained that there had been an issue the previous year when the animals had been let out of pens and encouraged to go into the play area and onto the equipment.

It was unanimously agreed that Westwood Farm Community Association be allowed use of Cotswold recreation ground for its Easter farm event on Sunday 1 April 2024 with the usual conditions and with an added requirement that the animals be kept in their pens.

24/031-2 Westwood Wanderers Football Club: A request for use of Cotswold recreation ground on Saturday 13 July had been circulated before the meeting.

It was unanimously agreed that, with the usual conditions, Westwood Wanderers Football Club be allowed use of Cotswold recreation ground for its presentation day on Saturday 13 July 2024.

24/031-3 Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA): A request for use of Cotswold recreation ground on Saturday 17 August had been circulated before the meeting. This would be the second year MNDA had used the recreation ground for this purpose.

It was unanimously agreed that, with the usual conditions, MNDA be allowed use of Cotswold recreation ground for a fundraising event on Saturday 17 August 2024.

24/031-4 Financial Regulations: The draft document had been circulated before the meeting and the Clerk explained the changes made. The Clerk advised that she was aware that the Model Financial Regulations document was currently being redrafted and confirmed that it was likely that further changes would be needed in the next few months.

It was unanimously agreed that the updated Financial Regulations be adopted.

24/031-5 Youth Work Partnership Agreement: The agreement had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk explained that the figures were incorrect and some work was needed to tidy the document up but, if it was agreed in principle, Berkshire Youth would be able to advertise future sessions and continuity of service would be maintained. She believed the total for the Parish Council to pay Berkshire Youth under the agreement would be in the region of £21,000-£22,000 for 2024-25.

It was unanimously agreed in principle that the Parish Council would enter into a new agreement with Berkshire Youth to cover the 2024-25 financial year. The final document would be brought to the next meeting for approval.

24/031-6 Requests for financial donations: A report had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk explained, as expected, that a third request had been received. It was from Age UK Berkshire's Maintenance Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (MCST) group who ran sessions in the Main Hall and Jubilee Annexe at Calcot twice per month.

The Clerk also explained that Age UK Reading had asked for £1,500.00 but the total in the budget was only £1,000.00.

It was unanimously agreed that Tilehurst Junior Youth Club be awarded £500.00 to support the cost of activities and running the services.

It was unanimously agreed that Age UK Reading be awarded £1,000.00 to support its continued work, the donation to be made under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

It was unanimously agreed that Age UK Berkshire's MCST group be given a 20% discount on its hire of the Main Hall and Jubilee Annexe at Calcot during the 2024-25 financial year.

24/031-7 Governance and Risk Management Scheme: It was unanimously agreed to adopt the updated Risk Register which had been circulated before the meeting.

24/032 To review the financial position and retrospectively note payments for February 2024: The information had been circulated before the meeting and was noted.

24/033 Chairman's remarks: Mr Taylor thanked everyone for attending and welcomed the newly co-opted councillors, saying they should contact him or the Clerk if they had any questions.

24/034 Exclusion of public and Press: It was unanimously resolved that, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, pursuant to the Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, section 1(2), the public and Press are excluded and are asked to withdraw for the remaining item(s) on the agenda.

Miss Williams and Mrs Manghnani left the meeting.

PART II

24/035 Performance-related staff salary increases: A confidential report setting out the Staffing Committee's recommendations was tabled at the meeting. Following discussion, all Members agreed to accept the committee's recommendations, which are detailed separately and will be signed by the Chairman.

The meeting finished at 9.55pm

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 9 April 2024

Chairman

Appendix A – New Planning applications

- 24/00267/HOUSE 290 Overdown Road, Tilehurst
Rear single storey and two storey extensions together with first floor side extension and alterations
This Council has no objections to the proposal but supports the recommendations made by Highways
- 24/00251/HOUSE Meadowsweet, Beals Lane, Tilehurst
Rear, side and first floor extensions. Double garage
This Council has no objections to the proposal but notes that it will alter the street scene significantly
- 24/00145/FULMAJ Land bounded by Hoad Way, M4 and High Street Theale
Full planning application for the construction of two employment units for flexible uses within Class E (light industrial), B2 and/or B8 of the Use Classes Order (including ancillary office provision) with associated enabling works, access from Hoad Way, parking and landscaping
This Council objects to the proposal and supports the comments and points raised by Theale Parish Council
- 24/00263/FUL 351 The Meadway, Tilehurst
Erection of a replacement two-storey dwelling
This Council has no objections to the proposal
- 24/00324/HOUSE 46 Partridge Drive, Tilehurst
Proposed garage conversion and single storey side extension
This Council has no objections to the proposal
- 24/00326/HOUSE Pike Croft, Ridgemount Close, Tilehurst
Proposed single-storey side extension, front extension and internal remodelling. New render and windows
This Council has no objections to the proposal
- 24/00390/HOUSE 66 Cotswold Way, Tilehurst
Two storey side and single storey rear extension
This Council has no objections to the proposal
- 24/00440/HOUSE 181 City Road, Tilehurst
Two storey rear extension to form kitchen/dining/room. First floor bedroom and bathroom with side dormer
This Council has no objections to the proposal

24/00389/FULMAJ Stoneham Grove Care Home, Long Lane, Tilehurst
Section 73a: Variation of Conditions 1 (Approved Plans), 16 (Approved Landscaping) and 19 (External Lighting) of previously approved application 23/01660/FULMAJ: Section 73a: Variation of Condition 20 (Approved Plans) of previously approved application 21/01216/COMIND: Demolition of existing structures and erection of a 64-bed care home (Class C2) with associated works including one access, parking, services, and landscaping

This Council has no objections to the proposal

24/00386/LBC Pincent's Manor Hotel, Pincent's Lane, Tilehurst
Section 19: Variation of Condition 4 (Windows/Doors) of previously approved application 21/03218/LBC2: Convert the redundant former Pincent's Manor Hotel (Use Class C1) into 50 extra care (Use Class C2) apartments for the elderly with associated extensive communal facilities and landscaping. Works include demolition of the existing non-listed conference facility, hotel annexe and outbuildings

This Council has no objections to the proposal

24/00415/HOUSE 55 Blewbury Drive, Tilehurst
Single storey rear extension

This Council has no objections to the proposal

Appendix B – 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 visited site, and the horse rocker ordered separately had been delivered. Work was expected to start in the next week or so.
- 2.2 The Clerk and Facilities Assistant met with a local company specialising in solar lighting to seek advice and obtain a quotation for lighting which we hope to install along the footpath which runs alongside Downsway School. The Clerk will provide an update at the next Youth and Community Safety Working Group meeting.
- 2.3 Mr Taylor, Mrs Downes and the Clerk recently conducted two informal interviews with potential candidates for co-option on to the Council.

3.0 Audit and Finances

- 3.1 The Clerk and Mr Furlong-King carried out a further Internal Control Audit, ahead of the final Internal Audit which has been scheduled for 29 April 2024.

4.0 Other matters

- 4.1 The Clerk attended the SLCC Practitioners Conference in February. Sessions included How parish clerks can deliver the National Planning Policy Framework and Climate Change, Retaining Volunteers, Incident Planning, Lawyers, Law and Local Government, Procurement and much more.
- 4.2 The Clerk attended a brief Home Office webinar on Martyn’s Law. The session introduced the Standard Tier consultation, which is currently active. The consultation forms part of the draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill which sets out the requirements that, under Martyn’s Law, venues and other organisations will have to meet to ensure public safety.

The draft bill will be subject to pre-legislative scrutiny by the Home Affairs Select Committee, ahead of formal introduction and further details will be provided once released.

- 4.3 The Clerk attended the Society of Local Council Clerks Berkshire Branch Meeting. This session was the annual training day and contained presentations on both personal and community resilience.

The Community Resilience session was run by an officer from the West Berkshire Public Protection Partnership and contained updated details on aspects of emergency planning.

4.4 The Clerk and Assistant Maintenance Officer met a representative from the Parish's grass cutting contractors to discuss potential amendments to the contract for next year.

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.

