

TILEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 8 October 2024 in the Main Hall, Calcot

Present

Parish Councillors: Mr C Taylor (Chairman), Ms J Stewart, Mrs R Braine, Mrs S Vickers, Mrs R Reynolds and Mrs P Furlong-King

District Councillors: Mr C Taylor, Ms J Stewart

Public: Three members of the public were present

In attendance: Miss J Major (Clerk), Miss S Williams (minutes)

Mr Taylor opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present and explaining that the meeting would be recorded for minute-taking purposes.

24/103 Open Forum

a) Members of the public – one member of the public introduced herself and said she was considering joining the Parish Council.

b) Councillors – Mrs Furlong-King explained that she had arranged a meeting with Reading Busses to discuss the change of route of the number 15 bus. She had originally posted on social media as a parish councillor but understood from the Clerk that no councillor could formally represent Tilehurst Parish Council (which was the corporate body) without it being formally agreed and minuted, in advance, by Full Council. She felt the meeting should go ahead as planned but would make it clear that, although she was a parish councillor she was not representing the council at the meeting. She would seek and follow further guidance from the Clerk. The matter would be brought to the next meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that no individual councillor (including the Chairman) could speak on behalf of the Parish Council, or make any commitment or decision, unless they had formal permission to do so.

24/104 Apologies for absence: Apologies had been received from Parish Councillors Mr R Loaring, Mrs H Manghnani, Mr F Royal, Mr N Furlong-King, and District Councillor Mr B Oloko

The Clerk raised a motion to rearrange the agenda and move item 24/113-4 to Part 2 as there were confidential matters to be discussed. It was unanimously agreed to make the change and to exclude the public and press while the matter was discussed.

24/105 Declarations of interest: None relevant to the agenda

24/106 Approval and adoption of minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 10 September 2024: The draft minutes had been circulated before the meeting. The minutes were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

A member of the public arrived.

24/107 Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

24/108 Planning:

- a) Decisions – see Appendix A
- b) New applications – see Appendix B
- c) Eastern Area – the Clerk would advise if there was anything relevant on the agenda of the meeting on 9 October 2024 so that the parish could be represented.
- d) Local Plan Examination Hearing – Mr Taylor said that, on Thursday 12 September, there had been a public meeting to discuss Pincents Hill. There had been 40-50 attendees and an action plan had been agreed. Following the meeting, attendees had contacted the Planning Inspectorate to confirm they were against including Pincents Hill in the Local Plan. Three representatives (from Save Pincents Hill group, Olivia Bailey MP, and Mr Taylor) had been invited to attend the Local Plan Examination Hearing. Each had spoken and the Inspector was currently considering whether the various sites suggested should be included in the Local Plan. Should it be decided to include Pincents Hill, there would have to be a full public consultation.

24/109 District Councillors' report: Ms Stewart would circulate the report following the meeting. Francis Baily Primary School in Thatcham had set up a school streets scheme based on the one in Calcot. There had been positive feedback on the new zebra crossing on Royal Avenue. A new SEN was being built near Kennet Valley Primary School; it would cost £3 million and would be able to take 12 children. There had been a litter pick at Turnhams Farm the previous Saturday, and Ms Stewart hoped to extend the area covered next year. She was helping a few residents who had called her about various issues.

Mr Taylor said Nigel Lynn, the Chief Executive of WBC, had stood down for personal reasons. There would be an Extra Ordinary meeting in early November when a temporary replacement would be appointed. School clawbacks had been completely eliminated for the majority of schools. At the last WBC meeting, councillors had voted to increase their allowances. There had also been a motion by the Liberal Democrats to means test winter fuel payments.

Mr Taylor had joined the Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education (SACRE) as the minorities representative. He had also attended a Planning Advisory Group meeting, and he explained that the Neighbourhood Development Plan was still with WBC. He still had a steady flow of local cases, but hoped the problem of City Road flooding might be solved.

24/110 Clerk's report: The report had been circulated before the meeting – see Appendix C.

The Clerk said the second (and final) instalment of the precept had been received, this being £157,954.00. She had dealt with the insurance renewal – this was possible as, in 2023/24, Full Council had agreed to enter a three-year agreement and this was only the second year. A surveyor's assessment of each of the parish-owned properties would need to be carried out. This was a requirement and would cost around £700 per property. WBC had e-mailed earlier in the day to confirm that the CIL bid had been successful. The members' bid process had been delayed and might start on 1 November. If anyone had suggestion as to suitable capital projects (i.e. assets not services), they should advise the Clerk. The Clerk was meeting the accountant on Monday 14 October and would then be drafting the budget.

With regard to the building damage at Calcot, a structural surveyor had investigated and the report was expected imminently. Quotes would then be sought and submitted to the insurer for approval.

The Clerk had a quote for £1,657.17 to replace the damaged fencing at Turnhams Farm. As this work was deemed to be an emergency, the Clerk had delegated authority under Section 4.5 of the Financial Regulations to approve the work so that it could be carried out promptly.

A Freedom of Information request had been submitted to WBC in regard to the Cotswold Sports Centre recharge. The solicitor felt the information should be made available to the Parish Council but, despite the Clerk asking since April 2024, WBC had refused to provide any evidence to explain the recharge.

24/111 Monitoring and Evaluation report for Greenham Trust: The report had been circulated before the meeting and was noted. The Clerk explained that it had been very time-consuming to produce as Berkshire Youth had not been forthcoming with any information. Mr Taylor said the report was worth reading as it was a good summary of the various youth projects. He thanked the Admin Officer and the Clerk for producing the report.

24/112 Issues with renovation of Jubilee Annexe: The updated report had been circulated before the meeting and was noted. The Clerk explained that quite a bit of work had been carried out in the Jubilee Annexe recently and she felt that most of the regulatory issues raised had been addressed. At next month's meeting, there would need to be discussion about what next steps to take in regard to the original contractor.

Mr Taylor expressed concerns that the lights still flickered when the central heating was on. The Clerk said four independent electricians had looked into this but, so far, no solution had worked. It might be that alternative sources of heating or light would be required. If the lighting was replaced, it was likely the ceiling would have to be taken down, and there was no certainty this would fix the issue as all the components in LED lights are sourced from the same factory in China.

24/113 Resolutions

24/113-1 CIL Fund bid: The application had been circulated before the meeting. There had been a slight change following discussions at the last meeting. The application was unanimously accepted.

24/113-2 Acoustic survey and report: A report on progress had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk explained that, earlier that day, she and the Admin Officer had met with the Managing Director of the company which had carried out the survey. Following the meeting, a change had been made to the report to clarify the conclusions. The final report would be circulated.

It was agreed that any decision as to action to be taken should be deferred to the next meeting when everyone would have read the report.

24/113-3 Consultation on WBC's draft Waste Management Strategy: The draft strategy had been circulated before the meeting. It was felt that the overall quality of facilities and service needed to be greatly improved if additional recycling was to be encouraged. Recycling areas, such as the one at Cotswold recreation ground, were often left with rubbish and fly-tipping on the ground, even after the bins had been emptied. The containers provided for home recycling were not sufficient. Trilock, stacking boxes might be more suitable. There would be a knock-on effect on public bins if black bins were collected only every three weeks; there were already issues with people dumping their rubbish in recreation ground bins. Three-weekly rubbish collections might not be suitable for families, and they might need larger bins.

The Clerk would summarise the comments made and submit a response on behalf of the Parish Council.

24/113-4 WBC's proposal to redevelop the tennis courts at Cotswold Sports Centre: This item was discussed under Part 2, item 117.

24/113-5 Project list: The updated list had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk explained that this was councillors' opportunity to consider which projects they would like to include in the coming year's budget.

Mr Taylor raised the possibility of installing a skate park/pump track at Calcot recreation ground, and the Clerk advised that there were various issues in addition to covenants on the land, including drainage, and loss of football pitches and income from them. Mr Taylor wanted to have further work, including legal searches in regard to covenants at a cost of £500.00, carried out. This will be brought to the November meeting as a resolution.

24/113-6 2025/26 budget: A report had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk explained that this was councillors' opportunity to set their expectations, including maximum level of increase, for the following year's budget.

It was agreed that the points included in the report for discussion/resolution should all be accepted as suggested, except that the councillor training budget should be raised to £2,000, and the donations and free facility use budget should be set at £7,500.

It was agreed that there would be resolution at the next meeting to decide how much should be paid annually to West Farm Community Association for housing the Parish Council's CCTV equipment, and for providing the electricity to run it.

It was agreed that the Clerk should aim for an increase in the precept of no more than 5%.

24/114 Review of financial position and payments for September 2024: The information had been circulated before the meeting and was noted.

24/115 Chairman's remarks: Mr Taylor noted that quorum had only just been achieved, and said there were six potential candidates for co-option, two of whom had attended the meeting. It was hoped the interviews could be carried out in the next two or three weeks, so that additional councillors could be co-opted at the November meeting.

24/116 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 (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 section 1(2), the public and press were excluded and were asked to withdraw for item 24/117 on the agenda.

Two members of the public left the meeting.

24/117 WBC's proposal to redevelop the tennis courts at Cotswold Sports Centre: The Clerk gave some background and then explained that, earlier that afternoon, she had had a long conversation with the solicitor about the situation. There was concern that redeveloping the old tennis courts so that they could be hired out as an additional sports centre facility would be likely to create a nuisance for neighbouring properties, and this would constitute a further breach of the lease. As the landowner, Tilehurst Parish Council had a duty of care to local residents, and it would also have to deal with any complaints.

The solicitor's recommendation was to issue an S25 notice which would start the process on agreeing a new lease, allowing a six-month period for this to be completed. He also suggested writing a letter to express concerns at the possible further breach of the lease.

Councillors felt unable to make a decision without further information and asked that a meeting be set up with the solicitor.

As yet, there had been no response from WBC to the previous solicitor's letter issued.

The meeting finished at 10.00pm

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 12 November 2024

Chairman

Appendix A – Decisions

24/00263/FUL	<u>351 The Meadway, Tilehurst</u> Erection of a replacement two-storey dwelling	Granted
24/01162/CERTE	<u>218 Long Lane (Cartwheel Cottage), Tilehurst</u> Commencement of works in relation to planning application 20/00669/FULD. Tree protection in place. Excavation and laying in place drainage connection for new dwelling. Part excavation for foundations to new dwelling. (All prior to expiry date of 3 August 2023)	Refused
<p><i>Note: Tilehurst Parish Council was not consulted on this application</i></p> <p><i>Reason for refusal: The works outlined in the applicant's supporting statement and as seen during the officer site visit do not constitute a material operation as defined within section 56 of the Town and Country Planning Act. Nor do any of the works said to have been undertaken demonstrate a genuine intent to implement the planning permission.</i></p> <p><i>Furthermore pre-commencement condition 7, relating to surface water drainage, remains undischarged. This condition is considered to go to the heart of the permission. On the basis of all the information available it has not been demonstrated that works have lawfully commenced. For these reasons the certificate is refused</i></p>		
24/01336/HOUSE	<u>289 Overdown Road, Tilehurst</u> Proposed conversion of existing garage into study, cloakroom and storage with small front extension to existing porch and first floor small front bedroom creating a usable room. New lean-to roof over with skylight over cloakroom	Granted
24/01175/HOUSE	<u>137 Long Lane, Tilehurst</u> Proposed erection of detached single-storey annexe building	Granted
24/01235/HOUSE	<u>169 Long Lane, Tilehurst</u> Garage conversion, internal alterations and detached workshop	Granted
24/01605/PASSHE	<u>131 Langley Hill, Tilehurst</u> Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Demolition of existing extension and proposed single store rear extension Dimensions 8.00m beyond rear wall, 2.95m height, 2.85m eaves height	Required and Granted
<p><i>Note: Tilehurst Parish Council was not consulted on this application</i></p>		
24/01582/HOUSE	<u>Pike Croft, Ridgemount Close, Tilehurst</u> Proposed detached garage	Granted
24/01388/HOUSE	<u>198 Overdown Road, Tilehurst</u> Two storey side and single store rear extension	Granted

Appendix B – New Planning applications

24/01946/HOUSE 32 Fairway Avenue

Double storey side and rear extension and porch addition

This Council has no objections to the proposal but notes that parking issues need to be resolved and supports the comments made by Highways and by a neighbouring resident

24/01979/HOUSE 150 Long Lane

Proposed conversion of garage to habitable use with raising of roofs over garage and over stairwell to provide improved headroom, with a replacement porch

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 report received following the monitoring of the noise from the MUGA at the Cotswold recreation ground was very inconsistent in its findings. The contractor was contacted and asked to clarify several points.
- 2.2 Further remedial works in the Jubilee Annexe had been completed, and the report giving details of works required/carried out and associated costs had been updated. The Clerk continued to liaise with the solicitor on the best course of action in regard to work carried out by original contractors, and this advice and the report would be presented at the next Full Council Meeting scheduled for 12 November 2024.

3.0 Other matters

- 3.1 Confirmation had been received that Mrs Manghnani’s nomination as the parish’s Nominative Trustee had been accepted by the Tilehurst People’s Local Charity. The appointment would run until June 2028, at which time the Parish Council would need to confirm continuation or nominate another trustee.
- 3.2 Councillor training had been booked with several places having been reserved on the “Making Effective Planning Representations” session being held on 19 November.
- 3.3 The next West Berkshire District Parish Conference was scheduled for 6.30pm on Tuesday 29 October in the Council Chamber at West Berkshire Council’s Market Street offices. The agenda had been circulated to all members.
- 3.4 On 23 September 2024 a vehicle accidentally reversed into the Calcot Centre building, resulting in internal and external damage. Concern was raised over the structural integrity of the damaged wall and a structural engineer had been instructed.
- 3.5 In mid-September, a stolen car was driven into the fencing at Turnhams Farm recreation ground, and around six panels of fence were destroyed. The police put temporary barriers in place, but young people kept moving them leaving the recreation ground unsecured. The Clerk was looking into sourcing replacement fencing but it is proving difficult to match the existing panels. Fencing is not included on the Parish Council’s insurance cover.

3.6 The Annual General Meeting of the Berkshire Association of Local Councils would be held on Thursday 14 November 2024 at 7.30pm. Member councils had been asked to provide details of any resolution they wished to present in advance of the meeting.

4.0 **Audit and Finances**

4.1 An internal Control Audit took place on 30 September 2024. The focus of the session was payments being made, with invoices, bank statements and control documents being reviewed. Time was also spent reviewing the Internal Control Checklist to identify changes which could be made to enhance the scope of the control audits being conducted.

4.2 As previously discussed with members, a funding bid was recently submitted to West Berkshire Council under the current round of CIL Funding. The Clerk awaits confirmation of the outcome of this bid.

5.0 **Priorities for October 2024** – this item gives information on upcoming priorities of the Clerk and officers over the coming month(s).

5.1 Updating the facilities assistant job description and advertising the vacancy.

5.2 Writing required reports on use of grants received from Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Greenham Trust for youth work. Berkshire Youth was very slow in sending information on activities so this was proving time-consuming.

5.3 Continuing to carry out work highlighted in RoSPA reports.

5.4 Preparing the grass cutting and ground maintenance specifications ready to put the work out to tender. The contracts will again run for three years.

5.5 Continuing to progress corrective works in the Jubilee Annexe.

5.6 Starting to investigate the possibility of installing fire alarms at other halls.

5.7 Drafting of the annual budget for presentation to Full Council in November 2024.

5.8 Preparing for the 2024/25 Interim Internal Audit meeting.

6.0 **Further reports**

6.1 The Clerk will provide further updates at the meeting as necessary.

6.2 Members are asked to note this report.