

TILEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 11 March 2025 in the Main Hall, Calcot

Present

Parish Councillors: Mr C Taylor (Chairman), Ms J Stewart, Mrs C Basden, Mr A Linden, Mr R Loaring, Mr M Powers, Mrs P Furlong-King

District Councillors: Mr C Taylor, Ms J Stewart

Public: Seven members of the public

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

Mr Taylor welcomed those present and reminded everyone that the meeting would be recorded for minute-taking purposes. He explained to five members of the public that there was an open forum at the beginning of the meeting where they could speak, but they might prefer to wait until the planning application they were concerned about was discussed.

25/026 Open Forum

- a) Members of the public – there were no comments or questions
- b) Councillors – Mr Linden said he had attended the last WBC meeting in February to say some words in memory of Jo Naylor. He also said the current international situation was not very good and suggested it might worthwhile preparing some contingencies and contacting the Emergency Planning Manager. His suggestion was noted.

25/027 Apologies for absence: Apologies had been received from Parish Councillors Mr N Furlong-King, Mrs S Vickers, Mrs R Reynolds, Mr F Royal, Mrs H Manghnani, Mrs R Braine, Mr J Lally, and District Councillors Ms Janine Lewis and Mr R Somner

25/028 Declarations of interest:

- Ms Stewart declared an interest in respect of resolution 25/041-1 as she worked for a charity, although she didn't believe she knew anyone who had applied for a financial donation so felt she would be able to vote
- Mr Powers declared an interest in item 25/037 as, in his professional capacity, he had some involvement in the number 15 bus issue
- Mr Taylor declared an interest in respect of resolution 25/041-1 as he had been chairman of Tilehurst Junior Youth Club for some ten to 15 years

25/029 Approval and adoption of minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11 February 2025: The draft minutes had been circulated before the meeting. The minutes were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

25/030 Matters arising: There were no matters arising

25/031 Planning:

- a) Decisions – see Appendix A
- b) New applications – see Appendix B

Five members of the public left the meeting once the first application had been discussed.

- c) Planning appeals – appeal APP/W0340/D/25/3360555 had been made against the refusal of application 24/01672/HOUSE Crevan, Beals Lane, Tilehurst. As it had been made under the Householder Appeals Service, there would be no opportunity for any further comments to be submitted
- d) Eastern Area – the Clerk would advise if there was anything relevant on the agenda of the meeting on 9 April 2025 so that the parish could be represented.

25/032 District Councillors’ report: Ms Stewart had submitted a written report before the meeting – see Appendix C – she drew particular attention to the litter picking item.

Mr Taylor would submit a written report as soon as possible after the meeting – see Appendix D.

25/033 Clerk’s report: The report had been circulated before the meeting – see Appendix E.

In regard to 4.4 of the report, the Clerk was concerned at having not yet had a request from Westwood Farm Community Association for permission to hold its Easter Farm event. Should a request be received, it would be circulated and agreed by e-mail.

The Clerk had, on the day of the meeting, been told by the legal advisor that WBC had only just confirmed receipt of the S25 Notice issued on 4 December 2024. A meeting to discuss the leases with WBC had been arranged for Thursday 27 March. It was essential that the working group meet before then to review the situation.

25/034 New Big Rig and outdoor gym equipment at Calcot recreation ground: A report had been circulated before the meeting and, after discussion, was noted. The Clerk confirmed that the match funding from WBC had been received.

25/035 Updated project list: The updated list with changes marked up was circulated before the meeting and, after discussion, was noted.

25/036 Tree surveys: The reports had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk explained that the most urgent work had already been carried out. The contractor had also provided costings for priority 1 and 2 work. Having increased the budget over the past few years, funds were in place to carry out all the work except that in the churchyard, but there was an earmarked reserve to cover that. A more detailed report would be brought to the meeting in the next month or two.

25/037 Changes to the number 15 bus route: A report had been circulated before the meeting. Mrs Furlong-King explained that she had had a very positive meeting with Olivia Bailey MP who had already written to Robert Williams, CEO of Reading Buses, and also distributed a survey to residents.

Mrs Furlong-King was meeting with RBC Councillor John Ennis later in the week.

If nothing progressed following contact with Robert Williams and Councillor Ennis, Mrs Furlong-King would contact Heidi Alexander.

25/038 Berkshire Youth: A report on youth work carried out by Berkshire Youth was circulated before the meeting. The Clerk explained that, following a reminder from Mr Taylor, Berkshire Youth had just sent a proposal for work to be carried out in 2025/26. The document was, however, sent back immediately with a number of queries and issues so it was not yet ready to be considered by the Parish Council.

After lengthy discussion, it was agreed that some changes be made to the report presented to the meeting to make it suitable for sharing publicly.

It was agreed that Sarah Emery, CEO of Berkshire Youth, would be invited to attend the next meeting to respond to queries and to address some of the ongoing issues. She would be reminded of the issues still outstanding.

It was agreed that members of the Youth and Community Safety working group should be invited to become the Parish Council's named contact with Berkshire Youth. If none wished to take up the opportunity, it would be opened to other councillors.

25/039 West Berkshire Council's 2025/26 budgets: Ms Stewart explained that there were specific criteria as to how the £16 million Emergency Financial Support funds could be used. Devolution of services from WBC to parishes would continue. Mr Taylor said there had been proposals that WBC save money by pausing or terminating the introduction of some IT initiatives, particularly if it was going to merge with neighbouring authorities, but the proposals had been defeated.

It was also confirmed that, following public consultation, streetlights would be dimmed rather than turned off at night, and Downlands Sports Centre would remain open.

25/040 West Berkshire Council's day care provision, specifically at Greenfield House Resource Centre: Ms Stewart had been told it was substantially more expensive for WBC to run the day care centres than for third parties to run them. There was no statutory obligation for WBC to run day services, but it did have to ensure the needs of those using the services were met. Options being considered were to transfer day care services to another provider, to move to different premises, or to close the centres. It could take up to a year for a final decision to be made.

25/041 Resolutions

25/041-1 Financial donations: A report and the requests for financial donations had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk said that an additional request had been received, so there were six in total and explained that the expenditure on a donation had to be commensurate with the benefit to the parish.

It was unanimously agreed that Tilehurst Junior Youth Club be awarded £500.00 to support the cost of activities and running the services delivered, the donation to be made under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

It was unanimously agreed that Age UK Berkshire's MCST group be given a 20% on its hire of the Main Hall and Jubilee Annexe at Calcot during the 2025-26 financial year, the subsidy to be funded under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

It was unanimously agreed that Reading Welfare Rights be awarded £500.00 to expand its services in Tilehurst, the donation to be made under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

It was agreed that Berkshire MS Therapy Centre be awarded £500.00 to support the provision of specialist treatments for people with MS, the donation to be made under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

It was agreed that Carebus be awarded £500.00 to support the service already offered to residents, the donation to be made under s.26-29 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

It was unanimously agreed that Age UK Reading be awarded £1,000.00 to enable more support to be offered to older residents in Tilehurst Parish, the donation to be made under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Parish Council was aware that making the above donations meant going £1,000.00 over budget.

Mrs Furlong-King left the meeting.

25/041-2 Grounds maintenance contract: A report had been circulated before the meeting.

It was unanimously agreed to award the grounds maintenance contract from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2028 to Contractor A, Scofell Landscapes Limited, at a cost of £12,649.92 (twelve thousand, six hundred and forty nine pounds and ninety two pence) plus VAT.

25/041-3 Resurfacing work at Cotswold recreation ground: A report had been circulated before the meeting.

It was unanimously agreed to award the contract to resurface around the play equipment at Cotswold recreation ground to Contractor B, Abacus Playgrounds, at a cost of £57,876.99 (fifty seven thousand, eight hundred and seventy six pounds and ninety nine pence) plus VAT.

25/041-4 Communications working group: As time was short and so few councillors were present, it was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

25/041-5 Financial Regulations: The updated Financial Regulations had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk explained that there were no legislative changes, but the Financial Regulations had been updated against the model document. Some additional sections which had been in the previous version of the document, for example to cover the situation around travellers, had also been included.

It was unanimously agreed to adopt the updated Financial Regulations.

25/041-6 Governance and Risk Management Scheme: The updated document had been circulated before the meeting. The Clerk explained that there were not many changes but it would be looked through more thoroughly after the audit had been completed.

It was unanimously agreed to adopt the updated Governance and Risk Management Scheme.

25/042 Review of financial position and payments for February 2025: The information had been circulated before the meeting and was noted.

25/043 Chairman's remarks: Mr Taylor reminded everyone that the social event had been arranged for just before the next meeting.

The meeting finished at 10.00pm

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 8 April 2025

Chairman

Appendix A – Decisions

24/02756/FUL	<u>Unit 1, Pincents Kiln Industrial Park, Calcot</u> Replacement of existing external condenser units, installation of new VRV unit and other associated works	Granted
24/02616/HOUSE	<u>25 Compton Avenue, Tilehurst</u> Garden room	Granted
24/02665/FUL	<u>2 The Colonnade, Overdown Road, Tilehurst</u> Change of use from veterinary surgery (Use Class E) to nail and beauty salon (Sui Generis)	Granted
24/02612/HOUSE	<u>13 Foxcombe Drive, Tilehurst</u> Two storey side extension	Granted
24/02802/HOUSE and 24/02803/LBC	<u>7 Calcot Court, East Drive, Calcot</u> Replacement of no.4 external doors located on the south and east elevations	Granted
24/02231/FUL	<u>9 Clay Close, Tilehurst</u> Existing double garage approved under planning application number 21/02703/HOUSE on 29 December 2021 to convert into a granny annexe with a single storey pitched roof front extension. New proposal to convert into a new detached bungalow with flat roof rear extension	Refused
25/00084/PASSHE	<u>42 Gatcombe Close, Calcot</u> Prior approval required and granted Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Proposed single storey rear extension. Dimensions 4.36m beyond rear wall, 2.83m height, 2.80m eaves height	
24/00863/FUL	<u>Unit 1, Savacentre, Bath Road, Calcot</u> Change of use of Unit 1 to allow unrestricted use within Class E(a) including the sale of both non-food and food and drink products	Granted
25/00059/HOUSE	<u>20 Foxcombe Drive, Tilehurst</u> Removal of existing garage and construction of single storey side extension. Construction of new porch with WC	Granted
25/00069/CERTP	<u>16 Lucey Close, Tilehurst</u> Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for a Proposed Development: Loft conversion consisting of pitched roof dormer to rear elevation and two rooflights to front elevation to form on habitable room with en suite bathroom	Refused

Appendix B – New Planning applications

- 25/00140/FUL Land adjacent to Linnet Close, Tilehurst
Erection of 4no. residential dwellings comprising 4 x 2-bedroom semi-detached houses including 2no. parking spaces per dwelling and private gardens. Creation of new vehicular access from City Road. Provision of accessible green space to rear of site
- This Council objects to the proposal because: vehicle access to the proposed new properties would have poor visibility and would be close to a very busy bus stop; the proposed new properties would overlook neighbouring properties; there are issues with drainage and sewage systems which would be exacerbated by adding four new properties; the potential for flooding would be increased; traffic congestion on City Road would be worsened, particularly at school drop-off and pick-up times; there is concern at the decreased number of parking spaces at the neighbouring property; the existing, long-term green space would be lost, displacing wildlife; and the proposed smaller green space would be likely to increase incidents of antisocial behaviour.**
- 25/00242/HOUSE 24 The Birchwoods, Tilehurst
Front and rear extension including pitched roof
- This Council has no objections to the proposal**
- 25/00266/HOUSE 1 Maybough Cottage, Dark Lane, Tilehurst
Single storey rear extension
- This Council has no objections to the proposal**
- 25/00272/HOUSE 14 The Ridings, Tilehurst
Single storey rear extension and conversion of garage to habitable room
- This Council has no objections to the proposal**
- 25/00311/HOUSE 26 Compton Avenue, Tilehurst
Single storey rear extension and front porch extension with associated changes to fenestrations
- This Council objects to the proposal as the potential need for an additional parking space needs to be investigated**
- 25/00299/HOUSE 9 Cowslip Close, Tilehurst
Proposed single storey front extension and rear rooflight
- This Council has no objections to the proposal**
- 25/00374/HOUSE 1 Yew Tree Rise, Calcot
Proposed single storey rear and side extensions
- This Council has no objections to the proposal**

Appendix C – Ms J Stewart's District Councillor's report

District Council – met on 27 February to discuss: Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025/26-2028/29; Investment and Borrowing Strategy Financial Year 2025/26; Capital Strategy - Financial Years 2025/26-2028/29; and Revenue Budget: 2025/26. Papers and a recording of the meeting can be found on WBC's web site. The next meeting is on 27 March.

Executive – met on 13 February to discuss the above and: Capital Financing Report Financial Year 2024/25 Quarter Three; 2024/25 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Three; Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation; Companion Bus Passes; Response to the Scrutiny Commission Task and Finish Group Report on Covid and Recovery; Carers Strategy 2025-2028; Bespoke Full-Time Educational Provision for Pupils with SEMH needs who have EHC Plans (13-19 years). Papers and a recording of the meeting can be found on WBC's web site. The next meeting is on 3 April.

Budget

Budget Passed for the next year

WBC's spending plans for 2025/26 have been unveiled setting out how £187m will be spent delivering services across the district and £73m on capital projects.

The plans contain a range of commitments focussing on the delivery of core infrastructure across the district, enhancing schools and other education facilities and developing provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Capital Budget

A £73m capital programme will see projects delivered across the district, including:

- £18.6m delivering a new solar farm at Grazeley
- Improvements to local roads and pavements
- Improvements to local schools
- £2.4m on a nutrient neutrality programme to develop and deliver projects to reduce the nutrients entering the River Lambourn
- £50,000 to provide real-time passenger information and other public transport infrastructure

Exceptional Financial Support Requested

WBC was successful in its request for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS). In January, a letter was sent to the government requesting an emergency bailout of £16m, with the budget papers showing it urgently needs support or it will need to issue an s114 notice, the Council equivalent of bankruptcy. The Exceptional Financial Support will be allocated to the Council's year end 2024/25 general reserve fund and to support the 2025/26 budget.

Local Government Reorganisation

West Berkshire considers options for a new unitary authority

WBC is in discussion with neighbouring local authorities about on the future of councils in the area. It follows a government announcement in December that two-tier councils (county and district) will be abolished and replaced by unitary authorities. It will also look for unitary authorities to provide services for a population of around 500,000 people. With WBC - already a unitary authority - covering around 170,000 residents, the government will be looking for it to join with other councils.

Councillors and council officers are currently in discussion with South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, and the other five Berkshire unitary authorities, to look at options to deliver local government reorganisation. These discussions include the possibility of a new unitary council

combining West Berkshire, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, and exploring options for unitary councils within the county of Berkshire.

Initial proposals must be submitted by 21 March with final plans required by 28 November 2025.

Leisure and Culture

New play equipment for Calcot

A new free-to-use Big Rig, cardio combo and resistance shoulder press has been installed by Tilehurst Parish Council at the recreation ground in Calcot.

The equipment, which cost around £20,000, was paid for in part by WBC's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Fund – a charge paid by developers which goes towards local infrastructure. It was match funded by Tilehurst Parish Council.

Similar equipment installed at Turnham's Farm recreation ground in 2023 has been well used by a wide range of ages and abilities - and has prompted similar equipment to be installed at Calcot.

Community

Fire and rescue service recruiting for summer internship

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is accepting applications from young residents to join its Summer Internship Scheme. The scheme aims to encourage 18-year-olds from backgrounds underrepresented in RBFRS to explore some of the roles available. Each intern will have the opportunity to gain valuable work experience and transferable skills. During the scheme, interns will participate in learning and development workshops, as well as visiting several fire stations across Berkshire. RBFRS is looking for four interns for five weeks in the summer, from Thursday 4 July to Friday 9 August. Each successful applicant will be paid an hourly wage of £10.66.

Fire and Rescue Service safe and well visits

RBFRS wants to check on people who may struggle to get out of their home in an emergency.

When a smoke alarm goes off, most – but not all – people can get out of their homes and call 999. Anyone who doesn't have an alarm or unable to react or evacuate should visit the RBFRS website. Residents can also call the freephone 0800 587 6679 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, or use the answerphone outside of these times.

Community groups invited to apply for crime prevention funding

Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Matthew Barber, has opened the first round of this year's Community Fund, with a particular focus on supporting projects that tackle anti-social behaviour and vehicle crime. Community groups are invited to apply for a share of £200,000. The Community Fund, jointly managed by the PCC and Chief Constable at Thames Valley Police, helps prevent crime and keep communities safe. The scheme is funded from proceeds of selling seized items which cannot be returned to their rightful owners. The closing date for this round of applications is 12pm (noon) on Monday 24 February.

Parish Matters

Litter Picking

WBC has offered to purchase one adult and one children's litter picking kit (10 sets in each) which can be used by Tilehurst Litter Pickers and Tilehurst Parish Council.

Next litter pick is on Saturday 5 April between 10.00am and 12.00pm at Turnhams Farm Hall.

Appendix D – Mr C Taylor's District Councillor's report

The main business of the past month was WBC's 2025/26 budget meeting when the capital and revenue budgets were approved and all amendments failed. I seconded a minority group amendment which sought to reduce capital expenditure by £2 million largely from IT projects which might never be implemented in light of forthcoming local government reorganisation and to transfer the savings to the strained revenue budget

I supported the Minority Group amendment to remove the proposal to review the three Social Care Day centres from the revenue budget (a similar amendment was tabled by the Conservative Group to which Cllr Joanne Stewart made an excellent speech)

I tabled a motion to urge the £400,000 allocated to start rebuilding the Calcot Schools to actually proceed after several years' delay, The motion was not allowed as it did not seek to change the budget but I decided to speak during the debate just on this subject. Council Leader Jeff Brooks later stated that this was "on his radar", that he would visit the school and that the project would get underway. I will be monitoring progress very closely.

I attended Eastern Area Planning where two controversial planning applications were discussed. I voted in favour of the planning application for an Advanced Conversion and Recovery facility using a process called Pyrolysis near Theale. There had been two objections on safety grounds. Though now approved, this application has been called in by the Secretary of State for review so the decision could be overturned. Since the planning meeting and the publicity it generated I have received number of emails about this.

I attended meetings of the Children's Mental Health Task Force and the Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education.

I held an initial meeting with WBC planning officers to review the situation in regard to the Tilehurst Neighbourhood Plan. I expect a written response from them covering the points raised in the letter from the NDP's ex Chairman

I attended a review meeting with Springfield School, Cllr Stewart and WBC officers to discuss the safer schools scheme planned for roads near the school. I will be chairing a public meeting at the school to discuss the proposals on 18 March

Cllr Stewart and I have actively pursued clearance of the fly tipping at the garages at Garston Crescent, Calcot. The area has now been fenced off as asbestos sheets appeared to be present. WBC has the landowner's agreement to clear the site though they had missed an earlier deadline. WBC officers have further assured me they will clear the site if the landowner fails to do so. Many residents in this area have contacted me about this.

I had a fairly productive meeting with a Deliveroo Complaints Manager arranged through Olivia Bailey MP following many instance of illegal deliveries being made via footways on the Yew Tree Rise Estate. It had appeared to improve but a new incident with photo evidence has just been reported. I was also able to raise this with Neighbourhood Police at a drop in session at the Stonehams Care Home which was primarily about illegal scooters and bikes around the area

I have opened a new case concerning the street light failures in Hilden's Drive and Longworth Avenue which has been ongoing for some weeks now. The target fix date has passed and I am contacting the contractors directly about this as WBC doesn't seem to have the resource to do so

Appendix E – Clerk’s report

1.0 Background

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

2.0 Activity updates

2.1 The Big Rig and new outdoor gym equipment had been installed at the Calcot recreation ground. Part-funded from the Community Infrastructure Levy scheme, and match-funded by the Parish Council, this offers free-to-use equipment for local residents. A report on the work was sent to West Berkshire Council on completion and the agreed funding of £10,478.50 has now been received. A press release was put on the Parish Council's web site and also submitted to the West Berkshire Residents' Bulletin, Newbury Weekly News, and Reading Chronicle (only the Reading Chronicle did not publish it).

2.2 Notification was received confirming that both Members’ Bid applications submitted have been successful. This means that £6.5K has been awarded for the installation of a disability gate and associated access at Turnhams Farm recreation ground and £10K towards replacement safety flooring in the children’s play area and around play equipment at Cotswold recreation ground.

2.3 The Licence for Alterations in relation to the proposed refurbishment of the disused tennis courts at Cotswold recreation ground had been finalised and signed.

2.4 For the second year running, from Monday 3 March to Monday 31 March the parish office is being used as a collection point for a free roll of compostable food waste caddy liners. This is proving very popular, with 15 to 20 people requesting them on the first day.

3.0 Audit and Financial

3.1 Mrs Manghnani and the Clerk are due to meet on Monday 31 March 2025 to conduct their first Internal Control Audit session. The session will focus on the Council’s Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and Audit arrangements.

4.0 Other matters

4.1 The Clerk attended the first Stoneham Grove Community Engagement event organised by Thames Valley Police. The aim of the session was to encourage residents to meet to discuss issues in and around the local area. It is hoped to run the sessions monthly, with the next being on Monday 10 March 2025.

4.2 The Clerk renewed the Parish Council's CPRE membership for a further year at a cost of £60.00.

- 4.3 The office has received complaints about lack of hot water or reduced water pressure to the changing room showers at Cotswold Sports Centre. The matter has been referred to West Berkshire Council for action.
- 4.4 The Westwood Farm Community Association has, for the past few years, organised an Easter Farm as part of its programme of community events. As the Cotswold recreation ground is used to host the event, permission has usually been sought and given by now. No request has been received as yet, but the Clerk anticipates one.
- 5.0 **Priorities for April 2025** – this item gives information on upcoming priorities of the Clerk and officers over the coming month(s).
- 5.1 Collating information for a final report to Greenham Trust on how funding received had been used for youth work in the parish. Berkshire Youth is still very slow to send information and no updates at all have been received for some weeks.
- 5.2 Progressing corrective works in the Jubilee Annexe.
- 5.3 Arranging Staffing Committee meeting to agree the facilities assistant job description before advertising the vacancy.
- 5.4 Progressing remedial work to the external wall of the Main Hall kitchen.
- 5.5 Investigating the possibility of installing fire alarms at other halls. Fire risk assessments (FRAs) are being arranged.
- 5.6 Updating the asset register.
- 5.7 Obtaining costings from Berkshire Youth for a 2025-26 Partnership Agreement. No information at all has yet been received.
- 5.8 Collating documentation required as part of the Risk management Process.
- 5.9 Obtaining quotations for electrical inspections of all halls.
- 5.10 Obtaining quotations for full legionella inspections to be carried out at all halls
- 5.11 Reviewing Leases for the Cotswold Sports Centre, car park and tennis courts.
- 5.12 Reviewing the supplemental agreement, which forms the basis of the Parish's contribution towards the running and maintenance of the Cotswold Sports Centre.
- 5.13 Preparing for financial year end closedown.
- 5.14 Preparing for the Final Internal Audit Inspection.

5.15 Drafting the Annual Report.

5.16 Preparing for the Annual Full Council Meeting, including the elections of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council.

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.