

TILEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 6 June 2019 in the Committee Room, Parish Office, Calcot (rescheduled following adjournment of Annual Meeting on 14 May 2019)

Present:

Councillors - Mr K Page (Chair), Mrs R Braine, Mr T Marino,
Mrs M Murnane, Mrs R Reynolds, Mr C Taylor

District Councillors - Mr T Marino, Miss J Stewart

Members of public - None present

19/079 Election of Parish Council Chairman – Mrs Reynolds proposed and Mr Marino seconded that Mr Page be re-elected as Council Chairman. There were no other nominations and members unanimously agreed to the proposal. Mr Page accepted the position, and signed the acceptance of office as Council Chairman, which was witnessed by the Clerk.

19/080 Election of Parish Council Vice-Chairman – Mr Marino proposed and Mrs Reynolds seconded that Mr Taylor be elected as Vice-Chairman. There were no other nominations and members unanimously agreed to the proposal. Mr Taylor accepted the position and signed the acceptance of office as Council Vice-Chairman, which was witnessed by the Clerk.

19/081 Co-option of a new Council member: Mr Page proposed that Mr Luis Marino should be co-opted as a member of the parish council. This was seconded by Mr Taylor, with all members in agreement. Mr Marino signed the acceptance of office which was witnessed by the Clerk, and was given a copy of the Register of Interests, which needs to be completed within 28 days. Mr Marino joined other members for the remainder of the Meeting.

19/082 Open Forum:

- a) Members of the public – There were no members of the public present.
- b) Councillors – Mr Taylor pointed out that there are several trees overhanging the footpath leading from Starlings Drive to the Calcot Centre. The Clerk advised that these trees are in Withy Copse which is owned by West Berkshire Council, who have already been advised. However, no response has yet been received and the Clerk will chase it up.

19/083 Apologies for absence: Apologies for absence have been received from District Councillors R Jones, T Linden, R Somner and A Williamson.

19/084 Declarations of Interest relevant to the Agenda: Mr Page declared an interest in planning application 19/00884/FUL – 7 The Colonnade, Overdown Road, Tilehurst.

19/085 Approval and Adoption of Minutes: The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 9 April 2019, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

19/086 Matters arising from the Minutes: There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

19/087 Clerk's Report: There was nothing to report.

19/088 Planning:

- a) Appeals - An appeal has been made against the decision of West Berkshire Council to refuse planning permission for application ref 18/02681 – land north of 17 Hugh Fraser Drive. As this Council did not object to the application, there is no necessity to write to the Secretary of State, although our previous comments to WBC will be forwarded by them.
 - 18/01365/HOUSE – 6 Hillview Close. The appeal against the decision by West Berkshire Council to refuse planning permission has been allowed.
- b) Decisions - See Appendix A
- c) New applications - See Appendix B
- d) Eastern Area - The Clerk will advise Members if there is anything relevant to the parish on the Agenda for the Eastern Area Planning Committee on the 26 June, in order that the parish can be represented.

19/089 District Councillors' Reports:

- a) Mr T Marino advised that following the recent elections, Lynne Doherty is now the new Leader of West Berkshire Council.
- b) Ms Stewart advised that the first meeting of the new Council following the elections was challenging, with a different mix of politics. A Climate Emergency Petition has been received by West Berkshire Council. Discussion on this has been deferred to the next Full Council Meeting on 2 July in order that the recently formed cross-party working group can discuss the wording and amend before adopting.

19/090 Regular payments: Members confirmed that the following can continue to be paid by direct debit and bacs –

- a) Salaries, pension scheme and PAYE: Staff, Berkshire Pension Fund, NEST Pension Fund and HM Revenue & Benefits - all monthly
- b) Non-domestic rates to West Berkshire Council: Ten monthly direct debits
- c) Zen Internet Ltd: Internet/telephone supplier – monthly direct debit
- d) Lloyds TSB credit card: Monthly, full settlement by direct debit
- e) PHS Hygiene contract: Quarterly direct debit covering three sites, and annual Duty of Care covering three sites.

- f) Moorepay: Monthly direct debit for payroll preparation services
- g) Grenke Leasing Ltd: Quarterly direct debit for printer/photocopier

19/091 Representation on outside bodies: The following representation is to continue as at present –

The Vision	- Mrs Reynolds
Carebus	- Mrs Reynolds
Tilehurst Pools Land Charity	- Mr Lovegrove *
Community Alcohol Partnership	- Mrs Braine

Mrs Braine will also continue to liaise with Denefield School on the parish's behalf

*Note: Although Mr Lovegrove is no longer a parish councillor, he has indicated that he would be willing to remain on the Committee. The Clerk will contact the Tilehurst Pools to ascertain if this is permitted under their Constitution, bearing in mind that Mr Lovegrove is no longer a councillor.

19/092 Renewal of BALC subscription: The annual subscription for membership of the Berkshire Association of Local Councils has been increased from £2020.66 in 2018/19 to £2094.70 in 2019/20. This figure also includes an amount for membership of NALC (National Association of Local Councils). Since late 2018 it would appear that BALC now exists in name only, with all services being provided by HALC (Hampshire Association of Local Councils). This Council has not yet had sight of the Agreement made with HALC which should have been sent before the subscription is renewed.

The Clerk has concerns that the service received so far from HALC is not up to the standard of that received previously from BALC, but without renewing the subscription this Council would no longer have access to NALC. This would be a loss as invaluable information and advice has been obtained from them over the past year.

Members agreed to defer a decision until the Clerk has attended an SLCC meeting on the 12 June, at which BALC will be discussed.

19/093 Expenditure of CIL monies: Members discussed possible projects which have been previously identified, to be carried out using CIL monies, as follows -

- Resurfacing of the car park at Turnhams Farm Hall. This had to be delayed because the parish became aware that the shared entrance with WBC would be used during the rebuilding at Little Heath School. As we were hoping to have the car park and the entrance resurfaced at the same time, this had to be put on hold.
- New front doors at Turnhams Farm Hall.
- New flooring in the foyer at Turnhams Farm Hall.
- Resurfacing and partial refurbishment of the play area at Cotswold recreation ground.
- Redecoration of the Calcot Centre, hall, foyer and office.
- New flooring in front office at the Calcot Centre.
- Replace kitchen worktops at the Cornwell Centre.
- Redecoration of the Cornwell Centre.

- New fence at the Cornwell Centre to stop footballs being kicked against the side of the building.
- New footpath down the side of recreation ground at the Cornwell Centre.
- New trees at the Cornwell Centre in the area between the building and the new housing.
- Replace the existing stile with an inhibitor at the Sulham Lane end of the Cornwell recreation ground.
- To purchase new covered rubbish bins to stop people putting household waste (incl food) into bins, this being particularly problematic at the Cotswold recreation ground and Cornwell recreation ground.

It was also suggested that gym equipment be installed at the Cornwell recreation ground; and a water fountain at the Cotswold recreation ground. Quotes will be obtained for both.

There have been problems with anti-social behaviour at the youth shelter next to the Cornwell Copse, and it was suggested that this should be taken out, and maybe put into the Calcot recreation ground.

19/094 Local Council's Update subscription: It was agreed to renew the annual subscription for a further year at £75.00. This is for a print copy.

19/095 Quotes for the emptying of dog bins: Minute 19/073(d) – The Clerk has obtained further quotes from the emptying of dog waste bins, all of which have been over £6000. As these were all higher than the quote of £5025 received from Reading Borough Council, Members agreed that the emptying of the bins should continue to be carried out by RBC.

19/096 Finances:

- a) The annual accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2019, including the final out-turn budget report and earmarked reserves, were approved and signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.
- b) Members reviewed the expenditure for April 2019, which was retrospectively agreed.

19/097 Audits:

- a) Annual Governance Statement 2018/19: Members reviewed and approved the governance statement, which was signed by the Chairman and Clerk.
- b) Internal Auditor's Final Report 2018/19: Members accepted the Final Internal Audit Report for 2018/19. The effectiveness of the internal audit was reviewed and accepted as follows –

Background and Scope

The Accounts and Audit Arrangements, introduced from 1 April 2001, require all Town and Parish Councils to implement an independent internal audit examination of their accounts and accounting processes annually. The Council complied with the requirements in terms of independence from the Council decision making process appointing Auditing Solutions Ltd

to provide the function to the Council from the outset. The report sets out those areas examined during the course of the two visits to the Council for 2018/19, which took place on 15 November 2018 and 23 April 2019.

Internal Audit Approach

In completing the review for the year, regard was taken to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis-recording or misrepresentation in the year-end Statement of Accounts / Annual Return. The programme of cover is designed to afford appropriate assurance that the Council has appropriate and robust financial systems in place that operate in a manner to ensure effective probity of transactions and to afford a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate the completion of the 'Internal Audit Report' as part of the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) process, which requires independent assurance over specified internal control objectives.

The reports and file of work undertaken for the year can be made available, on request, to the Council's external auditors should further assistance be required in gaining the required level of assurance on the systems examined.

Overall Conclusion

It was reported that, on the basis of the work undertaken this year, it has been concluded that the Clerk and her Administrative Officer continue to operate effective financial control systems, with testing and examination of the controls in place identifying no significant issues.

The 'Internal Audit Report' has been completed and signed, having concluded that the control objectives set out therein have been achieved within the financial year, to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council.

The auditor thanked the Clerk and the Administration Officer for the assistance provided when undertaking the audit.

The report has been prepared for the sole use of Tilehurst Parish Council. To the fullest extent permitted by law, no responsibility or liability is accepted by Auditing Solutions Ltd to any third party who purports to use or rely, for any reason whatsoever, on the report, its contents or conclusions.

Detailed Report –

Maintenance of Accounting Records & Bank Reconciliations

The objective is to ensure that the accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in cashbooks or financial ledgers.

No issues have been identified in this area of the review.

R1. Care should be taken to ensure that the reconciliation report from the accounting system lines up with the cash book balance on the system to avoid any difficulties at the year end. The issue is purely one of procedure.

Review of Corporate Governance

The objective is to ensure that the Council has a robust series of corporate governance documentation in place, that Council and Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders and that, as far as can be ascertained, no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been or are being considered for implementation.

No issues have arisen in this area.

Review of Expenditure

The aim is to ensure that:

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgment of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;
- All discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount;
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed; and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

In order to ensure compliance with the above criteria, a sample of payments has been examined, namely all those individually in excess of £1,500 together with a random sample of every 25th cashbook transaction irrespective of value, to 31 March 2019. The test sample comprised 33 items in all, totaling £67,554 and representing 48.5% of all non-pay related costs for the year. No matters were identified from the sample.

It was noted that the Clerk continues to submit electronic quarterly VAT returns and the submissions for September 2018 and March 2019 submissions to the Rialtas control account balance. It was also noted that the Council's accounting contractors continue to provide support and advice on VAT.

The controls in place at the Council to authorize payments were discussed and the Council's financial regulations were reviewed. Control over cheque payments is exercised through designated members signing the cheque. The Council makes payments using Visa cards held by the Clerk and the Maintenance Officer with designated financial limits set out in financial regulations within which the payments are authorized by officers. The cash book, showing payments made, is provided to the Chair and Vice Chair for retrospective review. It is understood that the Council has recently appointed a member to be an 'independent checker' on the financial documentation. It is considered that it would be good practice if the independent checker reviewed Visa card statements and initialed the statements evidencing the oversight.

No issues have been identified in this area of the review. One recommendation is made aimed at improving oversight.

R2. The independent checker should review the Visa card statements and initial the statements evidencing the oversight.

Assessment and Management of Risk

The aim is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks in order to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

One recommendation was made, aimed at improving the overall level of cover.

R3. The Council should increase its Fidelity Guarantee cover in line with its bank balances.

Budgetary Control & Reserves

The objective is to ensure that the Council has a robust procedure in place for identifying and approving its future budgetary requirements and level of precept to be drawn down from the District Council: also, that an effective reporting and monitoring process is in place. The aim is also to ensure that the Council retains appropriate funds in general and earmarked reserves to finance its ongoing spending plans, whilst retaining appropriate sums to cover any unplanned expenditure that might arise.

It was noted that the Council's balances are relatively high in comparison to the budgeted level of gross spend for 2019/20. It is noted that balances have been boosted during the year by the receipt of CIL monies. Without making any formal recommendation the Council should continue to consider its level of balances.

It was noted that the Clerk continues to produce regular budget monitoring reports in the year, and also that the Council set its 2019/20 precept after consideration of likely spending pressures. The Council has a relatively high level of balances but has projects in the pipeline which will require funding, also there are restrictions on the use of CIL monies.

Review of Income

In addition to the precept, the Council's principal source of income arises from its three community centre facilities with a range of regular and casual hire activities, together with sports pitch bookings.

It was noted that members continue to consider the level of charges and usage. A review was taken of the system for collecting money arising from hiring and samples tested from the bookings diary through to the invoice ensuring it is recorded in the accounting system and money has been collected. No issues have been identified from our sample.

The 2018/19 precept levied on the District Council was collected and recorded in the Council's Cash Book. The unpaid invoices report on the accounting system was reviewed for any aged items.

No issues have been identified in this area of the review.

Petty Cash

The Council does not operate a petty cash account, any out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the Clerk or her staff being reimbursed as required and approved in the same manner as all other supplier payments.

No issues have been identified in this area of the review.

Review of Salaries

In examining the Council's payroll function, the aim is to confirm that extant legislation is being appropriately observed as regards adherence to the Employee Rights Act 1998 and the requirements of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) legislation as regards the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the revised local government pension scheme, most recently further updated with effect from 1 April 2017 in relation to employee contribution bandings.

Detail approving changes in staff pay are recorded in confidential minutes retained in the office. Control would be improved if the Members signed these minutes evidencing their approval of changes. It is noted that overall pay costs are recorded in the cash book which is reported to the Chair and Vice Chair.

The Council continues to maintain satisfactory payroll arrangements. One recommendation was made to strengthen controls.

R4. Members should sign the office copy of confidential minutes where these record changes in staff pay and conditions evidencing authorisation.

Asset Registers

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996, (as amended periodically), require that all councils establish and maintain inventories/asset registers of buildings, land, plant and equipment etc. owned by them. A review has been made of the asset register held by the Clerk and agreed to the draft AGAR. It is noted that the Council's accountants have done up-dates to it which are not showing on the version held by the Clerk.

The asset register is materially correct, but the Clerk should hold the current version.

R5. The Clerk should obtain the latest version of the asset register and ensure it shows all the movements i.e. acquisitions and disposals in the year.

Investments and Loans

The objective is to ensure that the Council is 'investing' surplus funds, be they held temporarily or on a longer term basis in appropriate banking and investment institutions, that an appropriate investment policy is in place, that the Council is obtaining the best rate of return on any such investments made, that interest earned is brought to account correctly and appropriately in the accounting records and that any loan repayments due to or payable by the Council are transacted in accordance with appropriate loan agreements.

The Council has two bank accounts. Income received to the accounting system has been tested to ensure it is brought to account. The Council may be able to obtain a better rate by investing in term deposits or the CCLA. The cash accounts held have been agreed to the draft AGAR.

It is noted that the Council has not 'invested' any monies in periodic term deposits, any surplus funds being retained in the interest-bearing Lloyds bank business instant access account. One recommendation is made, that the Council should investigate options for earning more interest.

The Council currently has no loans either repayable by, or to, it.

R6. The Council should investigate options for investing surplus funds in line with its Treasury Management policy.

Statement of Accounts / AGAR

The year end accounts prepared by DCK have been reviewed, tracing them back to the detailed working papers provided by the Council's accountants. In addition, the amounts in the draft AGAR have been agreed to the supporting records specifically verifying the accuracy of detail contained within the Annual Return at Section 2 with no issues arising. *No issues have arisen in this area and, based on the work undertaken during the two visits to the Council for the financial year, and the Internal Audit Report in the AGAR has been signed off, assigning positive assurances in each relevant area. It was noted that at the time of the visit the Annual Governance Statement, section one of the AGAR, was not available for review.*

The Chairman thanked the office staff for their work and due diligence.

c) It was agreed to re-appoint Auditing Solutions Ltd as internal auditors for 2019/20.

19/098 Information items:

a) Due to the weather conditions experienced over the winter months, it has been necessary to withdraw the use of the parish football pitches for a total of 6 weekends during the 2018/19 playing season. The Clerk has been contacted by two separate contracted football teams asking for permission to play matches up to and including the weekend of 11 and 12 May 2019.

These pitches have been requested at the Calcot recreation ground and, as previously established, minimal pitch maintenance will be required on these particular pitches due to their current good condition. On this basis, the Clerk has permitted these matches to be played.

b) West Berkshire Council has advised that a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payment of £22,406.11 is due to this Council for the reporting period 1 October 2018 – 31 March 2019. This payment, received on 7 May 2019, relates to the following planning applications;

17/01566/FULD - 175 Halls Road, Tilehurst	£339.31
17/01356/FULD - 175 Halls Road, Tilehurst	£2,056.01
18/00443/FULD - Land Adjacent to 94 Royal Avenue, Calcot	£855.55
186/01034/OUTMAJ – Land Opposite Halls Place Farm Stables, Tilehurst	£19,155.24

c) The first instalment, of £144,597.50, relating to the Parish Precept has now been received from West Berkshire Council.

d) The ROSPA play area safety inspections were carried out at all of the parish recreation grounds between 24th and 27th April 2019 and the accompanying reports have now been received by the Clerk. These reports will be scrutinised by the Clerk, in conjunction with the Maintenance Officers, and a risk assessment/action plan will be formulated. This document will be presented to Council Members in due course.

e) The Clerk has received communication from Berkshire Youth, who are a local charity, and who have offered the services of up to 12 young people from a college aged 16 – 17 years old, to carry out jobs around the parish. They would be accompanied by staff from the college and have suggested jobs they could do would be litter picking, clearing paths, painting, and cutting back bushes. The date would be Wednesday 26 June. The Clerk has replied favourably to the suggestion.

19/099 Chairman's Remarks: Mr Page welcomed Mr Marino as a new member of the parish council.

The Meeting closed at 9.40 pm

The next Meeting will be held at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 18 June 2019

Chairman

APPENDIX A - DECISIONS

19/00272/HOUSE	<u>Lane End Cottage, 23-25 Westwood Row, Tilehurst</u> Single storey rear extension and minor alterations	granted
19/00395/HOUSE	<u>15 Farm Drive, Tilehurst</u> Rear single storey pitched roof extension	granted
19/00375/HOUSE	<u>14 Yew Tree Rise, Calcot</u> Garage conversion and the formation of a small front extension, to create space for a new entrance lobby, utility and WC. Including replacement windows and doors.	granted
19/00465/HOUSE	<u>2 Withy Close, Tilehurst</u> Loft conversion including installation of three velux roof-lights to the front/rear elevations to form new habitable space.	granted
19/00481/HOUSE	<u>27 Compton Avenue, Tilehurst</u> Two storey side and single storey rear extensions and front canopy	granted
19/00495/HOUSE	<u>50 Longworth Avenue, Tilehurst</u> Single storey rear extension with demolition of existing conservatory	granted
19/00601/HOUSE	<u>47 Skilton Road, Tilehurst</u> Single storey side and rear extension, demolish existing garage	refused
19/00798/HOUSE	<u>43 Cotswold Way, Tilehurst</u> Proposed single storey rear extension and provision of pitched roof over rear part of existing garage roof	granted
19/00852/HOUSE	<u>5 Cotswold Way, Tilehurst</u> Single storey side extension to create garage, utility and shower room, and a new front porch	granted
19/00578/HOUSE	<u>7 Dell Road, Tilehurst</u> Single storey rear and side extension and first floor extension	granted
19/00905/HOUSE	<u>5 Wandhope Way, Tilehurst</u> Single storey rear extension	granted

APPENDIX B - NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS

19/00718/RESMAJ Land adjacent to Stonehams Farm, Dark Lane, Tilehurst
Approval of reserved matters following outline application
16/01233/OUTMAJ (66 residential units with access from Long
Lane). Matters to be considered: Appearance, landscaping,
layout and scale

This Council would like to endorse various comments already made and emphasise their concerns, as follows:

1. From the Housing Officer regarding the size of the affordable homes proposed, and also the preference for houses rather than flats.
2. From Thames Valley Police.
3. The footpath running along the eastern side of the site should not be obstructed with construction vehicles during the proposed building works.
4. Where will site vehicles park during construction works? The immediate area does not lend itself to on-road parking.
5. There is concern with the light pollution from vehicles exiting the development affecting the property opposite the entrance, bearing in mind that the living rooms of this property appear to be situated at the front of the building.

19/00884/FUL 7 The Colonnade, Overdown Road, Tilehurst
Change of use from a newsagents to a coffee shop selling takeaway
and eat in food and drink

This Council has no objection to the proposal

19/01077/HOUSE 5 Malyns Way, Tilehurst – adj parish
Partial garage conversion, and single storey rear extension to replace
existing conservatory

This Council has no objection to the proposal

19/00916/HOUSE 3 Barbrook Close, Tilehurst
Single storey side extension following demolition of existing dining
Extension

This Council has no objection to the proposal

19/01149/FULD 59 Fairway Avenue, Tilehurst
Section 73 Variation of condition 2 'approved plans' of approved
application 18/03212/FULD: demolition of existing house and
erection of a replacement dwelling

This Council has no objection to the proposal

19/01161/HOUSE 4 Blackthorn Close, Tilehurst

Erection of a new fence along the side of property and a gate to the side of the property to allow access.

Whilst this Council has no objection to the proposal, Members have raised a query over the ownership of the land to be fenced off. Also, concern was raised that the erection of a fence as proposed would be out of keeping for the area.

19/01242/COMIND Denefield School, Long Lane, Tilehurst

Section 73: Variation of condition 1-5 year date, and 2-plans, of approved application 13/01162/COMIND: Section 73 application to vary Conditions 2 and 7 of approved application 10/03060/COMIN

This Council is unable to comment on this application as it is felt that insufficient information is available

PART 11

19/100 Badgers Hill PRU: The Clerk has received an e-mail requesting Stage 2 and 3 sign-off for the project. Apparently until this is done the planning application cannot be submitted. It has been acknowledged that the application has to honour this Council's concerns about the use of the overflow car park. The request was agreed by all Members and signed off by the Chairman.

The timescales for the project have slipped somewhat, and it was therefore agreed that the S25 notice would be extended to the end of December 2019, and not the end of October as previously discussed (see Minute 19/077).

Part of the project includes the sum of £4000 for car park lighting. This will probably be low level bollard lighting, and it should be stipulated to WBC that this should be turned off when the school is not being used.

19/101 Annual review of staff salaries: Ahead of the meeting of the 12 March 2019, the Clerk distributed a paper which contained details of staff members' current pay scales and annual salary levels and the impact that an incremental rise would have.

In 2018, Council Members agreed to continue with the NJC pay terms and adopt the 2% pay rise which had been negotiated for 2018/19 & 2019/20.

Incremental increases were discussed and agreed.