



Chairman: Rob Jones

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Clerk to the Council
Miranda Parker
Charvil Village Hall
The Hawthorns
Charvil, Reading
Berks RG10 9TT

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 21st October 2024 in Charvil Village Hall at 8pm

Present Rob Jones, Stephen Lucas, Pat Sutlieff, Jane Hartley, Isabelle Bray, Narinder Ryatt, Richard Bennett, and Lee Cripps. Katrin Harding arrived at 8.20pm.
The assistant clerk and media assistant were also in attendance.

Apologies for Absence Matt Walker

Absent

24/8429 Open Forum

No residents attended.

24/8430 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

24/8431 To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of 16th September and of an Extra-ordinary Meeting of the Council on 30th September 2024

These were approved and signed.

24/8432 To note the Clerk's report

This was noted.

Finance

24/8433 To note the Minutes of an Extra-ordinary meeting of the Finance Committee on 30th September 2024

24/8434 To receive and approve the financial reports

It was resolved to approve these which was passed unanimously.

24/8435 Authorisation of Payments

It was resolved to recommend approval of the payments of invoices, which was carried unanimously.

£149.05 to A1 Locksmiths

£53.88 to the Assistant Clerk

£2995.20 to Andrea Pellegram Ltd

£180.91 to Aquacare

£1656.42 to Berkshire Pension Fund

£176.36 to British Gas

£690 to Earth Anchors

-£384.99 to Everflow

£82.64 to Grundon

£601.51 to the clerk

£157.74 to MKR Electrical Services Ltd

£44.95 to the Media Assistant

£ 105.29 to Smartest Energy
£15.66 to SSE Contracting Ltd
£1203.86 to Sunshine Commercial Services Ltd
£1387.56 to Tactical Facilities Management Ltd
£200 to Wokingham Town Council
£45.61 to Yu Energy
£ 4959.97 in Payroll

24/8436 To consider the recommendation from the Finance Committee to simplify the charging structure for the Hall and Pavilion (hall only), and to decide whether to approve this

Councillor Lucas explained the rationale for this, that it would remove some of the anomalies that have occurred over time. It was resolved to approve this, and to offer the potential pre-school the Community rate, and both were approved unanimously, although the pre-school rate would be reviewed to ensure the rent is covering the costs.

24/8437 To give further consideration to the five-year plan

The Chairman has updated the spreadsheet after discussion at the Amenities Committee, and the Council were happy with what has been included so far.

24/8438 Planning, Environment and Highways Committee (PEH)

The Minutes of a meeting on 7th October were noted.

To consider a request by the Riverways Farm objectors' group for us to advertise for helpers to their cause on our social media feeds

Councillor Sutlieff had attended the recent meetings held by this group and informed the Council that Wargrave Parish Council had agreed to apply for "Rule 6", whereby they employ a barrister to argue against the appellant's case. Although Twyford Parish Council strongly object to the application, they were not willing to take the financial risk of applying for Rule 6, instead supporting the Borough in developing their argument against the appeal. The objector group are producing leaflets and posters to raise awareness of the appeal and of the groups' actions and ask for help in raising the funds to pay for the barrister. It was agreed that if Councillors were willing, they would help to distribute the leaflets, and that if the clerk receives an official approach from either Twyford or Wargrave Parish Councils, then they would publicise on our social media outlets.

To note the lack of progress on the repairs on the approach to the mini-roundabout and the zebra crossing on Old Bath Road, and to see if there is any way of speeding these up

The zebra crossing had been repainted earlier in the day, but the repairs to the approach to the roundabout are part of a different programme to repair the roads. This part still needs to be followed up.

To note the unintended consequences of the blanket Tree Preservation Order on the trees near the East Park Farm estate, and to see whether there is any possibility of refining it

It has become clear that there are self-seeded trees that have been allowed to get established, and they are making life difficult for residents who live nearby, as well as impacting on the health of the trees that were planted when the estate was built. The clerk wondered whether it would be possible to see if these trees could be taken out where they are causing problems, and it was agreed to investigate with the help of the borough councillors.

To finalise tree planting this autumn, and to fix a date in the diary

It was agreed that planting will take place between 10am and 12 Noon on Sunday 24th November. The areas to be planted are on East Park Farm to replace dead trees, and to replace the rowan in front of the hall.

It was also agreed to plan for some trees to be planted alongside the stream at East Park Farm to stabilise the bank.

To consider whether to complain about overgrown bushes on Old Bath Road

It was agreed that the clerk would ask for these to be cut back as they make the pavement too narrow, particularly for pedestrians with pushchairs.

24/8439 Amenities Committee

The Minutes of a meeting on 14th October were noted.

To note the solar panel survey is arranged for 1st November

This was noted, and Councillors Harding, Jones and Bennett would like to attend if work permits. It was agreed that the Council should ask for pigeon netting.

To consider the quotations for the tree work to the trees with Tree Preservation Orders at East Park Farm, and to approve one of them

It was noted that the approval for these works had been received a few days earlier, and it was resolved to offer the work to Nick Robins, which was approved unanimously.

24/8440 Borough Councillor's Report

Councillor Akhtar was not present but reported that the warning lights near the primary school were now fully operational.

He also reported that Highways have told him that there is no possibility of reconnecting the pillar lights on the zebra crossing as these were now obsolete.

He has been asked again about double yellow lines on Milestone Avenue.

Councillor Smith has reported that Wargrave Parish Council has applied for Rule 6, for Riverways Farm, which means they need to raise the funds for a barrister.

Councillor Harding has been working to secure a crossing on Park Lane as part of the planning agreement, as well as a teenage play facility on the Park Lane site. She reported that it is almost certain that the application would go to the Planning Committee in November. Further documents on the geological surveys and Wokingham's own consultants regarding these had just been uploaded and there was now a deadline for fresh comments. She also reported that the agreement for a crossing was borderline, and that the Parish would be unlikely to get anything more than a coloured strip of tarmac, which was unacceptable to most councillors. There was a discussion as to the location, and it has become clear that the original document uploaded has now been superseded by a crossing to the north of the entrance to the school, which is acceptable. The clerk was to work on a response to these recent uploads and submit them on behalf of the Council.

Items for Consideration

24/8441 To hear an update on the Neighbourhood Plan and to approve incorporating key Neighbourhood Plan documents into a page on the new website

Councillor Jones reported that the draft Plan was currently with the Neighbourhood Plan team at Wokingham, who will provide comments by the end of the week. The Borough will give draft screening reports to statutory consultees, and then the outcome of this needs to be approved by the Borough Council. One issue is whether we wait for the end of this process before running our Regulation 14 Consultation or running it in parallel. If the latter, Consultation could begin in November. It was approved to put vital documents on the new website.

24/8442 To consider whether to pursue the idea of vegetable plots in the Mendip Close area, and if so, how to progress

It was agreed that the idea would not be pursued now because there will be some extra allotment provision on the Hicks' site if approved, and the proposed cost would be prohibitive if based on the outline from the Borough. It was agreed to revisit this in six months' time.

24/8443 To consider whether to develop the idea of a Youth Council, and if so, how to do this

Councillor Bennett attended training on developing a youth council. The possible approach for the Parish Council would be approach youth leaders in the village to help us engage on the topic of what facilities youth would like to see in the village – these leaders could be those involved with the Uniform groups, youth workers from Twyford and Sonning, sports coaches, and teachers – set up a meeting with them, and discuss our plans, and see what other options they might come up with, and work towards what would be most popular and feasible. The other idea would be to invite some of these youth leaders to be Amenities "special advisers" on our green spaces.

24/8444 To note the digital media report

This report now covers the new website. There have been 367 visitors to the site currently, and the most popular page is the "What's On" page.

24/8445 To decide on whether to do an event on 14th December in the hall, and if so what and who will lead on it

It was agreed that an event would be held on 14th December, and that the hall would be needed from 3pm to 6.30pm, with the event being from 4pm to 6pm. It would be a festive Meet the Councillors session with mulled wine and mince pies, plus an introduction to the Consultation for the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. Ideally there would be carols with the music from Suzanne Newman as well, and Councillor Harding would provide crafts for 3–8-year-olds. No lead member was appointed.

24/8446 To hear an update on the possible pre-school, and what the next steps should be

The clerk is due to attend a meeting with the possible provider and the early years adviser from the Borough Council on 4th November and would report back at the next meeting.

24/8447 To consider the Community Governance Review and how it might impact Charvil

The clerk explained that the Thames Ward is regarded as an anomaly in that instead of one parish being represented by three Borough Councillors, it is four parishes. Whether there will be any pressure to amalgamate the parishes remains to be seen, but Councillor Lucas who attended the Borough Parish Liaison Meeting came away with the impression that nothing would be imposed on parishes against their will.

24/8448 To hear verbal reports from the Borough Parish Liaison Forum Group and the clerk's forum

Councillor Lucas reported there was a presentation on the Community Governance Review (see previous Minute) and a presentation from Highways, as well as some discussion around the traffic issues at Twyford Station, and the enthusiasm to progress the proposed Charvil-Twyford cycle route as this could help alleviate pressure on the station.

The clerk reported that the main topic was a discussion around a fictitious disaster in the Borough, and what steps might parishes take to be prepared. It was agreed

that although the Emergency Plan the parish has, is excellent for indicating what would be done once an incident happened, it could be strengthened by having a plan for how to prepare, especially in a weather event that we have some warning for beyond flooding, which is already covered. It was agreed the clerk and assistant clerk would work on this and bring to a future meeting. The emergency team at Wokingham would also be willing to help the parish run a tabletop exercise to test the robustness of the Emergency Plan.

24/8449 To consider whether to initiate a “Charvil Heroes” award or some such, and if so, how to do this

It was suggested this could be something awarded at the Annual Parish Meeting. Nominations would come from residents, but the Council would need to develop criteria and categories. It was suggested that this could be discussed further at the Amenities Committee.

24/8450 To consider whether the Parish Council would like to pursue the idea of CCTV on Milestone Avenue to deter fly-tippers at a cost of £3000 a year

It was agreed that as this area is not owned by the parish and is not regarded as the worst area for fly-tipping in the village, the Council would not like to pursue this idea.

24/8451 To note any agenda items for the next meeting

Items include a report back from the BALC AGM, future events, and an update on the Riverways appeal.

Neil Durrant was formally thanked for organising and facilitating the CPR training the week before, which was very well received by the village.

By virtue of the confidential nature of the business to be contracted the press and public were excluded from the remainder of the meeting under Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

24/8452 To approve an approach to discourage facility users from contacting staff needlessly out of hours, to approve a financial recompense to staff if they are called out and to form a list of Councillors who were willing to accompany staff if they are uncomfortable to attend such a callout alone

The Chair of Staffing said that it was unacceptable to expect staff to attend callouts out of hours if the issue was something that hirers should know how to deal with. To help with this, the assistant clerk has put together a guide to the hall to help users help themselves. While some things are good grounds to call for help (electricity issues etc), all regular users should know how to lock up and alarm the building, and this procedure will be in the guide.

It was agreed that this would be trialled, that something would be on the alarm cabinet to remind people of the guide, and the Conditions of Hire would be updated to alert people to the possible charge if they call people out unnecessarily. The fee would be £25 and would go to the employee who was inconvenienced. In cases where staff feel they need accompanying (eg late finishing parties) the following councillors agreed to be on a list to support: Councillors Jones, Hartley, Harding, Cripps, Bennett and Ryatt.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.03pm

Chairman’s Signature