

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 22nd February 2021 Via Zoom

Present

Jim Gillett, Paul Mundy, Pat Sutlieff, Claire Andersen, Mike Heath, Hilary Jones, Roanna Collis, Jane Hartley, and Borough Councillor Emma Hobbs (arrived at 8.30)

Apologies for Absence

Neil Jackson and Narinder Ryatt

Absent

21/7577 Open Forum

No residents present.

21/7578 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

21/7579 Minutes of the Council Meeting of the 18th of January held via Zoom

The minutes were approved by Council.

Finance

21/7580 Finance Reports – It was resolved to approve these which was done unanimously.

21/7581 Authorisation of Payments – It was resolved to approve the following payments, including the S137 payments agreed in December, which was done unanimously:

£51.98 to Grundon Waste Management Ltd
£36 to Assistant Clerk
£37.34 to British Gas Services Ltd
£270 to Alder Glass
£878.87 to Berkshire Pension Fund
£91.27 to Everflow
£27 to Heart Facilities Ltd
£50 to HTC
£50 to Involve
£61.94 to Aquacare
£264.83 to Dual Energy (Smartest Energy)
£28.75 to SSE
£95.39 to Clerk
£2460.74 to Sunshine Commercial Services Ltd
£107.14 to Tivoli Group Ltd
£78 to Loddon Door Services
£114 to SLCC
£42 to The Blue Moose

£2613.77 in Payroll

- 21/7582 To consider the issue of the damaged fence at St. Patrick's Recreation Ground and to approve the cost of repair** – The clerk reported that WBC had passed on a complaint from a resident whose husband had caught himself in a loose wire while crossing a low point in the fence between the Recreation Ground and the University land. This is not a public right of way, but many people step over at this point. Council considered repairing the fence completely, but it was felt that it would be damaged very quickly by disgruntled walkers. The contractor suggested re-instating the fallen post and connecting the remaining wires to this, so that the fence is clearly visible, but not at a wire at a height that will not prevent crossing if people choose to do so, although Council does not condone this. It was agreed that this was the most pragmatic course of action and it was resolved to approve the cost of this repair which was passed unanimously.
- 21/7583 To approve the cost of installing a letter box at the Village Hall** – As it is exceedingly difficult to get people to quote for work in the current climate, it was resolved to accept the quote from Alder Glass, which was passed unanimously, and the assistant clerk has been asked to arrange installation as soon as possible.
- 21/7584 To approve the cost of work to ensure that the Parish Council website is Accessibility Compliant** – It was resolved to approve this which was done unanimously.
- 21/7585 To approve training for the clerk on website accessibility and how to create accessible documents, and for the assistant clerk on social media issues and how to improve community engagement via Social Media** – it was resolved to approve this which was carried unanimously.
- 21/7586 Planning, Environment and Highways Committee (PEH)**
The minutes of the PEH meeting on 1st February were noted. There had been no feedback from Ian Gough about the hall energy and the clerk was asked to chase.
Clerk's note: the clerk is to have a catch-up meeting and will report back in due course.
- 21/7587 Amenities Committee**
The minutes of the Amenities meeting on 8th March were noted. It was reported that the Council had received two grants for loss of earnings at the Hall during the period from December to now.
- 21/7588 Report from the Borough Councillor**
Cllr. Hobbs reported that the new Assistant Director of Neighbourhood and Property, Simon Price, is a particularly good appointment. She had a meeting with the new local policeman, who indicated that there is a growing drug issue in the area, and that there had also been a spate of burglaries in the village. Cllr. Jones asked that schools are informed as this is a danger to the local children. She confirmed that the Grazeley plan is now gone, and we are waiting to have an update on the Local Plan. She is still dealing with enforcement issues at The Homestead and Newlands Farm.

Items for Consideration

- 21/7589 To hear an update on the Neighbourhood Plan and note the award of the Locality Grant** – The Council thanked the clerk for her work on the grant. Cllr. Heath gave a summary of recent activity and suggested that now there is more interest from residents, it is time to develop working groups. The clerk will circulate sample terms of reference, and Cllr. Hartley is working on the questionnaire.
- 21/7590 To discuss the May elections and to note there will be a virtual briefing on 9th March** – This was discussed, and everyone was encouraged to sign up.
- 21/7591 To consider the change of the lease for East Park Farm with the fresh intervention of John Halsall, and whether to push for a much-simplified agreement and to approve a collection approach** – The Chairman explained that he had thought that it would be possible to transfer ownership of the land, but this

is not the case. In his discussion with John Halsall, leader of the Borough Council, the issue of a break clause on a longer lease for the Borough was raised. Also, what kind of compensation would be fair to the Parish Council, given that the proposed redevelopment of the pavilion is potentially the most ambitious challenge it has faced. It was agreed that the Council would need legal representation to ensure its interests are protected, to ensure either a new or amended lease is fair to the Council.

21/7592 To consider closing the Village Hall car park while the building is closed – Currently there is no way to close the car park, and after some discussion it was agreed that installing some wooden posts and a chain across the entrance would be a good investment as it could be used to close the car park in the evenings to deter late night use of the car park that disturbs neighbouring residents.

21/7593 To review the closure of the East Park Farm Car Park if there were any changes in Lockdown measures – It was agreed that the car park would be opened on 29th March, in line with Step 2 of the Government's re-opening plan.

21/7594 To hear verbal reports from the Borough Parish Liaison Meeting and Wokingham District Association of Local Councils (WDALC) by Cllr Hartley- Much of the Liaison Forum was taken up with information on the Census and how parishes might help. It will be largely digital this time, but there will be help available to those who struggle with technology, and paper copies for those who need them. There was also a discussion on the Town and Parish Charter which will be sent to each Parish for them to sign up to if they wish. The clerk explained that this had been drawn up by clerks and officers of the Borough to aid partnership working. There was also a brief update on the Covid response and a request for future items. The WDALC meeting was a waste of time and serves little purpose in Cllr Hartley's opinion. They would like some funding from BALC, but this has not been forthcoming.

Cllr Sutlieff wondered whether it would be worth trying to find out whether a café would be viable at East Park Farm by allowing a mobile van to work from there – it was agreed this would be added to the next agenda

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm

Chairman's Signature