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BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the annual meeting of the Barkham Parish Council held on 12th April 2022 in the Studio Hall, Arborfield Green Community Centre at 7.30pm.

Strict following of Covid Guidance was adhered to during the meeting.

**Present**: Mrs Stubbs (in the Chair), Mr Bundred, Mr G Dexter, Mr Heyliger, Mr Wrobel, Mr Barker and the Clerk.

**22/044 To receive and accept any apologies for absence** Local Government Act 1972 Sch12

Mr Scott – Unwell, Mr Barker – On holiday

**22/045 To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda** (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1464)

None

**22/046 Minutes of the Council Meeting** LGA 1972 Sch 12 para 41(1) **–**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 8th March 2022 were approved and signed as a true record.

**22/047 Public Participation (allotted time 15 minutes)** Public Bodies (admissions to meetings) Act 1960 s.1 extended by the LG Act 1972 s.100

Adjournment of the Meeting will be called if any members of the public wish to address the Council on any matters or concerns relating to Barkham.

A representative from Barkham Homes, which has a planning application for discussion in the planning section (Handpost Farm) attended to inform the council of the reason for the application, and to answer questions about the plans submitted. Copies of the plans were given to the Councillors, and these were discussed. Some questions were asked and answered.

A member of the public attended to put themselves forwards as a councillor, who lives within Arborfield Green. He will be formally co-opted at the May meeting of the Council.

**22/048 Planning**:

1. **Planning Applications –** To discuss and agree any comments or objections on planning applications received before 12th April 2022. To include:

**220684** -Handpost Farm, School Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4TN

**Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached 5 bedroom dwelling and garage following demolition of existing manege building and barn, plus incorporation of the Handpost Cottage Annex into the existing farmhouse**.

The representative from Barkham Homes decided to step out of the meeting whilst the application was discussed.

Barkham Parish Council objects to this application on the grounds that it is inappropriate development in a rural, unsustainable countryside area. It lies outside the development boundary between the

settlements of School Road and that defined by the Barkham Street Area of Special Character.

Despite failing to comply with several planning policies including Section 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CP3, CP11 and CP18 of the Wokingham Core Plan 2010 and Policies IRS1 and IRS2 of the Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan 2019, the Planning, Design and Access Statement (PDAS) attempts to justify the proposal. Two points need to be highlighted:

1. The current application has been compared with a similar application F20001100 which was rejected for several reasons with particular reference to scale. The footprint of the house shown in the plan for the earlier application is 345m2. Section 5.15 of the PDAS compares this to the new dwellings footprint of 250m2 a 28% reduction which is described as a considerable decrease. However, this comparison excludes the footprint area for the garage for the current proposal 68m2 which, if included, results in a total footprint of 318m2 which would give an 8% reduction. In any event, hardly a considerable decrease!

This above analysis is based on the dimensions given in the PDAS.

1. In response to PA213690, validated 18 Nov 2021, a Certificate of Existing Lawful Development for the use of the annex as an independent residential dwelling was approved. Whether the current proposal to now incorporate the annex into Hand Post Cottage represents a change of plan or the process was designed to create a new independent dwelling that could be sacrificed in favour of a much larger building could be the subject of an extended discourse. However, when comparing the relative scales of the two residential properties the annex vs the proposed 5bedroom house it is not appropriate to include the barn or the manege in the equation because they are not buildings in residential use. As the proposals are justified solely on the basis of the new dwelling being a direct replacement for the annex, only the relative areas of these dwellings should be compared.

The footprint of the proposed dwelling is 318m2 (incl garage) compared with that of the annex (incl garage) of 66m2 (Source: PA213690) which represents a 4.8x increase in scale. If this is expressed as total living area, a more accurate measure of scale ie volume the difference becomes 582m2 vs 66m2 and a 8.8x increase in scale.

Once again, the above analysis is based on dimensions included in PDAS.

Regardless of the above, the outcome would be the same the construction of a new building where the scale and location is not appropriate for the rural countryside setting and would, consequently, cause harm to the surrounding rural environment contrary to local planning policies.

Other points deserving comment:

1. Serial applications to build a new dwelling between adjacent Caldwell House and No 6 Bridge Cottages appears to raise similar issues as the current application. These were rejected by WBC and the ensuing Appeal APPXO360A132200792, PA Reference 130862 was dismissed by Mr RJ Marshall on 13 Mar 2014.

2. With the higher ridge height of almost 1.4 m, the removal of hedging in the front of the development and the replacement of the weathered façade of the menage, the proposed dwelling will be more conspicuous when viewed through and over the hedges that line School and Barkham Roads. This is accentuated when viewed from the far side of School Road.

The proposed development will be entirely visible from vantage points in The Coombes. Here the character of the landscape will be changed if buildings expected to be found in a countryside location are replaced by a modern 5bedroom house.

1. Can an ecological survey conducted in midwinter be relied upon to identify all relevant species?
2. BPC notes that three individuals have submitted responses in support of the application. However, as one is the owner Mr Kelly and another the owner who has just sold Caldwell House, the weighting of this support is reduced.

In view of the discussion above, Barkham Parish Council does not believe a case has been made to support this application and requests that it is declined.

Barkham Parish Council has requested Cllr Kaiser list this application, should the officer be minded to approve the application.

**220779** -The White Cottage, Barkham Street, Barkham, Wokingham, RG40 4PJ

**Householder application for proposed two storey side extension with integral garage, single storey rear extension, 4No. rooflights, 2 juliet balconies, associated fenestration, following the demolition of existing detached garage.**

Barkham Parish Council object to this application.

This location falls within the Barkham Street Area of Special Character. Policy IRS4 of the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan (2020) requires that the natural character of such areas should be protected or enhanced. This proposal does neither as the drawings show a very modern style

of building.

Although it is a relatively large site, the two storey infill of the space between the existing dwelling and

existing garage creates a very much more solid frontage which will have a negative impact on the street scene. This is tantamount to overdevelopment of the site in the left right plane.

The Barkham Village Design Statement (2007) on Page 9 outlines the main design features of building designs in Old Barkham. These include buildings being set back from the road, well screened and generally with low rooflines. The new continuous and higher roofline that extends for most of the width of the proposed design together with the spatial impact of the new frontage, as discussed above, will further emphasise just how close the property is already to Barkham Street, there is no screening. This marks a move away from styles described in the Design Statement.

Barkham Parish Council requests that this application is declined.

Barkham Parish Council have requested Cllr Kaiser list this application for review by the planning committee, should the officer be minded to approve the application.

**220835** -30a, Barkham Ride, Wokingham, RG40 4EU

**Householder application for proposed single storey outbuilding to the rear of the property.**

Barkham Parish Council have no comments on this application.

**220851** -Feathercot, School Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4TP

**Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for an existing dwelling.**

Barkham Parish Council have no comments on this application.

**220944** - 8 Somerville Close, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SW

**Full application for the change of use of amenity land to residential garden, including erection of new 1.8m boundary fence and side gate (retrospective).**

Barkham Parish Council decided to defer a decision on comments until nearer the time to see if residents have any comments. A decision will be made under delegated authority before the deadline for comments is reached.

**220963** -8 Tiffany Close, Wokingham, RG41 3BN

**Householder application for proposed part garage conversion into habitable space and associated fenestration.**

Barkham Parish Council have no comments on this application.

**220834** -17, Sandy Lane, Barkham, RG41 4DD

**Householder application for the proposed erection of front porch with pitched roof, following demolition of existing porch. Erection of flat roof, single storey, side extension following demolition of conservatory and single storey, rear extension with pitched roof. Extension to front, ground floor window and other changes to**

**fenestration.**

Barkham Parish Council have no comments on this application.

**220822** - Reading Fc Training Ground, Park Lane, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4PT

**Application for the approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to Outline planning consent 163547 for the erection of 140 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), associated amenity spaces, play area, access, garages, parking, internal roads, pathways, drainage and associated landscaping (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale to be considered).**

Due to the number of documents received a few days before the meeting, the Council did not have time to fully review the plans and discuss them at the meeting. The Clerk will request an extension to after the next meeting for the plans to be discussed in detail. The Clerk will also contact the developer to ask what has been changed in the plans sine the presentation at the March meeting.

**220991** -378 Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DL

**Householder application for proposed single storey front extension, first floor side extension, garage conversion, erection of single storey detached garage, and changes to fenestration.**

Barkham Parish Council are opposed to this application. Whilst the Council do not have any comments on the main house alterations, there are concerns with the proposed parking plans at the rear of the property. The Parking plans will set a precedent for others. There are concerns that 2 mature oak trees will be removed to create the access, and the council has concerns over the site lines for exiting the proposed garage area, it is near to a bend in the road and it is not clear that this has been taken into account.

1. **Approved and Refused Applications**

**220251** - 26 Sandy Lane, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DB

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a first floor side extension, two storey front extension following demolition of existing front extension, plus changes to fenestration.**

This application has been approved by WBC

**220485 -** 25 Bearwood Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4TB

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension.**

This application has been approved by WBC

**220490** - Half Acre, Coombes Lane, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SU

**Householder application for the proposed erection of rear extension.**

This application has been approved by WBC

**220426** -26 Sandy Lane, Barkham, RG41 4DB

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a replacement garage with additional habitable accommodation following demolition of the existing garage.**

This application has been approved by WBC

**220165** - Bearwood Park, Mole Road, Sindlesham, Wokingham, Berkshire

**Full application for an entrance gate at the access adjoining Mole Lodge for a temporary period of 3 years from the date of determination (of this application). (Retrospective)**

This application has been withdrawn by the applicant

**220380** -102 Bearwood Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SR

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey side extension, and changes to external materials.**

This application has been approved by WBC

**Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/21/3280409 – Application 210536** - 344 Barkham Road, Wokingham RG41 4DE

**Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. three bedroom dwelling with associated parking and landscaping.**

This appeal has been allowed by the Inspectorate

**220686** -13 Bearwood Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4TB

**(Retrospective) Householder application for the proposed erection of a boundary wall.**

This application has been approved by WBC

1. **Any Other Planning Business**

**Solar Farm Questions –** Council agreed to submitting questions relating to the Solar Farm to WBC, to obtain an update as to where the project is and whether the conditions attached to the approval notice are being met.

**Instalcom –** Council approved the updated appeal response to be sent to the Inspectorate.

**School Road Proposals –** Council received an update on the proposals, there will be a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) Consultation before the order can be approved, where residents will be able to submit comments on the closure proposal. The Clerk will keep an eye on the TRO webpage to ensure any consultation is not missed, and will inform the residents who have contacted the council about the proposal, once the TRO consultation is open. As it has been confirmed that a TRO consultation will occur, the Council decided there was no action to be taken regarding the proposals for School Road and how they have been communicated to the Council and Residents.

**Arborfield Green District Centre –** Council received an update on the progress for the District Centre in Arborfield Green:

The main spine road is the primary route to serve the whole of the district centre, and this will be completed first.

A supermarket is planned, and Crest are currently in discussions with providers.

It is hoped a planning application can be bought forward for the site within the next 6 months

It is planned that there will be a public consultation, where residents and councils will be invited to view the current plans, discuss them with Crest staff, and submit any comments on the plans. This is planned to take place on the 29th and 30th April 2022, at the Arborfield Green Community Centre in the main hall. Cratus are finalising plans and will publicise the event.

The nursery that is planned for the District Centre, will be a commercial nursery.

**22/049 External Report – Ward Councillor report.**

The following report was given at the Parish Assembly prior to this meeting taking place:

There will be a 6th Form added to Bohunt School, which will open in September 2023. A planning application is due to be submitted. The Foundations for this wing of the school are already there as part of the original design and build.

Farley Hill School transferred to its new location in Arborfield Green. It is still under the control of WBC. The catchment area for the school has been changed for this year’s September intake.

WBC is currently working on a policy to change how speed limit reductions are made. Currently, the support of the police is required to change speed limits, the plan for the new policy is that it will be put in the hands of residents. The plan is that if a speed limit change request is received, the residents of the area will be consulted, and if there is a majority in favour of the change, it can occur. The support from the police is being taken out of the circle, and the Crime Commissioner has been spoken to and is in support of this. This is still being drafted and will need approval by Council.

The plans for the District Centre at Arborfield Green have not yet come forwards. This is currently being looked into. An anchor store is needed for the development of the District Centre, which has not been forthcoming due to Covid. Crest now currently in talks with providers. Before a store will agree to locate to the District Centre, the spine road of the Nine Mile Ride Extension will need to be completed and open, this is expected to happen on the 29th June. The Nine Mile Ride Extension should relieve some of the pressure on Langley Common Road.

School Road plans are controversial, matters are not helped by Instalcom’s presence at Woodlands Farm. The site has some permitted development and operating licenses, which is what Instalcom are using. A stop notice and enforcement notice have been issued, and these are currently under appeal. WBC is awaiting a date for the public hearing of this appeal. The proposed modal filter has arguments both in favour and against it, it is inconvenient for Wokingham residents to access Arbborfield, but will stop lorries going past the school. There are concerns by residents about the extra strain on Langley Common Road, and the trucks using a dangerous junction. Cllr Kaiser is pushing to get the speed limit of Langley Common Road reduced to 30MPH. The TRO consultation for the proposed closure will last for 21 days.

The Local Plan Update is based around a 5 year land supply for developments. WBC need to prove they have a 5 year land supply. WBC believe they have a 5.1 year land supply, however at a recent appeal for 22 flats by the new Co-op, the inspector said there was a 4.9 year land supply but disallowed the appeal, as WBC could prove they had higher build out rates than expected. The Local Plan identifies sites for the 5 year land supply.

18 months ago, WBC challenged the white paper proposal from Government which set housing rates at 1600 homes per year. The challenge was won, and the rates were lowered back to 800 homes per year

WBC currently has a housing crisis. There are waiting lists for new homes and there has been a high increase in people registering as homeless.

The Solar Farm has been approved, and will be built later on this year.

Boundary Changes are currently being reviewed. Parish wards should have 1800 residents per ward, but with the development in Barkham, this has exceeded the number and has triggered the review. There are 2 options: 3rds or all out election cycles. WBC currently has election cycles in 3rds, which means that every year for 3 years there are elections within the council, the 4th year, there are no elections. The all out election cycle means there will only be elections every 4th year, for the whole of Wokingham. To change to an all out election cycle, 2/3rd’s of the council must agree to the change. This is unlikely to happen. Under the 3rd’s system, there can only be 3 member wards, which will mean that Barkham will join wards with another parish or 2, to create a 3 member ward. The parish boundary will remain the same, it is just the ward boundary that will change.

**22/050 Clerks Report**

**Land at Highlands Avenue**

No progress has been made. The Clerk has sent an email to the solicitors, but has not yet received a response. There is still no information on the Land Registry site.

**Item ongoing**

**Enforcement Issues**

Land by Coppid Hill House – No update since the last meeting has been recieved.

The Coombes –

* Land adjacent to White Heart Grove – No updates have been received regarding these cases since the last meeting
* Plot B. – No updates have been received regarding these cases since the last meeting
* Beech Wood – No updates have been received regarding these cases since the last meeting

**Items ongoing**

**Phone box Adoption**

The Clerk has had contact with the DIO. The phone box adoption is listed on the agenda for a decision.

**Item ongoing**

**Queens Platinum Jubilee**

The working group has met to discuss the event and identify possible activities for the day. The possible activities are being looked into further for costs and availability. A poster has been issued asking for volunteers / stall holders, this has gone into both the BVRA and Council magazines, is on both websites and is on the council notice boards. Items for purchase for the event are listed for a decision on the agenda.

**Item ongoing**

**School Road / Langley Common Road Junction**

The road Safety Group have requested an update from Highways on the traffic monitoring that WBC was to undertake at School Road / Langley Common Road, and are awaiting a response.

**Item Ongoing**

**Bus Shelters**

Quotes for the replacement of 1 bus stop have been received and passed to the insurance company. The insurance claim for the bus stop by The Bull, that was damaged by a car hitting it, has been settled. A payment of £6856.00 has been raised to be paid. The Clerk will monitor the bank account for the payment.

**Item Ongoing**

**Trees at Barkham Fields (possible CIL Project)**

The Trees on Barkham Playing Fields have been planted. 128 trees are now on the site. A meeting to assess a second area has taken place, and this area, if suitable will be scheduled for planting in October / November.

**Item Ongoing**

**Litter Pick**

The Litter Pick took place with 11 groups of volunteers attending and 37 bags of rubbish collected. There were 3 reports for fly tipping.

**Item Closed**

**22/051 Finance**

* 1. **Accounts** – Proposal to agree accounts and payments for February to March 2022 LGA 1972 s150 (5)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Payments for February to March 2022 for authorisation at Council meeting on 8th March 2022 | | | |
| S/O | Staff Wages | £957.51 | April 2022 salary - LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Nest | £94.63 | Pension Contribution Employer & Employee – April 2022 - LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Plusnet | £33.60 | Internet and phone charges – April 2022 - LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Lloyds Bank (Credit Card) | £662.16 | Credit Card bill – March Payments  £3.00 – monthly fee. – LGA 1972 s111  £499.21 – Solopress – Magazine Printing - LGA 1972 s.142  £108.00 – A Star Signs – Litter pick signs - LGA 1972 s111  £10.20 – Post Office – Stamps LGA 1972 s111  £5.05 – Co-op – Tea and coffee supplies for office and meeting LGA 1972 s111  £29.25 – Morrisons - Refreshments for litter pick LGA 1972 s111  £6.95 – Sainsburys - Refreshments for litter pick LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Tivoli | £59.33 | Bin emptying – March LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | D. Carr | £260.00 | Magazine design LGA 1972 s.142 |
| BACS | Amazon | £102.33 | Office supplies LGA 1972 s111  £79.74 – Stationary  £22.59 – Litter pick supplies |
| BACS | HMRC | £363.85 | Tax and NI Payment – 4th Quarter LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Unity Trust | £18.00 | Bank Service Charge (paid on 31st March) LGA 1972 s111 |

* 1. **Report on Monies received**

£30.00 – Chips Away – Magazine Advert £120.00 – A1 Waste – Magazine Advert

£40.84 – Unity Trust Savings – Interest £0.72 – Natwest – Interest

£42.50 – Unity Trust Current Account – Interest £7379.00 – WBC Precept

* 1. **Queens Jubilee Celebrations -** Council agreed to the purchase of garden games and decorations for the Fun Day at the Village Hall, the items can then be used for other future events.

The approximate cost for the games and decorations is £310.00, as shown in the table below.

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| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Cost** |
| Union Jack Bunting | £2.29 Each (10m) x 6 |
| Flags | £3.99 each (5x3m) x 6 |
| Hand held flags (to give to children) | £18.39 (100pk) x 5 |
|  |  |
| Giant Snakes and ladders | £36.99 |
| Giant Dominoes | £9.85 – £15.00 |
| Connect 4 – Plastic  - wooden | £15.00  £46.99 |
| Tin can alley | £11.99 |
| Quoits game | £15.99 |
| Sports day set | £13.99 |
| Inflatable target ball | £9.99 |
| Wooden Skittles | £24.49 |

* 1. **Accounts –** Council reviewed and approved the income and expenditure Accounts as at 31st March 2022. Council was also informed that the bank statements and reconciliations have been checked and approved by Mrs Stubbs, as a member of the finance committee.
  2. **Phone Box Adoption** – Council decided not to progress with the adoption of the phone box on Venning Road due to the cost of transfer by the DIO, and the cost of an ongoing lease agreement. The Clerk will inform the DIO and BT that it will not be taking on the phone box.

**22/052 Councillors Forum**

Mr Heyliger will be putting in a proposal and request for CIL funding to update the speed watch equipment, due to Thames Valley Police changing the requirements for speed watch and the type of equipment now required for speed watch to operate.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.20pm.