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BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the meeting of the Barkham Parish Council held on 11th October 2022 in the Studio Hall, Arborfield Green Community Centre at 7.30pm.

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

**22/103 To receive and accept any apologies for absence** Local Government Act 1972 Sch12

Cllr Kaiser– On Holiday Mr Dexter - Unwell

**22/104 To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda** (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1464)

None

**22/105 Minutes of the Council Meeting** LGA 1972 Sch 12 para 41(1) **–**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12th July 2022 were approved and signed as a true record. The minutes were signed by Mr Bundred instead of Mrs Stubbs, due to Mrs Stubbs having a broken wrist.

**22/106 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.

None

**22/107 Planning**:

1. **Planning Applications –** Council discussed and agreed any comments or objections on planning applications received before 11th October 2022. As follows:

No applications were received to be discussed

1. **Approved and Refused Applications**

**221572 -** Barkham Manor Farm, Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DQ

**Householder application for the proposed construction of garden swimming pool and ancillary building with toilet, changing facilities and garden room.**

This application was refused by WBC

**221580** -73 Bearwood Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SX

**Householder application for the proposed single storey rear extension, double storey side extension, raising of roof to create first and second floor habitable accommodation with 1No front three storey gable, following demolition of 2 No. chimney stacks, existing front and rear extensions and existing garage and changes to fenestration.**

This application was approved by WBC

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**222226 -** 48 The Lilacs, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4UT

**Householder application for the proposed part garage conversion to create habitable accommodation.**

This application was approved by WBC

**222041 -** Feathercot, School Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4TP

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a rear conservatory.**

This application was approved by WBC

**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**.

This application was refused by WBC

**221750** -18 Field Place, Wokingham, RG41 4EU

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension including the insertion of 3no rooflights, and a patio area to the South East side and to the rear.**

This application was approved by WBC

**221898** -Doles Farm, Doles Lane, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4EA

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a porch, carport, side gate, and brick and paling fencing, plus new vehicular access and changes to fenestration, following demolition of the existing porch and conservatory.**

This application was approved by WBC

**221954** -58 Sandy Lane, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4ST

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a first floor side and rear extension with front and rear dormers.**

This application was approved by WBC

**222219** -76 Bearwood Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SY

**Full application for the proposed demolition of existing bungalow and phased redevelopment of the site with the erection of 2no. dwellings**

This application was approved by WBC

**222491** **-** 1 Sherman Avenue, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG2 9TF

**Householder application for the proposed conversion of garage into habitable accommodation with changes to fenestration**

This application was approved by WBC

1. **Any Other Planning Business**

**Ward Boundary Review Consultation –** Mrs Stubbs will draft a response to the consultation, which will be sent to all councillors for agreement under delegated authority, as the deadline for comments is before the next meeting of the council.

**School Road Closure**

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* 1. The Road Safety Group is currently assessing the effects of the closure, using the data logger, and need a few more weeks to complete this exercise. It was agreed to wait until the data has been analysed and reported before deciding on any comments.

To assist with the views of residents an article will be included in the next issue of the magazine, asking residents to submit any comments to WBC using the TRO email address, and asking that they send a copy to the Clerk, if they wish for the parish council to be aware of their views. The Council were 6-1 in favour of the article being included in the magazine.

A question was raised as to whether due process had been followed by WBC in advertising the ETRO on the website. This will be looked at before any comments are made. It was noted the ETRO was not yet listed on the WBC website, if residents are not able to access the scheme documents to view, how are they supposed to know what proposals they can comment on. It was agreed the Clerk would once again follow this up with WBC Highways.

To discuss items with WBC officers and executives, it was agreed that a small working group would be set up to meet with WBC. The group is to be comprised of Mr Barker, Mr Langford, Mr Dexter and Mr Heyliger.

* 1. Council decided by majority that a Freedom of Information request would not be submitted at this time.

**22/108 Delegated Authority Report**

The following decisions were made via Delegated Authority in July, August and September 2022 as the decisions were required to be made and the Council did not meet in August or September.

**July & August Decisions**

**Finance:**

**Updated Grant Request from St James Church**

The Grant application received from St James Church reflected the increase in cost sine their previous submission. The grant request had increased to £2407.00. The Council agreed unanimously to pay the increased grant.

**Accounts** –Accounts and payments for July to August 2022 LGA 1972 s150 (5)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Payments for July to August 2022 authorised under delegated authority | | | |
| S/O | Staff Wages | £1000.35 | August 2022 salary – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Nest | £96.52 | Pension Contribution Employer & Employee –August 2022 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Plusnet | £32.14 | Internet and phone charges – August 2022 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Lloyds Bank (Credit Card) | £3.00 | Credit Card bill – July Payments  £3.00 – monthly fee. – LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Tivoli | £261.04 | Bin emptying for April – July – LGA 1972 s111 |
| S/O | Staff Wages | £1000.35 | August 2022 salary – LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | St James Church | £2407.00 | Grant for maintaining churchyard - LGA 1972 s214 (6) |

The invoice of £36.00 for Councillor Training, which was agreed to be paid at the July meeting, was not received prior to the July payments being made, so payment was made with these invoices.

**Report on Monies received**

£120.00 – Advert payment A1

£30.00 – Advert payment – Chips Away

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**Planning and related items:**

**222226 -** 48 The Lilacs, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4UT

**Householder application for the proposed part garage conversion to create habitable accommodation.**

BPC had no comments on this application

**222266 -** 22 Thorn Close, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SQ

**Proposal: Householder application for the proposed single storey side extension, single storey rear extension plus changes to fenestration.**

BPC had no comments on this application

**222306 -** Land Adjacent to Blagrove Lane, Wokingham

**Outline application for the proposed erection of 350 dwellings with new access onto Barkham road, community space, Landscaping and onsite SANG, following demolition of outbuildings and agricultural buildings. Access to be**

**considered, all other matters reserved (Appearance, Landscaping, Scale and Layout).**

Barkham Parish Council (BPC) wishes to support the very many residents who have already responded to this application by objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:

1. The proposed site lies outside the existing settlement area in a greenfield location and would have a detrimental urbanising impact on the character and appearance of the local countryside. (Policies CP1, CP11, CC02 & TB21)
2. The development will erode the greenspace between several settlement areas which is contrary to the spatial goals of the 2010 Core plan (Section 2.68 (viii)). Although emphasis has been placed on the importance of the new internal SANG with reference to maintaining these gaps, it represents only a small part of the existing gap areas and replaces natural countryside with a more formalised layout. This area is characterised by wooded areas, ancient woodlands, open fields and a rich and diverse ecology. (Policies CP3, CC03 & TB21).
3. An area around the substation adjacent to the development site - Bottle Copse – included in the Natural England Ancient Woodland Inventory and covered by a blanket TPO (1648/2018) will become vulnerable to increased activity of the new nearby population. Furthermore, BPC understands that local residents believe the extent of Ancient Woodland goes beyond that registered by the Woodlands Trust and extends into the area that will be affected by the new access road leading to Barkham Road. This should be confirmed either way as part of the adjudication of this application. (Policy TB23 Ref. 3.111 Part B)
4. The development will have a detrimental effect on the diverse wildlife on the site and the differing habitats. As stated in the ‘Ecological Summary Report’ the area is home to several protected species including bats, badgers, hedgehogs, birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, plants and fish. (Policies CP3 & CC03)
5. The proposed access road leading onto Barkham Road joins the main road at a point that is on a bend and the brow of a hill. The double white centre road lines highlight the unsuitability of this location. A pedestrian access is shown in a nearby position where it is necessary to cross Barkham Road to reach the continuous pavement on the other side of the road. Should a crossing be provided? There appears to be no

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discussion on these points.

1. This development is not compatible with proposals to improve the pedestrian environment on Barkham Road, which aims to reduce the reliance on private transport and encourage walking and cycling in the borough. The additional traffic will further discourage people from walking and cycling.
2. There is limited public transport between the location to Wokingham and Reading, which further compounds the traffic issues within an already busy network. The existing infrastructure is not built to take any more traffic.
3. The impact on the setting of the listed historic assets and the possibility of there being below ground archaeology needs to be formally assessed. (Policies TB24 & 25)
4. The location is not sustainable with respect to location of shopping centres, schools, access to health facilities etc.   
     
   The travel plan submitted as part of this application states in Section 4.4 that ***‘ it is generally considered that 2km is an acceptable distance to walk to work or nearby facilities and amenities’*** whereas The Wokingham Borough Design Guide SPD states that for locations to be sustainable, ***‘Walkable Neighbourhoods should be created that have a range of facilities within 10 mins walking distance (800m) to encourage travel by foot or by bicycle’.***No matter how much discussion these contrary statements may provoke – the sick and elderly are not going to walk 2km to a healthcare centre, revellers are not going to walk 2km in the rain for a night out and no-one is going to walk 2km to do a heavy shop. Optimism and realism need to be balanced.
5. This application pre-empts the ongoing revision of the Local Plan. Although this has been delayed by the redesignation of the Grazeley site and, more recently, the change of administration within WBC, there is considerable value in adhering to a well-structured plan. Such plans are developed to ensure development is appropriately spread across an area and the required infrastructure is delivered in a timely and cost-effective fashion. This application raises many relevant concerns which would benefit from being considered as part of an overall plan for the current 2036/37 planning horizon.

Although this proposal lies just over the parish border, BPC is very much aware that many of the issues will have a direct impact on Barkham – increased traffic, the loss of a natural and rural gap between settlements and further demand on the limited facilities in the immediate vicinity.

Barkham Parish Council request that this application be refused.

**Application:** 214166

**Appeal:** APP/X0360/W/22/3297227

Silver Birches, Highlands Avenue, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SP

**Full application for the change of use of residential curtilage (Use Class C3) to parking for a recycling centre (Use Class B2). (Retrospective)**

Barkham Parish Council has not changed its position from the original comments submitted 13 Jan 2022 that this proposal would reflect an unwelcomed expansion of the A1 Recycling Centre in an area of

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countryside.  This somewhat simple statement was correctly and fairly expanded upon in the Delegated Officer Report dated 01 Mar 2022.

We note in the Planning Appeal Statement of Case submitted on behalf of the Appellant, Section 27, that Silver Birches, is already surrounded on three sides by the recycling centre.  We believe this is exactly the reason why this area of countryside should be retained to offer relief and some distancing from the recycling operations.

Barkham Parish Council requests that this appeal be refused.

**222219** -76 Bearwood Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SY

**Full application for the proposed demolition of existing bungalow and phased redevelopment of the site with the erection of 2no. dwellings:**

Barkham Parish Council (BPC) object to this application.

BPC note that the new build at No.76A will project beyond the rear of the neighbouring premise at No. 78 and that both new builds at 76A and 76B intersect notional 45o window lines drawn from both neighbours.  It is not clear from the drawings and a roadside inspection to what extent these new builds will impact the neighbours, there are however, concerns over loss of light to the neighbouring property and BPC request the planning officer make a visit to review these observations.

Putting two detached dwellings on this small plot is an overdevelopment which will dominate the site and cause significant harm to the neighbours. The parking arrangements could lead to a dangerous exit from each house when reversing onto a fast, downhill stretch of Bearwood Road.

Although CIL may not be a planning consideration, it appears to be managed via the planning process.  BPC would request the self-build and CIL exemption arrangements proposed for this application be reviewed for the following reasons.  Assumption for CIL liability is given as Maverick Properties Investment Ltd for No 76A (Phase 1) and as Susan McCouid for No 76A (Phase 2).  Yet there is only one CIL Self Build Exemption Claim Form in the name of Susan McCouid for 76 Bearwood Road with no reference to 76A or 76B.  Does this really mean that only 76B is a true self-build project?

For the above reasons, BPC request this application be refused.

**220421** -Parcel V2n, Biggs Lane, Arborfield Garrison, Arborfield

**Application for the approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning consent O/2014/2280 for the erection of 73no. dwellings within parcel V2N with associated internal access roads, parking, landscaping, open space, footpaths and drainage. (Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale to be determined).**

No Comments

**222373** -Bluebell Farm, Commonfield Lane, Barkham, Wokingham, RG40 4PR

**Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for change of use of land to a caravan site.**

No Comments

**September decisions**

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**Planning and related items:**

**Planning Applications – Comments or objections agreed on planning applications received before 13th September 2022:**

**222491 -** 1 Sherman Avenue, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG2 9TF

**Householder application for the proposed conversion of garage into habitable accommodation with changes to fenestration**

Barkham Parish Council had no comments on this application

**221954 -** 58 Sandy Lane, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4ST

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a first floor side and rear extension with front and rear dormers.**

Barkham Parish Council had no comments on this application

**Other Planning Business**

**Let’s Talk Climate Emergency – Survey –** As the survey seemed to be aimed at individual responses, Council decided it would not submit a response from the Council, but Councillors would respond individually, if they wished to.

**Land to the East of Edneys Hill and South of Barkham Road** – Council declined to meet with Bewley Homes to discuss this application. The Council are currently opposed to this development, but will await the full planning application before making any decisions on its stance to the proposed development

**CIL Projects and Expenditure**

1. **Footpath Repair on Bearwood Road** – Council decided that as it is Highways Land, WBC should be contacted to repair in the first instance. The Clerk will report the problem to WBC, and will await a response before any further decisions will be made.
2. **VAS Purchase –** Council agreed to the purchase of 2 further VAS signs, 1 which is solar powered and 1 which is mains powered at a cost of £5,328.00. The Clerk will arrange for the order to be placed and will raise the payment once the invoice has been received.

**Finance:**

**Accounts** –Accounts and payments for August to September 2022 LGA 1972 s150 (5)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Payments for August to September 2022 authorised under delegated authority | | | |
| S/O | Staff Wages | £1000.55 | September 2022 salary – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Nest | £96.52 | Pension Contribution Employer & Employee – September 2022 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Plusnet | £32.14 | Internet and phone charges – September 2022 – LGA 1972 s111 |

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| DD | Lloyds Bank (Credit Card) | £122.48 | Credit Card bill – August Payments Payments  £3.00 – monthly fee. – LGA 1972 s111  £22.80 – Stamps to send Sporting letters – LGA 1972 s111  £0.80 – Coop – Milk – LGA 1972 s111  £95.88 – Dropbox Subscription – LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | M. Bundred – Councillor Expenses | £130.59 | Speed Watch Equipment Re-imbursement – Bluetooth Phone to connect to Data Logger to download data – LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | PKF Littlejohn | £480.00 | External Audit – Internal Audit Accounts & Audit Regulations 2003 reg 2 |
| BACS | Tivoli | £65.26 | Bin Emptying – LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Amazon Business | £42.16 | Stationary for September – LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Gallagher Insurance | £1,483.07 | Insurance for 1st October 2022 – 30th September 2023 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Morelock | £5,328.00 | VAS Signs Purchase – CIL Expenditure - LGA 1972 s111 |

**Treatment of Bracken at the Junipers**

The Bracken on the top field at the Junipers has grown out of control.  The Company that planted the trees on the bottom field have a treatment for the Bracken that can be applied, which will kill the bracken (and only the bracken), which will enable planting of new trees to be undertaken.  The cost of the treatment is £740.00 (plus VAT).

Council agreed to fund the treatment of the bracken at Barkham Fields.

**Parish Office Operations**

1. **SAAA External Audit Arrangement Opt-Out** – Council decided to remain part of the SAAA External Audit agreement. An external Auditor will be appointed for the Parish Council for the next 5 year period.
2. **Follow up meeting with WBC Executives –** Council agreed the draft agenda for the next meeting with the Executive Members of WBC.

**22/109 Clerks Report**

**Land at Highlands Avenue**

No progress has been made.

**Item ongoing**

**Enforcement Issues**

Land by Coppid Hill House – This is now being progressed to Court proceedings.

The Coombes –

* Land adjacent to White Heart Grove – Recent appeals at this site have been dismissed by the inspectorate
* 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**

**Drainage Issues**

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Awaiting information as to whether there is a drainage gully at Barkham Fields, which may be contributing to how wet the ground is, it was unclear upon site inspection, as the hot weather had made the ground extremely dry. The Clerk will request an update now that there has been heavy rainfall.

The ongoing leak along Barkham Road: The water was tested by Thames Water, and no trace of chlorine was detected, which would indicate a water leak, it is now thought to be a natural spring that is flowing into the gully. Further investigations are required.

**Items ongoing**

**School Road / Langley Common Road Junction**

The road Safety Group continue to work to try to reduce the speed limit along Langley Common Road, to make the junction safer.

School Road has now been closed to through traffic. Monitoring needs to be undertaken, so the Council can comment on the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order before the end date in the middle of March 2023

**Item Ongoing**

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

The Ecologist carried out his site visits over the summer and found no signs of protected species where the trees are planned to go, so planting should be able to take place this coming tree planting season.

**Item Ongoing**

**The Coombes Woodland Maintenance**

Contact needs to be made with the resident who manages the woodland, to see if he is willing to meet with the councillors to discuss the maintenance plans for the woodland.

**Item ongoing**

**Instalcom Appeal**

The Appeal hearing has been set for 29th November at 10am.

**Items ongoing**

**Next meeting with WBC Executive Officers**

The Clerk has made contact with the Executive of WBC to arrange the next meeting to discuss ongoing issues. An agenda is required before a date can be set, so that the appropriate people can be invited and an appropriate date for all is set. It is planned for the meeting to occur in October.

**Items ongoing**

**Treatment of the Bracken at Barkham Fields**

WBC cut down the bracken before treatment could be undertaken, and the bracken cannot be treated when cut back. The treatment will be postponed until the new year, as the product cannot be used after September.

**Items ongoing**

**Closed Items:**

None

**22/110 CIL Projects and Expenditure**

**Electricity at Barkham Fields**

Council decided not to continue with the installation of an electricity box at Barkham Fields, after feedback from the BVRA that it would unlikely be used for their events.

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A second proposal relating to the electricity supply at the fields has been raised by Mrs Stubbs, for possible lighting (bat friendly) at the fields for early evening to assist dog walkers to be able to see in the winter months. It was agreed by 6-1 in favour of being looked into by the CIL committee. The CIL committee will look into the feasibility of this project.

**CIL Project Proposals –** Council considered other CIL proposals raised by members or residents, including

1. Council agreed that CIL cannot be used for an existing trust have its remit extended or a new trust to be created to supply Children of the Parish with a musical instrument and give subsidised music lessons to Children of the Parish, as it does not meet the requirements under CIL Legislation.
2. It was agreed the CIL committee will look at upgrading the football goal/basketball hoop equipment at Barkham Fields, but concern was raised over the type of equipment suggested. An alternative will be looked at.
3. Replacement of Surfacing on Bearwood Road Footpath – Post Office to Sandy Lane – WBC have said no to resurfacing the Path. Council decided not to fund the replacement through CIL, as it is WBC’s responsibility to maintain the footpaths. The Clerk will raise the footpath again, and remind WBC that as it has been reported, they will be liable should an accident occur on that stretch of footpath.

**22/111 Finance**

* 1. **Accounts** – Accounts and payments for September to October 2022 LGA 1972 s150 (5)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Payments for September to October 2022 authorised at Council meeting on 11th October 2022 | | | |
| S/O | Staff Wages | £1000.55 | October 2022 salary – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Nest | £96.52 | Pension Contribution Employer & Employee – October 2022 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Plusnet | £32.14 | Internet and phone charges – October 2022 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Lloyds Bank (Credit Card) | £3.00 | Credit Card bill – September Payments  £3.00 – monthly fee. – LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Tivoli | £65.26 | Bin Emptying - LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Savills | £148.50 | Hall Hire Oct – Dec - LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Information Commissioners Office | £35.00 | ICO fee - Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), |
| BACS | HMRC | £229.34 | Tax and NI payments for 2nd Quarter - LGA 1972 s111 |

* 1. **Report on Monies received**

£36,893.02 - WBC Precept Payment

* 1. **Sam Hosgood Sporting Award Grant** – Council considered awarding a grant to an applicant of a sporting organisation, who lives in Barkham. Council agreed to award a grant of £600 To be paid to the successful applicant in November
  2. **Internal Auditor Appointment for 2022-2023 financial year audit –** Council re-appointed C. Connell as the internal auditor for the 2022-2023 financial year.
  3. **External Audit Conclusion –** Council was notified that the External Audit for the Year Ended 31st March 2022 had concluded and the council received and unqualified audit report, with no action needed to be taken. The Clerk has advertised the conclusion of the Audit as required.

**22/112 Parish Office Operations**

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1. **Help for parishioners over the winter**

Council discussed ways to help and support the Parishioners, who may have financial hardship over the winter due to the increasing energy costs. It was agreed to advertise Barkham Parochial Charities and other organisations who can help in the next issue of Village Info. It was alos agreed that the Council would be willing to fund or sponsor events to provide warm places for residents, in association with the Hardship Alliance at WBC.

1. **BVRA Residents Survey –** Council agreed to:

9.40am – Vote to continue – all agreed

1. Questions about the parish Council being included in the BVRA Residents Survey. It was agreed by Council that the wording on the front of the survey be changed to Barkham Residents (including Arborfield Green)
2. The Survey being printed and included as an extra with the next issue of Village Info, and distributed alongside the magazine.
3. The costs of printing and distribution of the leaflet being shared 50:50 between the BVRA and BPC. Printing Cost Approximately £275 +VAT for stapled leaflet, Distribution Cost Approximately £73 +VAT.
4. For the Parish Office to be a collection point for surveys.

**22/113 Councillors Forum**

None

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm