Page 23/001

BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the meeting of the Barkham Parish Council held on 10th January 2023 in the Studio Hall, Arborfield Green Community Centre at 7.30pm.

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

**23/001 To receive and accept any apologies for absence** Local Government Act 1972 Sch12

Mr Scott – Unwell

Mr Bundred – Personal matters

**23/002 To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda** (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1464)

All Councillors have been granted a dispensation for the discussions of setting the budget and Precept.

Mr Wrobel – BVH CIL application – No dispensation has been granted, Mr Wrobel can not take part in discussions or the decision.

**23/003 Minutes of the Council Meeting** LGA 1972 Sch 12 para 41(1) **–**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13th December 2022 were approved and signed as a true record. The minutes were signed by Mrs Stubbs.

**23/004 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

**23/005 Planning**:

1. **Planning Applications –** Council discussed and agreed any comments or objections on planning applications received before 11th January 2023. As follows:

**223460 -** 2 Langley Common Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG40 4TS

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front extension to form a porch and 2 no. single storey side extensions following demolition of the existing side conservatory, plus insertion of rooflights to facilitate conversion of the loft to form habitable accommodation and changes to fenestration.**

Barkham Parish Council had no comments on this application.

**223742** -176 Bearwood Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SH

**Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. 4 bedroom dwelling following demolition of existing dwelling and garage**.

Barkham Parish Council had no comments on this application.

Page 23/002

1. **Approved and Refused Applications**

**223137 -** 50 Sandy Lane, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4ST

**Householder application for the single storey rear extension and changes to fenestration to include changes to the level of the rear garden and patio.**

This application was approved by WBC

**223212** -Bearwood Lakes Golf Club, Bearwood Road, Sindlesham, Wokingham, RG41 4SJ

**Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension to the clubhouse with additional balcony space over and associated alterations to the existing balcony stairs and dining room fenestration, plus removal of existing external stairs and infilling of stairwell to form an extension to the existing balcony.**

This application was approved by WBC

**223307 -** 12 Thorn Close, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SQ

**Householder application for the proposed conversion of existing garage to create habitable accommodation, to include changes to fenestration.**

This application was approved by WBC

**222794** -358 Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DL

**Householder application for the proposed single storey front extension. Replacement of front gates with 2m high gates. Raising the roof of existing single storey side, to accommodate extension. Single storey rear extension to include 1no. Juliet balcony to the First Floor. 3no. rooflights. Changes to fenestration. 11x4x3m swimming pool to the rear.**

This application was approved by WBC

1. **Any Other Planning Business**

**NPPF Consultation** – Council is asked to decide if it wishes to submit a response to the Government consultation on the NPPF Updates.

Council agreed that a response needs to be submitted. Councillors are to look at the updated NPPF and advise of any comments so a draft response can be compiled to be agreed at the next meeting of the Council.

**23/006 Ward Councillor Report**

The Coombes woodlands is up for sale. Working with Parishes to look to protect the woodland for resident benefit. Councils are able to bid to purchase the woodlands. Cllr Kaiser has had discussions with the WBC Finance Executive to see if WBC could buy it, but they are not in a position to. Cllr Kaiser has had discussion about whether WBC could assist the parishes. WBC is open to assisting and supporting the parishes with obtaining funding if needed and there are 2 possible ways that they may be able to help. There may be availability to bring forward the Parishes CIL payments to cover the purchase, or WBC would be willing to assist with an application to the Public Loans Board, which offer loans at a low rate of interest for public bodies.

The first action is to get the land valued, and the District Valuer Services (DVS) is the specialist property arm of the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), who would be able to assist with a valuation for the Parishes. The issue with purchasing the land would be managing it going forward, but there are options available and Berks Bucks and Oxford Wildlife Trust have said they can help in several different ways.

Page 23/003

There is 64 acres up for sale, but some has been offered to the adjacent neighbours, who had until 9am on the 9th January to decide if they would like to purchase their section. The Parishes have until the 13th February to submit a proposal.

Cllr Kaiser met with Crest to discuss Barkham Square. Crest have designed a vision statement for the land. Cllr Kaiser is concerned that the proposal may come forward for development. The issue for the Parish is there is nothing happening with the local plan update. The problem for the developer in getting permission is traffic. The Parish Council need to push WBC to get the Local Plan Update completed. The Parish can raise its profile against development by attending WBC question time and submitting a question regarding the Local Plan and the many developments that the parish faces.

BPC Councillors will look to submit a question.

Mr Heyliger asked if there was an update for the solar farm. Cllr Kaiser replied to say there is not much happening with that at the present time.

**23/007 The Coombes Woodlands**

Council discussed the possible sale of the woodlands and how it could be protected for resident’s enjoyment.

**The Council agreed the following:**

1. To Continue to work with Arborfield Parish Council to look at ways to protect the woodlands, and investigate the costs of purchasing the woodland
2. To do all it can to protect the woodland
3. Agreed in principle to use CIL to purchase the woodland if it is able and needed to, to keep it for residents’ enjoyment.
4. To get quotes for valuing the land and managing the land going forward. Council agreed to spend up to £1000 in the next few weeks to cover valuation and assessment fees. Quotes and expenditure will be agreed via delegated authority via email by the Full Council as they are needed before the next meeting.

The Clerk is to look into how CIL can be used to cover first year costs if the land is purchased by the Parishes. CIL should be able to be used for initial capital projects such as clearing the Rhododendron.

Work will commence immediately to investigate ongoing maintenance costs for the woodland.

**23/008 Finance**

* 1. **Accounts** – Accounts and payments for December 2022 to January 2023 LGA 1972 s150 (5)

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| Payments for December 2022 to January 2023 for authorisation at Council meeting on 10th January 2023 | | | |
| S/O | Staff Wages | £1050.78 | January 2023 salary – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Nest | £103.54 | Pension Contribution Employer & Employee – January 2023 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Plusnet | £32.14 | Internet and phone charges – January 2023 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Lloyds Bank (Credit Card) | £53.70 | Credit Card bill – December Payments  £50.70 – Dropbox Upgrade Payment LGA 1972 s111  £3.00 – monthly fee. – LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Tivoli | £65.26 | Bin Emptying - LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Savills | £148.50 | Hall Hire LGA 1972 s111 |

Page 23/004

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| BACS | HMRC | £542.37 | Tax and NI Payments 3rd Quarter LGA 1972 s111 |

Payment for Mr Bundred – Reimbursement for Zoom subscription for The Coombes Working Group – Council agreed to retrospectively approve the purchase of a Zoom subscription at a cost of £100.72 for The Coombes Working group, and acknowledge there is no ongoing commitment or contract made under the parish council for further financing for this subscription. Mr Bundred will be reimbursed for the cost at the same time as the above payments.

The Clerk will look to increase the current Council Subscription to cover all Councillors.

The Clerk will speak with the auditor regarding future purchases in emergency situations, and how this can be covered by the Council, whilst meeting the legal obligations.

1. **Report on Monies received**

None

1. **CIL Expenditure**

**Foothpath BA10(a) upgrade –** Council considered funding an upgrade to footpath BA10(a) to make it an accessible path during the winter and wet months. The cost of the upgrade to the full path is £35,000 - £45,000.

Council agreed to go ahead only with the section that will not be made into a greenway. The Cost of this will be lower than the quote as it is only approximately 1/3rd of the length which was quoted for. The Clerk will confirm the actual cost as soon as possible to the council. Council agreed that it would spend up to £20,000 on the non-greenway section.

A decision will be made regarding the greenway section, when there has been more information provided by WBC for the Solar farm and greenway project.

**Barkham Village Hall – CIL funding request -** Patio – Council considered funding improvement to Barkham Village Hall using CIL funds to replace the patio. Contribution requested was for 60% of one of the following quotes: RMR Landscapes £6,625 Exc. VAT, AB Fencing £6,500, AP Brickwork £9,600. The total CIL requested will be either: RMR Landscapes £3,975, AB Fencing £3,900, AP Brickwork £5,760.

The Preferred supplier to do the work is RMR Landscapes.

**Council agreed to fund the patio replacement at a cost of £3,975 exc. VAT (£4770 inc. VAT)**

1. **Draft Budget –** Council discussed the proposed draft budget. The Council agreed that due to the current financial economic crisis it would not increase any of the Earmarked reserves this year, to help residents with a lower precept for this year. This will be reviewed when setting the next financial years precept.

The Council unanimously agreed the budget and set the precept. The precept has been set at £26.18 per Band D Household, which is a decrease of 23.39%. The appropriate forms will be completed and sent to WBC by 1st February 2022.

**23/009 Councillors Forum**

**Mr Dexter:** Crest promised another meeting in January to discuss the District Centre and Community Centre. This need to be chased up. Mr Langford will contact the FBC representative to see if he has had anything further from Crest.

The BVRA/BPC Survey needs to be reviewed and reported to council to agree any actions needed.

The future of the BVRA is not certain, 2 member have recently resigned. Dev Watch is still running at present, but it is uncertain if this will continue if the BVRA folds. It is a useful resource, and would be beneficial to be

Page 23/005

taken over if the BVRA folds. Permissions will need to be sought from members to transfer their information to a new organisation, should it need to be transferred.

The Clerk sent a letter to Finchampstead in December regarding Barkham Square, have we had any response? The Clerk in Finchampstead responded thanking us for the letter, and will respond properly in the new year. The Clerk will follow up if a response is not received by the end of next week.

The report of flooding at a resident’s property at Barkham Fields. WBC/Thames Water not being very helpful, what is being done? Mrs Stubbs and the Clerk have written to WBC Drainage team to request they meet on site so they can be shown where the problem lies. A response is yet to be received.

School Road ETRO, we need to keep an eye on the end date to ensure we submit a response. Mr Heyliger is currently collating the stats from the data logger etc.

**Cllr Kaiser:** A call for sites for gypsy sites was released today asking for any land for this.

**Mr Heyliger:** Stratified Mortimer PC (SMPC) are finally in a position to commence their Community Speed Watch activities and having completed their training they are now in a position to offer BPC a demo on their Westcotex speed watch camera. This is our preferred choice of device which is approved by TVP. Mr Heyliger and 2 other Speed Watch Volunteers will be visiting SMPC on 20 January. If they are satisfied with the device an expenditure request will be submitted at the February Council meeting to be CIL funded. The cost is expected to be around £3800 plus Vat and the delivery period is around 6-8 weeks.

**Mr Stubbs:** Just to inform that the batteries in the SID device on Barkham Road do not seem to last very long. Mr Heyliger responded to say they last for approximately 2 weeks, however we are waiting for WBC to provide a power connection for the SID.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.29pm