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BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the meeting of the Barkham Parish Council held on 13th June 2023 in the Studio Hall, Arborfield Green Community Centre at 7.30pm.

**Present**: Mrs Stubbs (in the Chair), Mr Heyliger, Mr Dexter, Mr Langford, Mr Wrobel, Cllr Pittock (Ward Councillor) and the Clerk.

2 residents were in attendance at the meeting

**23/079 To receive and accept any apologies for absence** Local Government Act 1972 Sch12

Mr Barker – Family Matter

Mr Williams has given his apologies, he is unable to attend this meeting to be co-opted, and has requested it be rescheduled for the July meeting.

**23/080 To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda** (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1464)

None

**23/081 Minutes of the Council Meeting** LGA 1972 Sch 12 para 41(1) **–**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 9th May 2023 were approved and signed as a true record. The minutes were signed by Mrs Stubbs.

**23/082 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.

1 resident, a member of the BVRA attended for the discussion on the proposal to merge the 2 magazines

**23/083 Co-option of New Councillor –** Council to consider co-opting Mr David Williams onto the Council.

Mr Williams was unable to attend the meeting, and it was agreed that the co-option would be postponed until the July meeting of the Council.

**23/084 Planning**:

7.35 – 2 residents arrived at the meeting.

Motion by Mrs Stubbs to return to the public section so the residents who had just arrived could state their reasons for attending, as she was aware one of them wished to join the council.

Vote – all agreed – Motion carried.

One resident attended to put himself forward to become a councillor. Council asked the resident to give some background and reasons for wanting to join the Parish Council, which the resident provided. The co-option will be added to the July Agenda for this resident.

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The second attended to support the purchase of The Coombes, and had nothing further to discuss.

7.43 – The resident wanting to join the council left the meeting, as he had only attended for the public section of the meeting.

1. **Planning Applications –** Council discussed and agreed any comments or objections on planning applications received before 13th June. As follows:

**230629** - Caldwell House, Barkham Road, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG41 4TH

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front extension, a part single part two storey part first floor side extension and a single storey rear extension with changes to fenestration and the addition of 1 no. Juliet balcony, plus the erection of a detached garage with first floor accommodation to form an annexe, following demolition of the existing detached triple garage, annexe, workshop, carport and log store**.

Barkham Parish Council (BPC) opposes this application as it would represent a further significant development of this site on grounds of overdevelopment and, in particular, how the scale would affect the local amenity and character of the area.

If this application was approved, it would not be consistent with another recent planning application - 220684 - to build a large dwelling on an adjacent site at Handpost Farm which was refused because it would cause unacceptable harm to the character of the prevailing landscape.  The decision was upheld on appeal.

BPC requests that this current application is also refused.

**231095** - Hogwood Farm, Sheerlands Road, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG40 4QY

**Application for the approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to Outline Planning Consent O/2014/2179 (as varied by 181194, dated 14/11/2018). The Reserved Matters comprise details of 258 dwellings across Parcel P10 with access via the Nine Mile Ride Extension (NMRE) and Southern Bus Loop, associated internal roads, provision of Public Open Space and play areas, together with parking, cycle ways, footpaths, landscaping and sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS). Details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale to be considered**.

Barkham Parish Council had no comments on this application

**230529** - Hogwood Farm, Sheerlands Road, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG40 4QY

**Full application for the temporary formation of a visitor’s car park, temporary formation of a SUDS drainage basin and temporary landscaping to facilitate use of units 1 and 2 as a sales centre within development phases P14 & P15 at Hogwood Farm (Reserved Matters 220175 pursuant to outline consent 181194 refers). (Retrospective)**

Barkham Parish Council had no comments on this application

**223742 -** 176 Bearwood Road - **Demolition of exist Property and rebuild**

Council reviewed this application at during the council meeting in January 2023 and based on the information provided re scale etc decided to make ‘a no comment response’. Council has since learnt that there are heritage issues at stake here although the property is not listed - The NPPF requires all heritage assets to reviewed regardless of whether they are designated as such.  The house was part of the Walter estate and is in the style there-of.

Council agreed to submit further comments to the application as follows:

When Barkham Parish Council (BPC) considered this application in Jan 2023, it was not aware of any heritage issues as Section 7 of the Design and Access Statement reported there were none.  We now believe this was the opinion of the agents representing the applicants and not necessarily an unbiased statement.

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Although a formal Heritage Statement has since been posted on 17 May 2023, we note that it was commissioned by the architects working on behalf of the applicants.  BPC would feel more comfortable if any decision regarding the future of this property was based on the views of an independent 3rd party regarding its heritage and would welcome the views of the Conservation Officer on this matter.  Just because a building is not designated as listed does not mean it should not be afforded equivalent protection.  It is one thing to modify such a building – quite another to demolish it completely.

**231330** -Bluebell Farm, Commonfield Lane, Barkham, Wokingham, RG40 4PR

**Full application for the proposed change of use of land for stationing no. 14 static mobile home caravans for permanent residential use following demolition of existing dwellinghouse**.

Barkham Parish Council object to this application. The Parish Council questions whether this site is needed, as there is already a sufficient number of Gipsy and Traveller sites within the parish. It would change the character of the parish, and create extra traffic on a narrow road, that is not suitable for taking further traffic.

There is no documentation as part of the application as to how the site will manage its waste and rubbish disposal or for the provision of other services.

1. **Approved and Refused Applications**

**230543 -** 330 Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DE

**Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the mixed use of the building as part residential and part Beauty Salon.**

This application has been approved by WBC

1. **Any Other Planning Business**

**23/085 Delegated Authority Report**

There were no decisions made under delegated authority since the last meeting

**23/086 Clerks Report -** Council received a report from the Clerk

**Land at Highlands Avenue**

No progress has been made. The Clerk would like to close this item until further information becomes available.

**Item ongoing**

**Enforcement Issues**

Land by Coppid Hill House – No update has been received from WBC on this.

The Coombes –

* Land adjacent to White Heart Grove – No update received
* Plot B. – No update received
* Beech Wood – No update received

**Items ongoing**

**Drainage Issues**

Monitoring of the field is ongoing to ensure the problem has been rectified

**Item ongoing**

**School Road / Langley Common Road Junction**

The Road safety group continue to push for the reduction in the limit on this road.

**Item Ongoing**

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**The Coombes Woodland Maintenance**

This has been put on hold due to the possible sale of the woodlands.

**Item ongoing**

**Instalcom Appeal**

The Council still await the inspector’s decision.

**Item ongoing**

**Next meeting with WBC Executive Officers**

The Working group has met with the Executive and some progress is being made.

**Item ongoing**

**Insight Strategy and Inclusion meeting with WBC**

No further update at this time.

**Item ongoing**

**District and Community Centres**

The Council await the decision on the planning application that was discussed at the last meeting.

**Item ongoing**

**Solar Farm**

Monitoring of the delayed project is ongoing.

**Item ongoing**

**California Country Park Improvement Scheme**

No further update since the last meeting.

**Item ongoing**

**BVRA/BPC Survey**

The CIL advisory committee need to meet to discuss the CIL projects suggested by the residents to see if they are feasible to take forward**.**

**Item ongoing**

**Treatment of the Bracken at The Junipers**

WBC have scheduled the treatment of the bracken to take place at the beginning of July, when the product is able to be used again.

**Item ongoing**

**23/087 Finance**

* 1. **Accounts** – Proposal to agree accounts and payments for May to June 2023 LGA 1972 s150 (5)

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| --- |
| Payments for May to June 2023 authorised at the Council meeting on 13th June 2023 |
| S/O | Staff Wages | £1085.27 | June 2023 salary – LGA 1972 s111  |
| DD | Nest | £105.44 | Pension Contribution Employer & Employee – June 2023 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Plusnet | £32.14 | Internet and phone charges – June 2023 – LGA 1972 s111  |
| DD | Lloyds Bank (Credit Card) | £147.83 | Credit Card bill – May Payments – LGA 1972 s111£0.95 – Co-op stores - Milk£143.88 – Zoom Subscription£3.00 – monthly fee |
| BACS | C. Connell | £200.00 | Internal Audit for year ended 31st March 2023 - Internal Audit Accounts & Audit Regulations 2003 reg 2 |
| BACS | Amazon | £26.52 | £24.95 – Speed Watch Camera storage bag LGA 1972 s111£1.57 - Stationary LGA 1972 s111 |

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| BACS | Martin & Pole | £480.00 | Advice and negotiations for the purchase of The Coombes LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Diggerwise | £53,040.00 | Upgrade to footpath BA10 – CIL Funded - LGA 1972 s111, CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended)  |
| BACS | BVRA | £448.55 | Refund of overpayment made to BPC from Grant monies - LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Netwise | £528.00 | Website and Email Hosting subscription LGA 1972 s142 |

* 1. **Report on Monies received**

£2,724.68 – VAT Refund

£500.25 – BVRA refund of funds from Jubilee grant (there has been an error and an overpayment of funds to be refunded back to BVRA)

£136.68 – Natwest Interest for May

* 1. **Purchase of The Coombes Woodlands – Joint with Arborfield PC**
1. Council agreed to the purchase of The Coombes Woodland, using CIL funds, at a cost of £475,000, with funding from Arborfield PC, Barkham would pay £345,000 of its CIL funds for the purchase. Open Spaces Act 1906 s.9, CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended)
2. Council approved the Stamp Duty for the purchase, using CIL funds, at circa £11,500.  (This will only be payable, if the Councils do not set up a charitable trust) Open Spaces Act 1906 s.9, CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended)
3. Council agreed, that in the absence of further information, direct ownership is the preferred option of ownership, but will consider a charitable trust, if it is deemed the best way forward, after further investigations.

The Council thinks the cost of setting up a trust will exceed £3,000, and so if it is deemed the best way forward after the research has concluded, it will be bought back to full council for a final decision.

1. Council agreed to the first-year management costs of the woodlands at Circa £66,000 (including VAT) - Capital Costs for the first year will be paid for through CIL. Costs will be split with Arborfield PC in the ratio in which the purchase is made. Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10, CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended)
2. Council agreed to include funding for the management of the woodlands through the Precept, which may incur a rise to the precept at a cost of Circa £36,000 (including VAT). Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10
3. Council agreed to the Solicitors fees, shared with Arborfield PC, for the purchase. The Council added a buffer for if the costs exceed the amount given, and agreed to up to £15,000 of solicitor’s fees Local Government Act 1972 s.111, CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended)
4. Council agreed to the purchase of insurance for the woodland and for financial mismanagement insurance at a cost of circa £1,000. This will only be needed if a charitable trust is formed. Local Government Act 1972 s.111, CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended)
	1. **CIL Monitoring form** CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) Regulation 62A

Council reviewed and approved the CIL monitoring form for the financial year 2022-2023 for publication. The form will be published on the website by the deadline for publication in December.

* 1. **Parish Online Mapping Software** Local Government Act 1972 s.111

Council decided not to continue with a subscription to Parish online Mapping Software at a cost of £237.60. The Clerk will write to the company, advising them of the decision not to renew the contract. The Council may reconsider the subscription in the future when resources improve.

* 1. **New Laptop Software Purchase** Local Government Act 1972 s.111

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Council agreed that the Clerk could make the purchase of the laptop with the purchase of a package of software that best suits the Clerk’s needs. The Clerk is to decide if the one-off purchase at £212.16, or a subscription of up to £123.60 a year is the best option, as the council agreed that they would pay the ongoing costs if that was deemed the best option for the Clerk’s needs.

**23/088** **Approval and signing of Parish Accounts for the Financial Year End** Internal Audit Accounts & Audit Regulations 2003 reg 2

* 1. Council received a report on the internal audit
	2. Council approved the accounts for the Year End.

The Unity Trust Current Account Bank balance as of the 31st March 2023 was £ 473,298.84

The Unity Trust Savings Account Bank balance as of the 31st March 2023 was £ 76,113.72

The Natwest Savings Account Bank balance as of the 31st March 2023 was £ 140,619.13

The Nationwide Savings Account Bank balance as of the 31st March 2023 was £140,000.00

1. Council approved the **Annual Governance Statement** for the Annual Audit. The form was duly signed by the Chairman and Clerk
2. Council approved the **Annual Accounting Statement** for the Annual Audit. The form was duly signed by the Chairman and Clerk

**23/089 Parish Office Operations**

**Appointment of internal Auditor for Financial Year End 2023-2024**

Council agreed to appoint Claire Connell as the internal auditor for the end of year financial audit.

**Proposal to merge Village Info with the BVRA magazine**

A Motion to invite the BVRA representative to speak on the proposal was made by Mr Langford, seconded by Mrs Stubbs. Vote all agreed.

The BVRA representative presented the proposal to Council.

The Council could see the positives for merging the magazines and agreed to set up a working group to look at the options and devise a way forward for council to agree at a future meeting.

**23/090 Councillor Forum**

**Mr Heyliger**

Reported that the drain by the bus stop on Coppid Hill was blocked and needed Clearing. The Clerk will report this to WBC.

Reported that there were 2 mounds of earth by Manor Cottage on Barkham Street, from what appears to be drain cleaning that need removing. The Clerk will report to WBC.

Reported that the new Speed Watch equipment had been tested and 2 operators have been trained on the equipment. Speed Watch sessions will commence soon.

Mr Dexter

Grass and Hedge Cutting – WBC would like a list of problem areas in the parish. Please can Councillors send any areas of concern to Mr Dexter to collate ready to be sent to WBC.

Welcomed Mr Pittock as our new Ward Councillor. Asked how Mr Pittock intended to hear the views of the Community – Mr Pittock is happy to meet regularly to hear parishioners and Councillors views,

9.30pm – Vote to continue – All agreed

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Mr Wrobel

Informed Council that he will be meeting Ms Frost from WBC to discuss fly tipping and CCTV, with a view to putting forward a proposal to purchase cameras using CIL funds at a future meeting.

Raised the need for adverts for new councillors – the Clerk will be putting the adverts on the notice boards on Wednesday.

Mrs Stubbs

Requested that it be looked into for purchasing 2 bins to go at either end of Sandy Lane footpath, to stop dog poo bags being left along the path. Any other sites to be raised by Councillors for consideration and the Clerk will obtain quotes for purchasing the bins and emptying the bins. Mr Dexter suggested bins at footpath BA10.

**23/091 Exclusion of public and press** Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 S1 (2)

Council agreed that, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, the meeting was closed to the public. The residents in attendance left the meeting and the part 2 discussions began.

**Part 2**

**23/092 Minutes of previous part 2 meeting**

**23/093 The Coombes**