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BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the meeting of the Barkham Parish Council held on 12th September 2023 in the Studio Hall, Arborfield Green Community Centre at 7.30pm.

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

2 residents were in attendance at the meeting

**23/094 To receive and accept any apologies for absence** Local Government Act 1972 Sch12

Mr Barker – On holiday

Cllr Pittock (Ward Councillor) – Attendance required at a WBC meeting

**23/095 To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda** (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1464)

None

**23/096 Minutes of the Council Meeting** LGA 1972 Sch 12 para 41(1) **–**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13th June 2023 were approved and signed as a true record. The minutes were signed by Mrs Stubbs.

**23/097 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

**Motion by Mr Heyliger to move the agenda item for the merger proposal up the agenda so that the representative could leave after the discussion if needed.**

Proposed by Mr Heyliger. Seconded by Mr Wrobel. Vote – All agreed

The agenda item will be discussed after the planning section of the meeting.

**23/098 Co-option of New Councillor** Local Government Act 1972 S16 **–** Council to consider co-opting Mr David Williams onto the Council.

Mr Williams was unanimously co-opted onto council. All relevant forms were completed and signed by Mr Williams and the Clerk.

**23/099 Election of Vice Chairman** Local Government Act 1972 S15(6)

The election to fill the position of Vice Chair has been postponed until the next meeting where it is hoped that there will be full attendance by all members.

**23/100 Planning**:

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1. **Planning Applications –** Council discussed and agreed any comments or objections on planning applications received before 12th September 2023. As follows:

**231791** -5 Aggisters Lane, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DW

**Householder application for the proposed conversion of garage to habitable accommodation, part single storey side extension, part single part two storey rear extension**

Barkham Parish Council had no comments on this application

**231708 -** 331 Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DJ

**Householder application for the installation of children’s play equipment. (Part retrospective)**

Barkham Parish Council had no objections in principle to this application, but feel the choice of colour is not very considerate to neighbours.

**232132** -275 Barkham Road, Wokingham, RG41 4BY

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension with 1 no. lantern rooflight following demolition of existing garage, plus changes to fenestration and alterations to landscaping including addition of hardstanding, removal of front steps and relocation of retaining wall in front garden.**

Barkham Parish Council had no comments on this application, but will wait to submit the response to see if any neighbours had any concerns.

1. **Approved and Refused Applications**

**223468** - 39a Sandy Lane, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SS

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a 2 storey extension to form additional habitable accommodation, including rooflights and conversion of the integral garage. Erection of a single storey detached garage/garden store with pitched roof to the front of the dwelling along with changes to fenestration, following demolition of the existing single storey front elevation and single storey porch.**

This application was approved by WBC

**230606 -** Honeysuckle Lodge and Pine Lodge, Commonfield Lane, Barkham, Wokingham, RG40 4PR

**Application to vary conditions 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12 and 13 of planning consent 203626 for the proposed subdivision of existing 3 no. pitch gypsy traveller site to provide 8 no. pitches (net increase of 5 no. pitches), with ancillary day rooms, storage buildings and parking following demolition of existing buildings. Condition 2 refers to the approved details; condition 4 to landscaping and boundary treatment; condition 5 to submission of an Arboricultural Method Statement; condition 8 to cycle parking; condition 9 to drainage details; condition 12 to a lighting scheme and condition 13 to bin storage. The variation is to change the internal road layout of the site, and to alter the wording of condition 4, 5, 8, 9, 12 and 13.**

This application was approved by WBC

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

**Full application for the temporary formation of a visitors 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)**

This application was approved by WBC

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

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**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.**

This application was approved by WBC

**231428 -** 299 Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DG

**Householder application for the proposed erection of 2No Hip to gable loft conversions, with 3No Rear Dormers, and 3No roof lights to front elevation along with changes to the rear fenestration and removal of the chimney**

This application was approved by WBC

**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.**

This application was refused by WBC

**223721** -344 Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DE

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey side extension and alterations to roof to extend existing first floor habitable accommodation (part-retrospective).**

This application was approved by WBC

**231225** -347 Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DJ

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a two storey front and single storey rear extensions, including the conversion of the loft to habitable accommodation and storage, internal alterations and increase size of dormer.**

This application was approved by WBC

**231701** -29 Lance Way, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG2 9YY

**Householder application for the proposed conversion of existing loft to create habitable accommodation, to include 1no. dormer to the main N/E roof elevation along with 3No rooflights to the S/W elevation.**

This application was approved by WBC

**230597 -** Sunny Ridge, Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4TG

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front/side/rear extension, following demolition of existing garage.**

This application was approved by WBC

**223037** -Land at Edneys Hill, Edneys Hill, Wokingham, RG41 4DS

**Outline planning permission for the proposed erection of up to 40 no. dwellings plus open space, pedestrian and cycle links with other associated infrastructure and primary vehicular access from Barkham Road, following the demolition of no. 368 Barkham Road. (All matters reserved except for access).**

This application was refused by WBC

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1. **Any Other Planning Business**

**Ye Olde Leathern Bottle letter**

Residents of Barkham Road received a letter regarding proposed development to land off Limmer Hill at Ye Olde Leathern Bottel pub. Discussions need to be had on this, but Council will await the official planning application to be received.

Two large Oak Trees at the site have been cut down and removed. Clerk is to contact WBC to report the tree removal, as it is believed that due to the size and age of the trees and the volume of wood removed, special permission would have been needed to remove them, even though they did not have TPOs on them. The Clerk is to ask if this information is correct and whether any such permission was granted.

**Woodlands Farm Appeal**

Council has received notification that the enforcement notice and requirements confining the operations to a contractors yard was upheld at appeal. The owners have 6 months to comply with the notice. It’s too early to see what impact this has on the traffic or whether Instalcom might end up using part of the land just for storage, by confining operations to those under a previous Certificate of Lawful development. There is a question of exactly what is allowed under the existing certificate of use, and the Clerk will query this with WBC

There is a question of what is allowed under the existing certificate of use, and the Clerk will query this with WBC.

**Planning Process Draft Statement of Community Involvement – Consultation**

Council decided to submit some comments on the consultation of the Planning Process Draft Statement of Community Involvement consultation to WBC, as follows:

Barkham Parish Council feels that communication has improved, however some items that are planning related, which do not need to go through the planning application process, are not shared directly with Parishes, for example the consultation to close School Road, which causes concern. Any items that may affect residents should be shared with the parishes for comment.

Residents may feel less positive.  The statements in the consultation document give the right impression, but there is no indication where the substance is in them or what will change in practice from residents’ perspective.

**Street Cleaning Consultation**

The Councils have been granted an extension to submit comments. Council agreed that the Clerk can draft comments for the Council to approve via delegated authority to be submitted to WBC, reflecting concern about the removal of bins near the Arborfield Green playing fields.

Mr Wrobel notified the Clerk that the bin at The Coombes is broken and needs replacing.

**23/101 Ward Councillor Report –** Council received a report from Cllr Ian Pittock.

The following report was sent to the Clerk by Cllr Pittock to be given at the meeting:

I have submitted a request to make the road between NMRE to Biggs Lane 30mph.

Good news, Edneys Hill has been refused

Awaiting official paper on Bohunt 6th form before shouting at leadership.

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I am chasing up some vegetation cutting issues.

I am submitting some TPO requests.

**23/102 Delegated Authority Report September 2023**

The below decisions were made under delegated authority between June 2023 and September 2023.

**Finance**

**June**

**Searches Fees for the purchase of The Coombes** LGA 1972 s111

Council agreed to pay for searches for the purchase of the Coombes. The Cost of the Searches to Barkham PC were £662.57 + VAT

**This expenditure was approved by majority of the full council.**

**July**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Payments for June to July 2023 for authorisation** | | | |
| S/O | Staff Wages | £1085.27 | July 2023 salary – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Nest | £105.44 | Pension Contribution Employer & Employee – April 2023 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Plusnet | £32.14 | Internet and phone charges – February 2023 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Lloyds Bank (Credit Card) | £900.41 | Credit Card bill – February Payments – LGA 1972 s111  £897.41 – Dell Ltd – Laptop purchase  £3.00 – monthly fee |
| BACS | HMRC | £289.50 | Tax and NI for 1st Quarter LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Staff Expenses | £34.97 | Staff expenses for the 1st Quarter LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Amazon Business | £60.84 | Accessories for new Laptop – Bag, Work Station and USB extender LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Unity Trust | £18.00 | Service charge for first quarter LGA 1972 s111 |

**Increase in Hire Charge for the Studio Hall Hire** LGA 1972 s111

Council was informed that the cost of hiring the studio hall for the monthly meetings has increased by £1.50 per hour to a rate of £18.00 per hour.

**This expenditure was approved by full council.**

**Tree and Bat Surveys for The Coombes Woodland** LGA 1972 s111

Council is asked to agree to Tree an Bat Surveys being undertaken at The Coombes prior to the purchase being made.  Quotes are yet to be obtained and council is asked to agree that any quotes be reviewed and agreed under delegated authority during the summer break.

**This was approved by majority of the full council.**

**August**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Payments for July to August 2023 for authorisation via delegated authority in August | | | |
| S/O | Staff Wages | £1085.27 | August 2023 salary – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Nest | £105.44 | Pension Contribution Employer & Employee – April 2023 – LGA 1972 s111 |

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|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DD | Plusnet | £32.14 | Internet and phone charges – February 2023 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Lloyds Bank (Credit Card) | £7.33 | Credit Card bill – February Payments – LGA 1972 s111  £4.33 – Office Refreshments for meeting  £3.00 – Monthly fee |
| BACS | Savills | £603.00 | Hall hire for year 2023-2024 LGA 1972 s111 (made in 2 payments) |
| BACS | PKF Littlejohn | £1,260.00 | External Audit fee YE 31.03.2023 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 |

**This expenditure was approved by full council.**

**Tree Survey for the purchase of The Coombes Woodlands** LGA 1972 s111

Council was asked to agree to a tree survey being carried out for the purchase of The Coombes Woodlands. The cost would be split 50:50 with Arborfield PC.

Quotes for the costs for the survey were as follows:

Berks Bucks and Oxford Wildlife Trust: £900 tree survey plus £720 H& S Survey **= £1620 +VAT**

Duckworth Arboriculture Limited: Tree safety Survey: **£1320 +VAT**

WBC Countryside Services: **£1128 +VAT**

The preferred provider for ANPC is Duckworths Arboriculture Limited.  The reasons for this are as follows:

1. They have a relationship with the company from using them previously for their other woodland.
2. BBOWT are more expensive
3. As we plan on using WBC countryside services for the initial works, it is thought it best to have an independent survey undertaken so we are aware of the works needed.
4. The report from Duckworths will be broken down into 3 sections – Urgent work needed to be completed immediately, work to be undertaken within 6 months, and work to be undertaken within a year.

It is felt that the tree survey should be done before we complete and exchange contracts, as if there are any major concerns, which need immediate attention, that may be costly, then we may be able to negotiate on the price.  If the survey is carried out after exchange, then we have no room to discuss the price, as the purchase will have been completed.

Council were asked the following: Please can you confirm if you are in agreement to proceed with the survey, and to use the services of Duckworth Arboriculture Limited at a cost of £1320 +VAT. The Cost to Barkham PC would be £660.00 +VAT.

**This expenditure was approved by full council.**

**Phone and Broadband Package** LGA 1972 s111

An email was received from Plusnet regarding the closure of analogue phonelines from the 5th September 2023.  The Clerk managed to speak with someone from BT about this. To keep the analogue phoneline, the council needs to migrate to another provider before 5th September, and the provider recommended by Plusnet is BT.

Plusnet is also closing down their business services from the end of 2023, so this is another reason the council has to move the contract.  There will be no charges applied for terminating the contract with plusnet, as this is of their own doing.

The Council is currently under a contract on an analogue copper wire system, and have an unlimited business phone and broadband package which costs £26.78 exc. VAT per month (£32.14 including

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VAT).   The Council need to migrate to a new provider to be able to keep its phoneline and broadband package, as from 5th September Plusnet will not provide this system.

BT can offer us 2 options as follows:

1. Stay on an analogue copper wire system (this will be completely phased out by 2025).  There are 2 options of contract for this – Pay as you go or unlimited call package.

* The Pay as you go package is £24.95 Exc. VAT per month for the line rental and broadband, but any calls made are charged at 10p (I think this also excludes VAT) per minute.
* The unlimited calls package (which includes landline calls and calls to mobiles) costs £31.95 Exc. VAT per month, an increase of £5.17 per month on what we currently pay Exc. VAT.

1. Move to a digital phoneline (which we will need to do by 2025).  There are 2 options of contract for this – Pay as you go or unlimited call package.   For the digital option, BT will also provide a digital phone for us to use.  Only 1 will be supplied but further digital phones can be purchased.

* The Pay as you go package is £26.95 Exc. VAT per month for the line rental and broadband, but any calls made are charged at 10p (I think this also excludes VAT) per minute.
* The unlimited calls package (which includes landline calls and calls to mobiles) costs £33.95 Exc. VAT per month, an increase of £7.17 per month on what we currently pay Exc. VAT.

The Clerk also contacted a business phone and broadband comparison business to get other quotes, but they could not come near this price, so going direct to BT is the best option.

The Clerk recommends that the council take out the digital unlimited calls package, as this will save us having the same issue in a year or 2.  It will result in an increase of £7.17 exc. VAT per month, but it will save having to change to a digital line in the next year or so.

The cost including VAT will be £40.74 per month.

**This was approved by majority of the full council.**

**Planning**

**July**

**231275 -** Land At, 178 Bearwood Road, Barkham, Wokingham

**Application for a Certificate of existing lawful development for the use of a residential dwelling house and associated ancillary residential land.**

Barkham Parish Council object to this application on the grounds that the submitted available evidence does not confirm that the erection of The Lake House and its use as a Single Dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) and its surrounding land, may not have occurred over 10 years ago, and is thus not immune from enforcement action. (ET Planning Ltd, 10646740, CLEUD Statement 26 May 2023)

It is impossible for the Parish Council to opine sensibly on this application as the all important appendices have been deliberately withheld.

Barkham Parish Council request this application be refused.

**This response was approved by majority of the full council.**

**231276 -** 178 Land At, Bearwood Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SH

**Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the use of a residential dwelling house and associated ancillary residential land.**

Barkham Parish Council object to this application on the grounds that the submitted available evidence does not confirm that the erection of The Lake House and its use as a Single Dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) and

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its surrounding land, may not have occurred over 10 years ago, and is thus not immune from enforcement action.

It is impossible for the Parish Council to opine sensibly on this application as the all important appendices have been deliberately withheld.

Barkham Parish Council request this application be refused.

**This response was approved by majority of the full council.**

**231428 -** 299 Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DG

**Householder application for the proposed erection of 2No Hip to gable loft conversions, with 3No Rear Dormers, and 3No roof lights to front elevation along with changes to the rear fenestration and removal of the chimney**

Barkham Parish Council has the following comments on this application:

This is a sizeable extension in the vertical plane although contained within the boundaries of the overall footprint.  There are concerns that the proposed development of the bungalow may overlook the neighbouring properties, thus removing their privacy and affecting the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties.

The conversion of another of the few remaining bungalows in Barkham Road is incrementally changing the nature and amenity of Barkham.

The Parish Council would also like confirmation that the extension does not deprive the neighbours of natural light.

**This response was approved by majority of the full council.**

**223721 -** 344 Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DE

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey side extension and alterations to roof to extend existing first floor habitable accommodation.**

No Comments on this application

**This response was approved by majority of the full council.**

**Land off Langley Common Road Development –** Council is asked to agree to the following response being submitted:

Barkham Parish Council reserves it comments on this proposed development until the full application has been submitted to WBC for public consultation

**This response was approved by majority of the full council.**

**231225 -** 347 Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DJ

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a two storey front and single storey rear extensions, including the conversion of the loft to habitable accommodation and storage, internal alterations and increase size of dormer.**

Barkham Parish Council have no comments on this application.

**This response was approved by majority of the full council.**

**230597** - Sunny Ridge Barkham Road Barkham Wokingham RG41 4TG

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front/side/rear extension, following demolition of existing garage.**

Barkham Parish Council have no comments on this application.

**This response was approved by majority of the full council.**

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**August**

**231349 -** Longmoor Lodge, Park Lane, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4PT

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey side and rear extension to existing garage, including changes to fenestration and the insertion of a first floor to create habitable accommodation, plus the erection of an outbuilding.**

Barkham Parish Council have no comments on this application.

**This response was approved by majority of the full council.**

**231701 -** 29 Lance Way, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG2 9YY

**Householder application for the proposed conversion of existing loft to create habitable accommodation, to include 1no. dormer to the main N/E roof elevation along with 3No rooflights to the S/W elevation.**

Barkham Parish Council have no comments on this application.

**This response was approved by majority of the full council.**

**230872 -** Arborfield Green District Centre, Arborfield Green, Arborfield, Berkshire

**Application for approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to Outline Planning Consent O/2014/2280 (dated 02/04/2015). Re-consultation on revised plans and supporting information. Amendments to plans, elevations & siting of house types (increase to No. 207 dwellings) & high street commercial units; public house site (indicative) layout; hard & soft landscaping within village green; drainage; pedestrian crossing location. Expanded red line boundary to facilitate new piazza area (west of car park). As described within applicant cover letter.**

Barkham Parish Council can see no material changes to the plans that addresses the concerns of the council, and therefore, the previous comments submitted on the 25th May 2023 still stand.

The Parish Council also have concerns that Wokingham Council has proposed the Bohunt 6th Form Centre be sited in the legacy building (MOD Library) where the community centre is currently contained in the plans.  This has been widely shared on Facebook by Cllr Pittock and Cllr Cornish, informing the residents of the possibility of this building being used, and that feasibility studies are being undertaken. Where does this leave the community centre? There is nowhere else in the plans for it to go!

The Council is also disappointed to see that the number of dwellings has been increased in the revised plans.

Due to the previous comments not being considered, the proposed plans for the Bohunt 6th Form centre and the additional houses that have been added, the Parish Council are unable to support this application and request that it be refused.

**This response was approved by majority of the full council.**

**231842 -** 17 Lance Way, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG2 9YY

**Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension following the demolition of existing conservatory.**

Barkham Parish Council have no comments on this application.

**This response was approved by majority of the full council.**

**23/103 Clerks Report -** Council received a report from the Clerk

**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

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* Beech Wood – No update received

**Items 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**

**Instalcom Appeal**

The Council still await the inspector’s decision.

**Item ongoing**

**Meeting with WBC Executive Officers**

At the most recent meeting, the working group met with The WBC representative and a member from Highways to discuss ongoing items.

1. Progress is being made with regards to the gradient of the crossing on Biggs Lane, with a ‘table’ hump (similar to a speed bump) proposed to be installed to rectify the issue and aid crossing of the road. It is hoped that this ‘traffic calming’ measure will also assist with the moving of the national speed limit to further back beyond Commonfield Lane.
2. WBC is looking into a permanent crossing by Farley Hill School, counts are being undertaken and a decision will be made based on the outcomes of those counts. Cllr Pittock has advised that Highways need to take into account that many of the children currently in attendance are driven to the school, as they were originally at the old Farley Hill School, and as the children progress through the school, more and more will walk as they will come from the SDL, so consideration needs to be given to the fact that those walking to and crossing the road at the school will increase.
3. Speed Counts are due to be undertaken in September on Langley Common Road (LCR), to see if the speed of the vehicles is in the area required by the police to allow a change of Speed Limit to 30MPH.
4. The Junction of School Road and LCR has been squared off with white painted lines, to allow drivers to approach the junction square on, to improve sightlines at the junction for drivers.

**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**

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**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**

**Purchase of Litter Bins**

The Clerk has contacted WBC about the purchase and installation of the bins. WBC may have some used bins that have been removed that the Parish Council can purchase to save some costs, they will confirm once we have identified where the bins are needed to be placed.

BPC will need to pay for the bins, installations and the ongoing emptying costs. There should be no reason why bins cannot be attached to lampposts etc. If they need to dig into the ground to locate the bins, there will be addition costs for identifying if there are any services, and a license will be required for this.

One requirement is that stickers are purchased to go on the bins to identify them as belonging to BPC.

Tivoli need to be contacted for a quote for emptying the bins as part of the existing agreement

**Item ongoing**

**Closure of Langley Common Road Underpass**

WBC has informed the Clerk that the underpass at Langley Common Road, by Rickman Close is to be closed. A new toucan crossing will be installed on Langley Common Road, in the location of the bus stops by Rickman Close. The bus stop and shelter on the Wokingham bound carriageway will be resited further along the road to allow for the crossing.

**Item ongoing**

**Closed Items:**

**Land at Highlands Avenue**

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

**Item closed**

**Drainage Issues at Barkham Playing Fields**

Drainage at the fields appears to have been resolved, and the fields are much drier. Regular monitoring will be undertaken to ensure this remains the case.

**Item Closed**

**The Coombes Woodland Maintenance**

This has been closed due to the Parish Councils attempt to purchase The Coombes.

**Item Closed**

**Purchase of New Laptop**

The Clerk has purchased a new laptop, and has decided on the Microsoft 365 Basic Business subscription at £4.90 a month for the software This will be paid monthly on the credit card. The software purchase will be made once the months free trial had ended.

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**Item closed**

Mr Heyliger raised that the junction of School Road and Langley Common Road has not yet been squared off as agreed by WBC.

**23/104 Proposal to merge Village Info and BVRA Magazine**

The Council agreed to explore the matter further with a view to making a decision in October.

There are some items that need more discussion before full agreement can be sought. The discussions will take place before the October meeting, in the hope a final decision can be made in October.

Wider issues around the Council’s communications with residents were discussed. The possibility of using alternative technology, including the use of social media to target different age, location and interest groups, in addition to the proposed magazine, and Council agreed that these issues will need further consideration.

**23/105 The Coombes Purchase**

1. **Update -** Council received an update on the progress of the purchase of the Coombes as follows:

Barkham Parish Council in conjunction with Arborfield and Newland Parish Council are still hopeful that they can secure the woodlands for the residents to continue to enjoy. A joint offer of £475,000 made by the Parish Councils has been accepted by the vendors and we are currently undertaking the searches and other items before the purchase can complete.

There is always the risk that until the contracts are signed and exchanged, that the vendors can pull out of selling the woodlands to us, so it is not yet a ‘done deal’, but we are hopeful that we will exchange and complete in due course.

1. **Terms of Agreement**

9.32 – Vote to continue – All agreed

Council approved the terms of agreement document, subject to some minor wording changes and agreement by Arborfield PC, to be sent to the solicitors to be made into a legally binding document to be signed before the purchase of The Coombes is finalised.

Council agreed that the proposed changes to wording be made, subject to Arborfield’s approval. If Arborfield do not agree to the proposed changes to the wording, the document will be left as drafted.

1. **Signing of Sales Contract upon exchange and completion** Open Spaces Act 1906 s.9,

Council agreed to the Chairman of the Council signing the sales contract when the exchange and completion is ready to occur. The Councillors will review the documents and agree via email that the council agrees with the contract before the Chairman can sign the sales/purchase contract. The Clerk will be present at the signing of the contract.

1. **Transfer of funds to solicitors** Open Spaces Act 1906 s.9, CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended)

Council approved the transfer of funds be made when required, to the solicitors for completion of the sale. The share of funds to be transferred by Barkham Parish Council is:

£345,000.00 for the purchase and

£9619.50 for stamp duty

The Clerk will raise the transfer on the bank account when requested by the solicitors, and the transaction will be authorised by 2 councillors, as per the financial regulations.

1. **Payment of remaining invoices**

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Council agreed that any remaining invoices for the purchase of The Coombes (Solicitors fees etc) be agreed under delegated authority, if they are unable to wait until the next meeting for approval. Any approval will be in line with the delegated authority as set out in the Financial Regulations of the Council.

**23/106 Bus Shelter at Barkham Manor**

Council agreed to the conditions requested by the management association. The Clerk will inform the management association, so that a final decision on the siting of the bus shelter can be made. The conditions agreed to are as follows:

* 1. The legal and ownership status viz a vis construction on our land and indemnification against any public liability arising. The association envisage this may require certain legal guarantees by BPC.
  2. The Association would require it to be sited at least 1m from the (grade II listed) wall to allow access for maintenance.
  3. The association would require that no access route to our property be inadvertently created adjacent to the new shelter, which might present a risk to the security of our grounds. As it appears that excavation of the earth bank and clearance of shrubbery would be required for the proposed shelter we foresee a risk, and would require that suitable physical obstacles to entry were retained or reinstated.

**23/107 Finance**

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Payments for August to September 2023 authorised at Council meeting on 12th September 2023 | | | |
| S/O | Staff Wages | £1085.27 | September 2023 salary – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Nest | £105.44 | Pension Contribution Employer & Employee – September 2023 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Plusnet | £33.10 | Internet and phone charges – September 2023 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Lloyds Bank (Credit Card) | £179.59 | Credit Card bill – August Payments – LGA 1972 s111  £5.88 – Microsoft – Office 365 subscription  £2.83 – Coop – Office refreshments  £167.88 – Dropbox subscription  £3.00 – monthly fee |
| BACS | Amazon | £98.85 | Office Stationary LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Arthur J Gallagher Insurance Brokers Ltd | £1,550.72 | Insurance for 1st October 2023 – 30th September 2024 (including taxes and fees) – LGA 1972 s111 |

1. **Report on Monies received**

£200.00 – Arborfield PC – ANPC Share of Cost for Agent fees for The Coombes Woodlands purchase

1. **Parish Accounting Information**
   * + 1. **Income and Expenditure Report**

Council received and approved the income and expenditure report for April – September. The Clerk reported any variances and these were accepted by Council

* + - 1. **Bank Reconciliations**

Council is informed that the bank statements and account reconciliations have been checked and agreed by Mrs Stubbs

1. **Bank Mandate Updates**

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Council agreed to the removal of Mr Langford from the Bank accounts and nominated Mr Wrobel as a replacement signatory to be added to the accounts. All agreed to the addition of Mr Wrobel as a signatory to the bank accounts.

1. **Addition to Financial Regulations**

Council agreed to an additional statement being written for the Financial regulations that states the Clerk can remove a signatory from the bank account upon the member leaving the Council, without the need to go to full council for permission. This will enable any signatory that has left the Council to be removed without delay. Additions to the bank mandates will still need to be agreed by full council. Wording to be written and agreed before the financial regulations are updated for approval.

1. **Insurance Renewal** LGA 1972 s111

Council agreed to a long term agreement of 3 years being taken out with the insurance company recommended by the Broker Company for the Council (J Gallagher), which has compared the prices of alternative companies and recommended Hiscox, who is our current insurer.

Fixing for 3 years, means the insurance premium will remain the same, unless there are changes to the material facts concerning your policy; policy changes where the sums insured for assets covered against loss or damage are increased or decreased; the annual inflationary increase (index linking) applied to the sums insured for the assets covered against loss or damage; or the imposition by the Government of a higher rate of Insurance Premium Tax (IPT). The quote and price fixed for the period of 3 years is £1,339.93 excluding taxes and fees.

1. **Conclusion of Audit for YE 31st March 2023** Internal Audit Accounts & Audit Regulations 2003 reg 2

Council is notified that the External Audit for the Year Ended 31st March 2023 has concluded and the council has received an Unqualified audit report, with no action needed to be taken.

1. **Book Purchases** LGA 1972 s111

Council approved the purchase of the following books to assist the Clerk in the management of Council Affairs

* + - 1. The Laws of Parks and Open Spaces £36.00 (this will assist with the management of The Coombes)
      2. 13th Ed Local Council Administration £137.00 (Current edition owned by Council is the 11th Edition)
      3. The Clerks' Manual 2023 £47.50 (Current edition owned by Council is 2019 edition)

Delivery: £10.80 – Standard

Total **£ 231.30**

The Clerk will order the books and pay for them using the Credit Card

1. **Grants**

Council considered and approved the following grants to be made the following grant applications for a grant payment:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Payee:** | **Amount requested:** | **For:** | **Legal power that the grant comes under:** | **Agreed amount to be paid to organisation** |
| Royal British Legion | £100.00 | Wreath (to be paid in November) | Local Government Act 1972 s.137 | £100.00 |
| Parenting special Children | £500-£1000 | To help Families who have children and young people who have experienced early life trauma, including children in foster care or who have been adopted due to a variety of reasons, neglect, abuse. Also, families who have experienced poor life experiences and need more specialist support to enable their family to thrive and avoid breakup of families | Local Government Act 1972 s.137 | £1000.00 |

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|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Citizens Advice Bureau | £1000.00 | for continuing service providing advice and support | Local Government Act 1972, s.142 | £1000.00 |
| St James PCC Burial ground grant (awaiting application form) | £2,407.00 | Maintenance of Cemetery | Local Government Act 1972, s.214(6) | £2407.00 |
| Keep Mobile | Shortfall of £1490, so asking for a grant up to this amount | To continue providing the services offered and where possible lower the number of refusals. | Local Government and Rating Act 1997, s.26-28  Transport Act 1985 s.106(a) | £1500.00 |
| BVRA | £880.00 | To cover newsletter printing and the website operation. | Local Government Act 1972 s.137 | £880.00 |

Payments will be raised and authorised along with the above expenditure for the month.

**23/108 Parish Office Operations**

1. **Employing a Deputy Clerk**
   1. **Employment of Deputy Clerk LGA1972 S112 ss.1**

Council agreed to employing a deputy Clerk to assist the Clerk in the running of the Council. This has been raised by Councillors to assist the Clerk in the administration of the Council and to ensure continuity for the Council in the Clerks absence.

Salary scale etc. is to be agreed by full council before an advert can be sent out.

* 1. **Job description and Person Specification for Deputy Clerk**

Council adopted the job description and person specification for a deputy Clerk.

* 1. **Advertising the position**

Council agreed to the Clerk looking into the different ways to advertise the position, to ensure all legal requirements are met. The Clerk will report back at the next meeting for a decision on the ways to advertise.

**23/109 Councillor Forum**

Mr Wrobel asked the Clerk if she had received a response from WBC regarding whather CIL can be used to install Solar Panels on the roof of the Village Hall. The Clerk will chase this up.

Mr Dexter thanked the residents for attending the meeting.

**23/110 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**

**23/111 Minutes of previous part 2 meeting**

**23/112 The Coombes**