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BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the meeting of the Barkham Parish Council held on 12th March 2024 in the Studio Hall, Arborfield Green Community Centre at 7.30pm.

**Present**: Mrs Stubbs (in the Chair), Mr Wrobel, Mr Barker, Mr Sheth, Mr Dexter, Mr Heyliger, Mr Edgecombe, Cllr Pittock (Ward Councillor) and the Clerk. Miss Haynes also attended the meeting

**24/032 To receive and accept any apologies for absence** Local Government Act 1972 Sch12

None

**24/033 To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda** (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1464)

None

**24/034 Minutes of the Council Meeting** LGA 1972 Sch 12 para 41(1) **–**

**Resolved:** The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13th February 2024 were approved and signed as a true record. The minutes were signed by Mrs Stubbs.

**24/035 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.

3 residents were in attendance at the meeting. All 3 residents are interested in joining the council. Backgrounds and reasons for wishing to join the council were given by 2 of the residents, as the third had previously attended to register their interest.

If all 3 residents decide they do wish to join the council they will be co-opted at the May meeting of the council.

**24/036 Planning**:

1. **Planning Applications –** To discuss and agree any comments or objections on planning applications received before 12th March 2024. To include:

**232859** - Land at Hogwood Park Park Lane Finchampstead RG40 4PT

**Full application for the use of plots 127 and 128 as show homes and marketing suite, plus associated landscaping and parking; erection of a pergola in the rear garden of plot 127 (for a temporary period of 3 years).**

Barkham Parish Council have no comments on this application.

**240408 -** The Scrapyard, Land At, Highlands Avenue, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SP

**Application for advertisement consent for 1no. advert on a brick structure (retrospective).**

Barkham Parish Council have no comments on this application.

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**240342** - 11 Baston Road, Arborfield Green, Wokingham, RG2 9ZW

**Householder application for proposed single storey rear conservatory extension.**

Barkham Parish Council have no comments on this application.

**240548** - 9B The Shires, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SZ

**Householder application for proposed roof conversion to create 2No dormers to the front and rear for habitable accommodation**.

Barkham Parish Council have no comments on this application.

1. **Approved and Refused Applications Report**

**232927** - Land At Nine Mile Ride Extension, Reading, RG2 9GB

**Application for approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to Outline Planning Consent O/2014/2280 (dated 02/04/2015). The Reserved Matters (access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) comprise details of a foodstore, including the creation of the store building, public realm area, service vehicle access and service yard, customer car park with access from district centre spine road, landscaping, drainage and associated infrastructure.**

This application was approved by WBC

1. **Withdrawn Applications not discussed by Council**

**233143** - Seasons Hayes Lane Barkham Wokingham RG41 4TA

**Full application for the proposed erection of 3 no. detached five bedroom dwellings with associated parking and landscaping following demolition of the existing dwelling, annexe and outbuildings.**

1. **Any Other Planning Business**

**Question to be put to WBC**

The Councillors discussed whether to carry on with submitting the question discussed at the last meeting, or whether to change or cancel the decision. After discussion, with input from Cllr Pittock regarding work that has been undertaken in the background.

Resolved: Council decided that they would submit the question to WBC, but with some tweaks. The tweaked question will be drafted by Mr Dexter, Mrs Stubbs and the Clerk, ready for the WBC meeting on the 21st March, and sent to Council for approval before the question is asked at the meeting.

**24/037 Ward Councillor Report –** Council received a report from Cllr Ian Pittock.

BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL REPORT – 12th March 2024

1. Rooks Nest Farm
   1. Allotments not yet confirmed; if so, PC will handle the waiting list along with those for the allotments on the Green.
      * Query, this has not been discussed with the parish council, nor have the allotments for Arborfield Green. The Parish Council has not made any agreement to take on the Allotments as yet, as not discussions have been had with the parish by WBC.
      * Cllr Pittock to take this as an action and get someone to meet with the Parish Council.
   2. Confirmed planning permission for the solar farm stipulates, the land would be returned to farmland after 25 years. The 25 years might be extended with additional planning permission.
   3. Mortimers Lodge and Brooks Farm is for the SANG extension, not a backdoor method for the extra solar farm land.
   4. A programme board will now sit over the project boards covering

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* + - Solar farm
    - 2 SEND schools
    - Covid Memorial Wood
    - Potential allotments

1. I have reminded Cllr Paul Fishwick of the need for a review of the School Road Closure.

Action for Cllr Pittock to keep pressure on to get review of closure, and for a proper consultation to be undertaken.

1. March/April – Heading towards Elections
   * + Purdah starts about 26th March.
2. SANG Carpark – The existing car park will be made bigger, will look at the need for a car park at the other end of the SANG

Question – If the SANG is used for housing developments, where will these developments go?

Answer – They will be scattered around

Discussions was had around the medical centre and swimming pool, and if it was part of the S106 agreement. It wasn’t part of the S106 agreement, and the issue with the medical centre is the CCG are against it. The CCG may consider if more SDLs are provided in certain areas.

**24/038 Delegated Authority Report March 2024**

The below decisions were made under delegated authority between February and March 2024.

**Planning**

The following comments were agreed via email, as the date for comments could not be extended.

**230791 -** 31 Barkham Ride Wokingham RG40 4EX

**Outline application for the proposed erection of 26 no. dwellings following demolition of the existing dwelling and garage. (All matters reserved except for access.)**

Barkham Parish Council still object to this application. The revised/additional plans do not address the points raised in the comments submitted by the Parish Council on 2nd May 2023, and those objections still stand.

**This response was agreed by the majority of Full Council.**

**24/038 Clerks Report -** Council received a report from the Clerk

**Change over to BT Phoneline and Broadband**

The change of supplier to BT is still in progress. The new date for transfer is the 11th March 2024. The engineer attended on the 11th, but transfer has not yet occurred.

BT have refunded the £206.12 taken in error.

**Items ongoing**

**Communications**

The Clerk is looking into ways to further communications with residents.

Mr Dexter raised the BVRA magazine. We were informed that it was going to be a digital version only, but that seems to have changed. We may need to be aware as we contribute to the magazine and provide a grant to the BVRA.

**Items ongoing**

**Enforcement Issues**

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The Coombes – No update received

**Items ongoing**

**School Road / Langley Common Road Junction**

This has been agreed, but the work has not yet been completed.

**Item Ongoing**

**Meeting with WBC Executive Officers**

No further update at this time

**Item ongoing**

**Insight Strategy and Inclusion meeting with WBC**

A meeting is planned for March.

**Item ongoing**

**District and Community Centres**

The working group for the Community Centre met on 14th February 2024. An agenda item is included for discussion.

**Item ongoing**

**Solar Farm**

No further update since the last meeting

**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. It was not possible to arrange a meeting prior to this meeting, but a date is due to be set.

**Item ongoing**

**Purchase of Litter Bins**

This project is ongoing.

**Item ongoing**

**Closure of Langley Common Road Underpass**

No further update since the last meeting.

**Item ongoing**

**Closed Items:**

**Crossing the stream at The Coombes**

Planks were purchased to be installed at a stream in The Coombes. After installation, it was flagged as a health and safety issue, in which the Council’s would be liable for any incident. Due to this the planks have been

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removed and a project to install a proper crossing is being considered. The Planks are currently being stored pending any other uses for them.

**Item Closed**

**Bus Shelter at Barkham Road / Barkham Ride roundabout**

The Clerk has had permission from the land owner to site the bus shelter at the new location, and it is on the agenda to be progressed.

**Item closed**

**24/039 The Coombes Woodlands**

* 1. Council received and noted the draft minutes from The Coombes Woodland Committee
  2. Council received an update from the Coombes Woodland Committee on their meeting and any actions being undertaken:

The Coombes Woodland Committee (CWC) held its meeting on the 6th March 2024 2024.

At the meeting the following actions were taken or agreed.

Actions taken at the meeting:

* The Budget approved by Councils was formally agreed at the CWC meeting, and has been set at £36,500.00
* The terms of reference were reviewed and minor changes were made for approval by the Councils.
* A management plan for the woodlands continues to be created.

Phase 1 works to the trees are due to take place on Monday 11th and Wednesday 13th March. The trees will be checked for any nesting birds before any work is undertaken, and if there are signs of nesting, the trees will be left until after the nesting season.

* Research into a website has begun. The new Deputy Clerk for BPC will work to get this set up as soon as possible after she starts.
* A map sectioning the woodlands into areas will be created for ease of reference when reporting issues.
  1. The Council is asked to review and adopt the updated Terms of Reference for the CWC

**Resolved:** Council reviewed and adopted the revised Terms of Reference for the CWC

* 1. Council is asked to review the draft Terms of Agreement with Arborfield, and approve that it be sent to Geldards to be out into a final contract for the 2 councils.

**Resolved:** Council reviewed and approved the draft Terms of agreement to be sent to Geldards Solicitors to form the final contract between the 2 councils.

**24/040 Finance**

1. **Accounts** – Council agreed the following payments for January to February 2024 LGA 1972 s150 (5)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Payments for February to March 2024 for authorisation at Council meeting on 12th March 2024 | | | |
| S/O | Staff Wages | £1270.95 | March 2024 salary – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Nest | £130.43 | Pension Contribution Employer & Employee – March – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Plusnet | £32.14 | Internet and phone charges – March 2024 LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Lloyds Bank (Credit Card) | £11.43 | Credit Card bill – January Payments – LGA 1972 s111  £3.00 – monthly fee £5.88 – Microsoft – MS Office Subscription £2.55 – Co-op – Office sundries |
| BACS | Tivoli | £71.78 | Bin emptying – March 2024 LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Unity Trust | £18.00 | Account Charges LGA 1972 s111 |

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|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| BACS | Arborfield PC | £792.00 | Tree Survey Costs (50% share with Arborfield PC) Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9 & 10; CIL Spend Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended) |
| BACS | Staff Expenses | £38.43 | Staff Expenses for ?? to ??. LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | HMRC | £647.13 | Tax and NI payments for the 3rd Quarter LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | Pinnacle Property Management | £804.00 | Meeting Room Hire for April 2024 – March 2025 LGA 1972 s111 |

The Clerk is awaiting the invoice from Tivoli, and will raise that payment after the invoice has been received.

**Resolved:** All payments were approved for payment.

1. **Report on Monies received**

£206.12 – BT – Refund of money taken for bills when service not yet transferred.

1. **Direct Debit for BT invoices**

**Resolved**: Council agreed to a Direct Debit being set up for payments as soon as the transfer to them has completed.

1. **Recruitment of Deputy Clerk**
2. **Resolved**: Council agreed to employ Natalie Hayes as Deputy Clerk for 12 Hours per week, with a start date of 1st April 2024
3. **Resolved**: Council agree to set the salary scale at point 15 (£14.45 per hour) for the new Deputy Clerk
4. **Purchase of Laptop and desk for Deputy Clerk to work from**

**Resolved**: Council agreed to the purchase of a new laptop, laptop stand, monitor, mouse and keyboard, laptop bag, desk and desk chair for the new deputy Clerk, from the following suppliers:

**Laptop:** Dell 15 inch Laptop, i7 processor, Windows 11 Pro: £694.80 (from Dell)

**Laptop stand:** £24.00 (amazon)

**Logitech Mouse and keyboard**: £20.00 (Amazon)

**Laptop bag:** £27.00 (Amazon)

**Monitor**: £74.97 (Amazon)

**Desk:** £105.00 (Amazon)

**Desk Chair:** £49.59 (Amazon)

**All costs include VAT.**

1. **Membership to SLCC for new Deputy Clerk**

**Resolved:** Council agreed to a membership to the SLCC for the new deputy Clerk at a cost of £158.00

1. **Investment of any dividends from the CCLA deposit fund**

**Resolved:** Council decided how any dividends paid out through the CCLA Deposit Fund should be paid to the Parish. Council agreed that any dividends be Automatically re- invested back into the CCLA share fund and additional shares created

The paper work will be finalised and sent to the CCLA.

1. **Defibrillator Pads –** The pads in the defibrillator at the Post office expire at the end of March.

**Resolved:** The Council agreed to the purchase of replacement pads (1x Adult and 1x child pads) From Wel Medical (manufacturer of defibrillator) at a cost of £143.88 including VAT.

1. **Litter Pick Refreshments**

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**Resolved:** Council approved expenditure of up to £50 for the provision of refreshments at the litter pick on the 24th March 2024.

1. **Litter Bins**
2. **Resolved:** Council agreed to the purchase of a litter bin at the Coombes, to be ordered with the bins approved at the last meeting.
3. Mistake on bins at the last meeting

**Resolved:** Council agreed to the purchase of the post mounted bins and fixing kit at a total cost of £1049.74 including VAT.

**24/041 Parish Office Operations**

**April meeting of the Council**

**Resolved:** Council agreed to hold the meeting in the Clerks absence, and appoint a councillor to take the minutes

**Annual Litter Pick** – The annual litter pick is scheduled for 24th March. Volunteers are needed to help run the event. Please can Councillors advise if they are free to assist on the day.

Mr Heyliger will put up the Litter pick signs with the help of Mr Barker. A resident has organised the use of a trailer to collect the rubbish bags from the road side during the event, and Mr Heyliger will assist with collecting the rubbish bags.

Other councillors are to advise the Clerk if they are able to help on the day.

**Arborfield Green Community Centre Working Group Meeting**

Council received an update from Mr Dexter and Mrs Stubbs on the meeting that they attended.

The meeting didn’t go as expected, as they didn’t mention other areas of the district centre, it just focused on what the residents want in the community centre, which is a good thing, just not what was expected. A resident has been appointed as chairman of the working group. The operator will be selected by an open commercial procurement process once the specification has been agreed.

Council considered how it wishes to take these meetings forward.

**Resolved:** Council agreed that it would have at least 1 of the 4 appointed representatives attend each meeting. The Council will support the residents and allow them to take the lead on these meetings.

**24/042 Councillor Forum**

Mrs Stubbs – Please can we set up Council email addresses for all the Councillors? Yes, this has been approved previously, but there have been some issues with getting some councillors set up. The Clerk will look into this over the next few days.

Mr Stubbs – Query about Primary School Admissions – A resident has been in contact regarding trying to secure a place at Farley Hill School for her child, where her other children currently attend, but as the catchment does not include Barkham, it is unlikely that she will get a place, and will end up having to take her children to two different schools, for the same drop off time, which is not possible. Is there anything that can be done to assist?

Cllr Pittock is aware of this issue and is looking into it. Admission policies are followed by all schools in the borough. The catchment for Farley Hill School will change this year, for September 2025 intake.

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Cllr Pittock – Does the Parish require more Councillors due to the increase in the size of the parish? The reason I ask is that the larger parishes tend to be heard more.

The Clerk responded, I’m not sure. I’ll look into it and make enquiries as to how this works, and report back to Council.

Mr Wrobel – Can I just say, I’m pleased to see so many people interested in the Council.

Mr Heyliger – I would like to inform the Council that yesterday, Mrs Stubbs and myself attended an awards ceremony at Thames Valley Police (TVP), where I received a long service award for 5 years’ service, as a Police Volunteer.  a short written description was read out by the Chief Officer on the activities of Barkham Parish Council over this period.

The Clerk will write a short news release on this as soon as the official photos are received, and will publish it on the website, and in the BVRA magazine

Mr Sheth – I see that the CIL advisory Group is to meet to look at projects next week. Will this include the crossing at Farley Hill School?

Yes, all suggested projects will be reviewed by the advisory group, and any that are considered as feasible to undertake will be put to council for consideration to take forward, and the crossings will form part of that.

**24/043 Exclusion of public and press** Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 S1 (2)

**Resolved:** Council agreed that, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, the meeting was closed to the public.

The meeting was closed to the public at 9.30pm, and the residents left the meeting.

**Part 2**

**24/044 Minutes of previous part 2 meeting**

**24/045 The Coombes**