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BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the meeting of the Barkham Parish Council held on 9th April 2024 in Meeting Room A13, Arborfield Green Community Centre at 7.30pm.

**Present**: Mr Dexter (in the Chair), Mr Wrobel, Mr Sheth, Mr Edgecombe,

In the absence of the Clerk, the minutes were recorded by Mr Dexter

In the absence of the Chair and Deputy Chair, it was voted that Mr Dexter should chair the meeting (Proposed – Mr Sheth, Seconded – Mr Edgecombe, Voting – unanimous).

**24/051 To receive and accept any apologies for absence** Local Government Act 1972 Sch12

Mrs Stubbs – Unwell

Mr Heyliger – Funeral

Mr Barker - Travelling

E. Tims, Clerk – On holiday

**24/052 To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda** (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1464)

None

**24/053 Minutes of the Council Meeting** LGA 1972 Sch 12 para 41(1) **–**

**Resolved:** The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12th March 2024 were approved as a true record.

**24/054 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.

One member of the public was in attendance.

**24/055 Planning**:

1. **Planning Applications –** To discuss and agree any comments or objections on planning applications received before 9th April 2024. To include:

**240665 -** 178 Bearwood Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4SH

**Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. four bedroom detached dwelling with associated landscaping following demolition of the existing dwelling and garage.**

The Design and Access Statement (DAS) on Page 4 asserts ‘the site has no historic or local significance.  The existing property is not deemed a heritage asset and is not located within the curtilage of any other listed building’ and on Page 18 it is ‘not a heritage asset’.

However, Section 209 of the December 2023 version of the NPPF makes it clear that the effect on the significance of any heritage asset should be assessed regardless of whether it is designated or not.  Section 202 of the NPPF makes provision that any decision regarding the impact on the significance of a heritage asset should not be swayed by the condition of that asset.

The DAS on Page 5 draws attention to the property at 178, Bearwood Road being featured on an historical map

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dated 1892.  Further, the area and some of the buildings within this area have been associated with the Bearwood Estate.

An earlier application – 223742 approved Oct 2023 – relating to the property next door at 176, Bearwood Road identified there were heritage issues in the area.

The developer does not appear to have submitted a desk-based assessment nor has there been a third party heritage report.  Barkham Parish Council finds this strange given the potential for keepworthy heritage in the area.

If after due consideration, any heritage issues are deemed not to be relevant then BPC would support this application provided any new build is sympathetic to the Barkham Village Design Statement.

**240754 -** 330 Barkham Road, Barkham, Wokingham, RG41 4DE

**Prior approval submission for proposed change of use of the commercial premises on the ground floor to 1 no. dwelling**.

No Comment

**240731** - Land to the North East of Westwood Cottage, Sheerlands Road, Arborfield, Wokingham, RG40 4QX

**Outline application for the proposed redevelopment of the site and erection of 22 no. dwellings with associated access, infrastructure, open space and landscaping. (All matters reserved except for means of access.)**

Adjoining parish consultation comments by 27.04.2024

Insufficient work has been done to comment fully on this application but the consultation period continues to 27 Apr 2024 so there is time for further work. This should be picked up on the return of the Clerk following liaison with FPC and any final response approve on delegated authority. Considerations should include:

1. Infills of open land between significant housing settlements that is green with wildlife interests.
2. Few residents have responded to date but make the point that this proposal is not consistent with the recently made Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan.
3. The site was included in the last LPU consultation as being suitable for 10 homes.
4. The HELAA report is supportive for 12 dwellings.
5. Against 3 and 4 above, how does the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan deal with this?
6. What are the implications of going from 10/12 to 22 dwellings?
7. **Approved and Refused Applications Report**

**240179** - Land East Of Barkham Manor, Barkham Road, Wokingham, RG41 4TH

**Full application for the proposed erection of 3No detached dwellings with detached double garages and associated access and landscape works**.

This application has been refused by WBC

**240129 -** Hogwood Meadows, Park Lane, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG40 4PT

**Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the use of a converted stables as a residential dwelling.**

This application has been approved by WBC

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

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

This application has been approved by WBC

1. **Any Other Planning Business**

Mr Sheth reported that an approx 0.5 acre site in The Coombes is being offered for sale at a guide price of £10k. The sales particulars include a number of misleading statements regarding development

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potential which has been referred to Jason Varley for comment. On further investigation, the said lot is one of the original land lotted sites and is in Arborfield. ANPC have been informed and are considering writing to the auction house regarding the misleading statements.

**24/056 Ward Councillor Report –** Cllr Pittock was not present and no written report was available.

**24/057 Delegated Authority Report April 2024**

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

**Finance**

The following comments were agreed via email, as the payment was required before the meeting could be held.

**Payment of Calibra Tree Surgeons invoice for Phase 1 tree works**

The Phase 1 tree works has been agreed to be undertaken by the Coombes Woodland Committee. The works were carried out and completed by Calibra Tree Surgeons. The invoice needed paying before the meeting, so it was agreed under delegated authority by the Finance Committee that the Invoice could be paid. The invoice total **£1,860.00.** This cost will be split with Arborfield PC in the ratio of the purchase.

**This payment was agreed by the Finance Committee.**

**24/058 Finance**

* 1. **Accounts** – The following accounts and payments for March to April were agreed by Council 2024 LGA 1972 s150 (5)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Payments for March to April 2024 for authorised at Council meeting on 9th April 2024 | | | |
| S/O | Staff Wages | £2011.81 | April 2024 salaries – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Nest | £196.56 | Pension Contribution Employer & Employee – March – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Plusnet | £32.14 | Final Internet and phone charges – End of contract 2024 LGA 1972 s111 (May change as final bill not yet received) |
| DD | BT | £47.15 | Internet and phone charges – April 2024 LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | Lloyds Bank (Credit Card) | £803.95 | Credit Card bill – March Payments – LGA 1972 s111  £3.00 – monthly fee, £5.88 – Microsoft – MS Office Subscription, £1.25 Post Office (postage), £12.84 – Tribal Signs (letter sticker for Litter pick signs, £143.88 – Wel Medical (Defib Pads), £1.95 – Post Office (Stamps), £595.80 Dell (Laptop), £39.35 - Sainsburys (litter pick refreshments) |
| BACS | Amazon | £360.00 | Deputy Clerk Office Equipment LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | SLCC | £158.00 | Deputy Clerk membership to SLCC LGA 1972 s143 |

* 1. **Incorrect amount reported at the March meeting for Plusnet** – Council noted that the incorrect amount was reported for Plusnet at the March meeting. This is due to coming out of contract as the service had not transferred to BT. The amount reported at the March meeting was £32.14, and the correct amount should have been £39.35.

**This was noted by Council**

* 1. **Report on Monies received**

£424.24 Arborfield PC – Share of Tree works cost for Phase 1

**This was noted by Council**

* 1. **Zoom Subscription** – The Zoom subscription is up for renewal in May.

It was generally felt that BPC should have this capability but the councillors present did not know how often this facility had been used in the past year. It was also questioned whether we should change to Teams which has been significantly upgraded over recent years and seems to be more used by those

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groups who work with BPC. It was agreed that this item should be deferred until the Clerk could have an input. If a decision has to be made before the next PC meeting, then approval should be made on a delegated authority basis.

* 1. **Martin & Pole Advice services**

**Resolved:** Council agreed to instruct Martin & Pole as an agent to make enquiries as to the availability of Plot 2 of The Coombes, and to value the land for consideration. The cost of this service is £250.

**24/059 Parish Office Operations**

**Policies**

**Resolved:** These policies were considered to be complete and well structured. A few relatively minor changes have previously been circulated and should the clerk feel they are appropriate, the updated versions should be approved via delegated authority

* 1. **Annual Leave Policy**
  2. **Emergency Dependents Leave Policy**
  3. **Expenses Policy**
  4. **Flexible Working Policy**
  5. **Maternity Leave and Pay Policy**
  6. **Paternity Leave and Pay Policy**
  7. **Performance Improvement Policy**
  8. **Sickness Absence Policy**
  9. **Training and Development Policy**
  10. **Whistle Blowing Policy and Procedure**

**24/060 Councillor Forum**

Mr Wrobel has been appointed to the role of Barkham Village Hall (BVH) Chair and he asked if it was appropriate for him to serve as BPC’s representative on the BVH committee. The councillors present thought there was no reason why he should not continue in both roles. However, it would be necessary for him to declare a conflict of interest if BPC were to vote on any motions relating to BVH such as provision of CIL funds.  
  
Mr Edgecombe reported that the Coombes were very muddy making many of the trails impassable. Mr Dexter suggested that one of the problems here was the distinction between the formal PROWs which WBC have a legal responsibility to maintain and all informal paths that actually have no status. The CWC is aware of issues posed by the informal trails – it is a complex debate and the CWC needs to be given time to arrive at conclusion.  
  
Mr Edgecombe asked what was happening re the closure of School Road and expressed the view that it should be reopened. Mr Dexter reported that it was recognised that there were many concerns about the overall Arborfield road scheme that stems from a condition stipulated in the decision notice for the Arborfield Cross bypass. It has been suggested that the project – consultation and outcome – should be referred to WBC’s Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. It is not known if and when this will happen and the Clerk is asked to seek an update on her return.  
  
Mr Sheth ask what was concluded at the recent CIL meeting. Mr Wrobel felt this had been a useful meeting. Mr Dexter added that priorities had been reviewed but this would be a reiterative process. The Clerk has issued some update notes.

**24/061 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 and the residents left the meeting.

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**Part 2**

**24/062 Minutes of previous part 2 meeting**

**24/063 The Coombes**