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BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the annual meeting of the Barkham Parish Council held on 14th May 2024 in Meeting Room A13, Arborfield Green Community Centre at 7.30pm.

**Present**: Mrs Stubbs, Mr Dexter, Mr Wrobel, Mr Heyliger, Mr Barker, Mr Cunningham, and Mrs Tims, Clerk

**24/064 Election of Chairman** Local Government Act 1972 S15(2)

Mrs Stubbs Proposed by Mr Wrobel, seconded by Mr Heyliger.

Vote all agreed.

**Resolved:** Mrs Stubbs was duly elected as Chairman of the Council

**24/065 Election of Vice Chairman** Local Government Act 1972 S15(6

Mr Barker Proposed by Mr Heyliger, seconded by Mr Wrobel.

Vote all agreed.

**Resolved:** Mr Barker was duly elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council

**24/066 To receive and accept any apologies for absence** Local Government Act 1972 Sch12

Mr Edgecombe – On holiday

**24/067 Co-option of 3 new councillors** Local Government Act 1972 S16 **–** Council to co-opt 3 members on to the Council.

The first candidate was unable to attend, and asked for her co-option to be postponed due to personal circumstances – **Resolved:** Council agreed to postpone Co-option onto the council to a later date.

**Resolved:** Mr Cunningham was unanimously co-opted onto council. All relevant forms were completed and signed by Mr Cunningham and the Clerk.

The third candidate was not present and council agreed to postpone her co-option until it is confirmed if she still wishes to join the Council.

**24/068 To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda** (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1464)

None

**24/069 Minutes of the Council Meeting** LGA 1972 Sch 12 para 41(1) **–**

**Resolved:** The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 9th April 2024 were approved and signed as a true record.

**24/070 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.

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One member of the public was in attendance, to listen to the meeting.

**24/071 Election of representatives**

**Barkham Village Hall Management Committee** – Mr Barker

**BALC** - Shared amongst Councillors as and when meetings arise

**The Coombes Woodland Committee** – Mr Barker & Mr Wrobel

**Parish Planning Working group** – This will continue to function within the main council meeting with specific project teams appointed as and when necessary to review larger strategic applications.

**Finance Committee** Mrs Stubbs, Mr Barker, Mr Cunningham and Mr Wrobel The Finance committee will only meet when necessary to discuss the budget and precept or when the need arises. All functions of the Finance Committee will be taken to council.

**Road Safety Group Committee** – Mr Heyliger, Mr Barker & Mr Dexterplus resident representatives as co-opted by the Committee

**Trustees for Barkham Charity Trust** – Mrs Stubbs

**Community Liaison Group with Crest** - Mrs Stubbs, & The Clerk

**Parish/Town Forum Meetings with WBC** – Mrs Stubbs & Mr Heyliger

**Community Centre at Arborfield Green** – Mrs Stubbs, Mr Dexter & The Clerk

**Parish Magazine – Renamed to Newsletter** – The Clerk and the Deputy Clerk will produced a newsletter, which will be reviewed by council before publication.

**CIL Advisory Committee** – Mrs Stubbs, Mr Heyliger, Mr Dexter, Mr Barker, Mr Wrobel

WBC Climate Emergency Meetings WBC not holding meeting any more, so this is to be removed from the list

**Improving relations with WBC Working Group** This is being undertaken by the Clerk in conjunction with other parish Clerk who are experiencing the same issues, this is to be removed from the list. The working group who have previously met with WBC representatives, will formally close this down with WBC.

**24/072 Planning**:

1. **Planning Applications –** To discuss and agree any comments or objections on planning applications received before 14th May 2024. To include:

**241043 –** 312a Barkham Road, Wokingham, RG41 4DA

**Householder application for the installation of an electric security gate. (Retrospective)**

Barkham Parish Council questions if the gates should be set back from the pavement, to prevent congestion whilst waiting for the gates to open, and for the safety of pedestrians and other road users.

1. **Approved and Refused Applications Report**

**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.**

This application approved has been approved by WBC

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

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

This application approved has been approved by WBC

1. **Any Other Planning Business**

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**Enforcement Issues** – There are a lot of enforcement issues within the parish, some which, in the past, the parish council has been told come under permitted development, and now they are appearing as an enforcement case. Can questions be raised to WBC regarding the enforcement cases, and an update be requested. The Clerk will contact the enforcement team for an update and to raise the questions.

**24/073 Ward Councillor Report**

The 3 new ward councillors were unable to attend the meeting due to mandatory training by WBC. Cllr Betteridge sent a short biography to introduce himself to the parishioners of Barkham, which was as follows:

**Adrian Betteridge, Liberal Democrat Councillor for Barkham and Arborfield Ward**

After a degree in Aeronautical Engineering at Southampton University I joined the Army as an engineering officer, first reporting for duty at Arborfield Garrison prior to training at Sandhurst. I returned to Arborfield on many occasions during my 20 year Army career, including living in army married quarters in Tope Crescent 1994-95 where our first child was born.

My Army service included tours in Germany, Canada as well as on operations and I was awarded an MBE in the 2000 honours list for my work supporting operations in the Balkans. I left the Army in 2003 as a Lieutenant Colonel.

After 3 years as a strategy consultant, I joined defence company BAE Systems to run a large partnering contract they were negotiating with the UK Ministry of Defence. I retired from the company 12 years later having managed a range of large programmes and been appointed as the project management director of the UK armoured vehicles business and the global cyber-security business. In 2018, aged 55, my wife Roz and I were fortunate to be able to dedicate ourselves to local community and charitable pursuits.

We have lived in the Evendons area of Wokingham since 1996 where we raised our 2 children who attended The Holt and Emmbrook schools. I coached and refereed football and helped run the Winnersh Rangers football club at Bearwood for many years. I have been the club captain at Swallowfield Velo Club since 2016 and coach junior cycling at Bohunt School on Saturdays. I co-founded a community group in 2020 to lobby and help the borough council improve conditions for walking and cycling in our area. I have been the chair of Wokingham Liberal Democrats since 2023 and have served as a town councillor in Wokingham Town Council, which helps me understand issues from a parish council perspective.

Contact me at adrian.betteridge@wokingham.gov.uk or on 07985 088298

8.07pm – Cllr Betteridge arrived at the meeting.

Cllr Betteridge was welcomed by the parish councillors. Mr Dexter informed Cllr Betteridge that questions were just being discussed as to how the 3 new ward councillors will work together to represent the parish.

Cllr Betteridge said that this needs to be discussed, but all three agree that they need to work together as a team to best represent and support the parish council and the residents.

**24/074 Delegated Authority Report April 2024**

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

**Finance**

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

**Invoices received that needed payment before the next Council meeting** LGA 1972 s111

During the Clerks leave, additional invoices come through that needed to be paid before the May meeting.  They were as follows:

Rialtas (Accounts software package) - £230.40

BALC Subscription - £1107.82

Calibra Tree Surgeons (urgent tree work due to tree splitting and falling, ending up suspended over public footpath. CWC approved) - £240

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All include VAT

**The payment of the invoices was agreed by majority of the Council.**

**Booking of Training Course for the Deputy Clerk** LGA 1972 s111

A 2 part training course through BALC was identified by the Clerk for the Deputy Clerk to attend, entitled 'What you Need to Know for Clerks and Officers'.  The course gives an overview of what the role entails.The Course will be held on the following dates and times:
Part 1 Wednesday 12th June 2024 - 10am to 12.30pm
Part 2 Tuesday 25th June 2024 - 10am to 12.30pm
The cost of the course is £120 (which covers both sessions).

**The booking of this course was agreed by majority of the Council.**

**Planning**

**240778 -** 23 Almond Close Barkham Wokingham RG41 4UU

**Application for a certificate of lawfulness to demonstrate that no development is occurring in the change of use from dwelling to children’s home.**

No comment at this time, but the Parish Council notes that application 240778 is not a planning application but an application for a certificate of lawfulness. If the legal determination is that the applicant needs to submit planning permission then the Parish Council strongly encourages the applicant to meet with residents to discuss their concerns.

**240343** - Land at The Scrapyard, Highlands Avenue, Barkham, Wokingham

**Full application for the erection of a footpath and 9no. street lights (part retrospective).**

In view of the TPOs 920/1973 and 199/1981, Barkham Parish Council (BPC) regrets that neither it nor the Local Planning Authority were granted the opportunity to comment on this proposal until, with the exception of one street light, the entire project has been virtually been completed. More so as the Arboricultural Impact Assessment has largely been based on ‘anecdotal’ advisement.

BPC wishes to object to this application until representatives of WBC have visited the site to determine whether there have been any inappropriate actions which has led to damage – especially to roots - and any remedial actions deemed necessary by the Council and those recommended within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment have been enforced or included as a condition for approval.

**24/075 – Clerks Report**

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

Now approval has been given to use part of the land owned by Barkham Manor to site the new shelter, the Clerk has asked WBC for assistance with this project. WBC have agreed to look into carrying out the move of the shelter and all the associated items , which will be paid for by the Parish. WBC will write to BPC with the proposed costs etc before a decision on whether to go ahead is made.

**Item ongoing**

**Change over to BT Phoneline and Broadband**

The Change over to BT has now taken place. A refund has been received from Plusnet for some of the last bill payment that was taken.

**Item Closed**

**Communications**

The new Deputy Clerk has now started and will look into communications with residents as part of her role.

**Items ongoing**

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**Enforcement Issues**

The Coombes – No update received

**Items ongoing**

**School Road / Langley Common Road Junction**

This has been agreed, and plans have been drawn up and agreed. A works order is due to be raised, and works will be completed within 28 days of the order being processed.

**Item Ongoing**

**Meeting with WBC Executive Officers**

The Clerk is meeting with officers from WBC on a monthly basis, to progress the communications and other issues. Some items, such as the lack of information for consultations has been actioned by the WBC officers, and we await to see what effect this will have.

**Item ongoing**

**Insight Strategy and Inclusion meeting with WBC**

This meeting was due in March, but has not yet been arranged by WBC.

**Item ongoing**

**District and Community Centres**

The working group for the Community Centre met on 16th April 2024. There are two public engagement sessions planned for May to source feedback and ideas from residents on the new community centre and what it should try to include. The dates are: Tuesday 4th June 6:30pm to 8:30pm and Saturday 8th June 10:00am to 12:30pm.

The group would like a representative from the council to attend each session if possible. The Clerk can attend the session on Wednesday 15th May between 10 and 12 noon.

**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 Have met and reviewed the projects suggested. An agenda item for approval by Council is included for the May meeting.

**Item closed**

**Purchase of Litter Bins**

The litter bins have been purchased, and delivered. Before they can be installed, approval is required by WBC, which has been sought, we are just awaiting a response. Tivoli who empties the bins also need to confirm the increase in our contract to empty the bins, this is also underway.

**Item ongoing**

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**Closure of Langley Common Road Underpass**

The closure of the underpass will not occur until the new crossing of Langley Common Road is installed by the developer as part of their agreement for the development. It is hoped that this will be completed by Autumn, but is dependent on the developer.

**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 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**

**24/076** **Review and adoption of Parish Documentation –** Council is asked to approve the policies listed below:

**Standing Orders,**

**Resolved:** Council approved the Standing Orders

**Financial Regulations and Polices.**

**Resolved:** Council reviewed and adopted the updated Financial Regulations

**Operations**

**Resolved:** Council approved the Asset Register (Updated March 2024)

**Resolved:** Council approved the Scheme of Delegation (Adopted May 2021)

**Finance** Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 s.6

**Resolved:** Council reviewed and adopted the updated Financial and Risk Assessment

**Resolved:** Council reviewed and adopted the Investment strategy for 2024-2025

**24/077 Finance**

* 1. **Accounts** – Proposal to agree accounts and payments for April to May 2024 LGA 1972 s150 (5)

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| --- |
| Payments for April to May 2024 for authorisation at Council meeting on 14th May 2024 |
| S/O | Staff Wages | £2,000.52 | April 2023 salaries – LGA 1972 s111  |
| DD | Nest | £198.05 | Pension Contribution Employer & Employee – April 2023 – LGA 1972 s111 |
| DD | BT  | £52.51 | Internet and phone charges – May 2023 – LGA 1972 s111  |
| DD | Lloyds Bank (Credit Card) | £8.88 | Credit Card bill – April Payments – LGA 1972 s111£3.00 – monthly fee, £5.88 – Microsoft – MS Office Subscription,  |
| BACS | Amazon | £25.29 | Office equipment LGA 1972 s111 |
| BACS | WBC | £8,466.12 | Contribution towards bus services - 1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025 CIL Spend Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended) |
| BACS | Glasdon | £1034.59 | Bin purchase CIL Spend Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended)  |
| BACS | C. Connell | £200.00 | Internal Audit fee Internal Audit Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015  |

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* 1. **Report on Monies received**

£2704.30 Annual Interest from Nationwide (received in March), £6,508.00 1st Precept payment,

£331,387.82 CIL payment £26,033.00 2nd Precept payment

£13.72 Refund from Plusnet £186.82 Interest from Natwest

£12,725.96 – VAT refund

* 1. **Parish Accounting Information** Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015
		+ 1. **Income and Expenditure Report**

**Resolved:** Council received the income and expenditure report for the financial year end as at 31st March 2024.

* + - 1. **Bank Reconciliations**

**Resolved:** Council was informed that the bank statements and account reconciliations to March 31st 2024 were checked and agreed by Mr Dexter.

* 1. **Transfer of Funds into the CCLA Account**

**Resolved:** Council agreed to transfer £600,000 Into the CCLA Account. The transfer form was signed by the signatories.

* 1. **Notification on price increase by Tivoli for the emptying of the bin at The Coombes** LGA 1972 s111 **Resolved:** Council noted and approved an increase to the bin emptying contract for the bin at The Coombes.

Prices will be increasing by 5.2 % which is the current RPI increase over the last 12 months, effective April 2024. **The annual price (net of VAT) will increase from £717.84 to £755.17**

* 1. **CIL project List** CIL Spend Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended)

**Resolved:** Council reviewed and approved the updated CIL project list.

**Resolved:** Council agreed to the items in the New Projects list to being taken forward to assess feasibility of the projects.

* 1. **CIL Expenditure** CIL Spend Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended) – Council is asked to consider funding the following items through CIL
		1. **CIL funding Bid Request from WBC** CIL Spend Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended) –

Council considered funding the byway upgrade of Sandy Lane (Barkham Byway 17), as requested by WBC. **The estimated cost of the project is £18,500.**

**Resolved:** Council decided not to fund this project. It is similar to another recent request, which the parish also declined to fund, and the reasons for declining are the same.

* + 1. **CIL funding Bid Request from WBC** CIL Spend Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended)

Council considered funding The Junipers – play area enhancements. **Budget cost £25,000.00 + Vat**

**Resolved:** Council agreed in principle to fund the project proposed by WBC, but before a final decision is made, the council would like more information on the project scoping, equipment, and the cost (Council would like to review the quotes obtained). The Council would also like the opportunity to discuss the playpark over all, to see if there are any other options.

* + 1. **Solar panel for VAS on Barkham Road** CIL Spend Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended)

Council considered purchasing a solar panel to power one of the VAS, to reduce the number of sites the team need to visit to replace batteries on the units. **The cost is £532.80 including delivery and VAT.**

**Resolved:** The Council agreed to purchasing the Solar Panel to power the SID. The Clerk will place the order for the SID.

**24/078 Approval and signing of Parish Accounts for the Financial Year End** Internal Audit Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 reg 2

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

The Unity Trust Current Account Bank balance as of the 31st March 2024 was £74,216.06

The Unity Trust Savings Account Bank balance as of the 31st March 2024 was £756,942.60

The Natwest Savings Account Bank balance as of the 31st March 2024 was £142,508.60

The Nationwide Savings Account Bank balance as of the 31st March 2024 was £140,000.00

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

**24/079 Parish Office Operations**

 None

**24/080 Councillor Forum**

Mr Dexter raised that the grass had overgrown at the junction of Barkham Street and Church Lane. In the past, the resident has always cut the grass back, but WBC had informed the Highways committee that any overgrown vegetation should be reported for WBC to sort. To test if this was the case, the grass was reported to WBC on the Wednesday and by the Friday had been cut. Mr Dexter was impressed at how quickly it was rectified.

Mr Wrobel raised the strip of wildflowers along Biggs Lane by the Co-op and how lovely they are. A photo was shown to the council. Mr Wrobel wanted to thank the organisers, but is not sure how they are. He would also like the council to consider something similar for next year within the parish, which could then be photographed professionally. The Clerk will add an agenda item to the June agenda for this to be discussed.

Mr Heyliger informed that now the weather is improving, the speed watch sessions will resume. The first one is planned for Wednesday 15th May. Once the camera software upgrade has been completed, the speed watch group will seek more resident volunteers.

**24/081 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 9.28pm and the resident left the meeting.

**Part 2**

**24/082 Minutes of previous part 2 meeting**

**24/083 The Coombes**