

Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting held in the village hall, Tuesday 2nd February 2016, commencing at 8.00pm.

PRESENT

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| Chairman | Keith Brooks |
| Vice-Chairman | Jim Donahue |
| Councillors | David Bowen Rachel Hatcher James Polansky Jonathan Steward |
| Clerk | Felipa House |

Public:
Nick Leadbetter
Olivia Beard

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr. Hart, District Councillor Rob Simister, County Councillor Kevin Bulmer.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr. Steward (gardening contracts in the village).

3. Public forum Opportunity for members of the public to address the Council. With the permission of the Chairman, the public may also speak about specific items of business as they arise.

Nick Leadbetter & Olivia Beard wished to elaborate upon the planning application for Prospect House, High Street.

4. Agree minutes of Parish Council meeting 4th January 2016

These were approved as a true record.

5. District councillor's report

Cllr. Simister was not present.

6. County councillor's report

Cllr. Bulmer was not present.

7. Planning

P15/S3232/HH Prospect House, High Street. Replacement of existing single-storey outbuilding. The current outbuilding is falling down & will be replaced by another outbuilding in the same location & of the same size, which could potentially be used as a storage area or playroom. It cannot be seen from the road. The Parish Council unanimously agreed to submit 'No strong views'.

The Clerk confirmed that she had submitted (by both email & post) a letter drafted by the Council to the Planning Inspector objecting to the proposed development at Eastfield House.

8. Finance Approve payments/note receipts

Note : the Section 137 annual limit for 2015/16 is £7.36 per elector

Monthly salary for the Clerk

Expenses for the Clerk for stamps (£7.56)

Invoice from Collins for bulbs & gardening items (£195.53)

Invoice from Rialtas Business Solutions for software maintenance renewal (£133.20)

Invoice from NSALG for membership renewal (£66.00)

Invoice from Nova Press for the January 'Bulletin' (£350.00)

Re-issue of a cheque to SODC for parish election costs (£1,251.81) (the previous cheque was destroyed in the post).

Cllr. Polansky agreed to take over responsibility for the allotments from Cllr. Donahue & will represent the Parish Council at the Allotment Society AGM on 19th February. It was agreed that a new/improved gate for the allotments was needed; Cllr. Brooks will investigate the options.

All agreed that the front cover of the latest 'Bulletin' was a great improvement. Cllr. Brooks has been approached by a local business wishing to advertise in the 'Bulletin'; costs of £50 per full page, £25 per ½ page & £12.50 per ¼ page were agreed. The layout of the 'Bulletin' will also be reviewed to include more photos, particularly from readers, & details of local family groups & activities.

9. Village green

Cllr. Donahue & the Clerk have drawn up a draft contract for the provision of gardening/maintenance services to the village. This will be sent to Cllr. Steward after the meeting for discussion. A start date of 1st March was agreed.

The chain-link fencing on the village green alongside Muddy Lane is in very poor condition. This will be discussed at the next Village Green Working Group meeting, which will be arranged shortly.

Cllr. Steward would like working parties to be set up to look after the newly-planted bulbs & shrubs. He will ask for volunteers through the website & co-ordinate. Working parties at the village green will be held on 26th/27th March & 2nd/3rd April. These will include volunteers from the football & cricket teams. Cllr. Steward will ask the school whether they could help as well. Cllr. Steward will also discuss the possibility of creating a nature reserve on the village green/Maze site with WoTHabs.

Dog fouling in the village was discussed but no definitive solution was reached.

10. TAPAG

The issues outstanding on FixMyStreet are still ongoing.

Cllr. Polansky hopes to receive information from Thames Water regarding the efficacy of the Eastfield Lane pumping station very soon.

3 people have now completed their Community SpeedWatch training. Once more volunteers have come forward a group can be set up & the police involved. Cllr. Hatcher will ask for more volunteers via the website.

11. Cricket pavilion replacement project

This will be discussed at March's meeting when Cllr. Hart is available.

12. Residents' issues list Review/update

Cllr. Donahue's list has been updated & will be published on the website. Some issues will become part of the Community Plan.

13. Village environment/maintenance

The Council agreed that new, bespoke village signs would better reflect the village & its heritage & it was agreed that a competition be held for all the primary school children to submit their designs. Cllr. Polansky will broach the idea with the school.

The Clerk said that a parish tree survey should be carried out every 5 years. The Council did not know whether this had been done so the Clerk will investigate & organise one if necessary.

14. Neighbourhood Plan

An initial working group meeting has been held. Cllr. Hatcher will be leading this group. She will organise a village meeting, probably in April, to ascertain interest & obtain ideas from the parish as to what they feel is important. From this, sub-groups will be set up which each look at a specific area of interest. They will then provide recommendations to the working group. Each group will include 1 Councillor & 1 lead person. A referendum date of May 2017 is the target. The Council unanimously voted to produce a Neighbourhood Plan & asked the Clerk to complete the relevant documentation in order to register. The Clerk will also send Cllr. Hatcher contact details for those involved in the Goring & Woodcote Neighbourhood Plans. Any potential village hall relocation would be contained within the Neighbourhood Plan scope. A Community Plan will be produced in tandem with the Neighbourhood Plan.

It was noted that Whitchurch's Conservation Area has not been appraised for some time. Cllr. Bowen will contact SODC in order to do this.

15. Village hall

Cllr. Steward will be the Councillor responsible for the village hall & will work with the hall manager. The Clerk has started to take over Treasurer duties from Jill Bradon.

16. Parish Council meetings for 2016

There will be no Council meeting in August. Cllr. Brooks will issue the calendar of meeting dates, which will include the annual meeting & annual parish assembly.

17. Ad-hoc overtime for the Clerk

The Clerk requested that she be paid for any ad-hoc extra hours worked due to the increase in duties. The Council approved this request.

18. Dispensation for Cllr. Steward

Cllr. Steward has requested a dispensation to cover the gardening & maintenance work he carried out in the village. This was approved by the Council for a period of 3 years.

19. Annual audit requirements

The Clerk had sent all Councillors a copy of the latest asset register, Risk Management policy, Standing Orders & Financial Regulations to examine before the meeting. The asset register was amended to include items recently purchased & agreed. The Risk Management policy was discussed & felt to still be valid in its current form & thus agreed. The Clerk will update both documents & send them to the internal auditor. The Council agreed that the Standing Orders & Financial Regulations would be amended where necessary in due course through a separate meeting.

Arrow Accounting were again appointed as internal auditors.

Following advice from OALC the Council resolved to opt-in for the new external auditor appointment scheme for 2017 onwards. BDO will again be appointed for this year’s external audit.

The Clerk will allocate funds for the next financial year to similar budget headings as this year, adjusted for actual & projected spend.

20. Other matters for Chairman & PC to consider Items that arise that are not on this agenda but need discussion & to be proposed for a future agenda

Cllr. Bowen would like to list ‘The Greyhound’ public house as an Asset of Community Value. He will liaise with CAMRA to start the process.

The celebration for the Queen’s birthday in June will be discussed fully at next month’s meeting.

21. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 1st March 2016 at 8pm.

Meeting closed at 10.00pm.

**Signed.....
Chairman**

Date.....