



Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 19th September 2016

Present Chris Drew (Chairman), James Bell, Jackie Jeffery, Lauren McCann, Paul Mundy, Fiona Mowlem and John Hobson

Apologies for Absence John Davies

Absent Jim Gillett

6681/16 **Open Forum** – Amanda Burton, the New Assistant Clerk, attended. Andy Couldrick, the Chief Executive of Wokingham Borough Council and Keith Baker, Head of the Council, attended to explain their 21st Century programme, and one member of the press attended. Mssrs Baker and Couldrick explained the financial hole that they are facing, with a £30 million drop in income, and no funding from central government within two years. Not only this, it is unlikely that they will continue to hold on to all the council tax receipts as they do at present, and they will only be able to retain a proportion of the business tax raised in the Borough. As most of the “easy” budget cuts have been made already, the only way is to radically re-think how services are delivered to bring further efficiencies. There are certain statutory services but unlike in Central Govt, these are not ring-fenced, but councils have been allowed to increase the Council Tax by 2% to help pay for these. The executive has asked the council to invest in better IT so that it is easier for residents to interact with the council systems without human intervention. The idea is that the council would still have experts, but that a lot of their workload could be dealt with through IT or at a lower level, so making the most of their expertise and improving the efficiency of the Council. Mr. Couldrick seemed to be reasonably confident that staff were willing to buy into this as it was recognised that things were going to have to change, and it may lead to improved job satisfaction. The idea is to also have some staff based out in the communities, an idea tried before but these attempts have tended to fizzle out. Mr Couldrick feels it is important to try again as there are so many isolated people within the borough, and that these staff need to be there to work with the communities to get them to help themselves more, instead of being reliant on the dwindling support that can be offered from the centre. Wokingham are working with people who have helped district councils make this kind of change, but this is the first time it has been attempted by a Unitary Authority – if it works, Wokingham will be able to sell the model to other Authorities. As far as the inevitable cuts that will need to be made, the staff numbers at Wokingham will reduce from 1000 to 900 over 18 months, and some non-statutory services will inevitably be cut. One that may be are School crossing patrols – one idea was to get local companies to sponsor them, but some of these are very likely to go. The Council is trying to engage the community in the budget discussions by running a series of public meetings this autumn, to try to get across to residents the seriousness of the situation, and what they see as most important. There was a discussion about CIL and what it can be used for – the chairman made the point that by its very nature, the money is being spent on the large development areas, and that the rest of the parishes are out of the loop. Mssrs Couldrick and Baker insisted this was not the case, and that maybe more could be made of the Borough Parish working group to reduce this perception. It was also noted that major improvements in

infrastructure could only happen with large developments. This brought the discussion to an end, and the Chairman thanked them for coming and they left at 8.55pm.

6682/16 Declarations of Interest – Cllr. Mowlem declared that application 162562 was her application and left the room when this item was discussed. Cllr Mundy declared that he lived next door and so did not comment on this application either.

6683/16 Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th August 2016 - The minutes were approved by Council.

6684/16 PLANNING (ref 201)

a) New Applications for Information and Comment:

162238 Application for the proposed erection of a first floor front extension over existing garage and single storey side/rear extension to 2, Strathmore Drive – the clerk was asked to comment as follows:

Council feels that the side extension is bringing the building line forward and could set a precedent for other dwellings along the Old Bath Road. We note that this does not seem materially different from the previous plan that was refused as far as the single storey extension is concerned.

Council would like the application to be amended so that the building line is not breached.

162278 Application for the proposed erection of a two storey side extension to 20 Charvil Meadow Road – no Parish Council comment

162365 Application for the proposed erection of a two storey side extension to 15, St Patricks Avenue – no Parish Council comment

161718 Application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension to dwelling and single storey side extension to detached garage at 7 Simmons Fields – no Parish Council comment

162395 Application for advertisement consent for the proposed erection of various signage at “Co-Op” Charvil Service Station, New Bath Road, Charvil – no Parish Council comment

162419 Application for the proposed removal of car wash facility to the rear replacing it with a brickwork store room plus new bollards and staff parking bays at Texaco, New Bath Road, Charvil – no Parish Council comment

162398 Adjoining Parish Application to erect one single dwelling on land to the rear of 6, Phillips Close, Woodley – the clerk was asked to repeat previous objections, but on reviewing WBC’s response, a principle of development on this site has been accepted, and so in consultation with the Chair of Planning, it was decided that there was nothing to be gained by objecting to what is a minor change to an application already approved.

162562 Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of rear dormer extension plus conversion of loft space to habitable accommodation at 123 East Park Farm Drive – no Parish Council comment

b) Planning Applications Approved – the following approvals were noted

161646 Application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension to 6, St Patrick’s Avenue

161714 Application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension to include part demolition and part conversion of existing garage to form habitable accommodation plus single storey front extension to existing garage at 10 Wenlock Edge

162062 Application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension to 13, Kingsley Close

- c) **Planning Application Refused** – the following refusal was noted
 161699 Application for the proposed erection of a part single storey part two storey rear extension and alterations to existing dormer extension at Paradise, Beggars Hill Road
- d) **Appeal** – the following appeal was noted
 160778 Appeal against refused application for proposed raising of the roof to create first floor accommodation to include front and rear dormer extensions at 11, Park Lane
- e) **Local Plan Consultation** – It was agreed that the clerk and Chair of Planning would go through this document and would circulate draft replies before submitting them before the deadline on 30th September.
- f) **Feedback on the building of the railway compound** – This is permitted development as Network Rail is allowed to do this kind of temporary compound.
- g) **To consider whether anyone can attend the CIL training on 17th October and to look at the questions posed by Brendan Troy** – Cllr. Hobson agreed to go.

There being no further Planning business the Planning Meeting was closed.

FINANCE

- 6685/16 **Finance Reports** – It was resolved that the financial reports be approved, which they were unanimously
- 6686/16 **Authorisation of Payments** – It was resolved that the Council should approve all outstanding payments including £558.31 to NIC Services Group Ltd and £2763.25 to the Inland Revenue
- 6687/16 **To consider the draft terms of reference for the Finance Committee** – It was resolved to approve these which was done unanimously.
- 6688/16 **To reconsider the issue of registering for VAT in the light of the Pitch Hire element of East Park Farm** – It was resolved that Council should become VAT registered which was passed unanimously
- 6689/16 **To approve the rolling over of the Skipton bond** – It was resolved that the Bond be rolled over for another year, which was passed unanimously
- 6690/16 **To sign a letter to the bank to set up payment arrangements for the new Assistant Clerk and to sign any paperwork to change signatories for the bank accounts** – The letter was signed and Cllr Mowlem was given a form to get her identity checked at the bank

There being no further Finance business the Finance Meeting was closed.

REPORTS

- 6691/16 **Amenities Committee**- The Minutes of a meeting on 5th September were noted. It was resolved to approve the terms of reference for the Amenities Committee, which was carried unanimously
 It was resolved to approve the repairs to the Notice board at East Park Farm and the broken picnic bench outside the pavilion so the clerk will order the necessary parts.
- 6692/16 **Staffing Committee** – It was noted that the appointment process for the new assistant clerk was successful, and Amanda Burton was introduced to the council, having signed her contract of employment.
- 6693/16 **HIGHWAYS**
 It was reported that the idea of using some of the allotment land at the Hurst Road allotments for station parking was raised and that there had been an extra-ordinary General Meeting to discuss the possibility. The person who had proposed the motion

withdrew it in the light of the publication of the local plan sites that included a great deal of land around Twyford and Charvil. It was resolved that Council would think about this further if and when the topic is re-visited by Twyford Parish Council.

6694/16 ENVIRONMENT

It was reported that the Get Charvil Walking event had been a success, and Council thanked Cllr McCann for her efforts.

Cllr McCann reported that the Forest School is progressing, and that the Scouts have been asked to provide some logs from Paddicks Patch for seating. The school would also like to put up a sign saying "Thank you for respecting our Forest School, and Cllr McCann was asking Simon Bartlam's advice.

A TPO request for work at 7 and 8 Foxes Walk (266/1984) was noted and the consent for an application to fell an ash tree at Norris' Copse for health and safety reasons (28/1971) was also noted. *Clerk's note: the application 266/1984 was refused*

The Parish Council will shortly take possession of 500 crocus corms and Cllr McCann is to ask the school whether they would like some of them, and was also going to ask Peter Baveystock if some could be planted on the roundabout at the bottom of the Hawthorns. She would also like some volunteers to help plant them. *Clerk's note: The school are keen to have some, and Peter Baveystock is happy for them to be planted on the roundabout and roadside providing the planting process is not dangerous.*

6695/16 To note the signing of the lease for East Park Farm – This has now been signed and Charvil Parish Council have taken full possession of the site.

6696/16 To note the progress of the lighting project at East Park Farm and the replacement lights to LED by Wokingham – Dave Halley from Wokingham is looking at the possible lantern designs for East Park Farm, and the borough lighting project is progressing at a slightly higher cost than forecast, but much of this cost is offset by a grant from the government.

There being no further business the open meeting closed at 10.10pm

Chairman's Signature