

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 19th April 2021 Via Zoom

Present Jim Gillett, Paul Mundy, Pat Sutlieff, Claire Andersen, Mike Heath, Hilary Jones, Roanna Collis, Neil Jackson, and Jane Hartley

Apologies for Absence Narinder Ryatt

Absent

21/7608 Open Forum

No residents present.

21/7609 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

21/7610 Minutes of the Council Meeting of the 15th of March held via Zoom

The minutes were approved by the Council.

Finance

21/7611 Finance Reports – It was resolved to approve these which was done unanimously.

21/7612 Authorisation of Payments – It was resolved to approve the following payments, including the S137 payments agreed in December, which was done unanimously:

£71.72 to Grundon Waste Management Ltd
£246 to Drain and Able
£37.34 to British Gas Services Ltd
£40 to Dominic McKeown
£929.73 to Berkshire Pension Fund
£36 to Heart Facilities Ltd
£96.95 to HTC
£278 to A Star Signs
£123.88 to Aquacare
£159.93 to Dual Energy (Smartest Energy)
£31.28 to SSE
£82.59 to Clerk
£1010.92 to Sunshine Commercial Services Ltd
£107.14 to Tivoli Group Ltd
£778 to AMP Roofing
£1053.60 to Edge IT Systems Ltd
£1578.40 to Herald Graphic Ltd
£230 to JMVA Ltd
£112.50 to A1 Locksmiths (Berkshire) Ltd
£1435 to Groundwork UK
£2659.85 in Payroll

21/7613 To Review the Asset Register – This was noted. It was agreed to ask Councillor Ryatt to re-value the Hall for insurance purposes. *Clerk's note: there was an undetected error in the figures that has been represented to the Finance Committee for the Annual Return*

21/7614 Change of Signatories – It was agreed that Councillors Jackson and Hartley would become bank signatories.

21/7615 Planning, Environment and Highways Committee (PEH)

The minutes of the PEH meeting on 29th March were noted. Councillor Hartley gave a brief overview of the Minutes and explained that Simon Bartlam of the Countryside service had attended and had asked for suggestions for the siting of two dog waste bins. Councillor Jackson was concerned that resident feedback was considered on this topic as some had strong views on this. Another idea was to plant a Community Orchard on the scrub behind Vale View. Councillor Sutlieff was concerned that the Kickabout area should not be encroached upon as this is a well-used space and had been suggested as an alternative location to exercise dogs. *Clerk's note: the area suggested is currently scrub, rather than the more open area adjacent to it.*

21/7616 Amenities Committee

The minutes of the Amenities meeting on 12th April were noted.

The issue of approving the recommendation for a mobile food located by the stream in East Park Farm for a trial period was considered. The main driver behind even considering a mobile food van at East Park Farm was the idea that it might provide the Council with evidence as to the viability of a café in any new building at East Park Farm. After much discussion as to whether this would really be the case, the other main argument for allowing such a trial was that this seemed to be something that residents would like. Against this was whether such a van would compromise the security of the playing fields in consideration of traveller incursions, and that the Council had rejected a similar idea only last year. The deciding factor, however, was the fact that any such trial would inevitably affect the Council's ability to deal with the many projects currently in hand, at a time when staff are already fully stretched with re-opening buildings, supporting the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, and putting together a coherent plan for redeveloping the pavilion. Consequently, it was decided to re-visit the idea later in the year, when there was more headroom to put all the necessary agreements, licenses etc., in place. This would be July at the earliest, and if the recommendation was then approved, all parties who have expressed an interest in the past year would be contacted to see if such a trial was of interest to them, and one would be selected.

Two quotations were considered for the remedial electrical work in the pavilion, and it was agreed to offer the work MKR Electricals.

21/7617 Staffing Committee – The minutes of a meeting on 22nd March were noted. Issues raised included the re-instatement of the group closing the East Park Farm gates, the fact that there was clearly a negative effect on residents' attitudes from the third Lockdown, and Parish Staff had borne the brunt of much of this, and that something needed to be put in place for administrative support for the Neighbourhood Plan.

21/7618 Report from the Borough Councillor

In the absence of the Borough Councillor, there was no report.

Items for Consideration

21/7619 To hear an update on the Neighbourhood Plan Progress and to consider the timeframe for the delivery of the questionnaire and volunteers for this –

Councillor Andersen summarized the minutes, highlighting the success in getting the working groups up and running. Councillor Hartley said that she had nearly completed the youth questionnaire. The idea would be to knock on doors with the

survey, and then possibly visit again a week later to see how people are getting on with the survey. It was hoped that the questionnaire could be delivered between the 7th and 17th May, with a closing date of 9th June, and that a minimum response acceptable would be 20% of households. The idea would be to have a variety of drop-off points including the school, shop, village hall and possibly the garage, as well as FREEPOST. It was also approved to have badges, business cards and boxes with a common design, to help raise the profile of the plan. It was noted that fresh funding would have to be applied for before the questionnaires could be finalised. *Clerk's note: the timeframe has slipped and is now dependent on the response from the Locality Grant provider.*

- 21/7620 To note the uncontested election, the single vacancy and to approve the advertising of this vacancy** – There were nine councillors who have stood for re-election and no new candidates. It was approved to advertise the vacancy in the hope of meeting candidates at the May meeting. *Clerk's note: Roanna Collis has now resigned from the Council, and so advertising the vacancies will be done at such a time as it is allowed by Wokingham Borough Council*
- 21/7621 In the light of the positive reception from Wokingham Borough Council for allowing the East Park Farm Lease to be amended, to decide between extending the existing Village Hall, or to redevelop the pavilion at a location yet to be decided, near to East Park Farm playing fields** – It was resolved, by a majority of seven and two abstentions, to redevelop the pavilion
- 21/7622 To approve a working party which will examine closely the steps that need to be taken to create a full project plan for any such redevelopment** – It was decided that this group would consist of Councillor Ryatt, Councillor Jackson, Councillor Heath, Councillor Gillett, and Councillor Hartley. Councillor Mundy requested that the group visited him in his garden so they can better understand the noise issues for the houses close to the sports pitches.
- 21/7623 To consider how to hold the Annual Parish Meeting and how to ensure those that wish to attend, can. Also, to decide who is to co-ordinate the slides** – It was agreed to put something on Facebook, Noticeboards, and the website about letting the clerk know of intentions to attend – the limit is 45 attendees plus the Councillors and staff. The Chairman agreed to co-ordinate the slides.
- 21/7624 In the light of recent complaints, how best to improve communications with residents** – It was agreed that it would be a good idea to hold regular surgeries around the village. It was also agreed to bring this up at the Annual Parish Meeting to see how they would like communication to be improved. Also, maybe use Survey Monkey to gather responses.
- 21/7625 To hear feedback from the Borough Parish Liaison Forum** – The main issue was the changes to the Planning system, which appear to take decision making away from the local Planning authorities in many cases. The minutes will be shared with Councillors once they have been sent to the clerk.
- 21/7626 To consider and approve the Town and Parish Charter** – It was resolved to approve the Charter.

By virtue of the confidential nature of the business to be contracted the press and public were excluded from the remainder of the meeting under Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

- 21/7627 To implement the recommendation to approve the final version of the contract with Ed Francis and to approve the signing of it by the Chair of the**

Council – It was resolved to approve this, which was passed unanimously, and it was Agreed that the Amenities Manager would get the Agreement signed. *It was agreed at this point to extend the meeting to 10.10pm.*

21/7628 To consider how to organize the Neighbourhood Planning Administrative support – It was agreed that some work would be done by the Amenities Manager where practicable, and that it may be a topic for the extra-ordinary staffing committee meeting.

21/7629 To arrange a date for an extra-ordinary Staffing Committee meeting to review the staffing structure, possibly requiring external input – Councillor Andersen would arrange a suitable date. *This meeting has been set for 21st May.*

21/7630 To consider issues around Annual Leave, how it is booked and what factors affect whether it is taken – it was suggested that staff should book half of their leave early in the year and then book further slots as the year goes on, with the Chair of Staffing checking that it is being taken.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.08pm

Chairman's Signature