



Chairman: Pat Sutlieff

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Clerk to the Council
Miranda Parker
Charvil Village Hall
The Hawthorns
Charvil, Reading
Berks RG10 9TT

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 22nd January 2024 in Charvil Village Hall at 8pm

Present Pat Sutlieff, Narinder Ryatt, Rob Jones, Matt Walker, Stephen Lucas, and Lee Cripps

Apologies for Absence Isabelle Bray

Absent Jane Hartley

24/8226 Open Forum

The Media Assistant, Amenities Manager, and five residents attended. One resident attended out of interest, three attended to hear more about the sinkhole and one attended with an interest to be co-opted onto the Council. The resident interested in joining the Council introduced herself, explaining why she wanted to join the Council and what she would hope to bring to it. She has lived in Charvil for a couple of years, is a mother of a young child and is expecting another and is very interested in environmental issues. All the residents then stayed for the whole of the public part of the meeting.

24/8227 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

24/8228 To approve the Minutes of the Council Meeting of the 11th December 2023

These were approved and signed.

To note the Clerk's report

This was noted.

Finance

24/8229 To receive and approve the financial reports

It was resolved to approve these which was passed unanimously.

24/8230 Authorisation of Payments

It was resolved to recommend approval of the payments of invoices, which was carried unanimously.

£69.47 to the Assistant Clerk

£1074 to Aquacare

£1804.01 to Berkshire Pension Fund

£104.57 to Bowak

£152.47 to British Gas

£465 to Daisy's Dream

£324 to Drain and Able

£96.47 to Everflow

£115.91 to Grundon

£1541 to Herald Graphics

1989

Chairman's Initials.....

Date.....

£307.35 to JMVA Ltd
£465 to Me2 Club
£114.74 to the clerk
£400.80 to MKR Electrical Services Ltd
£89.90 to the Media Assistant
£70 to Paul Corby
£14.61 to SSE Contracting Ltd
£487.68 to Smartest Energy
£1135.73 to Sunshine Commercial Services Ltd
£1084.80 to Tactical Facilities Management Ltd
£12 to Taurus Elite Security
£4.40 to the Village Warden
£818.84 to Tivoli Group Ltd
£465 to Twyford, Wargrave and District Volunteer Centre
£109.08 to Viking
£4846.55 in Payroll

24/8231 To note the Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on 15th January

These were noted.

24/8232 To approve the budget recommendations from the Finance Committee

The clerk reported that £5600 needed to be moved from reserves to Members allowances in case any Councillor wishes to take up the new allowance in the next financial year. This will not affect the overall budget. It was resolved to accept the budget recommendations allowing for this change, which was passed unanimously.

24/8233 To approve the precept for 2024-25

It was resolved to approve the precept request of £117,600, which was passed unanimously. It was agreed that something would go out on social media to explain the increase before it is published by the Borough Council.

24/8234 To approve the re-appointment of Claire Connell as internal auditor

It was resolved to approve this appointment which was passed unanimously.

24/8235 To accept the Finance Committee's recommendation to offer regular main hall users a 10% discount

It was resolved to accept this, which was passed unanimously.

24/8236 Planning, Environment and Highways Committee (PEH)

To note the Minutes of 8th January

These were noted.

To decide upon a date for the litter pick

It was agreed that this would take place on Saturday 23rd March at 2pm to 4pm, from the Pavilion, with refreshments.

To approve the cost of the Speed Watch signs

It was resolved to approve this which was done unanimously.

To hear an update on the Scout birdboxes

The clerk reported that most of the boxes had signs of nesting and that a couple had been attacked – probably by squirrels, but possibly by woodpeckers. These have been repaired and the Scouts are hopeful for another successful year this breeding season.

24/8237 Amenities Committee

To approve the tennis coach provision that was conditionally approved at the December Amenities Meeting

It was resolved to approve this which was passed unanimously.

To consider the options for Legionella testing and to approve one of them

It was resolved to approve the twelve-month contract, subject to cricket usage of the showers, which was passed unanimously.

To approve the quote for the pavilion flooring

The clerk explained that there was only one quote for the repairs because it made sense to ask Concept 17 as they were familiar with the building, and they had come up with three options. Unfortunately, it will not be clear as to what the cause of the floor failing until the areas are opened up. It was resolved to agree the quote for the affected ladies' toilets only, and the affected corridor area, with the proviso that the rest of the ladies' toilets be done if it becomes clear the whole area is compromised.

To consider the quotes for the playground repairs at St Patrick's and to approve one of them

It was resolved to approve the quote from Infinity Playgrounds, which was passed unanimously.

To consider a request from the Air Ambulance to put a clothing bank at the Village Hall

After much discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of this proposal, it was agreed to sign up to a trial period, providing the nearby residents did not oppose it. The clerk is to add this to the February agenda for a follow-up.

To note the issues caused by the continued closure of East Park Farm car park and to consider any ideas to alleviate the situation until the car park is repaired

The clerk explained the issues that have been raised, and that it is appreciated that many people are inconvenienced. The Village Hall car park is open for the use by school parents but very few use it as they find this inconvenient. The residents present were all very concerned and exasperated by the continued closure, especially as it made Park Lane dangerous for pedestrians, but until the car park can be mended, there is little to be done but to encourage responsible parking, and more lift-sharing/walking to the site. The Council appreciate the difficulties raised for residents and hope a resolution can be found quickly.

24/8238 Borough Councillor's Report

The Borough Councillor was not present, but in his report, he said that he had raised the issue of the 20-mph flashing sign that has never worked on Park Lane and whether the speed humps could be raised with Paul Fishwick (executive member for Highways) at the Full Council meeting. He has also removed graffiti, reported fly tipping, and is working on plans for more joint community projects between Charvil, Sonning and Wargrave. He is also dealing with a complaint regarding the access gate on Pennine Way and cyclists.

Items for Consideration

24/8239 To hear an update on the Neighbourhood Plan

Councillor Jones reported that we are still waiting for the green mapping report. AECOM are working on the Design Guide and the Council are initiating the Housing Needs assessment for Charvil. The Borough has earmarked 169 homes for Charvil between now and 2036, which includes the two sites in the draft Local Plan, and some windfall. The housing needs assessment is a table-top exercise, but it will help us influence what will be built in the village. There has been a meeting with the planning consultant regarding getting the draft plan in place, and the green audit and community asset audit is nearly complete. Councillor Jones is also undertaking a survey of solar panels in the village to see how much energy is

produced in the village. The next meeting is on 5th February and then the next step will be the screening opinion from the Borough.

24/8240 To have a debrief on the Christmas event

Various attendees had said they enjoyed it but it was not quite what they were expecting – they had thought it would be more of a social event, with may be a break in the carols and more made of turning the lights on. It was also noted that around half of the attendees were with Councillors. There was a discussion as to whether there should be a charge for the event, and it was noted that there were no contributions to the Food Bank, which was a shame. It was agreed that this could be built on in future years as the idea was popular.

24/8241 To hear how the planning for the Annual Parish Meeting is progressing

The working group would like to hold the event at a weekend, but this may be difficult this year. The assistant clerk has been asked to keep suitable dates clear for next year. The idea would be to have a drop-in session, to improve community engagement, perhaps with something to amuse children while parents interact with Councillors. It was also suggested to invite some of the groups so that they can promote themselves, and possibly invite Cleaner and Greener to answer any queries about the change to bi-weekly rubbish collections. There was also a discussion about how to improve attendance, and apart from using our normal forms of communication, it would be an idea to get the event into the school newsletter. The working group will set up another meeting and will report back next month.

24/8242 To note the update on social media and to consider ways of boosting numbers of followers

The Media assistant reported that 95% of people who view our posts aren't actively following our accounts, but notwithstanding that, between Instagram and Facebook, the Parish is up to 2/3 of those who were following the old Facebook page. The most popular posts over the past three months have been the sinkhole, Hicks' development, and the flooding. Ideas to boost followers include online competitions, may be with a tennis session or such like as a prize, or a photograph competition with the winners featuring on the new website or on the cover of the magazine.

24/8243 To hear a debrief on the Flood Plan and to note the proposed development of an emergency plan

The flood plan had its first test in January with the severe flooding of much of the local area, and although thankfully no properties in the main part of the village were flooded, much of the plan was put into practice in terms of using the WhatsApp group, keeping people abreast of what was happening, the use of the Village Hall car park being offered, and such like. After this event, there was a debrief amongst staff as to how it went from the Council side, and the clerk and assistant clerk met with the flood warden to discuss how things went, and what could be improved. As a result of these meetings, it was agreed to update the plan as to who the best contacts are on the Council side, and for the flood group to draw up its own risk assessment and safeguarding policy if they ever do need to use one of our buildings to help affected residents. They now have keys to both buildings. It was also agreed that the Council needs to develop an emergency plan, and that the flood plan will sit within this. The assistant clerk and administration/media assistant will draw up a draft of this to be brought to the Council at a later date.

24/8244 To consider items for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Borough Council

The issue of the Borough Council's lack of funds was raised, in terms that it results in pressure being put on parishes to take on more. This can be intimidating for the parishes, as many are small and have very little scope to take on extra responsibilities either financially or administratively.

The other item is planning, particularly around retrospective applications, and also the frequent overriding of the Borough's own Design Guide.

24/8245 To hear an update on the sinkhole and to give retrospective approval for the appointment of a solicitor to act on the Council's behalf

The appointment of the solicitor was approved. The Chair explained that she and the clerk were to meet with Stephen Conway, the Head of the Borough Council and Sarah Morgan, the Assistant Director in charge of Property, on Tuesday to try to find a way forward. The main issue revolves around the lease and insurance – the Borough insure the property, but although they tried to insure for sinkholes, the only companies that applied for the contract only offered insurance if a building was also damaged – so the sinkhole was not covered. Wokingham argue that means, under the terms of the lease, the damage falls under the Parish Council's responsibility, which is a point the Parish has been disputing.

24/8246 To approve the change to a Gov.Uk domain

This was approved.

24/8247 To note any agenda items for the next meeting

None were raised.

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

24/8248 To consider whether to co-opt the resident attending this evening

This was approved unanimously.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10pm

Chairman's Signature