

A bi-monthly Meeting of East Garston Parish Council of East Garston Parish Council was held in the Friends Meeting House Children's Room on Wednesday 11th January 2017 at 7 p.m.

MINUTES

1. Present: - Jonathan Rabbitts (JR) - Chairman, Chris Tonge (CT), Sue Tulloch (ST), Deana Carpenter (DC), Liam Robson (LR), Jane Haddock (JH) and Alan Breadmore – Clerk. Parishioners: - David Bell; (part time) Galvin Mould (GM), David Knight, Trevor Butcher. Guest: - Graham Jones (part time)
2. Minutes of the bi-monthly meeting held 2nd November 2016 – were read and signed as correct.
3. Matters Arising:-
 - a. c/f. Awaiting action from WBC re re-profiling and drainage on Back St outside PJS, WBC have indicated there is still no funding.
 - b. c/f. Road Safety. Councillors thanked JR and Maidencourt Farm for clearing the hedgerow in order to improve visibility on Newbury Road.
 - c. David and Carole Ruse confirmed they would perform the street audit on behalf of the Parish Council.
 - d. Still no response re VAS on Newbury Road from "Smart Meter" planner.
 - e. JR and DC to obtain quotes for benches for Millennium Field.
4. The Minutes of Planning Decisions dated 2nd and 16th November and 14th December 2016 were read and signed as correct
5. Matters Arising:- None
6. Finance and Compliance:-
 - a. Paid since last meeting:

Name	Goods or service	Amount inc VAT	
Scofell	Mowing	£231	CQ 843
RBL	Poppy Wreath	£20	CQ 844
Griffins	Payroll	£310	DD
East Garston Parish Council	Opening Deposit for Unity Trust Bank	£500	CQ 845

- b. To be paid by next meeting:

Name	Goods or service	Amount inc VAT
East Garston PCC	Churchyard Maintenance	£200
East Garston Quakers	Room Hire	£72
?	Road Salt	£200
WBC	Dog Waste Removal	£210
T & M Cooper	Hedge Cutting	£160
A Breadmore	Clerk's Expenses	£25
Village Hall & Social Club	Broadband Grant	£200
EG Quakers	Community Grant	£300
?	Planning Consultant	£900
?	Bench Refurbishment	£200

- c. Received since last meeting: -

Name	Goods or service	Amount inc VAT
WBC	Members Bid Grant	£2174

- d. To be received by next meeting: -

Name	Goods or service	Amount inc VAT
HMRC	VAT refund	£1734

- e. The October, November and December Current Account bank statements (including December Unity Trust Bank) were reconciled to the cash book and signed by the chairman.
- f. Clerk confirmed that the Unity Trust Bank current account was now open. The transition from Santander is not yet complete but wherever possible the Unity account would be used as the primary account until transition is complete. All Councillors are signatories and three Councillors are already set up for internet banking. The procedures will be fine tuned over the next few weeks to ensure integrity and will be documented once confirmed. Clerk explained how beneficiaries are approved and how payments are made, requiring authorisation from two councillors. LR and DC confirmed they had used the process and that it was straightforward.
- g. Budget for 2017/18: - Under delegation previously granted, Clerk confirmed with Councillors that no undisclosed changes had been made to their pecuniary interests and accordingly granted dispensations for the ensuing budget discussions. Clerk presented a budget statement based upon actual and anticipated expenditure for 2016/17 and projections for anticipated expenditure for 2017/18 based upon previous patterns and known changes. This showed an excess of income over expected expenditure of approximately £1400, almost entirely attributable to the receipt of a grant toward the Millennium Field steps project which conservatively had not been budgeted for. The budget was accepted in its draft form

and the outstanding items for the current FY approved. After some discussion Councillors agreed that the precept should remain unchanged at £9,000 for 2017/18. Proposed CT, Seconded DC.

The key budget decisions were

- i. The community grant process using S137 powers would be repeated. £1000
 - ii. Continue contribution to superfast broadband in the Village Hall £200 (S137)
 - iii. Continue contribution to Wantage Bus Service, subject to usage data and new quote £410 (S137)
 - iv. Reduce Village Maintenance budget due to completed projects.
 - v. Maintain the Defibrillator Sinking Fund.
 - vi. Continue to earmark £2500 of S106 funding for children's playground equipment project, subject to a formal proposal and matched funding.
 - vii. Monitor implications of withdrawal of WBC services e.g. road salt provision, bus services and library services and be prepared to adjust priorities accordingly. Provisional allocation of £525 as contribution to Library services, subject to clarification of powers and detail from WBC re utilisation of Parish funds.
 - viii. Focus on road safety through appropriate use of signage and speed indicator devices.
7. Annual Performance Review of Clerk: - as required, an annual review of the Clerk's performance was held. He was thanked for his hard work which is greatly appreciated and his contract reaffirmed at NJC SCP 22. The NJC Local Government Services Pay Award for 2016 & 2017 should be applied, resulting in an increase of £8 p.a. in FY16/17 and £11p.a. in FY17/18. Proposed JH, seconded DC.
8. Flood Management Status: - CT advised there was nothing new to report, although he had observed that the sewage pumping station was again being tankered this week by Thames Water.
9. Planning Status:-
- a. Pump House - approved
 - b. 12 College Way – approved
 - c. Rear of Shieling – pending
 - d. College House - pending

Councillors discussed the approach that should be taken to ensure that their objections to the Rogers Lane development have the greatest impact. They concluded that the Parish Council required a focal point for this matter. CT suggested that parishioner Galvin Mould had already investigated the use of planning consultants and that councillors consider asking him to act as a voluntary project manager on behalf of the Parish Council regarding this matter. Councillors agreed (GM accepted) Proposed CT, seconded LR.

Clerk to draw up terms of reference for GM. The matter of appointing a planning consultant to advise on the Parish Council objection was discussed. Clerk had taken advice from County Association re the powers that might be used. Councillors determined that they could use S137 powers since this matter had such a high interest/impact/objection level among parishioners and hence was clearly in the interest of the community. (public meeting objection was unanimous and more than 60 objections had been lodged with WBC at the time of the meeting). Councillors instructed GM to appoint the favoured planning consultant on behalf of the Parish Council and allocated funds of up to £750 +VAT to the project. Proposed CT, Seconded DC. Clerk to review and approve contract.

10. Volunteer Programme:- CT reported no new projects although mentioned to those present that he would appreciate some help with completing tree clearance work in the Millennium Field.
11. Correspondence:-
- a. Next SID training date 8th February. Clerk to register CT and David Bell. CT to advise if any other candidates.
 - b. Clerk updated Councillors on latest communications regarding Library funding, including NALC/BALC advice re powers and required information from WBC that had not been forthcoming. Councillors agreed in principle to funding request but require further information before committing.
 - c. BT proposed removal of payphone. Councillors agreed to "adopt" it. Clerk to advise BT/WBC. Consultation to be held with parishioners for ideas on how to make use it for the benefit of the community.
 - d. WBC speed limit reviews will now take place annually in October/November; requests should be submitted by 1st June.
 - e. Parishioner reported bus stop next to Queens Arms required vegetation being cut back. CT to check.
 - f. Next Parish/District conference 21st March. CT and LR to attend. Clerk to register
 - g. Letter received from Colin Pounds and Dawn Tonge offering to sponsor a suitable "spruce" tree by the middle bridge in memory of their parents and the whole family who have lived in the village since the 14th century. Councillors approved. Clerk to respond.
10. Any Other Business
- a. JR reported that bench by middle bridge requires refurbishment. Clerk to get quotes

Meeting ended – 8.45 p.m. Next meeting – Wednesday 1st March 2017 at 7pm