

MINUTES

- Present:** Councillors: - Sue Tulloch – Chairman (ST), Deana Carpenter Vice Chairman (DC), Annabelle Eyre (AE), Peter Smith (PS), Jonathan Rabbitts (JR)
Gillian Woodward (Clerk).
- Apologies:** Clive Hooker (District Councillor) and Liam Smith (LS)
- Declaration of Interest:** The Chairman (ST) declared an interest in planning application 24/00743/FUL
- Minutes:** The minutes of the bi-monthly council meeting on 7th March 2024 and the minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting on the 18th April 2024 were unanimously confirmed and adopted.

Parishioner Sephanie Watson (SW) attended the meeting to put forward a proposal for new play equipment and to discuss how to fundraise for this. She had received a quote of £20,000 for the type of equipment required – and an image of the equipment was circulated. The village of Letcombe Regis has a very similar play unit and it was felt a good idea to have a look at this. It was agreed that the PC would need to see more than one quote and SW agreed to do some further research. Caloo was mentioned as a possible source.

The Chairman thought that the Greenham Trust might be a possible source of funding with two options: 1) matched funding up to £5,000 and ii) if the cost was over £30,000. The second option would not really be applicable. ST will have a closer look at option i) as it would need to come from the PC in the first instance.

As Tesco had funded wood bark for the playground in the past it was felt that it would be worth approaching them again. SW agreed to look into this. ST also reported that there might be CIL money available as a new funding stream is probably opening in July. It might be possible for the PC to donate some of its existing CIL money. The Chairman to look into this.

SW had some ideas for fundraising – baby and child clothes/equipment sales, collection boxes, village fete. It was agreed to keep resident Lise Cox informed at all stages because of concerns about more people, more rubbish, etc if new equipment likely to mean more people and children using the facility.

Pat Glover (PG) of the East Garston Eco Group reported on the following:

EV Charging – The Chairman said the Queens PH was considering getting chargers.

The Chairman is still looking into parcel lockers.

Training on WBC's climate emergency - WBC said in an email to PG that they are considering making their in-house training more widely available. PG to follow up.

BBOWT 'Managing Green Spaces' training.- PG and Andrew Gorton are attending this on 11th May.

WBC Village Hall Energy Scheme Grant is not yet open. Ed James, the Village Hall Chair, is happy to be involved.

PG to supply for the minutes annotated Friends of the Earth '20 actions parish and town councils can take on the climate and nature emergency' document. All comments very welcome.

PG also gave an update from WBC Town and Parish Climate Forum. Presentation on Active Travel, especially cycle routes. Presentation on the approx 12 seater Downland's Volunteer Group's new electric Handebus. This is available for hire, although no details were given. Both presentations are available from the Clerk.

5. Acceptance of Office and Election of Officers:

With the Chairman (ST) stepping down the Vice-Chair Deana Carpenter agreed to be Acting Chairman until a permanent new Chairman can be appointed. It was agreed that the PC should advertise for this vacancy and be able to vote on any candidates at the next PC meeting in July. **Action: The Clerk to start the advertising process.**

6. Planning Matters since last Meeting:

24/00743/FUL

Land East of Maberleys, and south of river Lambourn, Newbury Road, East Garston

Retrospective change of use of land to Use Class F2, Local Community Uses – c) Outdoor sport or recreation (not involving motorised vehicles or firearms).

The PC had no objections to this application and will record this on the WBC planning portal.

PENDING:

24/00534/HOUSE

Highbury, Front Street, East Garston

Part retrospective: Retention of replacement barn building with solar panels and use as artists studio (domestic) following demolition of derelict barn in rear garden of Highbury, Front Lane, East Garston.

Discussed at Annual Parish Meeting 18th April and PC had no objections.

24/00491/FUL

Greengates, Front Street, East Garston

Demolition of existing structurally compromised cottage and provision of a replacement cottage, with provision for access and related landscaping. A planning meeting was held on the 4th April 2024 attended by councillors to discuss the above application. The PC's concerns were noted on the WBC website. <https://publicaccess.westberks.gov.uk/online->

Signed



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and related landscaping. A **planning meeting** was held on the 4th April 2024 attended by councillors to discuss the above application. The PC's concerns were noted on the WBC website. <https://publicaccess.westberks.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application>

24/00032/FUL The Sheiling, School Lane, East Garston
New application for changing small parcel of land into residential curtilage. PC submitted comment that they would not make an official comment until outstanding matters re current refused permission and appeal have been resolved.

DECISIONS:

24/00176/TPC Corn Baggers, Back Street, East Garston
Tree work to 5 different trees (4 to be felled and 1 pollarded) **Permission granted.**

24/00340/TPC Penny Cottage, Front Street, East Garston
Reduce copper beech tree by 2m from 18m to 16m. Reduce rest of tree by 2m back to suitable growth points to maintain shape. **Permission granted.**

7. Receive Reports:

Councillor Hooker's report can be found here <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/downlandparishcouncilreport>

Chairman's report:

- The Chairman reported that she hadn't been able to progress with the works to the war memorial as she hadn't been able to get hold of the contractor. She will keep trying but it might be towards the end of summer before the work can be done.
- The village playground equipment had been discussed at the beginning of this meeting.
- Clerk's hours. The Clerk wanted the subject of her contracted hours (4/week) to be on the table as she has been doing twice that number of hours/week but that may be due to taking over and familiarising herself with all the work from the previous clerk, and with the work entailed in getting the 2023/24 audit done. She will keep a close on eye on her hours and discuss again in the July meeting if necessary.

Clerk's report:

- The Clerk reported that parish councils had been offered a framed portrait of King Charles III free of charge and this had been received and will be displayed in the village hall.
- Clerk reported that she was still updating the Emergency Plan and anticipated finishing this in the next few weeks.

8. Finance and Compliance

a) Payments and Receipts

1. Paid since last meeting

Name	Goods or Service	Amount Inc VAT	Approved
Tactical	Dog bins – Feb	81.60	ST/DC
WBC (credit note finally issued and small balance remaining)	Grounds maintenance	34.98	ST/DC
Scofell	Grounds maintenance – March	305.53	ST/DC
HMRC	Q4 PAYE	162.60	ST/DC
S. Coyle	Reimbursement of McAfee and Microsoft annual cover	209.98	ST/DC
G. Woodward	Clerk's salary – March		ST/DC
T&M Cooper Ltd	Hedge cutting	171.00	ST/DC
Tactical	Dog bins – March	81.60	ST/DC
Autela	Payroll	73.73	ST/DC
WBC	PC election re-charge	80.00	ST/DC
G. Woodward	Clerk's salary – April		ST/DC
	Total (incl Clerk's salary)	1635.84	

2. To be paid by next meeting

Name	Goods or Service	Amount Inc VAT
Scofell	Grounds maintenance – April	305.53

3. Received since last meeting:

Name	Goods or servic	Amount
WBC	Precept – 1 st payment	5250.00

Current account 5369.53
Deposit Account 16631.63
TOTAL £ 22001.16

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4. Clerk reported that the 2023/24 AUDIT had successfully be completed and apart from a couple of small VAT comments and the Notice of Public Rights being submitted late last year, the auditor had signed off the audit. Positive comments from the auditor reported that “there is a complete audit trail from the bank statements to the spreadsheet analysing receipts and payments and to the underlying documents”, “the authority and its accounts appear to be well managed”, and “the council’s website is well maintained”.
5. PCC error – a payment of £500 for the East Garston PCC was made in November 2023 for churchyard maintenance when it should have been £200. The PCC repaid the amount of £300 in April 2024.
9. **Jubilee Meadow-** DC confirmed that she would be undertaking the routine inspection of the fitness area shortly and would send her report to the Clerk. There was some discussion as to whether signage could be bigger in respect of No Dogs, and No Ball Games. The Chairman agreed to look into improving the signage.
Action: DC to send inspection report to the Clerk. The Chairman to look at signs.
10. **Village Maintenance and Millennium Field -** JR reported that the rotovating, levelling off and re-seeding work had still not been done because Thames Water had not kept to their schedule of spring for doing the work.
Action: Chairman to chase.
11. **Community Speedwatch:**
PS reported that he had a link about risk assessment for hiring the equipment but couldn’t access it so will send to the Chairman for her to have a look.
12. **Any Other Business:**
DC reported on the state of the phone box with its broken pane of glass. It was generally looking tatty and really needs someone to have responsibility of looking after it. DC said she had someone in mind who might be interested in taking over this task and would talk to that person. PS agreed to look at the glass to see if it can be easily replaced and a light bulb needs replacing.
Action: PS to look at the phone box. DC to talk to her contact.

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 8.00 p m.

Date of next meeting: Thursday July 11th at 7.00 p m

Signed



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