



**Minutes of a Meeting of the
PARISH COUNCIL**

held on
Tuesday 14 March 2023 at 8:00pm

PRESENT: Cllrs: Mike Coker, Steve Collett, Hilary Doyle, Mark Feazey, Matthew Furber, Katherine Giles, Ian Leake, Sarah Peacey & Paul Smith
Also present: Ceri Rance, Clerk & Amanda Sculley, Deputy Clerk

138 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Wendy Letton.

139 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

140 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

141 MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD 14 FEBRUARY 2023

141.1 It was proposed by Cllr Doyle, seconded by Cllr Coker and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 February 2023 should be approved and signed as a correct record.

142 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2023

142.1 None

143 COMMITTEE MINUTES

143.1 Staffing Committee held on 21 February 2023

It was proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Collett and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 21 February 2023 should be approved and signed as a correct record.

143.2 Planning & Transportation Committee held on the 28 February 2023

It was proposed by Cllr Collett, seconded by Cllr Doyle and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Transportation Committee held on 28 February 2023 should be approved and signed as a correct record.

144 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEE MINUTES

144.1 Recommendations from the Staffing Committee

Members of the Staffing Committee resolved to recommend to Council that all staff receive a 6% pay increase. The Clerk also addressed members regarding the Blue Mountain Community Centre project and the potential number of hours involved over the coming months. As the project is going to require a significant amount of administration and planning, the Clerk proposed that members consider increasing her hours. Members agreed to recommend that the Clerk's hours increase to 37.5 hours per week from Monday 20 March until 30 June 2023.

It was proposed by Cllr and seconded by Cllr and **RESOLVED** to award all staff a 6% pay increase from 1st April 2023 and to increase the Clerk's hours to 37.5 hours per week from 20th March to 30th June 2023.

145 ACCOUNTS 2022-23

145.1 Payment Approval List

It was proposed by Cllr Doyle, seconded by Cllr Smith and **RESOLVED** to accept the payment list totalling £54,188.48 and these be approved for payment. It was **NOTED** that the salary payment for the Clerk, pension payment and PAYE & NI payment would be adjusted to reflect the agreed increase in hours for the Clerk, an extra 15 hours for March. It was agreed that Cllr Collett should authorise the payments with the bank.

145.2 Projected Spend

The up-to-date spreadsheet was reviewed and **NOTED**. Councillors also considered a report concerning the year end position and it was proposed by Cllr Doyle, seconded by Cllr Smith and **RESOLVED** to move the following funds into reserves:

Open Spaces Maintenance	£5K
Play and Recreation	£5K
Elections	£5K
Village Projects	£20K
Parish Office Facilities	£20K

145.3 CIL Update

No changes since the last meeting.

145.4 Bad Debt

Councillors considered an outstanding debt of invoice 569 for £25.00 plus VAT. The company, GM Club Ltd had closed and there would be no payment. It was proposed by Cllr Doyle, seconded by Cllr Smith and **RESOLVED** that the debt be written off.

146 **REPORTS FOR DECISION**

146.1 Binfield Tennis Association (BTA) Rent Renewal

The BTA had received a Notice advising them of the new rental for 2023-24 calculated in line with the method laid out in the lease. They had responded with a letter requesting that the Council consider a 5% increase and a change to the lease regarding future increases. Councillors considered the issues and due to inflationary pressures and the need to reserve funds for the resurfacing of the courts, it was proposed by Cllr Doyle, seconded by Cllr Coker and **RESOLVED** to advise the BTA that their request had not been agreed and that the rental of £3,052 should be applied for 2023-24. Nevertheless, Councillors wanted the BTA to be reassured that it had the Council's support and other ways to support the club financially should be explored.

146.2 Defibrillator Request from Binfield 10K Committee

Binfield Parish Council received the following request from the Binfield 10K Committee. The committee would like to gift a defibrillator to the parish council which could be housed on the outside of the parish building on Foxley Fields. This would provide another defibrillator in a high traffic area of the parish as well as having another one on the 10K route. Councillors discussed the proposal and commented on the importance of having defibrillators within easy reach of highly used areas of the parish. Councillors also noted that there is already a defibrillator on the library building. It was proposed by Cllr Leake, seconded by Cllr Coker and **RESOLVED** to accept the gift of the defibrillator to be placed on the outside of the parish council building on Foxley Fields, until such a time as a more suitable location is identified without other units in close proximity.

146.3 Tablets for Councillors

Not all Councillors are able or willing to access the council information and documents on their own laptops and devices. It is possible for the council to provide a tablet device for each Councillor to make this straightforward. These would be individually set up and it would be expected that Councillors would use them for all council business, but no personal business. Tablets would also reduce printing costs as agenda packs will not need to be printed. It was proposed by Councillor Doyle and seconded by Cllr Leake and **RESOLVED** to instruct the office to purchase 11 Samsung S6 Lite tablets and keyboard cases at a total approximate cost of £3,575.00 plus £550.00 for set up costs. The funds will be taken from the IT Hardware budget so a budget amendment will be added to the budget revisions report at the April Council meeting. The Clerk was asked to prepare a report detailing any ongoing costs relating to the project.

146.4 Red Rose Allotment Plot 27 Debt Recovery

Following the vacation of this plot which had been left in a poor state, the leaving tenant had been sent an invoice in line with the allotment rules. This included costs associated with the plot being returned to acceptable state for the incoming plot holder. Although efforts had been made to contact the ex-tenant, no communication or payment had been received. After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Doyle, seconded by Cllr Leake and **RESOLVED** to make a Court Claim to recover the funds. The first submission to recover the debt would be made online at a cost of £80. Should no response be received further action would be considered at a future meeting.

146.5 Room Booking Charges and Facilities Package

The office is currently managing room bookings using Outlook calendar and corresponding with hirers using email. The process is time consuming and inefficient. Officers recently had a online demonstration of the AdvantEDGE IT Systems Facilities online booking system which would streamline the process and link with the office finance package for invoicing. The cost of the package is £575.10 which includes set up and training. It also includes a discount because BPC already use several of the modules. The annual cost is £261.80 per year. It was proposed by Cllr Doyle, seconded by Cllr Smith and **RESOLVED** to purchase the new module and implement it as soon as possible with funds from the IT regular expenditure budget. The extra annual charge would be added to the budget revisions report for April Council.

Councillors also discussed the proposal to review the room hire rates of the Parish building as these have not been reviewed since 2020. It was proposed by Cllr Doyle, seconded by Cllr Coker and **RESOLVED** to increase the room hire rates by 10% from the 1st April, with the condition that these would be looked at again as part of setting the room hire rates for the Binfield Community Centre if BPC take on the lease.

146.6 Asset Register

As year end approaches considered the Asset Register. As part of the Clerk's training on asset registers, she was advised that it is best practice for Council to set a threshold for individual items to be included onto the register. This will vary for different parish councils because of their very different levels of precept. It should also be recognised that some items bought may be considered as consumables, such as litter picking equipment or gazebos, as they are not high value items, and they tend to have a relatively short usable life before needing replacement. The Council reviewed the Asset Register which has 226 items with a total value of £1,052,573.03. It was proposed by Cllr Doyle, seconded by Cllr Coker and **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation to set the cost threshold at £100.00 and to use the monthly approved expenditure list to identify assets to be added.

146.7 CIL Projects Update

The Clerk confirmed that there were no updates to report.

146.8 Hearing Loop in Parish Building Currently Leased by the Foxes Den Cafe

A local resident and regular user of the café requested BPC look into installing a hearing loop in the building area currently being used by Foxes Den Café because some residents find it hard to hear others due to the building's acoustics. The Clerk and Mike Thomas investigated the possibility and costs associated with installing a loop in the café. The research revealed that a hearing loop would not be suitable for helping those who are hearing impaired while sitting in that area of the building. The acoustic panel option would be the best option to assist with mitigating the issue of sound reverberation around the building. It was proposed by Cllr Doyle, seconded by Cllr Collett and **RESOLVED** to instruct the Clerk to undertake the necessary project research to be reported back at a future Council meeting.

[10.02pm – Cllr Mark Feazey left the meeting]

146.9 Tree Planting on Foxley Fields

Binfield Environment Group (BEG) has received a free community tree pack from the Woodland Trust. The trees are native trees (elder, blackthorn, hazel, rowan and crab apple) that produce fruit that provides food for birds and insects and need to be planted in the next couple of weeks. BEG will be planting these trees on Saturday 18th March, potentially with the support of the Binfield WI. The proposal was to plant the trees in Foxley Field or to fill gaps in tree/hedge-row cover in Wicks Green and Silver Jubilee Field.

Following discussion by Councillors, it was proposed by Cllr Coker, seconded by Cllr Doyle and **RESOLVED** to plant the trees on Wicks Green and Silver Jubilee Fields. The Binfield Environment Group will be applying for another tree pack for the area identified on Foxley Fields and engaging with local residents on Wiggett Grove prior to planting in late 2023, early 2024. Councillors asked that the responses from the resident engagement process are brought to BPC ahead of planting.

146.10 Resurfacing Wicks Green Carpark and Drainage on Wicks Green & Silver Jubilee Fields

The car park in the Wicks Green open space has been deteriorating for some time. There are many potholes, and the surface is very uneven in places. Vehicles also drive onto the grass verges which has caused damage to the grass. Following the recent risk walks, it was noted that the surface is very uneven and would need attention. The temporary fixes of filling in the holes were no longer viable. At the December Amenity Committee meeting, members requested that quotes are sourced to resurface the area. There has also been an ongoing issue with flooding along parts of the path in both Wicks Green and Silver Jubilee Field. Parts of the path are prone to standing water, which is an increased risk to users when the path becomes icy in extreme cold weather. Following a review of all three quotes the Clerk and Amenity Officer were instructed to carry out further discussions with contractors to ensure that a similar proposal was quoted by all for fair comparison. The findings are to be presented at the next Amenity Committee meeting in April.

146.11 Blue Mountain Allotments

The Parish office received an email from legal representatives acting for Bloor Homes Ltd informing us that the land transfer was going ahead. BPC has been in discussion with Bloor Homes Ltd regarding the design and layout of the site as it is not currently fit for purpose. No further information from Bloor has been provided to date. Councillors were asked to proceed with the land transfer in order to expedite the project. It was proposed by Cllr Doyle, seconded by Cllr Giles and **RESOLVED** to proceed with the land transfer.

Due to the volume of research required for the project, it was proposed by Cllr Doyle, seconded by Cllr Collett and **RESOLVED** to form a working group. The following members were appointed to the working group and will join the Clerk, Amenity Officer and Amenity Admin Officer – Cllrs Collett, Doyle and Furber. Mike Thomas and Peter Brown would also be invited to join the group.

A draft plan of the allotment layout has been drawn up by Mike Thomas. It was proposed by Cllr Doyle, seconded by Cllr Coker and **RESOLVED** that the work carried out by Mike Thomas could be funded from CIL.

[10.29pm – Cllr Paul Smith left the meeting]

*[10.30pm Cllr Doyle proposed the meeting be extended to 11pm as per Standing Order 3 (u)
"A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2.5 hours except by request of the Chairman and with the agreement of all present and not longer than a period of 3 hours." All Councillors in attendance agreed.]*

146.12 CCTV Around Parish Building

Following some incidents of antisocial behaviour and graffiti on the Parish Building and Foxley Fields, the Clerk was asked to investigate the cost and feasibility of installing CCTV around the building to cover the areas of concern. The Clerk presented three potential solutions from companies and addressed the legal and financial implications of the project. Councillors reviewed all the information and **AGREED** that CCTV could not be justified at this stage.

147 **REPORTS FOR INFORMATION**

147.1 Clerk's Report

The report was **NOTED**.

147.2 Update Regarding SCS Contract

A meeting took place at the Parish Council offices on Tuesday 7 March between representatives of the Council - the Clerk, the Amenity Officer and Councillor Mike Coker - and Julian Gosling from SCS. The meeting was held to discuss the Clerk's decision to terminate the contract with SCS based on very little to no work being carried out over recent months and unsatisfactory customer services. Having previously received a credit note for June 2022, BPC will be receiving credit notes for December 2022 and 50% of February 2023 invoices. The report was **NOTED**.

148 **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

None

Meeting closed at 22.44pm

Helen Joyce