

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 6th February 2024 at 7:30pm at Westcott Cricket Club

Attendees

Cllr Sue Pusey (Chairman) (SP), Cllr Grahame Pusey (GP), Cllr Sue Lacey (SL), Cllr Jo Hooper (JH), Cllr Kevin Ready (KR), Cllr Tony Wilkinson (TW).
Ward Councillor – Cllr Ashley Waite,

Part One

108. Apologies

None

109. Open Forum

No Updates

110. Declarations of Interest

None

111. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19th December 2024

- 98.iv - Caroline Wainman had contacted SP asking if TW still wanted to be a Trustee of the William Turner Charity
- 98.viiJH pointed out that it was Ben Feeney who had been asked to attend the meeting

Cllrs resolved that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

112. Clerks Report

BM reported that he had now received the designs of the Green signage and had sent them to the printing company for a quote.

BM reported that he was still drafting the mowing tender and would send out to Cllrs asap.

Other updates would be picked up under the individual agenda items.

113. Reports.

I. Burial Ground & Churchyard

No update

II. Website

JH reported that the domain name had now moved to a new registrar, that there was a £50 registration fee, followed by £100 per year. This would reduce to £50 per year if the registrar also hosted the council website, but this would be decided when the current hosting become due for renewal. Cllrs agreed to pay for the registration.

III. Village Green

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No Update

IV. Charities

No Update

V. Buckinghamshire Council

Cllr Waite noted the following points:

- That resurfacing works would take place on Ashendon Hill from the 15th to the 21st February.
- That resurfacing works would take place in Upper Winchendon from the 22nd to the 24th February.
- That Thames Water works would take place in Cuddington, outside The Crown, from the 12th to the 14th February.
- That there would be overnight closures at the HS2 works between 12th and 15th February
- That there would be a Community Board event on 29th February at Quainton Railway Society, which would be the launch of the I'd Like to Borrow service.
- That there had been 450-500kg of food donations being collected each month, and that there was to be a Hamper appeal.
- That there would be a series of eight closures on the A41 during realignment works.

TW asked about pothole repairs, noting that the work undertaken near Stowe was of a higher standard using a roller. Cllr Waite confirmed that this was conducted by a Bucks Council sub-contractor. TW stated that he would like to see the criteria upon which repairs are assessed for quality assurance as part of the contract monitoring.

Cllr Waite reported that some potholes had been caused by water ingress, but that no organisation or agency will take responsibility.

VI. Speed Watch

SP reported that the SID device has been reset and is now functioning correctly.

VII. Cycleway

No update

VIII. Bucks Recycling

SP reported that she had attended a meeting regarding Bucks Recycling, but no Ward Cllrs were able to attend, noting:

- That a Compliance Assessment was being undertaken by Bucks Council on the Biomass Boiler. Cllr Waite stated that the assessment was likely being carried out by the Licensing Team. TW asked if it was possible to see the credentials of the Inspector of the equipment. Cllr Waite agreed to find out who was responsible.
- That there had been no crushing activity so far this year.
- That the bund process was underway to hand over to the Venture Park
- That 65 additional trees had been planted.

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- That the Noise Reduction Plan was reviewed in January, and that vehicles would be lined up in a specific way to reduce disruption at the start of business hours. The Yard Supervisor has been instructed to minimise noise levels.

SL noted that, according to the meeting, no complaints had been received, but that she had complained on several occasions. SP recommended copying all relevant agencies into a complaint.

JH asked if there was any information on the temporary structure next to the hangar buildings. BM noted that temporary buildings had specific time limits before needing a planning application. JH to send pictures to BM. BM to report to enforcement.

IX. Other

JH asked if there had been any response from Bucks Council regarding the meeting where the land behind Lower Green had been discussed. BM said there had been no response but had been promise the draft minutes when they were published. BM to chase.

JH recommended getting in an early submission for devolution, as only three or four schemes are likely to be considered.

SP reported that there was a village clean up on 17th March and would like WPC to cover the cost of booking the Cricket Club to serve refreshments to volunteers. Cllrs agreed to cover the costs.

114. Finance

Cllrs reviewed the accounts distributed by the Clerk up-to-the date of the meeting.

115. Planning Matters

SP reported on the Planning in Principle application that had been approved in Burnham Road.

JH stated that she was surprised it had been allowed in principle, particularly after looking into the new Biodiversity guidance.

116. Enhancements to the Green

JH reported that she had now sent a list of potential contractors to BM and would contact him to discuss.

117. Westcott School

SP reported on the potential closure of Westcott School.

JH stated that the Council should submit a response to the Consultation.

SP noted that the report states that the school was never at capacity, but highlighted that it was over 90% in recent years.

SP noted that the report referenced the wrong Wescott.

Cllr Waite reported that the Ward Cllrs were taken by surprise at a meeting, with no adequate explanation. JH asked if the Education Lead would be responsible for informing members. Cllrs Waite affirmed this, stating that Ward and Parish Cllrs should have been approached first but instead found out at the same time as residents, so were unable to offer advice.

Cllr Waite noted that the consultation report focussed on the school as it is today and doesn't reflect the history.

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JH noted that certain funding only became available to the school following the negative Ofsted report.

JH stated that the closure would likely leave an empty building in the village, noting that the land on which the school sits is leased, meaning for-profit academies would likely be uninterested in taking it over. Cllr Waite suggested reviewing the land registry docs to get a clearer picture of ownership.

Cllr Waite noted that there were no positive outcomes from closing the school, and suggested that people attend the upcoming consultation meeting.

Cllr Waite suggested that it may be worth engaging the Diocese to understand their long-term vision for the site.

JH felt that, without the school, there would no longer be a heart to village, and the MP should be engaged on the issue.

SP noted that she would like to see the school remain open, but would not be willing to have a futile fight if the decision were a fait accompli.

TW noted that there was a shortage of early years spaces locally, and this will exacerbate the situation.

TW stated that it would be useful to understand the finances of the school, in order to understand the drivers for the closure. JH noted that there was a high percentage of SEND children at the school, which ends up incurring an increased cost for support.

Cllr Waite noted that this issue might affect the house prices in the village.

SP asked that people try to get as many residents as possible to comment and attend the meetings.

Cllr Waite thought it was important to inform people how it may affect them, even if they don't have children.

TW noted that the Vicar wished to increase attendance of the Church, but closing the school would have a long-term impact on this.

TW highlighted the sense of community felt in the park after school hours.

118. Village Green – Tree Survey and Play Surface Update

- Tree survey - BM reported that he had spoken to the Arboriculturist, and he was unwilling to proceed without access to land registry information regarding the precise boundaries of the Parish land. TW suggested it may be possible to mark the trees. SP suggested speaking to BMKALC for a recommended Arboriculturist.
- Wet-pour Play Surface repair/replacement – BM due to meet the Calcoo rep on 8th Feb on the site.

119. Streetlighting Upgrade

BM had sent out the quote from EON to upgrade the streetlighting to energy-saving LEDs. SP noted that three of the Lamposts on their database did not belong to WPC.

BM to get additional quotes with the three erroneous lamps removed.

BM reported that the funding wouldn't cover streetlights and was focused on buildings. BM would update the Funding Report to include energy-saving funds.

120. Dog Bins

GP to look at compatibility with fixings for current bins.

121. Casual Vacancy

SP noted that Cllr Vitkus had resigned and that there was now a casual vacancy on the Council.

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BM to draft advert advising the vacancy.

122. Cricket Club Funding

Cllrs reviewed the Cricket Club's application for funding to provide a hard standing patio.

JH raised the following points:

- that she would like to know what events were planned for the wider community
- whether the area would be family-friendly e.g. no smoking etc.
- that increased hard standing was not in line with the recently published Biodiversity strategy for the area.

SL noted that there were Barbecue events held each summer at the club, and three in the past year, for wider residents, and that the club was regularly let out to private hires. SL felt that the club didn't promote its offer widely enough within the community.

TW would like more clarity on where the additional funding would be coming from.

BM to liaise with the Club.

123. Waddesdon Freight Strategy

SP updated the Cllrs on the consultation and asked people to submit their views.

BM to submit a statement from WPC that is supportive of the strategy.

124. Biodiversity Strategy

JH gave an update on the template for a Parish Biodiversity strategy, noting that it should inform documents such as the mowing tender. JH felt that WPC should raise awareness of the strategy and involve the wider community, such as during the village clean-up events.

JH asked for the item to be on the next agenda for further discussion.

125. Urgent matters of note

SP asked BM to chase Environmental Health regarding the fires at Waddesdon.

JH reported that there was a driveway on the High Street with no-dropped kerb and would like to know if this was allowed by planning. BM to investigate.

126. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 19th March 2024 at 7.30pm.

Part 1 of the meeting closed at 21:39

-----End-----

Date Agreed:

Signed:

Position: – Chair/Vice Chair/Councillor