

## Ruscombe Parish Council

### Minutes of Meeting of the Parish Council

Held in the William Penn Room, Loddon Hall, Twyford

On Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 7:30pm

**Councillors Present:** Mr M Evans (Chair), Mr P Cassidy, Mrs C Bulman and Mrs Holmes, Mr P Evans, and Mr J May (between items 130/22 and 136/22).

**Twyford Parish Councillors Present:** Twyford Parish Councillors Mrs L Jarvis, Mr J Jarvis and Mrs H Winder.

Others Present: Mr J Jarvis

**Clerk in attendance:** Mr Graham Winder (new) and Mrs Ruth Reid (former).

7:30pm Mr M Evans opened the meeting.

**121/22 Apologies for Absence:** Mr G Merrick, Mr G Howe.

**122/22 Declaration of Interest:** Mr M Evans declared that he and Mr May they are directors for the Campaign to Protect Rural Wokingham CPRW.

**123/22 Minutes:** Minutes for 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 circulated via email, approval proposed by Mr Cassidy, seconded by Mrs Bulman and approved unanimously.

**124/22 Public Comments sent to the Clerk or Councillors:** Mr J Jarvis raised the matter of upkeep and ongoing governance for Loddon Hall which in recent years has been allowed to run down with a marked history of mismanagement. He shared the fact that a new committee has been voted in for which Mr Jarvis is the secretary. He proposed that RPC could vote to have a representative on this committee and we should consider the whole council becoming members.

Mr Jarvis advised that a large amount of investment will be needed just to make the building energy efficient and raised the point that it has a 3-phase supply which the power supply companies to prefer to have converted to regular 2-phase. In addition, new flooring will be needed as in some cases it has worn down to chipboard. The original building built in 1966 was funded by the community and local PCs.

Mr Jarvis proposed that this could be a good CIL funded project. He also suggested that there are opportunities to offer it for party/wedding hire.

The freehold is owned by TPC but is leased to the association in full.

Mr Jarvis in summing up his update advised the any group can have a representative and if living outside the area, can be associates.

Action: Appoint an RPC representative to attend the four meetings annually. The Chair asked council if anyone is interested in being the rep, to let him know.

**125/22 Update from Twyford Parish Councillor:**

Two new councillors have been appointed, Mrs H Winder (North Ward) and Mr M Andrea (South Ward).

Mrs Jarvis updated council on the cost of clearing Stanlake Meadows of unwanted travellers - £4,900. This was funded by TPC but it ensured a quick eviction and saved the planned events from being cancelled and less waste to pick up. She also advised that the gates are being changed to double-leaf gates which should be more secure.

Mrs Jarvis shared the initiative to provide Chatty Benches in key locations for the lonely to sit and chat with anyone. The proposed locations are:

Village Centre  
Stanlake  
King George's

Mrs Winder introduced herself and added that the possibility of giving the benches a special colour has been considered. She added that a colour proposal is expected from Polehampton soon.

TPC visitors shared the initiatives that are being proposed for future events including an ice rink and outdoor cinema event at Stanlake and possible cinema at Loddon Hall. They further shared the winter crisis support initiatives including:

Food bank support  
Clothing  
Warm Hall/Places  
Church Hall

Mrs Winder will be meeting with Twyford Together about the above.

**126/22 Update from Wokingham Borough Councillors:**

No one in attendance.

**127/22 Annual Governance and Accountability Return Completion of Audit:**

This has been passed with the advisory that there should not be such high levels of funds.

Action: Mr Jarvis will send over Act 2016 on how to invest.

Mr Jarvis left the meeting at the end of 127/22.

**128/22 Ruscombe Ward Boundaries:**

Mrs Reid shared that WBC remains as a rolling 3 year election model. Ruscombe could become a ward with Twyford rather than Remenham/Wargrave. Consultation with residents runs to 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

Mrs C Bulman suggested not supporting merger of PCs as RPC would become a minority.

**129/22 WBC Local Plan & Development Sites in Ruscombe:** Mrs Reid emailed WBC with details of Hyde's Nursery and Northbury lane. WBC asked Council to wait until they have received an actual application as actual application could be different and any evaluation before this would not be a good use of funds.

Action: Check if this meets the Neighbourhood Plan. Obtain O'Neill Homer view if we can nail down what is clear.

Mrs Reid advised that there are no drawings in the Neighbourhood Plan, it is written and that our inspector is sitting on it rather than WBC.

Mrs Jarvis left meeting at end of 129/22

**130/22 Planning Applications:** None to discuss.

Mr J May joined the meeting during 130/22

**131/22 Clerk Recruitment:** New Clerk, Mr G Winder, recruited and handover completed at this meeting with ongoing backup for questions from Mrs Reid in coming weeks by exception.

**132/22 Ruscombe Ponds:**

Crossroads needs bullrushes pulled out and surrounding hedges trimmed.

Castle End – needs trimming back. There are concerns about mound of willows cut down, need quote to reduce fire risk.

Bench wood has been stolen and location is on the wrong place and needs to be dug out as consulting with the four landowners to leave it in place is not an option.

Action: Obtain a third quote for hedge cutting, quotes for removal of the bench metal and quotes for reduction of the bulrushes

**133/22 Pennfields Orchard:** A complaint about children using it has been received but as it is a public space, Council has no power to prevent this. Suggest she takes up with parents directly.

Wildflower verge, London Road – allow it to be reseeded but cut this Autumn.

Action: Clerk to email Localities to cut grass this time.

**134/22 SSE Energy Contract**

Need to renew contract. Rate has increased from 27.623/KWh to 60.889/KWh.

Vote to renew contract on 12 month fixed contract. Proposed by Mr M Evans, seconded by Mrs J Holmes and approved unanimously.

**135/22 Hardship Fund**

Main challenge is setting criteria for receiving funds. Citizens Advice is offering hardship support as are Wokingham charities. TPC may be too.

Mrs Winder is working on guide for TPC.

Mr M Evans proposed collaboration with TPC such that referrals of Ruscombe residents in need can be reimbursed to TPC by RPC where appropriate.

Mrs Winder shared her idea for providing gift cards for a hot drink/cake and similar.

Action: Council to set a budget. Members to think about this before next meeting.

Mr J May left meeting end of 135/22.

**136/22 SID Maintenance:**

Mrs Reid passed batteries to Mrs Holmes who will charge them up.

Action: Clerk to find out if Ruscombe Lane SID could be wired in and obtain quotes for others (CIL).

### **137/22 Trees**

Queens tree. It was agreed that a Copper Beech be quoted for.

Action: Mr Gary Merrick Has said he can obtain three quotes for tree, planting and plaque.

### **138/22 Remembrance Sunday**

It was agreed that Mr M Evans will lay wreath on 13<sup>th</sup> November, clerk to order wreath.

### **139/22 CIL Money**

Glebeland: RPC are waiting for confirmation from the Diocese as to what land will be available for lease.

Boundary sign: Mrs Reid reported that email from WBC indicated that they could fit in a narrower sign on boundary of Ruscombe.

Mrs. C Bulman proposed that we do more of the flower boxes

### **140/22 Finance:** Payments to consider:

CCB: £42 paid #1/10 2022

Clerk wages and expenses £686.83: Paid #2/10 2022

Nest pension £54.52: Paid #3/10 2022

New Clerk wages and expenses £118.62: Paid #4/10 2022

SSE (Sept) £58.07: Paid Direct Debit

These payments are proposed by Mr M Evans, seconded by Mrs C Bulman and approved unanimously.

### **141/22 Reports from liaison rep:**

Mr M Evans reported that he:

- a) Attended the Borough Parish Liaison Committee meeting in August and tabled questions about Tree Preservation Orders and the timing of the next Local Plan update.
- b) Attended the Northern Parishes Communication Group meeting in September where the Ward Boundaries review was discussed.

### **142/22 Any other business**

Queen's statue. Mr Cassidy obtained price for statue in region of £8-15K to include statue in crushed alabaster, erection and plinth.

Concerns raised that some residents may not feel that this expense is justified at these difficult times.

Mr M Evans closed the meeting at 9:27pm

Chair Signed\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Chair initials\_\_\_\_\_

RPC Minutes 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022

**Date of next meeting: Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022**

Chair initials \_\_\_\_\_

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