

Ruscombe Parish Council
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council
Held in the William Penn Room, Loddon Hall, Twyford
On Wednesday 10th May 2023 at 7:30 pm

Councillors Present: Mr M Evans (Chair), Mr G Merrick, Mrs J Holmes, Mr J May, Mr P Cassidy, Mrs A Hasted and Mr G Howe.

Clerk in attendance: Mr Graham Winder.

7:30 pm Mr Winder opened the meeting.

90/23 Election of Chair: Mr Merrick proposed Mr M Evans for Chair, seconded by Mrs Hasted and approved unanimously. Mr M Evans signed the acceptance of office and took the Chair.

91/23 Election of:

Vice-Chair: Mr M Evans proposed Mr Cassidy for Vice-Chair, seconded by Mr Howe and approved unanimously.

Planning Chair: Mr M Evans proposed Mr Merrick for Planning Chair, seconded by Mrs Hasted and approved unanimously.

Planning Vice-Chair: Mr M Evans proposed Mr P Evans for Planning Vice Chair, seconded by Mr Cassidy and approved unanimously.

92/23 Apologies for Absence: Mr P Evans.

93/23 Declaration of Interest: Mr M Evans declared that he, Mr May and Mr Howe are directors of Campaign to Protect Rural Wokingham CPRW.

Mrs Holmes joined 7.35pm

94/23 Minutes: Minutes for 5th April 2022 circulated via email, proposed by Mr M Evans, seconded by Mr Merrick and approved unanimously.

95/23 Public Comments sent to the Clerk or Councillors: Mr Winder has received reports of abandoned cars in Pennfields. Action to find out reporting route via Localities.

96/23 Future of CPRW by Mr Bell: Mr Bell provided some background to the foundation and structure of the CPRW. He highlighted the possible continuing need for the group in view of the Redingensians move to Riverways and Sonning Golf Club plans to combine with current rugby club land to provide 500 houses. Mr Howe will send over details.

Mr Bell posed the question whether it is appropriate to keep the group attached to Wargrave or widen to include Ruscombe.

Alternatively the funds could be returned and the CPRW company dissolved or kept active in view of the stadium plans by transferring funds and adding new people.

Mr Bell posed the question whether it is appropriate to have a Limited company owned by a council.

Mr May joined meeting 7.43pm

Further discussion took place with suggestions that CPRW be kept alive with Ruscombe central to the organisation. The current funds of £5.5k could be moved into RPC and ear-marked for the campaign.

Mr M Evans asked for clarification which was summarised as:

RPC to become custodian of funds eventually, with CPRW staying the same initially and in 1-2 years time, give the funds to the parish.

Mr M Evans moved to suggest that no vote was needed at this stage but the details of the proposed plan may be that Mr Halsall and Mr Howe would resign from the CPRW and hand over accounts to Mr May as MD and Mr Bell as Chairman.

97/23 Update from Twyford Parish Councillor: Mrs Jarvis updated Council with news that no meetings had been held since last update and that TPC had lost some Councillors although Mrs Winder would be returning after delays with paperwork.

The Coronation celebration event was a great result on the day with very many people streaming in and many who did not go home after the event was over. A great success for Loddon Hall.

Mr M Evans declared a big thank you and well done from Council.

98/23 Update from Wokingham Borough Councillors: Mr Howe shared the results of the recent elections and advised that due to proportional representation, the balance of power is now roughly 50/50 Lib Dem and Conservative with Labour in an overview and scrutiny capacity.

The Local Plan is waiting for Government to declare positions, so it is likely to be finalised sometime next year.

99/23 Ruscombe Neighbourhood Plan: Mr M Evans shared update that NP has been re-submitted and has been reviewed at the 20th April 2023 WBC Planning Meeting.

Public consultation starts mid-May for six weeks. This will be followed by an independent examination for which RPC will receive advice.

NP will be ready for referendum by Mid-Summer. Additional funds for O'Neill Homer will be needed.

100/23 Planning Applications

230943 The Hollies, Ruscombe Lane. No comment already entered as Mr Merrick could see no impact on surroundings.

101/23 Trees: No update.

102/23 Pennfields Orchard: Mulching has taken place.

103/23 Village Sign: Mrs S Castle will create the design for free. It was discussed that RPC should mention this in publicity and provide a gift (flowers) as a thank you.

Cost is likely to be just under £10k plus VAT and will look like the Hurst and Twyford signs. It is proposed that sign be located on the pond side of the junction. Mr May will consult with local residents.

Mr M Evans asked for a detailed proposal for next meeting.

104/23 SID Maintenance: All working now. Mr M Evans asked that Mr Chambers contact details be shared with Chair and Clerk.

105/23 End of Year: Mr Winder advised that an independent auditor has been engaged and that we will plan to complete year end for the end of June to satisfy compliance.

Mr Winder took action to look at higher interest options for current funds held.

106/23 RPC Policy Renew: Mr Winder has shared via email the Standing Orders, Code of Conduct and Financial Regulations, Mr M Evans proposed that Council reviews the detail of each policy in turn. Mr Winder to devise a suitable schedule for the reviews.

107/23 Annual Parish Meeting: This is due to take place on Wednesday 24th May. Mr Conway (Leader WBC) will be the guest speaker, as well as the Chair report, planning report financial report and an opportunity to ask RPC questions.

108/23 CIL Money: Mr Winder to find out when CIL money returns to WBC.

Proposal to fund church fences and gates discussed.

Other proposal includes providing water to Church Lane allotments. Mr Merrick to ask for costs.

The Ruscombe Lane leak fix possible CIL candidate.

109/23 Finance: Payments to consider: -

MBC Fencing & Garden Services £5340.00: Paid #1/5 2023

CR Landscapes £126: Paid #2/5 2023

Clerk Wages and Expenses £679.73: Paid #3/5 2023

SSE (April) £53.28: Paid #4/5 2023

These payments are proposed by Mr May, seconded by Mr Howe and approved unanimously.

110/23 Reports from liaison rep: Mr Merrick reported that he has tried without success to contact Loddon Hall group. No progress.

111/22 Any other business: FOI request ongoing, requesting dates of Councillor appointments and details of last elections. Mr Winder to action.

Mr M Evans closed the meeting at 8:58pm

Chair signed _____

Date _____