

Ruscombe Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Parish Council

Held in the William Penn Room, Loddon Hall, Twyford

On Wednesday 10th January 2024 at 7:30pm

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

Others Present: Mr R Dorin (resident)

Clerk in attendance: Mr G Winder.

7:40pm Mr M Evans opened the meeting.

1/24 Apologies for Absence: Mr P Cassidy, Mr M Andrea (TPC) and Mr F Newman (TPC).

2/24 Declaration of Interest: No new interests to declare.

3/24 Minutes: Minutes for 6th December 2023 circulated via email for approval. Proposed by Mrs Hasted, seconded by Mr Merrick and approved unanimously.

4/24 Public Comments sent to the Clerk or Councillors:

Mr Dorin attended to draw attention to his concerns regarding the surface water issue on Church Lane. He advised Council that he was present when Thames water attended to dig a hole in response to the issue early last year. He felt they were looking for a mains leak but that the problem is more likely a spring which needs a proper drainage solution.

Action: Clerk to find out who this may be reported to now and report back to Council and Mr Dorin.

An email was received from a Ms J Thorpe of LNT Construction requesting a streetlamp move to facilitate access for a new care home being built.

Action: Clerk to find out steps required and report back to Council and Ms Thorpe.

Reminder to action prior street light request.

Action: Clerk to find out next steps and report back to Council.

5/24 Update from Twyford Parish Councillor: None.

6/24 Update from Wokingham Borough Councillors:

Mr Howe confirmed to Council that he will be stepping down in May and to please let him know if Council wants anything done to contact him before then.

In reply, Mr Merrick raised the question of no footpath on Stanlake Road access.

Action: Mr Howe promised to raise matter at Ward Questions.

Mr Howe advised Council that the Local Plan is up for review at the next WBC Meeting and is likely to be nodded through. He further informed Council that the focus will soon be on elections and reminded them that Ruscombe will be Combined

with Twyford and Hurst for this purpose. He also provide further details on changes in representation.

Mr M Evans asked Mr Howe if the Wokingham Local Plan is soon up for approval. Mr Howe was unable to confirm this.

7/24 Ruscombe Neighbourhood Plan: Mr M Evans thanked everyone for getting the result we all wanted.

Mr J May joined meeting 7.57pm

8/24 Planning Applications:

240007 The Pavillions (TPO). Mr Merrick proposed that RPC enter no comment.

9/24 Ruscombe Ponds: Mr Merrick informed Council that work had slowed due to weather with paintwork on the railings outstanding. He added that work on Castle End Pond had been started by CR Landscapes and that they have taken out two willows. Mr Merrick also updated with Econet on work to do.

Pond Signage: Artwork is complete and sent over to Gerry for final view of cost.

Town Sign: Mr Merrick has exchanged emails with Leani of ONH regarding the location of signage. A meeting at the pond has been arranged for the 19th January.

Location of the sign will be 'face on' to New Road. RPC will need to apply for advertising planning permission. Estimated budget for permission is £1300.

10/24 Pennfields Orchard: Maintenance is ongoing.

11/24 SID Maintenance: All working, no issues.

12/24 Trees: Mr Merrick chase Mr Barnes regarding replacement tree.

13/24 Loddon Hall RPC Rep: Mr Merrick will attend AGM on the 22nd January.

14/24 Precept: The Clerk presented proposed Precept budget with caveat to reduce election cost element after clarification with Precept Team.

Precept was proposed by Mr M Evans, seconded by Mr May and approved unanimously.

15/24 Vacancies: RPC currently has one councillor vacancy with a further one at the end of January arising as Mr May resigns.

Mr M Evans asked if anyone had thought about possible candidates and several names were discussed. Mr M Evans proposed inviting them to the next RPC meeting.

In addition to the current Councillor vacancies, Mr M Evans will stand down as Chair at the end of the Council year in April and Mr Howe is likely to lodge his resignation just prior to the elections.

16/24 Shared Storage Proposals:

The draft proposal to move towards full MS Office365 was discussed and approved in principle.

Action: Clerk to obtain guidance on best package and related costs.

As a step towards using the storage to track projects better, Clerk will bring out old project list from Mrs Reid and update format to distribute ahead of next meeting. Particular focus to be given to boundary signs and Church Lane flooding.

17/24 CIL Money: Clerk presented CIL project spend tracker updated without budget figures and overall Aged CIL Summary of CIL received and spent.

Action: Clerk to check Aged CIL Summary detail figures and re-issue corrected one.

Action: Clerk to add budgets for CIL projects to enable better tracking. Input may be needed from project 'owners'.

18/24 Finance: Payments to consider:

Clerk Wages and Expenses £947.09 #1/12

Clerk Expense -Phone £10.00 #2/12

SCS Pennfields Orchard (Dec) £36.60. #3/12

PKF Littlejohn YE Audit £252.00. #4/12

SSE (Dec) £55.00: Paid Direct Debit #5/12

Keep Mobile Grant £600.00 #6/12

These payments were proposed by Mr G Merrick, seconded by Mr P Evans and approved unanimously.

19/24 Reports from liaison rep: No update

20/24 Any other business:

The NP Funding offer was discussed and it was thought to not be relevant now although Mr Merrick will look into this.

The question of funding St James the Great Church Roof repairs was further discussed and it was agreed that the Clerk would provide Mrs Hasted with the Church Warden's contact details so she may find out who is responsible for the fundraising effort and establish what support they would like from RPC (donation/input to find raising).

The Keep Mobile grant request was discussed and an amount of £600 was proposed by Mr M Evans, seconded by Mrs Hasted and approved unanimously by Council.

Action: Clerk to create an RPC Grant List to allow better tracking of amounts given.

Mr M Evans thanked Mr May for his contributions to RPC both as Chairman and as a Councillor.

Mr M Evans closed the meeting at 9:15pm

Chair Signed_____

Date _____

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 7th February 2024

Chair initials _____

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