

Ruscombe Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Parish Council

Held in the William Penn Room, Loddon Hall, Twyford

On Wednesday 7th February 2024 at 7:30pm

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

Others Present: Mr R Dorin (resident), Mr M Andrea (TPC) and Mrs Edwina Cameron.

Clerk in attendance: Mr G Winder.

7:30pm Mr M Evans opened the meeting.

21/24 Apologies for Absence: Mr G Howe.

22/24 Declaration of Interest: No new interests to declare.

23/24 Minutes: Minutes for 10th January 2024 circulated via email for approval. Proposed by Mr M Evans, seconded by Mrs A Hasted and approved unanimously.

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

Mr Dorin attended to request update on flooding issue in Ruscombe Lane area.

Action: Clerk to establish WBC next steps and report back to Council and Mr Dorian.

Mr M Evans requested the addition of a Matters Arising agenda item to aid in bringing forward unresolved matters from previous meetings.

Action: Clerk to add Matters Arising section to agenda template.

25/24 Councillor Vacancy: Parish Councillor candidate, Mrs E Cameron introduced herself to Council and took questions on her interest in becoming a Councillor.

Mr M Evans proposed coopting Mrs Cameron, seconded by Mr Merrick and approved unanimously.

Mr M Evans advised Council that an application for the second Councillor position has been received from Mr N Barnes who was not able to attend the meeting. He asked Council how they wished to proceed with this. It was agreed that Mr Barnes should be invited to the next meeting to introduce himself to Council.

Action: Clerk to invite Mr Barnes to next meeting.

26/24 Update from Twyford Parish Councillor: Mr M Andrea updated Council with news that there are two Councillor vacancies at TPC, one of which was triggered by the resignation of Mrs H Winder.

He also shared that Twyford Library, phase one should be completed May/June timeframe. Phase two waits on funding and planning permission.

Mr Andrea informed Council that a public meeting was happening that evening regarding the skate park.

He advised that TPC had many planning permission applications to review. TPC is looking for volunteers for speed watch in certain places. Anyone interested should let TPC know.

Mrs Hasted asked if there was any update on parking issues arising from people coming from Wokingham to Twyford to catch the faster trains. There was no real progress to report on this. Mr Merrick advised that parking issues had already been raised via a WBC survey carried out previously.

Mr P Evans asked if Twyford is involved in the Charvil sink hole issue. It was confirmed that insurance does not cover the cost and TPC is not involved.

27/24 Update from Wokingham Borough Councillors:

Mr Howe provided an update to RPC via email.

28/24 Ruscombe Neighbourhood Plan: Mr M Evans informed Council that the recognition event held for the volunteer team contribution to the NP effort was a success. He also informed Council that WBC confirmed that the plan has been formally accepted.

29/24 Planning Applications:

232561 – Twyford Orchards, Rolson House. For information only.

30/24 Ruscombe Ponds: Mr Merrick informed Council that the weather has been holding up work. CR Landscapes will be dismantling the Crossroads Pond railings, rubbing back and re-painting them.

At Castle View pond, two willow stumps have been removed and CR have been asked to look at overflow drainage.

31/24 Pennfields Orchard: Maintenance is ongoing.

32/24 SID Maintenance: All working, no issues. This section will be removed from standing agenda in future.

33/24 Trees: Mr Barnes will replace the tree when stock comes in.

34/24 Loddon Hall RPC Rep: Mr Merrick reported on Loddon Hall AGM which he attended. Proceedings were a little awkward at time due to changes of officer roles. The meeting was well attended with around 80 people. The accounts were presented which looked in good shape with much emphasis on the bar although this is still a small contribution overall. Progress is 'lumpy' but the heart of the organisation is in the right place.

35/24 Burial Ground Closure: The Clerk presented letter from St James the Great PCC requesting permission to close the burial ground to new burials. Council agreed to grant permission while expressing disappointment that closure was necessary.

While discussion was focused on the church, Mrs Hasted updated Council to advise that she now has the email address of the fundraising contact at the PCC and that she had contacted her to state that RPC would probably be willing to help.

36/24 Shared Storage/Project Management Proposals: Clerk shared quoted costs from EdgeIT for creating a secure cloud share for Council documents and resources, combined with RPC official email addresses for Councillors. The costs of around £500 to set up and £500 annually were shared with Council. Approval was given to move forward with the IT set up on this basis.

Mrs Hasted shared the proposed format for capturing new projects using existing examples which was welcomed, reviewed and accepted by Council as the standard template going forward.

37/24 CIL Money:

Town Sign Project – Mr Merrick advised that he had met with OH regarding planning permission. He asked Council to note that one of the requirements is that the sign must be 8ft from any road edge which effectively places it between the tall road signs and the bench on the edge of the Crossroads Pond.

Mr Merrick also advised Council that the sign would be made in two moulds and should last about ten years before re-painting.

A revised quote was notified to Council of £10,325 +VAT and carriage. Council approved revised quote subject to planning permission.

Time Capsule – Council was advised that the rough cost of the time capsule would be £300.

Mr P Evans advised Council that benches at Church need replacing. Chair confirmed with Mr Merrick that he will look into this and include the church as benches may be in memoriam.

Mr Cassidy suggested a 'chatty bench' like the one in Twyford.

38/24 Finance: Payments to consider:

Clerk Wages and Expenses £921.54 #1/1

Mr M Evans Expenses (NP Recognition Meal) £370.60 #2/1

SCS Pennfields Orchard (Jan) £36.60. #3/1

CCB Annual Membership £42.00 #4/1

Citizens Advice Grant £200.00 #5/1

ARC Grant £500.00 #6/1

SSE (Jan) £55.00: Paid Direct Debit #7/1

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

Action: Clerk to create Grants List for tracking donations.

39/24 Reports from liaison rep: Mr M Evans advised on his attendance at NPCG and shared his disappointment at the lack of police attendance at the meeting. He will circulate the minutes in due course.

40/24 Any other business:

Mr M Evans confirmed that he will attend the Meet the Councillors Session coming up.

Mr Merrick confirmed that he has worked further on the pond signs with costs around £600. Proofs will be circulated soon.

Mr M Evans closed the meeting at 8:56pm

Chair Signed _____

Date _____

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 6th March 2024