

MINUTES OF THEALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 5th February 2018 in the Peter Gooch Room, The Pavilion, Englefield Road, Theale.

Present: Councillors B. Williams (chair), S. Coker, J. Richardson, D. Baker, A. Clark, D. Lye, I. Hopcroft & P. Clifford.

Apologies received: Cllrs Z. Fenwick and D. Wood.

Present: Jo Friend (Clerk) in attendance. There were twenty seven members of the public in attendance.

Declarations of Interest: None declared.

The chairman asked if any members of the council or members of the public were intending to record or film the meeting. The answer was negative.

192/17/18 Open Forum for Members of the Public

Mr Ward – said that, following on from the last parish council meeting, he understood that WBC's deadline had passed. Not happy that WBC keep ignoring their own deadlines.

The chairman responded informing him that, late today, she had received a letter from Nick Carter, CEO at WBC – in fact, it's receipt was so recent that the other parish councillors weren't even aware of it yet. She has only had time to skim read it but the letter suggests that WBC is willing to wait until after a parish meeting and a possible parish poll before making its decision. She suggested that if the resident were not happy with WBC's approach to its own deadlines that he makes that complaint to them.

Pamela Sergent – said she could see that the chairman was doing her best in order that clarity was achieved. At the last meeting, even though WBC's Cllr Graham Jones said Cllr Lynne Doherty would clarify things if she was permitted to speak, she didn't clarify and residents were left even more confused about some matters.

Cllr Doherty had mentioned to residents that she was a volunteer just like the parish councillors but, unless Theale's parish councillors are receiving allowances of £17,000 each they are a very different kind of volunteer. Cllr Doherty also said she wasn't employed by WBC, she was a consultant – so do WBC officers report to consultants? The catchment figures she was going to clarify just didn't clarify things. In the last five years, looking at the schools immediately around Theale, over 100 out of catchment children have been placed in them. Englefield Primary alone has taken 53 out of catchment children. Mrs Sergent said she was not sure that the village was having access to clear figures. Questions that have been asked of WBC have still not been answered, ie is the new school a replacement school for the existing one, what will the current school building be used for if the new school is built?

The chairman asked if any other members of the public wished to speak, the answer was negative.

Pamela Sergent asked, if no one else wished to speak could she add something else? She spoke about the people behind the Save Our Village campaign, explaining that they were just like-minded, individual residents and that it was a positive movement. She read out a statement they had made about the purpose of their group and their key concerns.

A member of the public had a question about the parish meeting and the parish poll, asking for clarity over what will happen in terms of the result. Considering the costs involved and the fact that a parish meeting will probably result in a poll, shouldn't the parish council bear this expenditure in mind and commit to abiding by the result? The clerk explained that a poll result was not legally

binding and the parish council could not commit to abiding by whatever the result may be. She added that, as Cllr Clifford had suggested at a previous meeting, the poll result would be one of the things taken into consideration when the parish council makes its decision.

Paul Dinsdale asked if an agenda would be followed at the parish meeting. He asked if, at that meeting, once a question had been agreed and a poll called could the parish councillors discuss it and say whether or not they will abide by the result? The clerk responded saying no, it was not a parish council meeting but a parish meeting. Councillors would be present as electors not as councillors. Mr Dinsdale asked who will be setting the agenda as he and other parishioners wanted to have input into it. The clerk replied that she would be setting the agenda and was taking advice from BALC and NALC on the matter.

There being no further comments, the public open forum closed and the majority of members of the public left the meeting.

Notifications of Chairman's remarks – Cllr Baker had one, Cllr Clifford had one and Cllr Williams had two to raise.

SECTION A

193/17/18 MINUTES OF MEETING OF 8TH JANUARY 2018.

Cllrs Baker and Clifford asked for amendments to be made to 171/17/18 paragraphs 10, 12 and 15. Cllr Baker asked for 'relocated' to be amended to 'relocate' in 178/17/18.

Members then adopted the Minutes of the Meeting of 8th January 2018. Proposed Cllr Clark; seconded Cllr Clifford. Approved nem con.

194/17/18 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 8TH JANUARY 2018.

178/17/18 The Co-op frontage had been reinstated and the cash machine will be in the same location it was previously.

SECTION B

195/17/18 District Council Report

Cllr Macro was not present at the meeting but submitted a short, written report:

WBC has decided to implement its proposed changes to the litter picking and street cleansing services;

WBC is calling for the introduction of on-street parking charges in Thatcham as introduced in Newbury a couple of years ago. He is concerned that this may be introduced in Theale.

196/17/18 Clerk's Report

John Cumber Hall – Council thanked the clerk and Mary Tearney, the hall trustee, for their work in securing 100% rates relief for the hall.

Skate park graffiti – Cllr Lye said Reading Borough Council have a graffiti removal team who jet wash graffiti. The clerk informed him that the skate park manufacturers had advised that the surface would be damaged by jet washing and that she was looking into alternatives. Cllr Lye asked if the doctors' surgery CCTV covered the skate park but Cllr Williams said she had asked previously if it covered anything outside of the surgery car park and the surgery informed her it didn't.

Village Hall Sewage Pump Repairs – Members agreed the parish council should make the 50% contribution towards the repair bill as requested by the village hall. This item will be put on the next agenda for formal resolution.

197/17/18 Planning Applications

18/00163/HOUSE	Single storey rear extension	7 Roundhead Road, Theale RG7	Mr & Mrs C Harwood	No objection
18/00099/ADV	External building mounted fascia sign & directional totem signage & car parking designation signs	1510-1520 Arlington Business Park, Theale	Aecom	No objection
18/00182/COMIND	Demolition of 3 existing industrial units & the erection of 2 replacement industrial units with front service yard for flexible B2 &/or B8 uses with ancillary office	Technology Centre, Station Road, Theale	PIL Acquisitions 1 Ltd	No objection

198/17/18 Theale Library & the Gateway Centre

The meeting with Paul Anstey will be rearranged.

199/17/18 Parish Council Vacancy

Members noted Cllr Macro's resignation and registered their thanks to him for the time he spent as a parish councillor.

200/17/18 Parish Council Signatories

Cllr Clifford offered to be a parish council signatory. Members agreed unanimously to add him to the list of signatories.

One member of the public left the meeting.

201/17/18 Beansheaf Building

The council has been advised that further historical documentation and evidence is required in order to progress this matter. Council minutes prior to 2000 will have to be examined for such evidence. The clerk will provide the minutes to Cllr Clifford who agreed to go through them looking for such evidence.

202/17/18 General Data Protection Regulation

Cllr Clark to attend CCB training event on 22nd February 2018.

One member of the public left the meeting.

203/17/18 Cricket – Licence/Contracts

Cllr Hopcroft updated the Members. He and Cllr Clifford had met with the cricket club to go through the agreement template the club had provided. Cllr Hopcroft said he was waiting to hear back from the club. The club had asked if it was possible for the cooker to be replaced as it was no longer functioning and the club would like to provide more hot food on match days. The clerk said she would refer this to the working group who are organising the refurbishment to see what style of cooker they had planned to install, she felt that it would be possible to replace the cooker by the start of the cricket season.

One member of the public left the meeting.

204/17/18 Highways Issues at Andrews Close

Members were angry that still nothing had been done to improve the highways problems at Andrews Close and that as a result, the emergency services had been unable to afford a deceased resident the dignity that was deserved. The clerk was asked to write to Mark Edwards at WBC, informing him what had happened and asking why nothing had been done despite WBC being aware that there was a problem.

205/17/18 District Parish Conference

Noted.

206/17/18 Disruption to Newbury Rail Service

Noted.

207/17/18 Local Government Boundary Review

Noted.

208/17/18 WBC Consultation on Proposed Term Dates 2019/20

Noted.

209/17/18 Authorisation of Payments

It was RESOLVED that items on sheet no.510 and dated 5th February 2018 be approved for payment. Proposed Cllr Richardson; seconded Cllr Coker. Approved nem con.

Members noted the December 2017 Direct Debit sheet.

(direct debit sheet incorrectly labelled as 'January 2018' on agenda)

SECTION C**210/17/18 Items for Information**

Noted.

SECTION D**211/17/18 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

Cllr Baker withdrew his item.

Cllr Clifford – there appeared to be a lot of mud on the North Street and golf club roads following football at the weekend on North Street playing fields. He felt that the weather was an issue as there had been so much rain, could the council put gravel down? The clerk and Cllr Coker said they would monitor the situation and ask managers to report on the conditions – it had been exceptionally wet recently.

Cllr Williams – expressed her disapproval of the local labour party's recent comments on social media regarding the primary school issue. She felt the use of the term 'comrades' and a clenched fist emoji were not appropriate in this matter. Cllr Williams said it seemed wrong that such a group were coming into the village and getting involved in a village matter when they obviously were not in possession of the facts, there were many inaccuracies in their posts. Cllr Richardson asked the clerk if the local labour party had contacted the parish council requesting information on the primary school project – the clerk confirmed there had been no contact.

Cllr Williams – said she was aware that there was a lot of misinformation in the public domain about the proposed new primary school and therefore a lot of confusion amongst residents. She recommended that the parish council should start publishing facts on its website to clear up some of the confusion. She recommended the clerk start doing this as

soon as possible. Cllr Baker said some of the information was of a sensitive nature so how will councillors be checking this before it's published? Cllr Williams responded saying it wouldn't need to be checked, the clerk is the Proper Officer, she will use her judgement and it would be facts that were being published. Cllr Clifford said that historical information did not have to be put on the website, it is the situation as it stands now that is important. Cllr Hopcroft suggested that website posts could be checked beforehand by councillors and a 24 hour limit for comments be set.

The clerk explained that, in practice, this would not be workable. The time involved in dealing with each councillor's comments on each item to be published and re-writing the piece to suit everyone would be substantial. The clerk reminded councillors that she was the Proper Officer and that she would use her professional judgement. It was facts they were talking about putting on the website, information that could clear up residents' misunderstandings or confusion. Cllr Hopcroft commented that the last press release written by the clerk was very good. Cllr Lye asked if pictures and links could be put on TPC's website. No other councillors objected to Cllr Williams' recommendation.

212/17/18 Part II

In view of the confidential nature of business to be conducted it is in the public interest that the public and press be excluded and are instructed to withdraw.

Any remaining members of the public left the meeting.

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 9.50pm.

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Chairman to the Council