

MINUTES OF THEALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 11th September 2017 in the Peter Gooch Room, The Pavilion, Englefield Road, Theale.

Present: Councillors B. Williams (chair), A. Clark, D. Wood, J. Richardson, A. Macro, I. Hopcroft, D. Lye, P. Clifford, D. Baker & Z. Fenwick.

Apologies received: Cllr S. Coker.

Present: Jo Friend (Clerk) in attendance. Twenty one members of the public were present.

Declarations of Interest: Cllr Clifford declared an interest in Item 9, 'Councillor Interests'.

The chairman asked if any members of the council or members of the public were intending to record or film the meeting. Two members of the public, Paul Dinsdale and Tony Philips, replied that they would be live streaming the meeting on Facebook.

The chairman reminded Mr Dinsdale and Mr Philips of the legislation with which they were required to comply and informed the other members of the public present that they should make it known if they did not wish to be filmed, the room would then be rearranged to provide them with an area to sit in. The chairman informed the public that if they spoke during the meeting then they would be filmed/recorded, if they did not wish to be filmed/recorded then they would not be able to speak.

Some members of the public moved seats and one stated that she did not wish to be live streamed on social media but that she hadn't been intending to speak at the meeting anyway.

Following on from a suggestion made after a previous council meeting, the chairman asked all councillors to introduce themselves.

85/17/18 Open Forum for Members of the Public

A member of the public addressed the council. She wanted to thank the council for their hard work, having been a parish councillor some years ago, she was well aware that the role of councillor wasn't just a case of attending the monthly meeting. She praised the councillors and the clerk for the way they carried out their duties and for their professionalism. There was a round of applause from the audience.

The chairman thanked the resident for her comments and, as no further members of the public wished to speak, the public open forum was closed.

Notifications of Chairman's remarks – Cllr Fenwick and Cllr Lye both had one item to raise. Cllr Clifford had three items to raise. Cllr Baker had one item to raise.

SECTION A

86/17/18 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF 7th AUGUST 2017.

Members adopted the Minutes of the Meeting of 7th August 2017. Proposed Cllr Wood; seconded Cllr Lye.

87/17/18 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF 7th AUGUST 2017.

There were no matters arising.

SECTION B**88/17/18 District Council Report**

Cllr Macro reported on the recurring problems of Ikea's gridlocked car park; the Boundary Review; his petition against WBC's new waste charges; local parking issues and the refusal of the Whitehart Meadow planning application.

89/17/18 Clerk's Report

Noted.

90/17/18 Planning Applications

Councillor Macro gave his usual caveat: he sits on the Eastern Area Planning Committee and his views could change should further information be made available.

17/02379/HOUSE	Two storey extension at rear & side, new porch & bay window to front. Demolition of existing chimney & detached garage.	22 Blossom Lane, Theale RG7 5BD	Julian Li	<i>Application ruled invalid by WBC</i>
17/02426/HOUSE	Single storey rear extension	11 Muswell Close, Theale, RG7 5EF	Ben Watson	No objection
17/02238/ADV 17/02237/FUL <i>Adjacent parish</i>	Erection of navigation tower with internally illuminated static sign at IKEA store.	Ikea Ltd., Pincents Kiln, Calcot RG31 7SD	Ikea Ltd	OBJECT Height; intrusion on skyline; visibility from AONB & Conservation Area; unnecessary advertising not navigational aid
17/02230/ADV <i>Adjacent parish</i>	Internally illuminated parapet sign on west elevation of IKEA store	Ikea Ltd., Pincents Kiln, Calcot RG31 7SD	Ikea Ltd	OBJECT Visual impact; unnecessary advertising; appears to be identical to previous application which was refused; WBC's grounds for refusal
17/2241/MINMAJ <i>Adjacent parish</i>	Development of three industrial buildings for the processing of non-hazardous materials, together with small office, parking, storage areas & internal roads	Former Theale Quarry, Deans Copse Road Theale	Claude Fenton (Holdings) Ltd	No objection Comment: noise & flooding issue should be adequately addressed; request measures in place to prevent site vehicles from accessing swing bridge
17/02275/HOUSE	Addition of porch & rear extension (size & design to match neighbour's porch & rear extension), erection of an outbuilding in rear garden	7 Lambfields Theale RG7 5DB	Adam Wise	OBJECT Outbuilding v. large & high; described as habitable room; leaves little amenity space; conservation area; errors on plans – rear extension does not match neighbour's.

16/01235/FUL 16/01237/FUL 16/01238/FUL 16/01239/FUL <i>Adjacent parish Additional documents only</i>	Construction of culverts under highway to enable flood alleviation works associated with development of Burghfield Park	Burghfield Sailing Club, Hangar Road Sulhamstead	Floodline	No further comment
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91/17/18 External Audit

The completion of the external audit was noted. Cllr Macro said the clerk should be congratulated for achieving such a clean audit. Members agreed.

92/17/18 Councillor Interests

Cllr Lye said he couldn't see there was anything to discuss as all the councillors had interests when it came to the primary school issue, for example many had children at the school and all councillors lived in the village. Cllr Clifford said he had received correspondence from the parish council and had been in contact with the monitoring officer regarding his position in relation to the new primary school project. He said he had suggested a formal meeting could be held with members of the council, West Berkshire Council's Monitoring Office and an independent legal expert in this field. The chairman said she had informed Cllr Clifford that she didn't consider such a meeting necessary. The parish council was giving him advice on the matter, approved by the Monitoring Officer, and that it was just advice, the decision as to whether he declares an interest in the matter is for him to decide. He was entitled to obtain legal or other advice from whomever he wished but the decision as to how he chose to act on any advice was his.

Cllr Macro said he didn't think Cllr Clifford had a conflict of interest in this matter as it was his wife who held the positions of school governor and member of West Berkshire Council's Project Board for the new Theale Primary School, not Cllr Clifford himself. Cllr Macro added that he himself was not aware of his wife's view on issues and would not be influenced by them anyway.

The clerk confirmed that, as had been made clear to Cllr Clifford from the beginning, no one can make a councillor vote nor prevent a councillor from voting. The decision as to how they act in any matter is entirely down to the individual councillor. The clerk has provided advice that Cllr Clifford does have a conflict of interest in this matter, a view agreed with by the monitoring officer, and the matter on the agenda is whether or not Cllr Clifford wishes to provide clarification that can be communicated to the residents who contacted the council expressing concern about such a possible conflict.

Cllr Clifford said the clarification he would provide was that he will declare any interest he may have at the beginning of a meeting at which any decision will be made.

The clerk thanked him for his statement and said she would inform the residents of this.

Cllr Baker said other residents had told him that when they asked for updates or information they hadn't received answers and yet this matter was on the agenda. The chairman asked for clarification as to when these questions had been asked, Cllr Baker said it was at council meetings. The chairman confirmed that residents were told if questions couldn't be answered immediately and informed of the answer when it was available. Similarly, updates on issues were provided if available, if there was no update available then none could be issued. She asked Cllr Baker if he was referring to just one topic or did this relate to other council business – he confirmed that he was referring to the school project. The chairman said Cllr Baker knew as much about that issue as the rest of the council and that he would know if updates were available and could reassure residents accordingly.

93/17/18 Parish Council Positions

Members all agreed that Cllr Richardson should take up the role of TPC's Internal Checker.

94/17/18 Planning Committee

Cllr Macro suggested the council have a Planning Committee which would meet in between full council meetings and deal with planning applications, thus reducing the number of items that had to be dealt with at full council and avoiding the problems associated with short comment deadlines. He agreed with the clerk's recommendation that a number of councillors be nominated by full council to sit on this committee and that they should commit to the research involved with commenting on applications and the attendance of the meetings. This is the structure adopted by many parish & town councils. Cllr Hopcroft felt that any councillor should be able to attend if and when they wanted to. The clerk said this could lead to councillors expecting others to have done the legwork and it would be no different to full council. Cllr Macro explained that Planning Committee meetings would be open to the public and that non-members (including parish councillors) would be welcome to attend and give their views but they would not be entitled to vote. Cllr Hopcroft and a couple of other councillors were not comfortable with power being delegated to nominated members. Cllr Richardson said no one had asked the question 'did any councillors want to sit on a planning committee?' No progress could be made on the matter and so it was agreed that things would stay as they are.

Cllr Clifford suggested that a procedure be put in place to address the fact that some comment deadlines are before the next full council meeting. The clerk confirmed that such a procedure already exists – she routinely emails details of such applications to all councillors and an extraordinary parish council meeting can be called if required.

95/17/18 West Berkshire – Electoral Boundaries Review

The deadline has been extended to 13th November. No changes are proposed for Theale. Cllr Macro suggested that TPC submit a comment of support for the proposals. Proposed Cllr Macro; seconded Cllr Clifford. Approved nem con.

96/17/18 Berkshire Association of Local Councils AGM

Cllr Williams attended in 2016, she will consider attending again this year.

97/17/18 WBC Members' Bids

Cllr Macro confirmed that match funding from the parish council would probably be required. Members will circulate their ideas for projects for which this scheme could be used.

98/17/18 Training Events

Meet the New Auditors/Local Council Finance Update – Clerk and Cllr Richardson to attend

Preparing for General Data Protection Regulation Briefing Session – Clerk and Cllr Richardson to attend.

99/17/18 SLCC Membership

Members RESOLVED that this be renewed. Proposed Cllr Richardson; seconded Cllr Fenwick. Approved nem con.

100/17/18 Recreation Ground Seat

Members agreed to the request to install a memorial plaque on a seat in the recreation ground. The resident is welcome to make a donation towards the upkeep of the seats in the park but this would be entirely voluntary.

101/17/18 Speed Indicator Device Training

Cllr Macro offered to attend the training. It would be preferable if two people were trained as the speed checks should be double manned.

102/17/18 Project Griffin

The clerk and Cllr Macro will be attending this briefing.

103/17/18 SLCC National Forum

Members agreed that the clerk should attend the National Forum meeting in Leicester on October 17th and the first day of the National Conference on 18th October. Proposed Cllr Williams; seconded Cllr Clark. Approved nem con.

104/17/18 Authorisation of Payments

It was RESOLVED that items on sheet no.496 and dated 11th September 2017 be approved for payment. Proposed Cllr Baker; seconded Cllr Hopcroft. Approved nem con.

Members noted the July Direct Debit sheet.

SECTION C**105/17/18 Items for Information**

Noted.

SECTION D**106/17/18 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

Cllr Lye asked if the football goals were now up. The clerk confirmed that some teams had painted theirs over the summer and that matches were now starting and so they should be up.

Cllr Fenwick wished to highlight the issue of Amazon drivers using Brunel Road and causing congestion. She suggested that the council may wish to keep an eye on this.

Cllr Clifford said he was disappointed that an item suggested by a resident had not been included on tonight's agenda despite Cllr Clifford requesting it to be on there. He said the decision not to include it had been taken without consultation with him and asked under what authority had that been done. The clerk reminded him that, prior to publishing the agenda, she had emailed all councillors, including Cllr Clifford, with details of why this item would not be included on tonight's agenda. The main reason was the complexity of the subject matter which would require a detailed discussion and this could not be had in the five or ten minutes that would have been available for it on tonight's agenda. The clerk had made it clear in that email that she was not dismissing the subject but simply not putting it on that particular agenda. The clerk confirmed that the authority she had used for making this decision was Standing Order 9 which states that the Proper Officer's decision is final.

Cllr Clifford said it appeared that the chairman and vice chairman had discussed the matter before the agenda was issued but both of them confirmed that no discussion had taken place. The clerk referred Cllr Clifford to her email of 5th September which said that she had referred her decision to the parish council chairman and the vice chairman before finalising the agenda – no discussion had taken place.

Cllr Clifford confirmed his other items had already been addressed.

Cllr Baker asked that when the clerk organises for the repairs to the fencing at North Street playing fields to be carried out, that pedestrian access is maintained in the corner. This access is very popular with residents of North Walk etc.

107/17/18 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.

All members of the public left the meeting.

Members noted Payment sheet No. 497 dated 11th September 2017.

Library – Gateway Update

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 10.10pm.

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Chairman to the Council