

MINUTES OF THEALE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 14th May 2018 in the Peter Gooch Room, The Pavilion, Englefield Road, Theale.

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

Apologies received: Cllrs A. Clark and Z. Fenwick. District Councillor A. Macro.

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

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 a negative.

Councillor Williams congratulated Councillor Rolfe on his recent election success and welcomed him to his first meeting as a parish councillor.

5/18/19 Open Forum for Members of the Public

Several members of the public spoke:

Q – Could we have an update on the school? Cllr Williams replied that there was no update that could be given at this evening's meeting except to assure residents that work was ongoing on the matter and the parish council will give an update to residents as soon as possible.

Q – Is there a standard process to be followed (regarding the school issue) and, if so, is that process being followed? I understand that some matters may be commercially sensitive. Cllr Williams explained that this was a complex matter and the parish council was following the process as advised by its legal team. She said that TPC's legal team were very professional and very experienced in these matters.

Q – I would like a joint statement from the parties involved, so as to quash any speculation. Cllr Williams asked what speculation he was referring to as things had appeared to be pretty quiet recently. The resident replied that it was on social media. Cllr Williams suggested that a lot of things posted on social media were speculation only and residents would be best advised to ignore it. Information on the matter would only come from the parish council, either on its website or from the office, if people were getting information elsewhere then it would be speculative. She assured residents that relevant updates would be provided when available.

Q – I would like to congratulate Cllr Williams on her re-election as Chairman and say thank you for the huge amount that you do for the village. Thank you to all the councillors who work for the village, we know that it's much more than just attending a monthly meeting and that it's not just about the school, the parish council deals with far more issues than just the school. Thank you.

Q – Is there any help that residents can give regarding resolving the school issue? The intake figures are predicted to be 45 Theale children in September 2019 and yet there will only be 30 places. The nursery places have just been announced and this lady here didn't get her child in. Cllr Williams said she wasn't aware where those intake figures had come from and that the intake to the nursery was not something the council could comment on. She said WBC had confirmed, if built, the new school wouldn't be opening until September 2020. Cllr Williams suggested residents could direct their concerns and issues to WBC, putting them on social media could be scare mongering, better to direct them to WBC and let them know what the concerns are.

One member of the public left the meeting.

Q – Residents have emailed and offered help in terms of developing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. Is this something the council will consider as it enables a more proactive

response to development? The clerk confirmed that the email referred to had only been received that day and, as yet, had not been dealt with but the council would be responding.

Q – I would like to offer my help to Zoe with regards to the village fete. Cllr Williams said this event was not a parish council event and that she should contact Cllr Fenwick directly, her details are on the parish council website.

As there were no further questions the chairman closed the public open forum.

Several members of the public left the meeting.

Notifications of Chairman’s remarks – Cllr Rolfe had two items to raise; Cllr Baker had one; Cllr Hopcroft had one; Cllr Williams had four.

SECTION A

6/18/19 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF 9th APRIL 2018 and 30th APRIL 2018.

Members adopted the Minutes of the Meeting of 9th April 2018. Proposed Cllr Hopcroft; seconded Cllr Coker. Approved nem con.

Members adopted the Minutes of the Meeting of 30th April 2018. Proposed Cllr Richardson; seconded Cllr Wood. Approved nem con.

7/18/19 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 9TH APRIL 2018 and 30th APRIL 2018.

There were no matters arising.

SECTION B

8/18/19 District Council Report

Cllr Macro was not present but had provided a written report which Cllr Williams read out.

Councillors were aware that the contractors at the Red Lion development had been breaching the conditions of consent in terms of working on Sundays and Bank Holidays and that residents had written to the WBC case officer but no response had been received. The clerk was asked to write to WBC planning department on the matter.

Councillors were aware that the police had been declining to use their powers under the Public Order Act when it came to dealing with recent traveller incursions. It had also been reported that the police escorting travellers off Prospect Park in Reading had accompanied them along the A4 to the M4 roundabout but had then returned to Reading, leaving the travellers to enter Theale and set up camp in the village. The clerk was asked to write to the Police and Crimes Commissioner on the matter.

9/18/19 Clerk’s Report

Members noted the report.

10/18/19 Planning Applications

18/00988/PAD56	Closure of Drakes Level Crossing, & associated works. Prior approval submission	Land East of Arrowhead Road & South of Level	Network Rail	No comment
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	under Part 18, GPDO	Crossing, Arlington Business Park, Theale		
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11/18/19 By-Election Result

Members noted that Clint Rolfe was the successful candidate at the by-election on 3rd May. There was a round of applause from the members of the public.

12/18/19 Parish Council Planning Committee

Members RESOLVED to adopt the committee Terms of Reference as proposed by the clerk. Proposed Cllr Baker; seconded Cllr Wood. Approved nem con.

The following councillors were appointed to the planning committee: Cllr Williams, Cllr Clifford, Cllr Wood, Cllr Hopcroft, Cllr Rolfe and Cllr Baker.

Members discussed the purchase of display equipment for future planning committee meetings following the trialling of the projector and screen at the meeting of 30th April. Cllr Clifford suggested the council purchase a 70" LED screen to be permanently installed on the wall of the Peter Gooch room, He said these could be obtained for under £1,000.

Councillors were concerned about the cost and the security of such an item. The clerk reminded Members that the pavilion was not used exclusively by the parish council, it was hired out to others and therefore the security of permanent fixtures was more problematic. Cllr Clifford suggested that a box could be built around the screen to protect it. Cllr Hopcroft suggested that a removable screen could be used, one that is put up for meetings but stored away when not in use. The clerk asked where this screen could be stored as the parish council was already short on space, Cllr Hopcroft suggested maybe at the library.

Cllr Richardson suggested purchasing a projector and installing a pull down screen in the Peter Gooch room. This would be a cheaper solution and worked well on the 30th. As well as there being security issues, she felt that any money spent on equipment should be proportionate to its use, planning meetings would only be held 12 times a year.

Cllr Hopcroft suggested council consider something more portable than an LED screen, for instance an interactive white board?

No agreement was reached. Cllr Clifford was asked to provide a costed proposal for his LED screen suggestion and Cllr Hopcroft was asked to do the same for his whiteboard suggestion. The matter will be discussed again at the next parish council meeting.

As had been prearranged with the clerk and the Chairman, Councillor Coker left the meeting.

13/18/19 Internal Controls

Members noted that Councillor Richardson had carried out the check of the council's financial procedures on 12th April 2018. She wished to bring to the councillors' attention just how much work the clerk does in her role as RFO and praised her work.

14/18/19 Annual Risk Assessment

Members RESOLVED to adopt the revised 'Risk Assessment & Management 2018' document. Proposed Cllr Richardson; seconded Cllr Williams. Approved nem con.

15/18/19 West Berkshire Historic Environment Action Plan (HEAP)

Cllr Hopcroft will contact the secretary of HEAP, Susan Ellis, for more information.

16/18/19 Community Infrastructure Levy

Noted. Clerk to monitor the situation.

17/18/19 Annual Parish Assembly

Noted.

18/18/19 WBC Planning Consultations

Noted.

19/18/19 Authorisation of Payments

It was RESOLVED that items on sheet no.519 and dated 14th May 2018 be approved for payment. Proposed Cllr Lye; seconded Cllr Hopcroft. Approved nem con.

Members noted the March 2018 Direct Debit sheet and payment sheet no. 517, dated 24th April 2018.

SECTION C

20/18/19 Items for Information

Noted.

SECTION D

21/18/19 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Cllr Rolfe – had received complaints from a resident of Trafalgar Court regarding the event held in NSPF last Sunday. The resident had provided photographs to show how close to his flat the organisers had set up the barbeque and marquees. Cllr Rolfe had told the resident that he would pass the complaint on to the parish council.

Cllr Williams said there had been many issues with the event on Sunday, a fund raising obstacle course arranged by the Scouts. The issues seem to be a product of poor organisation. Cllr Richardson said that the organisers had not arranged vehicle access to the site, despite being reminded to by the parish office, and had put calls out on social media asking if anyone had keys or the combination to the security locks. The organisers had also called the parish council chairman whilst she was out on Saturday night to ask for keys. It would appear that a regular hirer gave the combination to a member of the public who gave it to the event organisers. The Scouts then lost the locks during their event, contacting councillors again to arrange the purchase of replacement locks, only to find them again later. In addition the organisers had not arranged toilet facilities for the event. Over the course of the weekend, Councillors Williams, Richardson and Coker and the clerk and Gary Nelson all had to either attend the site or make calls to deal with the issues arising. The presence of travellers in the village made the security of the site even more important.

Cllr Williams suggested that the council write to the Scouts with feedback, pointing out the impact the poor management had on councillors, staff and residents over the weekend.

Cllrs Clifford and Hopcroft disagreed with sending a letter, the scouts hadn't intended for these things to happen and they may not have been aware of the travellers. They felt it was too harsh an action and instead the organisers could be invited to a meeting to discuss things. Cllr Hopcroft said he felt it would be more constructive to meet with the organisers and talk it through with them. Cllr Williams asked Cllr Hopcroft to confirm that he was offering to represent the council at such a meeting, he confirmed he was. Cllr Richardson complained that it was always the same few councillors that were left to deal with out of office hours issues such as the security of parish council assets.

There followed a heated discussion between councillors. Cllr Rolfe suggested sending a letter containing feedback to the Scouts but including the offer of a meeting should the Scouts want one.

To resolve the issue there was a show of hands to determine who supported sending a letter and who supported calling a meeting. Five councillors supported the letter, three councillors supported a meeting. The clerk was instructed to write to the Scouts accordingly.

The second matter to be resolved was the conduct of the regular hirer, Theale Tigers. The council had met with the club previously to address breaches of their contract but it would appear that breaches were still occurring. Councillors agreed that a meeting should be called with the club to discuss the matter.

Some members of the public left the meeting.

Cllr Rolfe's second item concerned the Splat Bus. He had contacted Berkshire Youth, the operators of this activity bus, and reported to council that the cost of affiliation to Berkshire Youth was £135 pa. This would entitle TPC to 6 free Splat Bus sessions a year (co-funded by Greenham Common Trust). Councillor Rolfe suggested sessions could be organised for the school holidays. Councillors agreed that this was a good idea. The clerk confirmed that the council had budgeted funds for events and so the costs could be covered by these monies.

Cllr Baker – reported that there was an overgrown bush, on the corner of The Orchard and The Crescent, which was obstructing the footpath. The clerk advised that he report it to WBC, using their online map, and they would contact the owner requesting that the obstruction be removed.

Cllr Hopcroft – his item had been dealt with.

Cllr Williams – suggested that a combination lock be purchased for the inner gate at NSPF. Clerk to action.

Cllr Williams – Last Thursday evening she reported to police (101) a group of youths on the skate park who were drinking and smoking cannabis. They were local youths who live not far from the park.

Cllr Williams said her other items had been dealt with earlier in the meeting.

22/18/19 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.

The remaining members of the public left the meeting.

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 9.30pm.

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Chairman to the Council