

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 6 PM ON 16 APRIL 2020 By Zoom Video Conference

PRESENT: Cllr R. Cundy, Chair. Cllr S. Bromley, Vice Chair.
Cllrs S. Bowers, D. Cornish, Mrs C. Driver, Mrs B. Eytle, G. Jukes OBE,
Mrs R. Margetts, Mrs N. Jennings-Frisby, Mrs S. McDonald, R. Marshallsay, J. May,
A. Pearce, S. Weeks, R. Woof and G. Veitch.

Mrs K. Dagnall, Clerk.

135/2020 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr R. Rampton.

136/2020 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

137/2020 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March were approved as a true record and will be signed retrospectively at the earliest opportunity. It was noted that the minutes were for information only and do not form a legal record as the meeting was held by video conferencing which at the time of the meeting was not lawful.

138/2020 CHAIRS REPORT

- The Clerk is circulating regular updates on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to all Councillors. The co-ordinated approach being taken by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), the voluntary sector bodies and the Town and Parish Councils through the Wokingham Community Response Group is running smoothly and is ensuring – as far as possible - that those who need support receive it.
- The next meeting of the Council on 20 May is the Annual Meeting and it is intended that the meeting will go ahead unless it becomes too complex to do this as a virtual meeting, in which case this will be deferred to the earliest opportunity when circumstances allow the meeting to be held in person.

Cllr Cundy asked all Councillors to give some thought to roles they may like to stand for. The Clerk will be circulating information with a request that Councillors indicate which committees they wish to be a member of, and for expressions of interest in standing for the various positions available.

- As previously advised the elections due to take place on 7 May have been deferred for a year to 6 May 2021. Any Councillor who was planning to stand down should not feel obliged to continue for a further year if they do not wish to do so and should contact the Clerk if they wish to resign.

139/2020 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Reports from each Committee were circulated prior to the meeting.

PLANNING

Cllr Veitch advised that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 April have been circulated.

- WBC Officers are continuing to determine applications. Enforcement Officers are visiting some sites but are not undertaking site meetings.

- It was noted that the current situation may have an impact on the housing land supply issue with little or no housebuilding taking place. WBC has suggested that the Government may make allowances for this. WBC is continuing work on the Local Plan Update.
- The Appeal relating to proposals for 118 dwellings on land north of Nine Mile Ride has been dismissed.
- The application for development at 25 Carolina Place has been refused.

FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT

Cllr Woof reported on the financial position of the Council and other matters as follows.

Financial position

Unity Trust Bank	£38,166.34
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund account	£503,064.76
CCLA Property Fund	£25,000
Including £488,361.39 CIL receipts	

Payment schedule

The schedule of payments totalling £7586.28 was unanimously approved. Cllrs Bromley and Woof agreed to authorise the electronic payments.

- The annual accounts have been completed subject to a final check by the Clerk.
- Legislation has now come through confirming a 2 month extension to the timeframe for approval and submission of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The deadline is now 1 September. The financial sections of the AGAR can now be completed but the internal audit requires a visit in person so has been deferred.
- The Council is due to receive Community Infrastructure Levy Funds of £174,480 in late April.
- While there are no immediate concerns, the current situation reinforces the need for a comprehensive Business Continuity Plan.
- Communications – web site reports show an increase in users from 533 (including 509 new users) in January to 615 (including 568 new users) in March. Page views are up from 1455 in January to 1737 in March.

AMENITIES

Cllr Mrs Driver reported on current matters.

- The Allotment site remains open with some restrictions on tenants. The communal facilities are closed. There have been several new applications – there is now a waiting list of 5 residents and 7 non residents. There is one plot available but no plots are being let at present.

Cllr Weeks noted the Wokingham Fire Service interest in an allotment plot, although a plot in Wokingham Town is likely to be most suitable. The Clerk will contact Wokingham Town Council regarding availability.

- The Telephone Box book swop is not being used as intended. Any suggestions for alternative uses should be forwarded to the Clerk, and any thoughts on if there would be more scope if it was relocated to a different position.
- The pilot survey of 8 trees on Wellingtonia Avenue took place on 17 March but the findings are not yet available.
- The Community Litter Pick has been deferred to September. The California Crossroads tidy up and the defibrillator training due to take place in April have been cancelled.
- St James' Church plans for VE day on 8 May have been cancelled.
- A resident of Finchampstead Road has been collecting litter on Finchampstead Road, Commonfield Lane and other areas as part of the permitted daily exercise. The Clerk will

send a note of thanks and will advise him of the 'Adopt a Street' scheme and the equipment which is available when the Office re-opens.

RIGHTS OF WAY

Cllr Woof reported on current matters. The meeting planned for 25 March was deferred but will be rearranged as soon as possible.

- The Footpath Warden is continuing to carry out maintenance work at his discretion.
- Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) has provided road planings for the section of FP13 which is the allotment track, these have been spread by the allotment tenants.
- There are no further updates from WBC as the Localities Officer is currently redeployed to cover other priorities.
- There has been some progress with the new footpath map.
- The installation of the final signage on the Greenway has been deferred.
- The recurring problem of encroachment on FP8 will be reported to WBC again.

ROADS & ROAD SAFETY

- Unfortunately some people are taking advantage of the lack of traffic and are speeding, particularly on Nine Mile Ride and Longwater Road. The Police have been consulted but have other priorities at present and are unable to process any information from Speed Indicator Device (SID) sessions, or to undertake any enforcement.
- The South East Water Works on Nine Mile Ride continue. Approximately 180m was completed last week. On the night of Storm Dennis all the metal covers over the service works were removed. A resident reported the registration details of the van to the Police and investigations are underway.
- Work on Barkham Bridge and the Arborfield Relief Road continues.
- WBC and its contractor Balfour Beatty continue to undertake road repairs.
- A new street cleansing contract started on 1 April. This Contract is being delivered by Urbaser as a sub-contractor for Volker Highways and will become part of the Wokingham Highway Alliance.

Finchampstead Neighbourhood Action Group is organising a visit to the Re3 Recycling Plant on 14 July at 10am. Any Councillors wishing to attend should contact Cllr Bromley.

140/2020 GRANTS AND DONATIONS

Cllr Woof advised that current Council policy is that all grant applications are considered at one time in October each year.

Cllr Woof recommended that this policy is modified to allow applications to be considered individually and at any time during the 2020/21 year. This was unanimously approved. The policy and the need for further amendments beyond 2020/21 will be kept under review by the Finance & General Management Committee.

It was noted that no applications have been received to date.

The Clerk has circulated information on the ongoing discussions with the voluntary sector over potential funding issues due to the Coronavirus situation, and on funds being made available through organisations such as the Berkshire Community Foundation, the Police Protection Fund and the SSEN Community Resilience Fund. The Government has now allocated funding to voluntary sector groups, some funds will be made available direct to the groups and other funds will be available through the National Lottery.

141/2020 PROJECT AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATES GORSE RIDE COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION

- WBC has not responded to the letter forwarded on 3 March but this is understandable in the current circumstances. The Clerk will ask for an update and response at the earliest opportunity.

- The Community Development Worker has provided some updates on the Gorse Ride Community which have been forwarded to Councillors.
- Cllr Bowers advised that the planned Steering Group meeting has been deferred due to the current situation and that there is no news on the submission of a planning application for Phase 2 of the regeneration.

ARBORFIELD STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT LOCATION

- There were no matters to report.

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Cllr Cornish advised that meetings and work on the Plan continue. The first draft of the full Plan has now been produced but there is still a considerable amount of work to do before the Plan is complete.

As noted above there are concerns about the impact of the current Coronavirus situation and the resulting lack of housebuilding on the housing land supply issue. Cllr Marshallsay advised that information from Localities suggests that if a Referendum is not possible due to the current situation, a draft Neighbourhood Development Plan may still be taken in to account when determining planning applications. Cllr Weeks offered to consult the WBC Planning Department over this.

142/2020 ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN – STRATEGY CONSULTATION

A letter outlining the consultation and requesting comments on the draft plan was circulated to all Councillors.

It was agreed that a response should be submitted thanking the RBRFS for the opportunity to comment on the draft Plan and supporting the proposals contained within it.

143/2020 CALIFORNIA COUNTRY PARK

WBC had forwarded a design brief for a Destination Play Area at the California Country Park – for the Council's information only. It was agreed that an improved play area would be an asset to the Park.

Cllr Cundy outlined some of the history of the Park and the involvement of the Parish Council and the partnership working with WBC to date.

Concerns were expressed about the ongoing developments at the Park and its capacity to cope with an increased number of visitors from across the whole Borough. It was felt that encouraging visitors to drive to the Park from a wide area conflicted with the WBC Climate Emergency declaration and efforts to encourage people to walk and cycle rather than drive to destinations.

A further concern is the apparently uncoordinated approach being taken to improvements to the Park. New projects are being started while others are incomplete, and other areas are being left looking shabby, unattractive and in some cases unsafe with no apparent plans to rectify this.

It was agreed that the Clerk should contact WBC expressing the Council's concerns about the apparent lack of an overall strategy for the Park, and requesting a meeting with appropriate WBC Officers and / or Councillors to discuss this.

144/2020 CORRESPONDENCE

- The FBC Centre has expressed its thanks for the grant awarded for improvements to the hall floor.
- Other correspondence has been circulated by email or covered in items above.

145/2020 COUNCILLOR FORUM

- Cllr Weeks provided a brief update on the Coronavirus situation and its impact on WBC finances.
- Cllr Mrs Eytel praised the WBC communications relating to the pandemic.

- Cllr Bromley was thanked for his assistance with setting up the video conferencing for Councillors.

146/2020 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The next meeting – the Annual Meeting of the Council - will take place on Wednesday 20 May 2020 via Zoom video conference at a time to be confirmed.

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the Council.

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL - PAYMENT LIST 16 APRIL 2020

UNITY TRUST BANK ACCOUNT 07/04/20			£38,166.34	
CCLA DEPOSIT ACCOUNT 31/3/20			£503,064.76	
CCLA PROPERTY FUND 31/03/18			£25,000.00	
INCLUDING CIL RECEIPTS OF £488,361.39				
TOTAL FUNDS			£566,231.10	
	NET	VAT	TOTAL	
Outstanding payments yet to be cleared				
TOTAL PAYMENTS OUTSTANDING			£0.00	
Payments already approved and paid				
BRITISH TELECOM	59.00	11.81	70.81	BT DD 1
PAYMENTS APRIL 2020				
Staff costs			£5,182.80	
Other costs				
FBC CENTRE OFFICE RENT/SERVICE CH	2168.48	0.00	2168.48	367188149
WEB MARKETING MATTERS	164.00	0.00	164.00	93500915
INFORMATION COMMISSIONERS OFFICE	35.00	0.00	35.00	DD
CPRE SUBSCRIPTION	36.00	0.00	36.00	763942412
Allotment costs				
Neighbourhood Development Plan costs				
Grants and contributions - subject to final approval by Council where required				
TOTAL APRIL 2020 PAYMENTS		£0.00	£7,586.28	
TOTAL REMAINING			£558,644.82	
APRIL PETTY CASH / CARD PAYMENTS				
Total petty cash payments	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total Card payments (Clerk)	385.13	77.04	462.17	
Total Card payments (Footpath Warden)	0.00	0.00	0.00	
TOTAL	£385.13	£77.04	£462.17	

FINAL PAYMENTS 19 - 31 MARCH 2020 - FOR INFORMATION ONLY

UNITY TRUST BANK ACCOUNT 30/03/20			£19,025.89	
CCLA DEPOSIT ACCOUNT 30/03/20			£503,064.76	
CCLA PROPERTY FUND 31/03/20			£25,000.00	
INCLUDING CIL RECEIPTS OF £488,361.39				
TOTAL FUNDS			£547,090.65	
	NET	VAT	TOTAL	
Outstanding payments yet to be cleared				
TOTAL PAYMENTS OUTSTANDING			£0.00	
Payments already approved and paid				
Refer to payment list approved 18 March 2020				
FINAL PAYMENTS MARCH 2020				
Total staff costs			£0.00	
Other costs				
IBS - OFFICE SUPPLIES	54.25	10.85	65.10	538426680
SP BROMLEY - LAPTOP / HARDWARE	631.09	126.22	757.31	545650364
RBS SOFTWARE	25.00	5.00	30.00	846041509
FBC CENTRE CAFÉ CHARGES	12.92	2.58	15.50	925430133
WBC-FOOTPATH MAP DESIGN PAYMENT 1	387.50	0.00	387.50	57550976
CHAIRS EXPENSES / ANNUAL GATHERING	299.75	0.00	299.75	298522065
CHAIRS EXPENSES / ANNUAL GATHERING	43.32	8.66	51.98	765375105
Allotment costs				
CASTLE WATER JAN - JUNE 2020	491.64	0.00	491.64	43548958
Neighbourhood Development Plan costs				
BELL CORNWELL CONSULTANCY	100.00	20.00	120.00	104157346
ROYAL MAIL CONSULTATION POSTAGE	1.17	0.23	1.40	54513924
LOCALITIES GRANT REPAYMENT	4515.00	0.00	4515.00	19300612
Grants and contributions - subject to final approval by Council where required				
TOTAL FINAL MARCH 2020 PAYMENTS		£173.54	£6,735.18	
TOTAL REMAINING			£540,355.47	
FINAL MARCH PETTY CASH / CARD PAYMENTS				
Total petty cash payments				
Total Card payments (Clerk)				
Total Card payments (Footpath Warden)				
TOTAL	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	