

Minutes of a Meeting of Woodcote Parish Council

Wednesday 06th March 2024 at 19:30, The Function Room, Woodcote Village Hall

Public Session (Prior to the Start of the Meeting)

Representative of St Leonards: The Church Yard is open to all, a place of burial and a place of calm. There are war graves; approximately 1200 burials and almost 900 plots. The cost of running the Church in total is approximately £50,00 per year, including the funding of the vicar etc. The vast majority of that funding comes from grants and donations. Last year the grant from the PC was just less than £900. The Church is very active in raising the funds and does a lot of fund raising and grant applications. It is a challenging and over the last few years there has been a deficit, and the reserves are low. The grant is very important to the maintenance of the graveyard and encourage the PC to award the funds for this financial year.

Representative of FOWPS: Representing the charity. The outside canopy needs replacing, which has been failing for 5 years and recent storms have made it irreparable. The outside space is primarily for EYFS (Reception and preschool age), also used by an external holiday club, and for the Year 6 leavers BBQ and the summer fair which the whole community is invited to. It is a vital shaded area for outside learning and protection from the elements during drop off and pick up. Asking for £9889. Normally FOWPS raise £10k, but the school is asking for a commitment to £7k to underpin the curriculum costs (including staff costs, books, pencils, teaching materials), and the other £3k normally goes to finding school trips etc. The proposal is to replace the former canvas cover with a permanent cover attached to the side of the building to give a larger covered area. Replacing the former canvas one will cost a minimum of £5000. A number of quotes for multiple options have been sourced.

Members Present:

Chair	Cllr R Peirce (RP)
Members	Cllr L Bilbe (LB)
	Cllr H Booker (HB)
	Cllr K Byrne (KB)
	Cllr D Ellis (DE)
	Cllr T Over (TO)
	Cllr S Pritchard (SP)
	Cllr B Urbick (BU)

Officers Present

Clerk	Mrs L White (LW)
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Public and Press	At least 6
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Meeting Started: 19:50

Mar24.1. To receive apologies for absence. [LGA 1972 s85(1)]

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting from Cllrs J Sloper & K Davies.

Mar24.2. Declarations of Interests [LA 2011 s31]

Mar24.2.1. To receive declarations of interest for items on this agenda

None.

Mar24.2.2. To consider requests for Dispensations [LA 2011 s33]

None.

Mar24.3. To approve the minutes of previous council meetings [LA 1972 Sch 12. Para 41(1)]

Mar24.3.1. Meeting held on 07th February 2024

It was agreed the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed.

Mar24.3.2. Matters arising from the minutes not elsewhere on the agenda.

None.

Mar24.4. Planning [The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015]

To respond to the request to consult by the Planning Authority

Appendix A

Mar24.4.1. P24/S0454/HH - 3 Bridle Path, Woodcote, Reading, RG8 0SE

Single storey rear & side extension, internal alterations & changes to fenestration.

The Cllr allocated to this application presented a summary of the details and proposed a response.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to submit the response: NO OBJECTIONS subject to the Highways Officer's satisfaction there remains adequate off-road parking for a four-bedroom dwelling. This property is in close proximity to a busy junction and is also in a high traffic area, as this is on the main bus route and opposite a very busy convenience shop.

Mar24.4.2. P24/S0251/HH - Old Forge South Stoke Road Woodcote RG8 0PL

Demolition of existing rear shed, erection of new single-storey rear extension and new front porch.

The Cllr allocated to this application presented a summary of the details and proposed a response.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to submit the response: NO OBJECTIONS, however Council has concerns about the proposals to build up to and on the boundary line, which is against advice of the Joint Design Guide 2022 and would not be typical in character for the plots / houses in this road, which are typically large detached dwellings on spacious plots which do not span the full width. Subject to the Planning Officer's satisfaction that this proposal is not against the Joint Guide, this Council asks that the concerns are addressed before permission is granted.

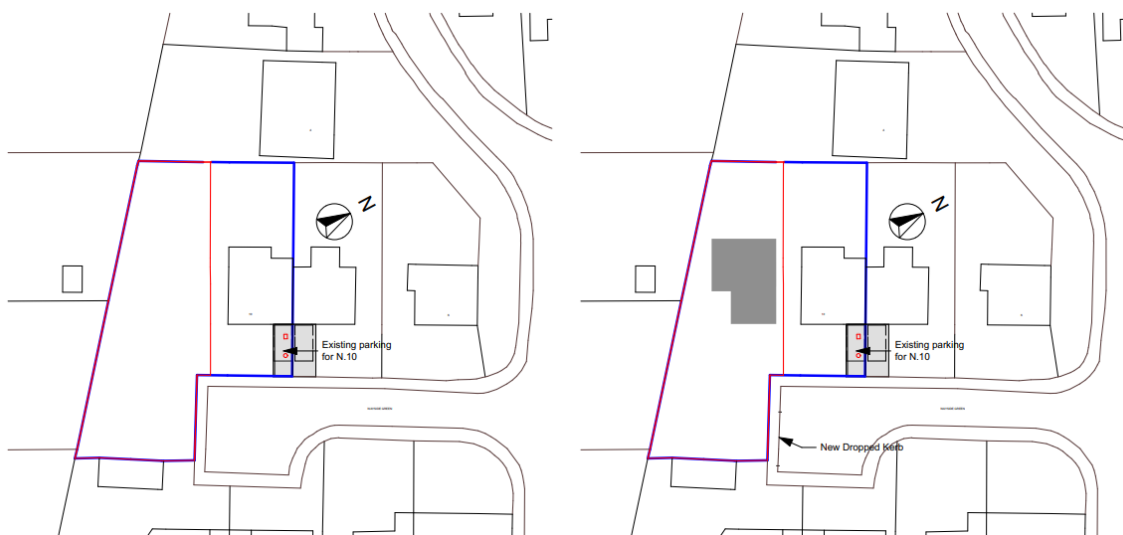
Mar24.4.3. P23/S4003/S73 - 10a Wayside Green Woodcote RG8 0QJ

Variation of condition 2 (plans), variation of condition 7 (Parking & Manoeuvring Areas Retained), variation of condition 9 (landscaping) and variation of condition 10 (Surface Water Drainage) on planning permission P19/S4288/FUL (Erection of a two-storey four-bed dwelling house) to allow for the relocation of proposed parking area.

*To consider approving the response as drafted **APPENDIX A** in response to the request of SODC planning to withdraw the objection.*

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to submit the response: OBJECTS

Regarding the parking, this Council maintains that there was no previous permanent driveway in this location. Historically the previous owners did store a caravan there at times, but the permanent parking for 10 Wayside Green was and continues to be at the front of 10 Wayside Green and not into the proposed parking area of 10a Wayside Green. In the existing block plan submitted as part of planning application P19/S4288/FUL there was no parking area shown for 10 Wayside Green in the area which is now part of 10a, where it is claimed there has always been existing parking. See image below.



This Council acknowledges that an S73 application is recognised method of making a significant change such as this to the parking layout, but has significant concerns about the cumulative effect of the multiple proposed developments on the site. Individually, each application or licence applied for, is in itself abiding by all planning laws and caravan regulations, however the cumulative effect on the site is over development. Allowing the movement of the parking, will allow the permanent citing of a large mobile home on the site, subject to the appropriate licences being applied for as confirmed by the applicant. Whilst the Cul-de-sac is residential in appearance the permanent citing of a large mobile home on the site would introduce considerable built form into the verdant expansive part of this street scape. This would result in overdevelopment.

Woodcote Parish Council asks that this application to move the parking and install electric style gates be refused on the grounds it will lead to a cumulative effect of over development of the plot and to this part of the cul-de-sac which harms the character and appearance of the wider street scene. Should the applicant still wish to pursue the movement, to submit full planning application which will trigger

notification of all affected parties and neighbours including those with addresses on Behoes Lane, Woodcote.

Regarding the SUDS component of this application, the PC has NO OBJECTIONS.

Mar24.4.4. P24/S0668/HH - 57 Whitehouse Road Woodcote Reading RG8 0SA

Construction of a part single and part two storey side extension with associated internal alterations.

The Cllr allocated to this application presented a summary of the details and proposed a response.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to submit the response: OBJECTS

The proposals would mean the loss of a parking spaces to the side of the property and access to the current garage, which would be contrary to Policy within the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan 2:

“The Parish Council acknowledge that proposals for modifications and extensions to existing properties will continue to come forward within the Plan period. Where it is practicable to do so, such proposals should be designed to ensure that existing parking spaces are retained or rearranged as part of the proposed development.”

The parking arrangement for the proposals needs to be clarified and reviewed. The spaces need allow a length of at least 5.5 metres if positioned in front of a dwelling to allow for opening the boot without overhanging the pavement. Pedestrian access to the property would also need to be demonstrated on plan.

Care needs to be taken to ensure the proposed parking does not dominate the frontage. This part of Whitehouse Road is characterised by houses set back behind small gardens and/or front hedges. Very few, of the existing properties in the vicinity have parking positioned directly in front of them without some soft landscaping. By removing all available parking space to the side you minimize the ability for some landscaping to soften the impact of the development and avoid an overly prominent parking area. Policy D1 of WNP & DES1 & DES2 of SODC ALP.

Additionally, the side access seemingly fails to meet the requirements of the Joint Design Guide in respect of minimum distances for side access.

Also note to request further details of the efforts to minimize the carbon and energy impacts are also not present, to meet requirements of SODC ALP DES8.

Lastly, WPC raise question on the application site boundary and whether it is accurate, as it appears to differ from the boundary shown on Land Registry for the property. This is of particular concern in respect of available space for parking, landscaping and maintaining access to the rear of the property.

We ask further that the following condition be placed, should this application be approved.

The garage accommodation approved shall be retained as such and shall not be adapted for living purposes without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Mar24.5. To receive a report on the Greenmore Pond and proposed works Appendix B

Received. It was further noted that no works can go ahead until the grounds are safe, after the recent rains. It was confirmed that the works are likely to take multiple days. The work will be safer and quicker when the grounds are drier. Worst case, the works should take no more than 5 days.

Mar24.6. To note the minutes from the Village Green Committee/group Appendix C

Noted.

It was commented that it is clear from the minutes that the committee feels they have not received responses from the council on some specific items. The council should also update them on the tree plans. There are also concerns about the business sponsorship and becoming more independent of the P, the Village Green is a PC asset for the community and need to ensure any agreements reflect this.

It was suggested that similar to in Goring, a licence model could be used to allow the group to look after the green, with each year providing plan for the year ahead.

[PROPOSAL] To encourage the volunteers and thank them for their good works propose to bring to the next meeting a licence agreement for a year at a time subject the council receiving a proposal for the year ahead.

Mar24.7. Village Hall Appendix D

Mar24.7.1. To receive a report on the Joint Working Group with the Village Hall Trustees

Received.

A summary of the findings so far with the Village Hall working group was given, including updating the deeds to be Woodcote Parish Council (Custodian Trustee), and finding a way to overtime revert to the 1962 model of the Management Trustees managing the building in its entirety and the Parish Council helping with large Capital Projects. The next Village Hall working group meeting is this coming Friday, 8th March 2024.

Mar24.7.2. To approve leasing the Parish Office from the Village Hall, £6,000 per year, starting 01st April 2024

Resolved: Approved Unanimously, payment to be made once precept is received for the 2024/2025 year.

Mar24.7.3. To approve sending letter of support to the Village Hall Charity in applying for Thermal Efficiency grant from Locality

Resolved: Approved Unanimously.

Mar24.7.4. To approve applying for CIL Grant from SODC for the Village Hall Roof, and seek permission/support from the Woodcote Village Hall Charity – the management charity – to apply for the grant.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to apply for both a CIL grant **and** a Capital Grant from SODC.

Mar24.7.5. To consider the option to, and if thought fit approve, recruiting on a 6m fixed term contract, a parish council “Facilities Assistant” to complete the VH maintenance role temporarily.

If approved, also to approve:

- *Job Description,*
- *Terms and Hours and*
- *Candidate.*
- *Purchase of Smart Phone budget £300, plus £8 monthly cost.*

A representation has also been received by the Chair of the Council that this role also include the community centre in this role.

It was noted that the costs for this role were paid for by the WVHC (Woodcote Village Hall Charity) until March 2020. No resolution has been found in the minutes to explain why the Parish Council started paying this cost in April 2020. The role is for a fixed term of 6 months whilst the Village Hall Working Group works out roles and division of responsibilities between the WVHC and WPC with regard to the Village Hall.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to advertise the role, SCP15, 8 hours per week, fixed term 6m contract, as no expressions of interest have been received to date, to not include the community centre in this initial trial.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously the Job description, but add a line to record hours spent and create a report each month to the council on activities, with a split on how the hours are spent across this different aspects of the role.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to delegate to the Staffing Committee the hiring.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to purchase a smart phone for the purposes of carrying out the role, budget £300 + £8 per month ongoing costs.

Mar24.7.6. To consider, and if thought fit approve a proposal from Thames Air Ambulance for a Clothing Bank in the Car Park

Regretfully it was agreed that this was not a suitable use of the car park at this time, the motion failed. Perhaps the enquirer should ask the Co-op if they could go there?

Mar24.8. To consider grant requests and approve applications and values. **Appendix E**

Mar24.8.1. Request from the Village Hall for £6,000, to cover ~~6 months~~ of the cost of the Village Hall management, £1k to be paid immediately from 2023-2024 budget, the remainder to be paid 1st April 2024 from the 2024-2025 budget.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously a grant of £6,000 to the Village Hall. Future grant applications should be applied for in the normal way with a grant application, marketing plan and meet all other requirements of the grants policy in place at the time of the application. £1k to be paid immediately from 2023-2024 budget, the remainder to be paid 1st April 2024 from the 2024-2025 budget.

Mar24.8.2. Request from St Leonards Church, for £1,000 church grounds maintenance, mowing, hedges & trees. [LGA 1972 s214]

Resolved: Approved Unanimously a grant of £1,000 to St Leonards Church, Woodcote for the FY 2023/2024.

Mar24.8.3. Request from Friends of Woodcote Primary School (FOWPS) for £9889 for new roof over playground for Reception Classroom [LGA 1972 s137]

It was commented that OCC should be fully finding the schools and where do they draw the line between what they will and will not fund? FOWPS have made a very sound case to back up the request.

It was further commented that the County Council should be funding the Zebra Crossing, Librarian, other highways works, but do not and this PC has to fund it, and where should the line be drawn there?

Resolved: Approved Unanimously a grant of £6500 to Friends of Woodcote Primary School from FY 2023-2024 budget.

Mar24.9. Finance 2023-2024

Mar24.9.1. To approve finalised Payment List for January & February 2024

Resolved: Approved Unanimously the lists as detailed below, to cancel Zoom for next year.

January 2024

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Supplier
152	11/01/2024	£ 1,790.84	£ 358.17	£ 2,149.01	Fire safety equipment works	RES Systems Ltd
159	15/01/2024	£ 580.00	£ -	£ 580.00	Plumbing Village Hall	Woodcote Village Hall Trustees
156	15/01/2024	£ 630.00	£ -	£ 630.00	Donation	Oxfordshire South & Vale Citizens Advice
157	16/01/2024	£ 910.00	£ 182.00	£ 1,092.00	Tree care	Kings Tree Care Services Ltd
154	26/01/2024	£ 266.49	£ 53.30	£ 319.79	Waste collection	Shield Maintenance Ltd
160	29/01/2024	£ 60.95	£ 12.19	£ 73.14	Telephone & broadband	British Telecom (BT)
155	31/01/2024	£ 31.25	£ 6.25	£ 37.50	Office supplies	Premier Office Supplies (TV) Ltd
	Jan Staff Costs	£ 1,909.65	£ -	£ 1,909.65		
	Total	£ 6,179.18	£ 611.91	£ 6,791.09		

February 2024

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Supplier
165	15/02/2024	£ 129.90	£ 25.98	£ 155.88	zoom	Zoom Video Communications Inc
158	15/02/2024	£ 3,995.00	£ 799.00	£ 4,794.00	Legal fees	Blandy & Blandy
166	29/02/2024	£ 60.95	£ 12.19	£ 73.14	Tel/Broadband	British Telecom (BT)
	Feb Staff Costs	£ 338.85	£ -	£ 338.85		
	Total	£ 4,524.70	£ 837.17	£ 5,361.87		

Mar24.9.2. To approve payments list for March 2024, including any grants agreed in this meeting.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously the March Payment list as detailed below.

March 2024

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Supplier
182	07/03/2024	£ 6.67	£ 1.33	£ 8.00	Mobile Phone SIM Costs	GiffGaff Ltd
180	07/03/2024	£ 266.49	£ 53.30	£ 319.79	Waste collection	Shield Maintenance Ltd
179	07/03/2024	£ 29.25	£ -	£ 29.25	Meeting Room Hire	Woodcote Village Hall Trustees
178	07/03/2024	£ 449.06	£ 89.81	£ 538.87	OALC Membership	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC)
177	07/03/2024	£ 69.90	£ -	£ 69.90	LiveDriveBack-up	Livedrive Internet Limited
176	07/03/2024	£ 58.33	£ 11.67	£ 70.00	Webhosting	Oxford IT Solutions
175	07/03/2024	£ 10.00	£ 2.00	£ 12.00	Domain Renewal	Oxford IT Solutions
174	07/03/2024	£ 2,002.08	£ 400.42	£ 2,402.50	Village Hall Roof	West Waddy Archadia (WWA)
173	07/03/2024	£ 540.60	£ 108.12	£ 648.72	Village Hall Roof	West Waddy Archadia (WWA)
164	07/03/2024	£ 147.38	£ -	£ 147.38	Village Hall room hire	Woodcote Village Hall Trustees
161	07/03/2024	£ 266.49	£ 53.30	£ 319.79	Waste collection	Shield Maintenance Ltd
183	28/03/2024	£ 6.67	£ 1.33	£ 8.00	Mobile Phone SIM Costs	GiffGaff Ltd
181	28/03/2024	£ 266.49	£ 53.30	£ 319.79	Waste collection	Shield Maintenance Ltd
167	29/03/2024	£ 60.95	£ 12.19	£ 73.14	Tel/Broadband	British Telecom (BT)
TBD	28/03/2024	£ 1,000.00		£ 1,000.00	Village Hall Grant	Woodcote Village Hall Trustees
TBD	07/03/2024	£ 1,000.00		£ 1,000.00	Churchyard Maintenance Grant	St Leonards Church
TBD	07/03/2024	£ 6,500		£ 6,500	S137 Grant to Friends of Woodcote Primary	FOWPS
184	07/03/2024	£ 177.00	£ 35.40	£ 212.40	6m VH PPMs	RES Systems Ltd
TBD		£ 1,020.83	£204.17	£ 1225	Tree Planting	Kings Tree Care Services
Various	March Staff Costs	£ 1,177.78	£ -	£ 1,177.78		Staff & HMRC
	Total	TBD	TBD	TBD		

Mar24.9.3. To note receipts for January and February 2024

Defer to next meeting.

Mar24.9.4. To note the reconciled bank balances, up to January 2024, including all other Bank Reconciliations for this financial year, now all data has been moved to Scribe Accounting.

Defer to next meeting.

Mar24.9.5. To complete the quarterly budget review and approve virements.

Defer to next meeting – subject to already approved Cost Code rationalisation.

Mar24.9.6. To approve adding all Councillors to the bank mandate plus the new Clerk, removing the former Clerk.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously.

Mar24.10. Clerks Report

Appendix G

Mar24.10.1. To review the Action List

Action List

Defer to next meeting.

Mar24.10.2. To ratify the purchase and planting of trees for Project Cool, including approving paying the cost of the trees and tree delivery in advance, £1225, the remaining to be invoiced and paid after the works have been completed.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously.

Mar24.10.3. To note the Freedom of Information response to request 23rd February 2024

Noted, also available on the website.

Mar24.10.4. To note the litter picker has requested supplies for the Great British Spring Clean over the 6th/7th April 2024 weekend.

Noted.

Mar24.10.5. To approve the risk assessment for the Great British Spring Clean and that this is a Parish Council arranged activity for the purposes of insurance, arranged by a member of our staff.

[ACTION] Ask the school to encourage the pupils to take litter to the next available bin with space.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously.

Mar24.10.6. To approve purchase of defibrillator battery, £289.00 + £10 fast postage excl VAT, and note the Clerk will commence inspections of this parish council asset.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to purchase directly from Community HeartbeatTrust, maximum budget £310. There is still 6 months left on the current battery, only once the battery is installed, once dropped to 10%, the 4 years guarantee start date is triggered. Clerk now has access to Webnos, will complete defib checks. Access to the guardianship of the Defib is still to be resolved, this needs to be activated by the current guardians in most instances.

Mar24.10.7. To consider a proposal to move to a .gov.uk domain and wordpress website, £750 for off the shelf website from Eyelid Productions and hosting with Could Next £120 domain registration for 2 years and £10 per month hosting.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously.

Mar24.11. To receive Items of Correspondence and agree actions arising.

Since Issuing the Agenda we have received:

- Completed grant form for hornet traps, but this is actually a request for the parish council to purchase and administer hornet traps within the parish. The Clerk asked if two councillors wished to propose this item be on the next agenda, the motion failed.
- An FOI request for details of our Council Homes and waiting lists. A response has already been sent that we do not have any as we are a parish council and therefore hold no data pertaining.

Mar24.12. Motion without notice to suspend standing order 3x, and extend the meeting by up to 15mins.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously

Mar24.13. Matters for future discussion.

- Reinstating a Neighbourhood Plan Committee, and include review of the Local Plan
- Trees on the allotment land – ask the allotment trustees to consider formally asking for their removal or official permission.

Mar24.14. To agree list of items from this meeting to be submitted to Woodcote Correspondent or our Facebook Page as a Parish Council Update.

Resolved: Approve Unanimously the following items

- New Clerk
- New Cllrs, w. a paragraph.

- Litter Pick – Spring Clean
- All Grants awarded.

Mar24.15. To consider and, if thought fit, approve the following motion: In view of the confidential nature of the business about to transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw.
Confidential Papers

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to exclude the public and press. The Chair invited those in attendance to withdraw.

Mar24.15.1. Consider quotes for pavilion roof, approve budget.

Resolved: Approved unanimously to ask WWA to apply for planning permission for a Zinc roof and ask for tenders for Zinc Roof following appropriate financial regulations for projects of this cost. **[ACTION]** Clerk to check tendering process to be compliant with regulations.

Mar24.15.2. To consider quotes for the Greenmore Ponds works, and approve budget and supplier

Resolved: Approved unanimously to appoint WJ Hatt, maximum budget £3000

Mar24.15.3. To consider quotes for the remedial works for the fallen tree at Long Toll, and approve budget and supplier

Resolved: Approved unanimously to appoint Luke Brown, maximum Budget £1000 and ask to remove both trees.

Mar24.15.4. Approve Salary Point, Hours and Contract for Litter Picker(s)

To defer to April.

Mar24.16. Confirm the date and time of the next Council Meeting 03rd April 2024.

Confirmed.

There being no further business to be transacted the Chair closed the meeting at **22:38**.