

WOODCOTE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting Wednesday 1st November 2023 at 7.30pm.

PC MEMBERS

Chairman	Mr. R. Peirce
Vice Chair	Mr. K. Davies
	Mr. B. Urbick
	Miss H. Booker
	Mrs L. Bilbe.

Parish Clerk	Ms J. Welham
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1. To receive apologies and approval for absence.

None.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest.

None.

3. **Public Forum**: Opportunity for members of the public to address the Council, the public may also speak about specific items of business as they arise, with the permission of the Chairman.

3 MOP present.

Member from Woodcote Conservation Group present, report updating position with the work at Greenmoor Ponds had been circulated prior to the meeting. There were no questions from Councillors, project is at the early stages, updates to follow as it progresses.

4. To Approve the Minutes of Parish Council Meeting 4th October 2023.

Approved as a true record.

5. Matters arising from those Minutes not on the agenda elsewhere.

The Reservoir site Greenmore was raised, suggested that OCC should be dealing more strongly with the owner of the site as they contract work to this company regularly. WPC have made OCC aware of the ownership of the site.

9. Village Hall to consider proposal re Lease & arrangements with VH Trustees.

Cllr. Urbick gave update on the background of the investigations into the Lease and Charity Constitution, the PC being Custodian Trustees and the Management Trustees. The Lease is not valid and the proposal was discussed;

At a previous full council meeting, Cllrs Booker and Urbick agreed to work with the Woodcote Village Hall Charity trustees to review the lease for the village hall and bring the suggestions for an amended lease to the Council for approval. The intent was to clarify responsibilities and to continue to support the trustees as they work toward making the hall a sustainably self-sufficient asset for the community.

In working through the issues, it was discovered that the Village Hall is not owned by the Council. In fact, it is not owned by anyone. Rather, the structure for its management and upkeep was established by a constitution in October 1962, the governing document (based on provisions of section 4(2) of the Public Trustee Act 1906). This designated that all matters regarding the hall building, improvements and maintenance, be the responsibility of the 'Management Trustees'.

The fact that the Parish Council does not own the building has been confirmed by a solicitor and an expert in the organisational structures of village halls in the country (T Hennessy solicitor, T Hall of Community First Oxfordshire, both these individuals were referred by the then internal Woodcote Parish Council auditor Jane Olds).

Since the Parish Council is not the owners of the village hall, there can be no lease of the building. As a result, the current lease is not valid. The solicitor also informed the Parish Council that the current constitution of the Village Hall Charity trustees is not in compliance with appropriate legislation. Any changes to the original constitution must be based on the Charities Act 2011 s.280. The amendments put forward in subsequent amendments – particularly about the 'ownership of the village hall' - are not valid.

The Woodcote Parish Council is the 'custodian trustee', merely holding the deed documents. The Woodcote Village Hall trustees are the designated 'management trustees'. Until such time as revised constitution can be drafted by a solicitor, in keeping with the principles of the 1962 constitution, the original constitution would seem to apply. This revised document will need to be submitted to the Charity Commission and obtain their specific approval (not merely that they have received it).

The following proposals are put forward to the Woodcote Parish Council meeting to regularise the situation of ownership and management. It is important to note, though, the intent is to maintain strong support for this important community asset and the Village Hall Charity trustees.

We would ask that the Council decide on each proposal:

1. To note that the lease between the Woodcote Village Hall trustees and the Woodcote Parish Council has not been valid. All payments to the Village Hall since the lease was drafted are deemed 'grants in kind' based on the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s.19. Therefore the prior payments are all lawful, as is the situation with VAT.
2. To agree the principle of a simple lease of the Parish Council offices from the Village Hall Charity, initially for £6,000/pa (£500/month) to be paid annually in advance, renewable each year. Though a formal lease will need to be agreed, this will pay for the use of the offices until the detail can be agreed. This is to commence from the date of the Parish Council meeting at which this is agreed (pro rata to the end of the current fiscal Year). The agreement for subsequent years will be from 1st April.
3. To agree that all Parish Council usage of the Village Hall will be as a 'user' and the hall will be booked as needed, at the appropriate rate.

4. To seek to amend the Land Registry to be in compliance with the legislation and clearly state: “Woodcote Parish Council as custodian trustee of the Woodcote village hall” and to approve the reasonable funds necessary to amend the entry.
5. To agree to pay the legal fees for the Woodcote Village Hall Charity trustees to engage an experienced solicitor to draft a revised constitution. This is aimed to support the trustees as the situation is regularised and compliant. Request an initial budget of £2,000 as this is likely to be sufficient for the task.
6. To appoint Cllr K Davies as the Parish Council appointed trustee of the Charity (to be revisited and reappointed each year at the Annual Parish Council meeting).

The transition will take some time and the Council may be formally asked by the trustees for grants to support the change as well as to help address other issues. It would be appreciated if any of these grant requests are made by the trustees in writing, clearly setting out the need and any background. They must be submitted to the Clerk who will seek approval from the Council.

Importantly, the Parish Council intends to continue to support the refurbishment of the hall and participate in the project design. Any costs will be brought to the Council for approval. Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s.19 and potentially other parliamentary acts provide the powers for the Parish Council to support this.

The Chairman of the VH Trustees spoke and in principal felt the proposals were acceptable, he had concerns that the current grant from WPC would be stopped.

He will need to put these proposals to the other Trustees and they have a meeting scheduled for Wednesday 8th November. He requested if the Draft minutes could be available before this meeting. He acknowledged that these changes would require a rewrite of the constitution’.

Resolved A working group to be formed with Terms of Reference to work with Trustees to agree timeline and structure to work through proposals. Cllr. Davies to represent WPC.

6. Allotment Trustees Meeting to consider proposed rental increase for next FY 2024/25. Following the Allotment Trustees meeting 25th October it was raised that the rental charge for year 2024-2025 should be increased due to rising cost over the last few years. The last increase was 2018.

Based on rents not having increased for 5 years and the cost increases experienced and projected, water 15%, grass cutting 7%, suggested an increase of 8% for the coming FY2024/25.

The proposal was 2 pence per square metre from 0.27p per sq.metre to 0.29p per sq. metre. This had been accepted favourably from the plot holders who attended the Allotment Trustees meeting.

Resolved to increase the rental by 2 pence from 1st April 2024. Plot holders will be advised.

7. Planning Applications to consider all applications received from SODC and any other applications submitted and published by SODC between the circulation of this agenda and the meeting.

P23/S3441/FUL Removal of existing defective roof coverings and replacement with suitable materials; provision of new roof lantern and rooflights; associated carpentry repairs; overhaul of rainwater goods. The Oratory School The Oratory Drive Woodcote RG8 0PJ.

P23/S3442/LB Removal of existing defective roof coverings and replacement with suitable materials; provision of new roof lantern and rooflights; associated carpentry repairs; overhaul of rainwater goods. The Oratory School The Oratory Drive Woodcote RG8 0PJ.

Woodcote Parish Council support these two applications subject to views from the Conservation Officer.

7.1 Applications Granted by SODC

P22/S2702/HH Application proposal, including any amendments : Proposed first floor side extension by placing a room above garage and placing roof dormers to the front and rear of the extension. Site Location : 25 White House Road Woodcote RG8 0RX.

7.2 Applications Refused by SODC

None.

7.3 Other Planning Matters

Re planning application RE P23/S2818/FUL - Land between 14 & 14A Bridle Path, Woodcote which had been withdrawn by the applicant. Request made that Clerk email the Planning Officer dealing with this application asking for more information, given the important precedent this could have set in terms of the development at the rear of properties backing onto the village settlement boundary.

8.Finance To approve payments, note receipts.

List of payments to be made between 7/10/23 to 6/11/23

Date Paid	Payee Name	Ref.	Amount Inc. Vat	Transaction Detail
11/10/23	OALC	BACS	36.00	OALC Training BU
11/10/23	Royal British Legion Trading	DD	28.99	Poppy Wreath
24/10/23	Jenny Welham	BACS	9.99	6 socket extension unit
28/10/23	J. Welham	SO	xxx	Monthly salary
28/10/23	L. Crockett	SO	xxx	Monthly salary litter picking
30/10/23	British Telecom	SO	171.50	Monthly line & BB
	Woodcote Conservaton			
2/11/23	Group	BACS	340.00	Annual Grant
2/11/23	RES Systems Ltd	BACS	2,816.10	New Fire Door VH
2/11/23	Sheild Maintenance ltd	BACS	319.79	Dog & Litter Bins monthly
				Toilet syphon/remove water
2/11/23	Premier Heating Solutions	BACS	420.00	htr
				Structural survey VH flat
2/11/23	ASKWard Ltd	BACS	735.60	Roof
			6,611.34	

To Note Receipts

SODC Cil Funds £71,904.20.

Football Club Recreation Ground Fee £300.00

Resolved Move the CIL funds into the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Account.

8.1 Quotations/Grants received for review/approval including any received after circulation of this agenda.

RES Fire Services – Emergency Lighting VH. Remedial and additional advisement works.

Total cost £3537.92.

Resolved proceed with Remedial works only cost £1715.84.

Update Fire Zone Drawing £75.00

Resolved proceed

Kings Tree Services – Tree maintenance works, overgrown hedges & trees Wayside Green cut back £220.00

Overgrown Trees and hedges corner of Greenmore Reading Rd cut back £690.00.

Resolved to accept and proceed with works.

10. Grants – review potential grant offerings from various organisations.

Grant offerings listed.

Trust for Oxfordshire Environment offer grants, varying amounts.

SODC Capital Grants next round open Spring 2024 possible for VH flat roof.

District Council Community Grants, WPC has one pending. £5K per District Councillor.

County Councillor Community Grants approx. £15K per councillor.

SODC & OCC can be approach for grants from their section of CIL Funds.

11. Woodcote Cricket Club to consider proposal for funds towards spiking the V.Green.

The detail had been circulated prior to the meeting;

Request for financial support from WPC for the Verti-Draining of the Village Green.

As per previous emails, the quote for verti-draining the whole Green is as follows. The quote is for the hire of the equipment from Wilders (Crowmarsh) with the actual work being done by Jonny Aldridge, a job he has done in the past.

Week hire - £1100 + VAT

Delivery and collection cost - £150

Insurance is 15% of the hire total so £165

Total cost = £1635.00

WHAT IS VERTI-DRAINING?

A process of deep spiking the soil with solid tines to improve drainage and aeration. It works in the range of between 8-12 inches in depth.

WHY IS IT NEEDED ON THE GREEN?

It is self-evident that the drainage on the Green is very poor as a result of compaction due to the high clay content of the soil and dry weather conditions in previous summers (e.g. 2022).

The result is that every time there is significant rainfall, large areas of the Green are flooded. This causes issues for the Sports Clubs - games have to be called off which with good drainage would not need to happen. In addition it creates issues for all users of the Green as there are times when it is difficult to walk safely across the Green, because it becomes very slippery.

PARISH COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT.

The Sports Clubs realise that the drainage on the Green is more of an issue for them than for other users, but there is an issue for all users and therefore the Parish Council may be willing to contribute towards the cost of this work. A contribution of one-third of the cost, with the Football Club and Cricket Club each contributing one-third would mean an outlay of £545.00 for each organisation.

Resolved WPC to fund one third £545.00.

12 Financial Regulations To review and adopt changes to accommodate monthly meetings. Deferred to next meeting.

13. Village Hall Flat Roof – review progress, costs, next actions.

The architect who had been working with Cllr. Davies had not responded to the letter sent asking for next steps following the structural survey results and giving a deadline.

Due to this it was agreed that another architect should be engaged to take the next stage of this forward. Cllr. Davies to follow this up and he also stated he would check the flat roof again to check the drainage channels.

14. Matters for Next Agenda/s Opportunity for Members to raise matters which require attention & discussion for future agendas. Proposal of Motion Forms can be received by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 9b.

Financial Regulations

Project Cool Phase 2.

15. Correspondence – to consider potential actions of any received.

Email from resident requesting permission to use the VH Carpark for a Coffee Truck for an event booked at the VH early December.

A drawing of the position had been sent. WPC would allow in the Car park only not to the frontage of the hall, will advise Trustees of this as they are managing this booking.

16. To note date of the next PC meeting: Wednesday 6th December 2023

Meeting closed 21.30

Signed...Cllr. Kevin Davies.....Date..6th December 2023