

TAPLOW PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF TAPLOW PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 17th MAY 2016 AT 6.30 P.M. IN TAPLOW VILLAGE CENTRE HIGH STREET TAPLOW SL6 0EX

Present

Cllr. George Sandy

Cllr. Jamie Barnard

Cllr. John Bamberg

Cllr. Roger Worthington

Cllr. Louise Symons

Cllr. Gerry O'Riordan

Cllr. Val Pridmore

Cllr. Toby Greeves

Cllr. Yannick Le Touze

Mrs. K H Holder – clerk

Emma Billingham from the Maidenhead Advertiser and nine members of the public.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 6.30pm.

Open forum

Carrie Collerton of Queen Anne House said an application was pending for a non material amendment to change a window to a juliet balcony at that property. She felt SBDC had made a series of errors in past planning permissions and this NMA would cause grave privacy issues for the neighbour who is overlooked by the proposed juliet balcony.

PC/34/16 To elect a Chairman for the coming year and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

34.1 Cllr. Bamberg proposed Cllr. Sandy as Chairman. This was seconded by Cllr. Greeves.

34.2 Before a vote was taken, Cllr. Worthington referred to concerns that the Internal Auditor had raised about transgressions against Council procedures. He asked for Cllr. Sandy's personal assurance that compliance with procedures would be a high priority for him so that a clean bill of health could be forthcoming at the year end. Cllr. Sandy advised that the issues this year had arisen owing to misunderstandings as to the management of the Land Securities monies. It had not been understood the extent to which they were governed by the Council's Finance Regulations which had now been clarified. He said that the renovation of the Village Green project which gave rise to the concerns was a unique situation and that he would abide by all Council procedures going forward. He said that he was sorry the Clerk had experienced criticism for the misunderstanding.

34.3 On a show of hands **it was unanimously agreed** that Cllr. Sandy be voted in as Chairman. Cllr. Sandy thanked councillors for their confidence in him. He added he had lived in Taplow since 1971 and cared passionately about the Parish. He believed he had the support of an excellent Clerk and a good team of Councillors who had all shown resilience in a difficult situation.

PC/35/16 To elect a Vice-Chairman for the coming year

The Chairman proposed Cllr. Barnard. Cllr. Bamberg seconded this. It was **unanimously agreed**.

PC/36/16 Apologies for absence

Cllr. John Kennedy.

PC/37/16 To elect members to the Finance Committee for the coming year

It was **agreed** all councillors were on the Finance Committee.

PC/38/16 To elect members to outside bodies - SBALC and Old Priory Gardens Working Group

It was **agreed** that Cllrs. Worthington and Symons would represent the Council on SBALC and Cllr. Barnard would represent the Council on the OPG working group.

PC/39/16 To review constitutional documents including the standing orders, asset register and risk assessment and to approve the amendment of the finance regulations to provide for a chairman's allowance of up to £500pa

39.1 The Clerk reported that no changes were proposed to the Standing Orders or Risk Assessment. The Asset Register had been amended to include the new streetlights, bins and defibrillator and this was **approved**.

39.2 The amendment to the Finance Regulations was to provide the means for the Council to make small gifts to those who made a contribution to parish affairs. This arose from concerns raised by the Internal Auditor about a gift made to a contractor as compensation for the bank wrongly bouncing his cheque (and out of a compensatory sum received by the Council from the bank) and for gifts made to experts who had advised on the Mural project without asking for a fee. Cllr. Barnard emphasized that the services provided by these experts had been given over a protracted period of eight months and the Council had thought it fit to recognize the service they had given. Cllr. Bamberg proposed the amendment to the Finance Regulations for the provision of a chairman's allowance to be added as a new clause 4.8. The monies for this year would be vired from General Funds and budgeted for going forward. This was seconded by Cllr. Worthington. **It was agreed** unanimously.

PC/40/16 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12th April 2016

These were **approved** and signed by the Chairman.

PC/41/16 Matters Arising from previous meetings (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

41.1 The Chairman reported that the assignment of rights in the mural had not been signed. Cllr. Barnard explained that although the physical mural and copyright in the photographs taken recently belonged to the Council, the intellectual property rights in the Mural belonged to Mrs Horton. The assignment was intended to ensure that we could take steps to prevent any third party exploiting the Mural but this was a decision for the Horton family and no pressure would be applied to pursue this.

41.2 The Chairman enquired whether a quote to improve the heating in the Perkins Room had been obtained but the Clerk had heard nothing further and would chase.

41.3 The Chairman reported that the defibrillator had been installed at the Oak and Saw

and training for its use would take place on Saturday 4th June at 9.15am in the village hall. Anyone wishing to attend must register with the Clerk.

41.4 Cllr. Le Touze reported that the Berry Hill speeding working party had met and felt that the traffic calming measures contained in TfB's guide would not address the scale of the problem and that more drastic measures would be needed. They were investigating the feasibility of speed cameras and would request an agenda item at the next Council meeting.

41.5 The Chairman confirmed the three new litter bins had been installed.

41.6 Cllr. Barnard reported the Race to Church had been a roaring success with almost £2,000 raised for TVAP. They planned to run the event every three years.

PC/42/16 To consider the request from Playgroup to extend their fencing

42.1 The Chairman referred to the drawings circulated prior to the meeting which the Playgroup had submitted. By way of background the Chairman noted that the paved area outside the Hall had been extended during the Green renovation to avoid wear to the grass where the Playgroup were moving the fencing each day. The proposal was now to be able to fence off this extended paved area. The Chairman's view was that this would push parents collecting their children onto the newly seeded grass area causing more wear.

42.2 Mrs Ainsley – the Playgroup supervisor – said she believed that as the proposed new gate would be on the pathway it was unlikely parents would stand on the grass. The new standing area would only be shortened by about 8 feet and the new fencing would be lighter and not require wheeling. The result would be a big gain in outside playing space for the 36 children in their care.

42.3 Cllr. Le Touze expressed an interest in having permanent fencing. The point was made that access issues including rights of way would need to be considered with perhaps some semi-permanent fencing being preferable.

42.4 Cllr. Barnard felt that the children would benefit from more space and that the Green is intended for the public to use. He believed it would be possible for the Playgroup to manage the situation.

42.5 **It was agreed** that Cllr. Pridmore should liaise with the Playgroup and put forward revised plans for the next meeting.

PC/43/16 To approve the costs of implementing the email subscription service on the website

Cllr. Worthington reported that Mrs. Hatch had undertaken most of the work to write a new website with an email subscription facility. The next steps were to re-assign the domain name which he hoped to do shortly. It was important to encourage as many residents as possible to sign up to the new email facility and to this end he had obtained a quote for £58 to have leaflets printed for distribution to all residents. These would need volunteers to deliver after the new website goes live.

PC/44/16 Planning

44.1 Mill Lane - Cllr. Worthington reported that the council had received an historic set of application documents from Berkeley Homes but not for the current application for condition relief. He had written to BH with a query on tree management within this but have had no reply to date.

BH have submitted the application for the gas holder area of the Mill Lane site. It appears to be in compliance with the earlier (withdrawn) application. I do not see any reason to make an objection.

44.2 The Feathers signage application was rejected. The current main sign is also considered in breach of approvals.

44.3 Applications for “Non-material Amendments” relating to a previously approved development at Queen Anne Cottage (15/01613) – 16/00802 and 16/00841 have raised some concerns. The original approval permitted a first floor window. The amendment wishes to change this to French windows and a Juliet balcony. The neighbour contends that this is highly material and that there were errors of fact in the original application drawings and statements. I recommend that we raise an objection to the changes being non-material as the best way to clarify these problems.

44.4 As a more general matter I will follow up to clarify what the obligations are on the applicant and the council as to informing parties potentially affected by a development application.

44.5 There are some applications in for rear extensions at 2, 3, 4 Hill Farm Cottages that I haven’t yet fully assessed.

44.6 The Neighbourhood Plan is in consultation from SBDC till June 6th.

PC/45/16 To receive reports from outside bodies

There were none.

PC/46/16 To consider and agree the future of the Frog Bin

The Clerk reported that despite assurances the frog bin has not been emptied by parents and has become a liability on the Council which has paid to have it emptied on numerous occasions. The new Head Teacher at the school had said she would be happy for it to be relocated onto school premises. Berkeley Homes will be developing a litter management plan but this could take several years and they have said they would not want the frog bin. **It was agreed** that the bin be relocated to the school at a total cost not exceeding £100 plus Vat and to ask the school to contribute to the move if possible. The issue of litter in the Parish should be on the next agenda.

PC/47/16 Finance

47.1 Expenditure shown in the cashbook was **approved** and the Chairman and Cllr. Worthington authorized to sign cheques shown in the cashbook.

47.2 The draft Accounts and Annual Return for 2015/16 circulated prior to the meeting were **approved**. Cllr. Bamberg noted that there was no ongoing need to maintain a ‘Building Reserve’ in the accounts and that an item to remove this earmarked reserve should be on the next agenda.

47.3 In response to qualifications made by the Internal Auditor on the Annual Return it **was agreed** to write a letter to the external auditors explaining the circumstances giving rise to the qualifications. In particular it had become clear that more detailed recording of meetings would alleviate concerns regarding budgeting and that misunderstandings had arisen about the extent to which the Finance Regulations covered the Land Securities monies. In any event Cllr. Bamberg felt clause 11.1 c of the Finance Regulations was relevant to provide the power the Council needed to act in the way it had. The Internal Auditor said this clause applied to contracts over £50,000 but this was not clear.

47.3 The Clerk advised that a 30 day working period from 6th June until 15th July would be published within which residents could examine financial documents.

47.4 The Clerk noted that the exact issues and failings of the Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign were not clear. She had arranged for it to be put up in Boundary Road next and asked everyone to be vigilant and report the issues with it. It was possible that a fix could be done over the phone but it was more likely that an engineer call out would be required which could cost £490 plus Vat. By coincidence Farnham Royal PC's MVAS was failing too so she might be able to organize one call out for both and share costs. It was **agreed** to take all necessary steps to fix any issues with the MVAS up to £500 plus Vat.

47.5 It was **agreed** to subscribe to the Thames River Alliance at a cost of £25

PC/48 /16 Any other business and to consider agenda items for the next full council meeting on 26th July 2016 at 7.00pm

It was **agreed** that the issue of the Building Reserve in the accounts, litter and dog mess, the Playgroup fencing and the Berry Hill speed issues should be on the next agenda.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.