

**COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of a Meeting of the Cookham Parish Council held in the**  
**Community Room, Cookham Library, Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2023, at 7.30pm**

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**PRESENT:** Cllr M. Brar (Acting Chairman)  
 Cllrs L. Austin, C. Aisladie, E. Bune, C. Doyle, J. Edwards, I. Herd J. Perry,  
 B. Perry, and L. Tull.

**Also Present:** There were no members of the public present  
 There were no members of the press present.

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**OPEN FORUM:**

A minute's silence was held for Mr J. Stretton, former long servicing Parish and Borough Cllr, who recently passed away.

**1. APOLOGIES:**

Apologies were received from Cllrs M. Howard, H. Philip, P. Roe and I. Wernham.  
 Cllr M. Barnes did not attend.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

Cllr I. Herd      Item 10      Pecuniary

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The minutes of the Full Council meeting (inc part II) held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022 were approved as a true record of the meeting, on the proposal of Cllr C. Doyle seconded by Cllr C. Aisladie.

**4. APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

The minutes of the Planning Committee mtg held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022, were approved as a true record of the meeting, on the proposal of Cllr B. Perry seconded by Cllr L. Austin.  
 The minutes of the General Purposes Committee mtg held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2022, were approved as a true record of the meeting, on the proposal of Cllr C. Doyle, seconded by Cllr E. Bune, subject to the correction of the spelling of 'Bike rack': p2994, item 9, third bullet point.

**5. FINANCE:**

**a. TO APPROVE PAYMENTS/RECEIPTS IN DECEMBER 2022:**

The list of payments and receipts made in December 2022 were unanimously approved, with the addition of a payment of £300 in connection with Cemetery Lodge made after the Financial Summary had been prepared.

**b. TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT PKF LITTLEJOHN WILL REMAIN AS OUR EXTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE NEXT 5 YEARS UNTIL 2026/27:**

Council acknowledged the information.

**6. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM CLLR B. PERRY REGARDING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WP:**

Since the last Council meeting, developments needing report and/or approval are:

1. The Working Party met on 21 December 2022.
2. It finalised its review of the Policies and Projects in the current draft of the Plan. Troy are being asked to make changes, mostly relatively minor and mostly by consensus. Two major issues were: (a) the agreement by consensus of a submission from WildCookham amplifying their suggestions and mapping relating to wildlife corridors; and (b) the acceptance, on a vote after vigorous debate, of Mr D. Scarff's suggestion on how, in the Projects section, to embody the WP's wish to ensure that any community-led renewable power schemes did enjoy local support.
3. The idea was floated that it might be better to separate out the Projects section (created after the initial consultation) into either a discrete part of the document or into a different document, albeit

presented in either case as allied to the Plan. The WP will take Troy's advice on this. If he considers this feasible, the WP will decide it at its next meeting.

4. The WP decided again to ask Troy to try to shorten the text underlying the Policies and Projects. The WP understands, though, that the Policies and Projects are supported by this text. Now having agreed those, it does not wish to lose that support. So any shortening must be done carefully. The WP did not think it was itself the right forum for any such changes.
5. There was debate about consultation in particular of landowners and those others to whom the WP reached out at the initial stage. The WP remains as keen as always to be fully transparent and accessible to all even-handedly. Accordingly once the changes now mooted have been made to the draft (which may or may not include the changes to the organisation of the document set out at 3 above) it wishes to have the draft(s) as it/they then is/are added promptly to the Council's website. It will then both write to all those to whom it initially reached out, including the landowners group, to invite comments and use the regular advertisement in the Parish Magazine to invite the rest of the public to do the same.
6. Once those comments are received and considered, and any further changes made as a result, it hopes to be able to regard the Plan as ready for formal consultation.
7. The WP accepted with regret that it now appears most unlikely that the Plan can be ready for referendum simultaneously with the local elections on 6 May.
8. Dr Courtenay-Smith confirmed that the 'Stanley Spencer appendix' should be ready as promised by the end of the year. It is an exhaustive document, enriched by much research and specially taken photographs. Copyright issues means it is important that people only use the links in the appendix to access the paintings. She has been grateful for the help and support of Mr D Scarff and Mr T Denniford. While she has taken great pains to ensure its accuracy, with T Denniford and D Scarff, as well as the Stanley Spencer Gallery archivist, all of whom she gratefully thanked, she asked for suggestions of residents with 'deep roots' who might be willing to review the document and help even further to ensure so far as possible its complete accuracy. On the behalf of the WP, and having seeing an early partial draft, the WP thanked her in advance for a tremendous piece of work.
9. The WP will meet again on 4 January. The next meeting will decide that issue and answer any final questions Troy may have. The WP hopes that Troy can then redraft such that the WP will be in a position by February to hold a meeting to which representations can be made by landowners, other consultees and the public.

**7. TO DECIDE THE NEXT STEPS FOR THE INFORMATION CURRENTLY HELD ON THE COOKHAM FLOOD BLOGSPOT AS THE BLOGSPOT IS DUE TO BE CLOSED DOWN:**

The Cookham Flood Blogspot was set up by Cllrs following the 2014 floods in the parish. It is not integrated with Council software and has remained a stand alone application, maintained by the creator, who is no longer a Cllr. They have notified the office that they wish to stop from spring 2023. As the site holds useful information, the Council needs to decide how it wants to proceed. Options are:

1. Do nothing and let the blogspot close down. The information will disappear.
2. Take on the site as it stands on the current blogspot software. The Clerk does not have the knowledge of its setup or how the blogspot works, nor is there currently the resources within the Council to maintain it.
3. Review the site and add key bits of information to new pages within the Councils maintained website. It would then be administered by the website administrator. This may incur cost for the setup.

After considering postponing a decision until after the May elections, Cllrs unanimously approved a decision to bring the key information onto the Councils website. Clerk to liaise with the Website Administrator.

**8. TO ACCEPT THE QUOTATION FROM THE SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS (SLCC) LOCAL COUNCIL CONSULTANCY (LCC) TO UNDERTAKE A RE-EVALUATION OF STAFF ROLES TO ENSURE THE COUNCIL EMPLOYEES ARE PAID IN LINE WITH THE RELEVANT PAY SCALES FOR THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES, AS AGREED BY THE STAFFING COMMITTEE IN MARCH 2022:**

A quotation for £1188 (ex VAT) was received from Local Council Consultancy (an SLCC Enterprise) to undertake a re-evaluation of staff roles to ensure they are paid in line with their responsibilities, as approved at the Staffing Cmte in March 2022.

Financial Regulations ask that three comparative quotes are gained. The Clerk has attempted to find three quotes, but this has proven difficult as it is a specialist service. The Clerk had

contacted another group early in December, but they have not responded, she has not been able to find a third provider.

Cllrs were unanimous in favour of accepting the quote for a re-evaluation of Councils employment roles from LCC. Cllr Aisladie, as Chairman of the Staffing Committee, and the Clerk to make contact.

**9. TO CONSIDER A RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE 2023/24 RBWM BUDGET. CONSULTATION CLOSSES MIDNIGHT ON 24TH JANUARY 2023:**

The draft RBWM budget proposes a 2.99% increase in Council Tax for 2023/24, plus an increase of 2% in the Adult Social Care Precept. RBWM still faces increasing financial challenges due to a number of factors including: pressures on core services, high inflation and rising energy costs on a Council Tax that is lower than national average which limits the income the Council has at its disposal.

After a short discussion, Cllr J. Edwards volunteered to form a response for Cllrs to review and comment on via email, before it will be sent by the Clerk on behalf of the Council. Cllrs were also encouraged to also respond as individuals.

**10. TO CONSIDER A RESPONSE TO THE RBWM CONSULTATION ON A DRAFT ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGEPOINT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN. CONSULTATION CLOSSES MIDNIGHT ON 9TH JANUARY 2023:**

Cllrs had had the opportunity to review the consultation information prior to the meeting. A question was raised regarding chargepoints for Cookham, in particularly the RBWM carpark on Sutton Rd as it wasn't specifically listed. Cllr Brar, in her capacity as Borough Cllr, will follow up the question of charge points for Cookham.

Cllr I. Herd to form a response for Cllrs to review and comment on via email, before it will be sent by the Clerk on behalf of the Council.

**11. TO DISCUSS THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023 AND THE ANNUAL REPORT:**

**a. APPROVE THE MEMBERS FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING WORKING GROUP TO COME FORWARD WITH IDEAS AND PLAN THE MEETING.**

The very low attendance at last years Parish Meeting was noted by Cllrs. It was hoped that this will be improved for the meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> March this year.

Cllrs agreed that a presentation on the developing Neighbourhood Plan would be both interesting and relevant to the community, Cllr B. Perry to contact Troy Planning and Design. It was also agreed that promoting the work of a Cllr/becoming a Cllr, might appeal to prospective candidates for the elections in May 2023.

**b. COORDINATE THE PRODUCTION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT:**

Cllrs were happy to produce an annual report for the year 22/23. Reports to be with the office by 17<sup>th</sup> February.

**12. OUTSIDE BODIES, BOROUGH CLLR AND CLERK'S REPORTS:**

**Clerk** Cemetery Lodge Tenancy renewal in progress, awaiting information from Prospect. Working with solicitors on the Lease with Cookham Rise Primary School for use of land. This will lead on to Land Registry work. Training is well underway but will not be a quick process.

RBWM Clerks and Chairs mtg 15/12/22: Main theme the budget. The Borough are keenly looking at devolution of services to Parishes, particularly if there is a PC power that allows it.

This will impact the Parish either in the form of: monetary donation, or sourcing and managing contracts. Cllrs to note there will be an impact staff resources.

**13. TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE UPDATES FOR THE FULL COUNCIL ACTION LIST:**

The report was reviewed with the following updates:

- H&S Audit – Cllrs Austin and Aisladie have met. To be dealt with in New Year.
- Turkey Housing PI/ap – Cllr M Brar is still waiting for information from the Planning Authority. Planning Cmte to write to Planning Authority also.

**14. CHAIRMAN'S SUBMISSIONS:**

None.

**The meeting closed at 8.30pm.**