

COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Cookham Parish Council held in the
Community Room, Cookham Library, Tuesday 5th December 2023, at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Cllr M. Howard (Chairman)
Cllrs L. Austin, M. Brar, T. Caen, J. Edwards, M-L. Kellaway, R. Kellaway, J. Moore
B. Perry, H. Pleming, A-L. Regan and L. Tull.

Also Present: One member of the public was present.
No members of the Press were present.

OPEN FORUM:

Cllr Howard gave an update on the works on Cookham bridge. The project is on schedule, opportunities to bring forward the end date of the works is very limited as some areas of the bridge are in a worse state than previously assumed. Project timings are under constant review.

1. APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received from Cllrs C. Aisladie, N. Bedwell and E. Bune

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Cllr B. Perry Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan working party.
Cllr A-L. Regan Member of the Cookham Village Events committee.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the Full Council meeting, held on 7th November 2023 (including Part II) were approved as a true record of the meeting, on the proposal of Cllr M. Brar, seconded by Cllr T. Caen, subject to following amendments:

Item 13, minute page 3141 to add 'and Cllr J. Moore' between 'Cllr C Aisladie' and 'the Cookham...',
Item 15, minute page 3141 to add 'pending further information' to the end of the sentence.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14th November 2023, 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 Finance Committee meeting held on 21st November 2023, were approved as a true record of the meeting, on the proposal of Cllr R. Kellaway, seconded by Cllr M. Howard, subject to the additional sentence to Item 3, minute page 3183, second para: '3. Higher than expected inflation'.

5. FINANCE: To approve payments / receipts in November 2023: The list of payments and receipts made in November 2023 were approved.

Cllr Howard updated council with an ongoing issue regarding Bancroft Consulting who are intending to submit a further invoice as they feel the work they completed is in excess of their flat rate fee. These extra charges are being questioned as there was no notification from Bancroft Consulting that the council was incurring additional fees. Cllr Howard will provide an update at the next meeting.

6. TO APPROVE THE BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Reference the minutes of the Finance Cmte meeting of 21st November, Minute page 3183, Items 3 and 4.

Cllr R. Kellaway took the council through the discussions at the Finance Cmte meetings that have led to the recommended budget. As noted on the Finance Cmte minutes, the budget calculations had been worked out with a precept increase of 13.5% on the 2023/24 figure.

For the financial year April 2024 to March 2025, the finance report shows a budgeted expenditure of £217,998 with a predicted income of £212,601, with £5,397 coming from strategic reserves or the general fund to balance the budget. The budget, as presented on the Accubus finance report, was adopted on the proposal of Cllr R. Kellaway, seconded by Cllr J. Edwards, by 11 votes for with 1 against.

A review of the current financial year will take place at the March Finance Cmte meeting, which will give an indication of the level of the General Fund. Decisions on moves to/from strategic reserve will also be made at that point.

7. TO APPROVE THE PRECEPT REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25 AS RECOMMENDED BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Cllrs were reminded that the precept levy and the percentage increase appears on residents council tax demand. Cllrs would be expected to defend the reason for a large percentage increase.

Based on the approved budget discussed in item 6, a precept amount of £159,786 for the year April 2024 to March 2025 was approved on the proposal of Cllr R. Kellaway, seconded by Cllr M. Howard, by 10 votes for, 1 against with 1 abstention.

Based on the available RBWM Tax Base data, this gives a Band D equivalent charge of £54.07 per household for the year.

8. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING PARTY:

i. 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 as follows:

1. We have written to all owners of proposed LGSs without any replies (except for some correspondence from Westwood Green Ltd., the residents' association there, who have not yet commented), have received a number of further responses from 'original' consultees (mostly very welcoming, one with various questions which have been answered), and heard nothing further from anyone else.
2. We have received an updated paper from Marlow Archaeology Group, as it now is.
3. We received a note from Troy on the question of compulsory, rather than advisory (e.g. 'must' as against 'will be encouraged') language. Troy also advised on the effect of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, which received the Royal Assent on 26.10.23; this may make some changes to the Basic Conditions with which the CNP has to comply, but Troy think it unlikely. There are also potential changes to the NPPF and to the National Development Management Policies ("NDMP") later this year or early next which may have to be considered. Finally Troy made some other points arising from comments and reviewing the work to date.
4. Subject to and on that basis, the WP undertook a final review of the draft. It made various minor changes.
5. Troy have suggested that RBWM's comments might be sought before going out to Regulation 14 consultation, thereby potentially reducing comments at the latter stage. The WP agrees this, so will do so.
6. Accordingly, and subject as above, the draft will now be properly formatted and produced for consideration, and we hope approval for Regulation 14 Consultation, by this Council we hope on 2 January 2024.

ii. To consider a request to designate the Alfred Major Recreation Gound as a Local Green Space as part of the Cookham Neighbourhood Plan:

The designation of land as a Local Green Space helps to strengthen its protection from future developed. There are a number of areas around Cookham that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party wished to include in this protection, including the Parish Council owned Alfred Major Recreation Ground.

On the proposal of Cllr B Perry, seconded by Cllr M Howard the approval to designate this land as a Local Green Space was unanimously approved.

Cllr J. Moore left the meeting at 8.15pm

9. **TO REVIEW THE RBWM DIFFUSION TEST DATA FROM COOKHAM HIGH STREET FOR PART OF 2023:**

The information from the RBWM diffusion tube collection point was forwarded to Cllrs for review. The collection period is still ongoing. The data so far shows a below average read (available data was from January to August 2023). RBWM considers Cookham High Street to be a site of least concern and the diffusion tube is likely to be reallocated to a site of greater concern next year.

A proposal to consider more data collections points around Cookham Village is being looked at. This will be reviewed by the Traffic working party prior to it being brought to Full Council for consideration.

10. **COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN – TO RECEIVE THE INITIAL DRAFT FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION IN JANUARY 2024:**

Cllrs were asked to fully consider the draft Corporate Plan they had received with the agenda packs, and think about what the councils values are and any areas that are important to them that they wish to bring forward for inclusion in the Plan. This will be discussed further at the January meeting where it is hoped that decisions will be made on key aspects of the Plan.

11. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE COOKHAM CHRISTMAS FAYRE, SUNDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2023.**

Both the Christmas Fayre and the Parish Council stall had gone well. There had been many visitors to the stall which had given Cllrs an opportunity to talk to residents. An opinion poll was held looking at various themes that the Parish Council might consider in the future. Although nothing conclusive was highlighted, traffic, parking and road safety had the biggest interest. Cllrs thanked Cllr A-L Regan for organising the stall.

12. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE TRAFFIC WORKING PARTY:**

A meeting has been held and Cllrs have reviewed passed information. They continue to work on a plan which will come back to Full Council for consideration.

13. **TO REVIEW SMALL GRANT AWARDS APPLICATIONS FOR 2023/24:**

i. To review and approve the Grant Application for Cookham Christmas Society:

The council discussed the grant application but requested more information on the Society's financial position, in line with the grant application form, i.e. a set of the latest approved statement of accounts for the society and relevant bank statements. The Clerk to follow this up. This will be added to a future agenda once the new information is received.

14. **TO CONSIDER A DONATION OF £50 TO BE MADE TO WYE VALLEY VOLUNTEERS (A REGISTERED BOURNE END CHARITY) TO PROVIDE A SHUTTLE MINIBUS BETWEEN BOURNE END AND COOKHAM ON SUNDAY 3RD DECEMBER 12-4PM TO SUPPORT COOKHAM STREET FAYRE AND SATURDAY 9TH DECEMBER 10-3PM TO SUPPORT THE MONTHLY BOURNE END COMMUNITY MARKET:**

The council unanimously approved a donation of £50 to Wye Valley Volunteers.

15. **OUTSIDE BODIES, BOROUGH CLLR AND CLERK'S REPORTS – REPORTS MUST BE SUBMITTED PLEASE NO LESS THAN 24 HOURS BEFORE MTG:**

Cllrs M. Howard/M Brar **Borough Cllrs Report:** Provided by email. Subjects included: Cookham bridge works noting that Cookham businesses are open as usual, EV charge point procurement, review of fees and charges to supplement RBWM funds, Strande Park, verges and Rock the Moor.
The Streetlights in the Village have been returned to the old traditional style following their removal in order to upgrade them to LED.

16. **TO REVIEW THE FULL COUNCIL ACTION LIST:**

The list was briefly reviewed, updates included:
Odney Common: Cllrs Perry, Howard and the Clerk have met with the Odney Management team who have gone away to consider the matter further.

Odney Weir: The Environment Agency are being slow, but there was an indication that they may trial restricted openings from March.

Cllr Howard in his capacity as Borough Cllr, is intending to set up a meeting with residents about flooding. He is also continuing to talk to Borough Officers about options for traffic calming along Dean Lane.

17. CHAIRMAN'S SUBMISSIONS:

RBWM is looking for Parish Cllr volunteers on their Place and Overview Scrutiny panel. Information has been emailed to Cllrs.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm