

COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Cookham Parish Council
Held in the Community Room, Cookham Library, Tuesday 6th September 2022, at
7.30pm

PRESENT: Cllr M. Howard (Chairman)
Cllrs L. Austin, M. Barnes, E. Bune, M. Brar, C. Doyle, I. Herd, B. Perry and H. Philip

Also Present: 1 member of the public were present.
There were no members of the press present.

OPEN FORUM:

A resident discussed his Speedwatch campaign and updated the Council with the statistics of the project. Data collected over 66 sessions between January and June saw over 1300 cars doing above the 30mph speed limit. Warning letters were sent as a result. The data had been forwarded to Thames Valley Police and RBWM and due to the scale of the problem, this should trigger an escalation in the process but unfortunately it appears to have stalled. The resident asked if the Parish Council could raise the issue and push for enforcement. Cllr M Howard offered to write to PC Turnbull and RBWM Cllr P Haseler. Cllr M Brar, in her capacity as RBWM Councillor, will also escalate within RBWM.

1. APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received from Cllrs C. Aisladie, J. Perry, P. Roe and I. Wernham,

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 2nd August 2022 were approved as a true record of the meeting, on the proposal of Cllr C. Doyle seconded by Cllr M. Brar.

4. APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE REPORTS:

The minutes of the Planning Committee mtg held on 9th August 2022, were approved as a true record of the meeting, on the proposal of Cllr B. Perry, seconded by Cllr E. Bune.
The minutes of the General Purposes Committee mtg held on 16th August 2022, were approved as a true record of the meeting, on the proposal of Cllr C. Doyle, seconded by Cllr M. Brar.

5. FINANCE: To approve payments/receipts in August 2022:

Subject to the amendment to the report to exclude the payment from Prospect Holdings which had been received early in September instead, the list of payments and receipts made in August 2022 were approved on the proposal of Cllr Howard.

6. TO CONFIRM THE NEXT STEPS FOR THE CO-OPTION OF TWO COUNCILLORS FOR COOKHAM RISE WARD AND APPROVE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CO-OPTION PROCESS:

Cllrs reviewed documents: NALC Legal Topic note LTN 8 – Elections and co-option, HALC Guidance note: Casual Vacancies and the Councils own Standing Orders regarding the process to Co-op Councillors. An advert will be displayed around the area. Cllrs decided on a closing date for applications of 14th October with a view to complete interviews and approve an appointment at the Full Council meeting in November. If there are no applicants, the adverts will remain in place.

7. SMALL GRANT AWARDS AND DONATIONS POLICY:

S.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the 1972 Act”) enables local councils to spend a limited amount of money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory expenditure.

The power allows a local council to spend money, subject to the statutory limit, on purposes for the *direct benefit of its area, or part of its area, or all or some of its inhabitants*. The council must also ensure that *the direct benefit accruing to its area or residents is commensurate with the expenditure incurred*. This means that a council should not spend a disproportionately large amount on something which has no or very little direct benefit.

i. TO APPROVE THE ADOPTION OF A GRANTS AND DONATIONS POLICY:

The Policy was approved unanimously.

ii. TO APPROVE THE SMALL GRANT AWARD INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORM:

The application pack (covering information and application form) was approved unanimously, subject to the addition of the words ‘if appropriate’ in relation to point 9: the applicants Equal Opportunities policy.

iii. TO CONFIRM THE PROVISIONAL BUDGET AMOUNT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR

23/24: Cllrs approved a provisional small grants budget of £2,500 for the financial year starting April 2023. This is subject to approval of the Councils budget following the budget setting process in October and November.

iv. TO APPROVE THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF GRANT AWARD FOR FINANCIAL

YEAR 23/24: Cllrs approved the maximum single award would be £1,000 for the financial year starting April 2023.

Applications will be reviewed twice a year, at the October and March Full Council meetings each year. The process will start at the beginning of the next financial year in April 2023.

8. TO CONSIDER THE INFORMATION REGARDING SMALLER AUTHORITIES' AUDIT APPOINTMENTS (SAAA) AND DECIDE WHETHER TO REMAIN OPTED IN:

SAAA is responsible for appointing external auditors to all applicable opted-in smaller authorities, setting the terms of appointment for limited assurance reviews, and managing the contracts with the selected auditor firms. The five-year appointing period runs from 2022/23 until 2026/27, and the SAAA has completed a procurement exercise to appoint auditors to each county area from 1 April 2022. Councils need to decide whether to opt in or make their own arrangements. All authorities are required to appoint an external auditor. NALC strongly advise Councils to continue as part of the SAAA sector-led auditor appointment regime and remain opted in.

On the proposal of Cllr M. Howard, the Council unanimously approved to stay opted in.

9. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM CLLR M. HOWARD REGARDING THE PLAY AREA IMPROVEMENT PROJECT TO INCLUDE DECISIONS REGARDING:

Work is due to start w/c 26th September and implementation will take approximately 4 – 6 weeks, weather dependant. A pre-installation meeting is being planned with Sutcliffe Play on 9th September.

a. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND AWARENESS, E.G. OF THE CLOSURE OF THE PLAY AREA WHILST THE WORK IS HAPPENING, NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION, UPDATE FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS:

A letter will be sent to neighbours backing onto the Alfred Major recreation ground, a notice will be placed on the gateways into the park. Cllr M. Howard will update the schools with news of the project and the dates the play area will be closed.

The information will be added to the notice boards, website and social media.

b. TO CONSIDER FEEDBACK REGARDING THE SEATING POD AND CONFIRM ITS EXACT LOCATION:

At the 'Love Parks' event the PCSO had raised concerns about how the seating pod may attract more teens, however it was felt that as the skate ramp is already a place to congregate it would not add to the issue. The seating pod will be placed slightly east of the skate ramp and be in full view of the CCTV cameras. It is an open structure.

c. TO CONFIRM THE SITES OF THE FITNESS EQUIPMENT SITED AROUND THE PARK:

The four pieces of equipment will be placed near to the edge of the park at the corners: by the access to Worster road, backing on to Penling Close and Broom Hill, Groves Way and near to the bottom corner of the allotments. These sites will be confirmed at the pre-installation meeting.

10. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM CLLR B. PERRY REGARDING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WP:

There was nothing further to report. The draft plan is currently being drawn up by Troy Planning + Design and will be reviewed by the Neighbourhood Plan working group once it has been received.

Cllr B. Perry commented that the Tall Buildings Supplementary Planning Document consultation has opened. The matter has been added to the Planning Committee agenda for 13th September.

11. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE TWINNING VISIT BY ST BENOIR IN OCTOBER AND MAKE DECISIONS ON THE WELCOME EVENT TO BE HELD BY THE PARISH COUNCIL AND APPROVE ANY ASSOCIATED SPEND.

The guests from St Benoir will arrive on Saturday 22nd October. Cookham Parish Council will hold a reception, starting at 6.30pm at the Community room in the Library. Drinks and a small selection of nibbles will be supplied for around 50 people. Cllrs discussed whether to provide the food and drink or make use of a catering company to do this. A suggested amount of the value of £1,500 was discussed, however quotes from catering companies will be sourced and reviewed. Cllr Howard to get some quotes and report back.

There is a full schedule of events planned for the guests during their stay in Cookham.

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

Cllr E. Bune **MMPA:** Meeting 27th July 2022, minutes supplied.

Cllr M. Brar **Borough Cllr Report:** supplied via email prior to meeting. Points covered: The Building Height and Tall Building Supplementary planning document, grazing cattle introduced to Battlemead Common and the Cookham Village Conservation Area appraisal is to be reviewed for approved at RBWM Cabinet 29th Sept.

Clerk The CCTV cameras are in the process of being installed. Following the Assistant Clerks resignation, the office will once again be busy as we go through the recruitment process to find a replacement.

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

The report was reviewed with the following updates:

Gigaclear project moving forward slowly.

RBWM have confirmed that a Scheme and Byelaws are still in force.

Maintenance work required on Stonehouse common – Clerk to follow this up with Contractor.

14. CHAIRMAN'S SUBMISSIONS:

Cllr Howard will ask the Environment Agency for an update regarding their recent consultation on the proposal to install fencing at the Weir on Odney Common.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.