

HERMITAGE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting of Hermitage Parish Council held at
Adelaide Room, Holy Trinity Church, Hermitage, Berkshire RG18 9ST
on Wednesday 22nd November 2023 at 7.30pm

Present Cllr R Cottingham, Cllr A Goldsmith (from item 7.3), Cllr D Brown, Cllr P Turner, Cllr I Govier, Cllr R Marr.

01.11.23 Public participation

None.

02.11.23 Apologies for absence

District Cllr P Dick, District Cllr H Codling, Ms N Pierce (clerk).

03.11.23 Minutes of meeting held on 19th October 2023

The minutes were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

04.11.23 Declarations of interest

None.

05.11.23 Actions agreed and matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting not referred to elsewhere

Completed actions

7.1 Unauthorised activities at Prior's Court Farm .

12.3 Draft ROWIP response sent.

Ongoing actions

12.5 Facebook posting and website.(communications)

Draft outline plan for improving communications

06.11.23 Reports

6.1 District Councillors

Dist. Cllr. P Dick & Dist. Cllr. H Codling reports have been circulated. Noted.

6.2 Chairman's report

Noted. Discussed as appropriate under other Agenda items. Copy appended.

07.11.23 Planning

7.1 New Applications.

23/02255/HOUSE, 27 Lipscomb Close, Hermitage, RG18 9SZ. Demolition of existing single skin front porch and erecting of double height, double glazed glass porch. **No objection.**

7.3 Decision notices

None.

7.3 Neighbourhood Development Plan

Cllr Cottingham provided an update: see also appended report.

NDP group recommends accepting independent examiner's recommendations and modifications. Agreed

West Berkshire Council wishes to delay publishing the NDP decision notice until March 1st to align with elections. Agreed.

To advise WBC and provide copy of these minutes when agreed

Clerk

08.11.23 Finance and report of Responsible Finance Officer

Financial position as of 31st October 2023

Balance carried forward (Inc. S106 contributions)	£206,814.16
Receipts to 31st October	£109,904.57
Payments to 31st October	£50,430.33
Payment not processed by 31st October	£603.00
Calculated total	£266,288.40
Balance in hand (total)	£266,891.40

8.1 Report of Financial Officer (Clerk's report)

Noted. No comments or questions.

Action to confirm that signatory forms for Metro completed & accepted

Cllr Taylor

8.2 Payments for consideration November 2023

8.2.1 Sunshine Commercial Services Ltd monthly charge	£269.57
8.2.2 Grass maintenance/Contractor	£703.00
8.2.3 Cost of administration	£1,343.51
8.2.4 Tactical Facilities Management Ltd, dog bins	£40.80
8.2.5 Cripps Fencing, Pinewood Park, and Furze Hill Exclusion Zone	£546.00
8.2.6 Barlow and Sons (Hermitage Ltd) materials	£300.73
8.2.7 West Berkshire Conservation Society, donation 31/10	£80.00
8.2.8 Gardner Leader, Hermitage Green open space	£1,807.20
8.2.9 Yattendon Estates Ltd, Christmas Tree	£110.00
Total	£5,200.81

All approved and to be entered and endorsed on-line.

Cllr Brown advised that he had accidentally endorsed the Sunshine Commercial payment twice, which apparently means they get paid twice. Need to check and adjust

Clerk

8.3 Direct Debits previously approved

Noted.

1&1 Ionas (web site) monthly payment	£5.99 ¹
NEST monthly payment	£97.78

8.4 Receipts October 2023

Noted.

Burial Ground	£903.00
WBC Precept	£30,876.00
Groundwork Grant (NDP)	£1,200
Newbury Dog training (donation)	£50.00
CCLA interest	£288.76
NBS interest	£2,309.07

8.5 Clerk Pay Scales

2023/24 NJC pay scales have been increased from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. Clerk's pay approved above includes back-dated increase.

Chairman noted from her finance training that she should be dealing with Autela, not clerk.

Clerk's appraisal is due. Councillors asked to provide input to Chairman in confidence.

9.10.23 Burial ground

Memorial requests Grave plot 254 and E28. Approved

Grave plot E5, burial 16th November noted.

Chairman noted from her recent finance training that HPC may have to start charging VAT for memorials.

To do more investigation and remind Clerk that plots in new section end in E

Chairman

Advise these applicants and future ones that plot No must be engraved on the back

Clerk.

- 10.11.23 Highways**
Confidential WBC update on proposed extension to Eling Way noted.
Update unavailable on informing Highways about potholes etc. **Clerk**
- 11.11.23 Environment**
- 11.1 Playgrounds**
Cllr Govier had circulated the latest inspection report. Nothing new of note.
Concerned that net had not yet been replaced. Action ongoing **Clerk**
Noted that equipment manufacturer should be able to advise names of local contractors.
Cllr Govier noted that Clerk's report indicated that HPC would not be covered for any maintenance work. Cllr Goldsmith explained she had queried this and it was incorrect.
Cllr Govier noted that he had proposed that all maintenance should be put out to contract.
To be put on next agenda **Clerk**
- 11.2 Furze Hill**
See Chairman's report.
Ash die-back quotation £2,940 inclusive of VAT approved: no other responses to request.
Chairman clarified that the repairs identified as 11.2.2 on the agenda had already been authorised. October actions complete.
- 11.3 Other open spaces**
Nothing to report on Dines Way, Lipscomb Close, Charlotte Close.
Clerk has written re battery box and positive response received. To be discussed at December meeting.
- 11.4 Land Transfers**
No significant progress per clerk's report. Solicitor has proposed interim fee payment for Hermitage Green. Agreed.
- 12.11.23 Other matters**
- 12.1 Village Hall**
N Burraston had attended training on fund raising (notes circulated) for future application to car park extension.
- 12.2 Defibrillator checks**
Done.
- 12.3 Christmas Tree**
To be lit 8 Dec at the Fox, 1900. Trinity Tones will attend and provide sound system.
Risk assessment/ traffic management plan to be reviewed **Chairman/ Cllr Goldsmith**
To provide cones to close entrance and advertise on facebook **Cllr Govier**
- 12.4 Covid Grant**
Options for use of residual £625.25 from Covid grant from SSE resilient communities fund discussed.
To consult school about heit possible use. **Chairman**
- 12.5 Hermitage medications collection**
Councillors regretted loss of service, especially given queues at Surgery Pharmacy. Agreed not up to HPC to approach other local businesses, but Cllr Brown could in his role of patient liaison group representative.
- 13.11.23 Policy Review**
Anti-bullying and harassment. Cllr Govier advised no changes required: Approved.
Investment and fraud. Cllr. Turner advised no changes required: Approved.
Freedom of information. Cllr Brown advised requires update of Clerk's hours: Approved with that change.
Cllr Goldsmith noted that, in future, reviews should specify which guidance has been consulted.
Above policies to be posted on website along Open Spaces when signed. **Clerk**

14.11.23 Correspondence received since the last meeting not referred to elsewhere

Correspondence noted on agenda.

15.11.23 Reports from Parish Council representatives who have attended meetings of outside bodies on behalf of the council

Chairman attended BALC AGM: see report.

Cllr Paul Turner and Cllr Ruth Cottingham had attended training in Budget and Precept Setting and finance respectively.

Chairman noted from her finance training that councillors should be dealing with the payroll contractor.

Cllr Govier had attended a meeting about Youth Clubs. Unfortunately, key people were not present so nothing decided. Berks Youth would like to make a presentation to an HPC meeting. February was suggested.

Cllr Govier to invite.

It was agreed that Cllr Govier could lead on this for HPC.

16.11.23 Items to be raised by Councillors (information only)

Clerk Pay Scales

Clerk's appraisal is due. Councillors asked to provide input to Chairman in confidence.

17.11.23 Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent (information only)

None

18.11.23 Date of the next meeting

Thursday 14th December at 7.30pm in the Adelaide Room, Holy Trinity Church, Hermitage.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21:30.

Signed _____ Dated _____

Appendices

Chairman's Report