



Minutes of a meeting of Great Shefford Parish Council held on Monday 2nd September 2024 at 7.30pm at Great Shefford Village Hall

Present: Councillor Louisa Freeman (Chairman)
Councillors Miranda Armstrong, Tony Coard, Jessica Copcutt, Piers Storey,
Carol Turner and Eunice Tweedie

In attendance: Mel Taylor (Locum Clerk)
Councillor Clive Hooker (West Berkshire District Council)
6 x members of public

2024-09/01 CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillor Freeman reminded those present that the meeting would be conducted in line with the Council's Code of Conduct, details of which were published on the Council's website.

2024-09/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2024-09/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2024-09/04 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED to take as read and confirm as accurate the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st July 2024.

2024-09/05 OPEN FORUM

The following questions were raised by members of the public:

i. Asset of Community Value

A member of public requested an update on the request to register The Great Shefford Pub as an Asset of Community Value and Councillor Freeman confirmed that an application had been submitted to West Berkshire Council. Applications were considered on a sealed-bid basis and the date of decision was unknown.

The resident requested a copy of the application and Councillor Freeman advised that advice would be sought from West Berkshire Council on whether the application was in the public domain and if so this would be uploaded to the Parish Council website.

ii. Report from District Councillor

Councillor Hooker reported that: progress on a speed check in Shefford Woodlands was ongoing; discussions had taken place with Highways regarding a recent accident at the junction of the A338 and B4000, also that it was hoped that a sound check exercise would be undertaken with regard to potential resurfacing.

2024-09/05 OPEN FORUM continued**ii. Report from District Councillor continued**

Councillor Hooker advised that application forms would be available from October for the next round of Members' Bids; and that the Local Plan Inspector's initial report had been released and West Berkshire was expected to significantly increase its housing allocation by another 850 to 9270 by 2041. Councillor Hooker recommended that Downlands Parish Councils consider Neighbourhood Development Plans.

2 members of public left the meeting

2024-09/06 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

It was noted that the following planning applications were awaiting decision: 24/01479/HOUSE – proposal of single storey extensions to The Bungalow, Hillside Stud, Great Shefford, RG17 7DL, and 24/01172/8FUL – proposed expansion and enhancement of existing commercial use, including the siting of 30 containers,, car parking, fencing and landscaping at Northfield Farm Industrial Estate, Wantage Road, Great Shefford, RG17 7BY.

The following planning application decisions were noted:

24/00408/LBC & 24/00406/HOUSE – Henley Farm, Wantage Road – conversion of a carport outbuilding (former cart-shed) to ancillary studio space, and

24/01383/COND – for approval of details reserved by condition 3 'Approved plans (further details)' and 9 'Biodiversity Monitoring Strategy' of approved application 23/00663/FULMAJ – construction of flood alleviation scheme.

2024-09/07 FINANCE

- i. There were no outstanding payments to be approved.
- ii. Councillor Coard reported that he had been unable to speak to SSE regarding incorrect charges as they had stated that he was not an authorised contact. Councillor Freeman confirmed that she had previously spoken with SSE to give authorisation that Councillor Coard could speak on behalf of the account. Councillor Freeman to contact SSE again to ensure this message is documented their end.
- iii. Councillor Armstrong confirmed that the 2023/24 Audit papers had been submitted.
- iv. Councillor Freeman advised that funds of £12,200 in the dormant account had now been transferred.
- v. Councillor Freeman advised that the Council's current 3-year insurance agreement was due for renewal in October.

RESOLVED to renew the insurance with the current provider for 1-year, to allow time to review the policy and obtain additional quotes for renewal in 2025.

2024-09/07 FINANCE continued

- vi. Councillor Armstrong advised that CIL reports for 2022/23 and 2023/24 would be submitted to West Berkshire Council and Councillor Storey would upload to the website.

2024-09/08 VILLAGE MATTERS**i. Village Events – Litter Pick & Best In Show Day**

Thanks were recorded to Councillor Turner for organising the community litter pick, attended by 12 adults and 6 children. West Berkshire Council supported through loan of equipment and collection of sacks of litter. It was agreed that community litter picks should be held regularly and to purchase the Council's own litter picking equipment.

Thanks to Nicola Liddiard for organising the Best in Show Day which had raised funds for the school PTA. It was understood that enhancements were being considered for next year, including potentially co-ordinating with the Harvest Festival.

It was hoped that continuity of regular events like this would build attendance and participation. It was agreed that cohesion was needed across all village events and activities and that the website could be better utilised for this. Contributions of regular content was needed. It was agreed to undertake a leaflet drop to promote the website and appeal for content writers.

RESOLVED to establish a website Working Group steered by Councillor Storey, with local residents Clare Coard and David Edwards.

ii. Fencing repairs by The Great Shefford

A number of fencing options were discussed, from wooden posts to steel fencing, and it was agreed that steel fencing was preferred.

RESOLVED that Councillor Coard would obtain 3 quotes for steel fencing and that authorisation to proceed be agreed by Councillors via email, in order to expediate the work.

iii. Speed Awareness Scheme and traffic calming measures

Councillor Tweedie advised that the speed awareness group was up and running and 2 sites had been approved, with the aim of 5 sites being approved eventually. Data was being captured with the aim of reducing speed limits. In the first report, 20% of 450 cars were recorded as exceeding the speed limit.

Monitoring would be conducted monthly at different sites and on different days and times.

Councillor Hooker advised that there may be new opportunities emerging to apply for speed limit reductions, however, costs may be prohibitive.

It was noted that speed signs were obstructed by vegetation, and that the 'smiley face' speed monitor was not working and as the funding used to purchase the equipment had closed, the Parish Council may wish to consider funding the repair.

2024-09/08 VILLAGE MATTERS continued**iv. Footpaths / WBC Maintenance**

The state of disrepair of the footpath by the side of St Mary's Church, leading into the Water Meadows/wildflower field, was reported to West Berkshire Council in May. Councillor Armstrong advised that 2 gates north of the Church were being reinstated.

v. Park Seating / Playground maintenance

The play area bench had been vandalised. Councillor Coard to research costs for replacement.

vi. Report of Homelessness in the Park

There had been a report of a homeless person in the wooded area near the skate park but upon inspection no evidence of this was found.

It was understood that there had also been someone staying overnight in the pub car park. Cameras were monitoring the situation.

Councillor Hooker left the meeting

vii. Christmas Planning

It was understood that the base for the Christmas Tree was stored at a local farm but the condition was unknown and would need assessing. Councillor Coard offered to make a new base when the size of the tree was known. A resident had offered to fund an external socket at the village hall to power lights if the Christmas Tree was to be located there.

RESOLVED that Councillor Turner to source a tree of approximately 15ft, location to be confirmed, and that a small event be held on Saturday 30th November 2024 with Christmas Carols and mulled wine.

viii. Asset of Community Value – The Great Shefford

Covered under Minute reference 2024-09/05i above.

2 members of public left the meeting

2024-09/09 FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME UPDATE

Construction work was ongoing. There had been reports of work vehicles using the lower Newbury Road but it was believed to be due to other road works.

2024-09/10 EMERGENCY TEAM MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Groups were still operational.

2024-09/11 COUNCILLORS' BUSINESS

Councillor Freeman confirmed that an advert for a new Clerk had been placed with BALC (Berkshire Association of Local Councils). There had been correspondence from 1 interested party. The previous Clerk had advised that they were potentially available, but it was agreed not to pursue.

Councillor Coard reported that one of the defibrillators was out of action due to the battery. Councillor Freeman to contact the previous contact to ensure the defibrillators were still being checked.

1 member of public left the meeting

Councillors discussed a potential project with the school to design highway speed signage and it was agreed to liaise with the PTA.

2024-09/12 MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

Councillor Freeman advised that she would be looking to step down as Chairman at the next opportunity.

2024-09/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 4th November 2024 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.31pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____