



SPEEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ONLINE ON MONDAY 22ND FEBRUARY 2021 AT 7PM

Present	Parish Councillors	Cllr Dudman (Chair), Cllr Amirtharaj (Vice-Chair), Cllr Phillips, Cllr Black, Cllr Newell-Hart, Cllr Gourley, Cllr Booth, Cllr Clifford, Cllr Butter
	WBDC Councillor/Employee	None Present
	Members of the Public	None Present
	Clerk & RFO	Jean Lindsay

Meeting started at 7.02pm

Resolution	Item	Action
Resolved	<p>1. Apologies: None</p> <p>2. Declaration of Interests</p> <p>Cllr Clifford declared an interest in Items 17 and 18. Cllr Clifford is Chair of St Barts Foundation who's treasurer is married to an individual connected to Items 17 and 18 although not personally known to Cllr Clifford.</p> <p>3. Chair Opening Remarks</p> <p>Cllr Dudman gave a brief update on the Government's roadmap out of lockdown and in particular the possibility of returning to face to face meetings at the end of June.</p> <p>The Clerk advised current regulations permitting virtual meetings were only in force until 7th May 2021 however representations were being made to the MHCLG to at a minimum extend this permission. To be discussed at next meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Dudman requested Councillors make every effort to respond to emails from the Clerk particularly when asked to do so by a specified date.</p> <p>Cllr Dudman also asked if any Councillors volunteer to undertake an action to be completed by a specific date it would be appreciated if these dates could be met to ease the Clerk's workload.</p> <p>4. Open Session – no Members of the Public present</p> <p>5. Minutes – to approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 18-01-21 (draft)</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Dudman Seconder: Cllr Phillips Abstention: 1 In Favour: 8</p> <p>Cllr Booth unable to vote due to loss of connection at 7.20pm</p>	
Resolved	<p>6. Financial Report Clerk as RFO</p> <p>6.1 Balance in bank as at 18-01-21 reported as £69,724.16</p> <p>6.2 To retrospectively note invoice payments made for January 2021</p> <p>All Councillors noted payments made.</p> <p>Cllr Booth re-joined the meeting at 7.24pm</p>	



Resolved	<p>6.3 Proposal: To accept Finance Reports to 31-01-21</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Dudman Seconder: Cllr Newell-Hart All in Favour</p> <p>7. District Ward Report (previously circulated)</p> <p>Cllr Newell-Hart gave a vote of thanks to Cllr Doherty on behalf of himself, Cllr Phillips and Cllr Booth for her prompt responses and guidance regarding the Stockcross to A34 Footpath project.</p> <p>Cllr Dudman added on behalf of Full Council Cllr Doherty's pro-active participation and regular attendance at meetings was very much appreciated.</p> <p>The Clerk advised she would personally as Clerk also like to thank Cllr Doherty for the all her help and support.</p> <p>8. Finance Committee</p> <p>8.1 Minutes – to receive the Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 04-02-21 (draft)</p> <p>No questions raised.</p> <p>8.2 Appointment of Internal Auditor 2020/21</p>	
Resolved	<p>Proposal: To appoint David Weller as Internal Auditor for 2020/21 as recommended by Finance Committee.</p> <p>Cllr Black advised the Finance Committee were happy to continue with David Weller for this year but in line with best practice would seek a new auditor for 2021/22 which would be addressed under Item 8.2.</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Black Seconder: Cllr Gourley All in Favour</p>	
Resolved	<p>8.3 Appointment of Internal Auditor 2021/22</p> <p>Proposal: To approve a new Internal Auditor be sought for 2021/22 as recommended by Finance Committee</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Black Seconder: Cllr Clifford All in Favour</p>	
Resolved	<p>8.4 Internal Audit Policy</p> <p>Proposal: To approve amendment to SPC's Internal Audit Policy to state a new Internal Auditor be appointed every 3 years as recommended by Finance Committee</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Black Seconder: Cllr Phillips All in Favour</p> <p>Clerk advised there were also some other revisions required to the policy which she would action at the same time for initial review by the Finance Committee.</p> <p>9. Planning & Highways Committee</p> <p>9.1 Planning Applications – to discuss how the process of reviewing new planning applications could be improved</p> <p>Cllr Dudman advised his understanding was that the current process of using email did not lend itself to discussion between Committee members when views might differ.</p> <p>The Clerk advised issues did not usually arise but if members of the Committee had</p>	Clerk



differing views regarding an application and responses had not been received by the date requested there was very little or no time for further review prior to submitting comments to WBC to meet consultation deadlines.

Cllr Newell-Hart felt discussion amongst Committee members was important as it could provide better understanding regarding an application due to the knowledge and/or expertise of individual members and enabled an open exchange of views.

Cllr Gourley acknowledged there was great strength and depth of knowledge of planning within the Committee but his approach was to also apply the 'person on the bus' test as to whether an application was sensible and without open debate it was not possible to apply the litmus test.

Cllr Clifford felt planning applications affected people's lives and it was worth testing ideas and views as opinions were better forged as a team.

Cllr Booth advised he looked forward to resuming face to face meetings but in the meantime stated it was important to respond promptly within the timescales requested plus ensuring that all emails from each Committee member were read.

Cllr Dudman felt the email review of applications worked well when all members had the same views but suggested in the event of differing opinions a Zoom meeting be arranged to permit that debate.

Cllr Newell-Hart felt there were challenges ahead regarding planning with more significant changes and developments being proposed and plans should be put in place to ensure the litmus test could be applied with vigour.

Cllr Booth supported Cllr Dudman's suggestion.

It was agreed all planning applications would continue to be reviewed via email but in the event of differing views on any application or a large development required review a Zoom meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee would be called.

9.2 Publishing Planning Application Information

9.2.1 **Full Council Minutes** – to agree to publish for information purposes only summaries of planning applications considered and WBC decisions as appendices

The Clerk advised appendices could be added to Full Council meeting minutes summarising SPC's responses to new planning applications and WBC planning decisions for information purposes only and asked if Council wished to do this.

Cllr Newell-Hart felt information contained within WBC Case Officers' reports regarding planning decisions was valuable as a learning tool to better understand the rationale behind decisions.

Cllr Butter suggested appeals should be included for completeness.

Cllr Dudman advised this suggestion was purely to provide improved visibility of the Committee's views on planning applications in the interests of transparency and the absence of formal Committee minutes.

Cllr Butter advised all planning application information was available for the public to view on the WBC planning portal.

Cllr Dudman suggested links to WBC planning portal for individual applications be published on SPC's website rather than the additional work of adding appendices to minutes.

All Councillors agreed.

9.2.2 SPC Website

Cllr Booth advised he would have to follow up with members of the Committee to seek their views in response to his original email in which he proposed what information should be published on the website.

Cllr Dudman asked Councillors to email their feedback to Cllr Booth as soon as

Planning &
Highways
Committee



Resolved	<p>possible.</p>	
	<p>Clerk to start publishing links to WBC planning portal for new applications.</p>	Clerk
	<p>10. Development</p>	
	<p>10.1 Parish Improvement Plan – update from Working Party</p>	
	<p>Cllr Black gave an update on the following:</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockcross Telephone Box – Clerk to obtain revised quote to include shelving for a book swap and the installation of a defibrillator • Stockcross Green Dog Bin – Clerk to check no objection from neighbouring residents • Extension of footpath and tarmacking disabled parking area at Stockcross Recreation Ground – the WP felt these were longer term projects and due to the costs involved could not be considered for 2021/22 • Stockcross to A34 Footpath – covered under Item 10.4 • Removal of chain linked fencing at Marsh Benham – Clerk to obtain quotes • The Pound – the WP were continuing discussions on how this area might be improved 	Clerk Clerk Clerk
	<p>The Clerk advised following a request from a parishioner for a new salt bin on the corner of Snake Lane and Rookwood due to severe issues in icy conditions this had been discussed by the WP and she had now obtained permission from Highways to site a salt bin on the grass verge and the cost of the bin was £108 +VAT including salt.</p>	
	<p>Cllr Black proposed Full Council approve the supply and installation of the new salt bin in the sum of £108 +VAT to be funded from Earmarked Reserves.</p>	
	<p>Proposer: Cllr Black Seconder: Cllr Newell-Hart All in Favour</p>	
	<p>Cllr Phillips felt the installation of a portaloos at Stockcross Recreation Ground for a trial period over the summer months was urgent due to the woods being used as toilet facilities.</p>	
	<p>Cllr Black advised the WP had discussed this at length but had felt there were other priority projects at this time.</p>	
	<p>Cllr Gourley felt the challenge was that SPC would be attempting to correct people's poor behaviour and there were potentially hidden costs that must be taken into consideration together with such matters as daily checks and problem reporting which would all fall to the Clerk. Cllr Gourley also felt this could be a recurring cost which had not been budgeted for.</p>	
	<p>Cllr Phillips advised the supplier would maintain the portaloos on a weekly basis and added Stockcross Recreation Ground was a popular destination with visitors coming from some distance away and felt SPC had sufficient funds to provide this facility for a trial period and if too many issues were identified it could be removed.</p>	
	<p>Cllr Newell-Hart felt there could be many unforeseen costs particularly when getting involved in health and hygiene.</p>	
	<p>Cllr Butter felt the trial was probably worth doing assuming the supplier would take responsibility for maintaining the portaloos but questioned how its effectiveness could be monitored.</p>	
	<p>Cllr Dudman felt the cost of a trial was not exorbitant but was concerned about whether there was support from neighbouring residents and the risks involved particularly relating to vandalism and anti-social behaviour potentially leading to</p>	



	<p>health and safety issues.</p> <p>Cllr Clifford felt the Council should not have a trial unless it was committed to the long term cost if it was successful as to withdraw such a facility would be difficult.</p> <p>Cllr Amirtharaj advised the point of contact for any queries or issues from the public would be the Clerk and felt the Council should not put her in that position and what level of support was there from parishioners. Cllr Amirtharaj added this was parishioners' money and should therefore be of benefit to parishioners.</p> <p>Cllr Newell-Hart felt this could set a precedent and raise questions as to why the Council was not providing the same facility at its other recreation grounds.</p> <p>The Clerk advised insurance would need to be looked into in detail as this was a public space and the facility would be used by members of the public.</p> <p>Cllr Dudman acknowledged the differing views of Councillors but felt the issue at Stockcross had arisen due to the COVID-19 situation and an increase in visitors last summer but with the potential of a return to some sort of normality after 21st June would there still be a need and wanted to understand the local demand for such a facility.</p> <p>Cllr Phillips felt unable to carry out a survey of parishioners very quickly but asked the Clerk to advise him of what level of insurance cover was required.</p> <p>Cllr Butter felt a survey of parishioners was imperative to ensure full support as if there was not full support this could cause untold issues.</p> <p>Cllr Phillips advised he could conduct a survey but not for some time.</p> <p>Cllr Dudman recommended the matter be referred back to the WP and Cllr Phillips feed the additional information required regarding insurance and residents views to the WP. WP to report back to Full Council.</p> <p>10.2 Improvements Completed in 2020/21 – to agree means of communicating improvements achieved in 2020/21 to parishioners</p> <p>Cllr Gourley advised the WP felt it would be good to look at ways of communicating the improvements achieved over the last year to parishioners and the suggestion was to do this via the SPC website and various local Facebook and Nextdoor groups.</p> <p>Cllr Dudman supported this suggestion particularly as it would keep parishioners informed of where their money had been spent.</p> <p>Cllr Gourley offered to put a document together to be reviewed at the next WP meeting.</p> <p>10.3 War Memorial Project – to agree whether to re-apply for previously granted Members' Bid in the sum of £1802.50 or submit new application in May when next round of Members' Bids opens once up to date quotations are received</p> <p>The Clerk advised if Council wished to re-apply for the timed out grant these funds would have to be used within 6 months but added regardless of the decision concerning the Members Bids the Specification of Works would need to be updated prior to being able to start obtaining quotes as all original documentation dated back to 2017. The Clerk added that quotes could only be obtained from highways approved contractors as it was a public highway.</p> <p>Cllr Booth advised the Specification of Works needed to be clarified as the project comprised of two parts – the extension of the pavement running up the south side of Bath Road and the T off from the road pavement to the plinth of the War Memorial. Cllr Booth added the original proposal was the road pavement part be in tarmac but the T off be paving slabs to look uniform with the War Memorial.</p> <p>Cllr Gourley felt it would be prudent to obtain up to date quotes and submit a new application in the hope it would be awarded rather than SPC potentially incur</p>	<p>Clerk/Cllr Phillips</p> <p>Cllr Phillips</p> <p>Improv WP / Cllr Phillips</p> <p>Cllr Gourley</p>
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increased costs by re-applying for the £1802.50 in the absence of new quotes.
All Councillors agreed a new application should be submitted once new quotes were received.

10 4 Stockcross to A34 Footpath Project

Cllr Phillips advised Cllr Doherty had been extremely supportive and helpful and was currently obtaining clarity regarding land ownership and suitability of the land for a footpath.

Cllr Phillips added there were two sections of footpath proposed one being from Snake Lane junction to the bus stop at The Vineyard to join the existing footpath and the second to run from the existing footpath to the bus stop at Deanwood House.

Cllr Phillips added that if the footpath was completed back to the Snake Lane bus stop there was a gap between the footpath in Stockcross on the north side of the B4000 which ends opposite the Lord Lyon and although there is a grass verge to walk along suggested the footpath could be extended to meet this for completeness and should be added to the proposal.

The project team agreed to discuss this further.

Cllr Gourley advised he did not recall this was part of the LCWIP and was not highlighted as being a major thoroughfare and suggested on the back of this project and the Active Travel funding the Council should try to encourage as many people as possible to respond to the Active Travel consultation to add weight to the proposal. Cllr Gourley further advised there was a heat map as part of the consultation where it was possible to pin where other projects were and the more people who highlighted this stretch of the B4000 could be beneficial to the project.

Cllr Newell-Hart advised the project team had been cautious about involving parishioners at this stage in case it did not come to fruition.

Cllr Dudman suggested input from parishioners could be beneficial particularly when it came to seeking funding for the project and therefore publicity was important to gain insight into the level of support which would add weight to SPC's discussions with WBC.

Cllr Gourley raised the question of funding as Cllr Doherty had asked if SPC would be willing to put any funds towards the project.

Cllr Newell-Hart advised the intention was never for SPC or parishioners to contribute to the funding of the project in any way and WBC should provide all funding.

All Councillors agreed.

11. Maintenance

11.1 Parish Maintenance & Repairs Register

The Clerk advised the new toddler swing seats at Speen Recreation Ground had been fitted. There were no other items to report.

12. Speen Fete

Proposal: To approve the use of Speen Recreation Ground by the Lions Club Newbury on Saturday 12th June 2021 to host Speen Fete. Approval to be granted subject to COVID-19 restrictions. If restrictions do not permit such an event to take place on the requested date the Lions Club requests approval to hold the event later in the year date to be confirmed

In light of the Government's announcement of the roadmap out of lockdown all Councillors acknowledged the date would be later in the year.

Proposer: Cllr Dudman
Secunder: Cllr Amirtharaj

Resolved



Resolved	<p>All in Favour</p> <p>13. Correspondence: To receive & consider correspondence (all relevant correspondence is circulated electronically on receipt and where possible dealt with by the Clerk) – None to report</p> <p>14. Matters for consideration and information arising after the preparation of this Agenda which the Chair agrees to take as urgent (all Councillors)</p> <p>Cllr Clifford expressed her disappointment that there had been no comments made by the Council in response to the WBC consultation on the emerging draft of the Local Plan Review and felt this was a dereliction.</p> <p>Cllr Dudman agreed with Cllr Clifford’s views particularly when at the last meeting several Councillors had requested that comments be submitted and an action had been agreed. Cllr Dudman added that when Councillors including himself agreed to an action effort should be put in to fulfilling that commitment.</p> <p>15. Date of Meeting – Monday 22nd March 2021</p> <p>16. Exclusion of the Press and Public</p> <p>To Resolve: That in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and in the public interest the Press and Public be excluded for Agenda Items 17 & 18 under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Dudman Seconder: Cllr Black All in Favour</p> <p>The meeting closed at 9.04pm</p>
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Signed:	Name (print):	Date:
	Position:	

Abbreviations Used:

- SPC = Speen Parish Council
- WBC = West Berkshire Council
- WP = Working Party
- MHCLG = Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government
- LCWIP = Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Page approved by (initials) & date:
