



**SPEEN PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD AT SPEEN PAVILION SPEEN RECREATION GROUND ON WEDNESDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY 2024 AT 7PM**

<b>Parish Councillors present</b>	Stuart Gourley (Acting Chair) Sasikumar Sadagopan, Alan Booth, Shalini Philip & Charlotte Winton.
<b>In Attendance</b>	District Councillor Martha Vickers 2 Members of the Public
<b>Clerk/RFO</b>	Becki Hannington

Resolution	Item	Action
	<p>Cllr Gourley opened the meeting expressing his thanks to the previous chair, Ian Wilson for all of his hard work whilst he was with SPC.</p> <p><b>1. Election of Chair</b></p> <p><b>Proposal:</b> To elect the Chair for the 2024/25 term and receive the Chair's signed Declaration of Acceptance of Office.</p> <p>Cllr Winton was nominated as Chair.</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Winton Seconder: Cllr Gourley All in Favour</p> <p>Cllr Wilton was duly elected Chair and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.</p> <p><b>2. Apologies for Absence:</b> Cllr Amirtharaj.</p> <p><b>3. Election of Vice Chair</b></p> <p><b>Proposal:</b> To elect the Vice Chair for the 2024/25 term and receive the Vice Chair's signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.</p> <p>Cllr Gourley was nominated as Vice Chair.</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Gourley Seconder: Cllr Winton All in Favour</p> <p>Cllr Gourley was duly elected Vice Chair for and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.</p> <p><b>4. Declarations of Interests</b> – none declared.</p> <p><b>5. Open Session</b></p> <p>Two member of the public representing Speen Allotment Association (SAA) raised concerns regarding access the new David Wilson Homes (DWH) development and parking for allotment holders as well as condition 45 relating to the bus stop. They also raised concerns about trees overhanging the emergency access route and some allotments, which the owners of the trees have not done anything with in the last 10 years. Work is due to commence in July this year and they are concerned what steps DWH/SPC and WBC will take to prevent pollution coming on to allotments from site during the works (westerly wind direction). SPC have supported SAA since applications went through. Bollards were previously discussed along with ANPR but there is nothing on the WBC planning portal to support this. They shared concerns on space/parking and access affecting allotment holders' ability to park.</p>	

Page approved by (initials) & date:



Cllr Winton advised she is aware of bus stop/kerb issue and is meeting with DWH on 28<sup>th</sup> May and this would be a good opportunity to discuss this with them. Cllr Winton asked SAA to attend to discuss concerns with DWH directly. Cllr Winton stated that DWH are keen to work through concerns to ensure everyone is happy but these issues primarily lie with WBC. Cllr Gourley advised SAA to look for Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) on the WBC planning portal to check how DWH are planning to mitigate the risks they are concerned about.

Chair agreed to bring forward agenda item 18.2 at SAA's request to be discussed. SAA explained their grant request and that this would be used for running water on site as there are issues with the current water supply and they are concerned about the upcoming development affecting this further. The Landlord of the allotments agreed to put in mains water however, SAA have no say in how this is to be introduced. They provided 2 taps (one needed, one not needed) and SAA are concerned for charges when using this and charging members who have always had access to free water. SAA decided that the best action to put in pipes across centre of site as integrating main water into the infrastructure is an onerous task.

Cllr Winton questioned if SAA had a lease for the land and requested to see this as obligation to supply water which should be in a lease and the responsibility may lie with the landlord.

Cllr Booth questioned why SAA want a piped water supply now when they have had free water supply for years. SAA feel the water is drying up and flow will be disrupted when the building works begin, and this is why they want a guaranteed supply on site for members. SAA stated that they have already had problems with supply this year.

Cllr Winton explained that there is limitation within the grant aid awarding policy in relation to budgeted amounts to be considered and also restrictions where responsibilities may lie with the landlord and she felt reluctant to allocate partial support and also doesn't feel the grant application is quite ready to go forward.

SAA confirmed they have signed 75-year lease and became CIO and that the Landlord agreed to installing mains water. SAA were given a £1,000 grant for water and for loss of trees that had to be replaced.

Cllr Winton advised it would be a good idea to hold the grant application for now and bring this forward to next round whilst the obligations in the lease are reviewed.

Cllr Gourley agreed that the comments around the lease are a sensible check.

**Proposal:** Application to be held until next round of grant applications whilst lease is to be reviewed.

Proposer: Cllr Winton  
Seconder: Cllr Gourley  
In Favour

Clerk to send email confirmation of this to SAA.

**6. Minutes** – to approve the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 24/01/24 (draft)

Proposer: Cllr Winton  
Seconder: Cllr Philip  
In Favour.

**7. Finance Committee**

- 7.1** To note the minutes of the Finance and HR Committee meeting held on 13/03/24 (draft).  
The minutes were duly noted by all members of The Council.

Clerk.



**7.2 Proposal:** To consider and resolve upon membership of the Finance Committee for 2024/25

The Clerk advised that Cllr Amirtharaj had expressed he would be happy to join the Finance and HR Committee to meet the required numbers.

The Council unanimously resolved that the Finance Committee should continue to be formally constituted for 2024/25 with membership comprising Cllr Winton Cllr Philip, Cllr Gourley, Cllr Sadagopan and Cllr Amirtharaj.

Proposer: Cllr Winton  
Seconder: Cllr Booth  
All In Favour

**7.3 Proposal:** To approve the draft ToR's for the Finance and HR Committee as per the Finance and HR Committee's recommendation.

Proposer: Cllr Winton  
Seconder: Cllr Gourley  
All In Favour.

**8. Planning & Highways Committee**

**8.1 Minutes** – to note Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee held on 07/02/2024 (draft)

The Minutes were duly noted by all members of the Council.

**8.2 Proposal:** To consider and resolve upon membership of the Planning & Highways Committee for 2024/25

The Clerk advised that Cllr Amirtharaj had expressed that he would like to continue on the Planning & Highways Committee for 2024/25.

The Council unanimously resolved that the Planning & Highways Committee should continue to be formally constituted for 2024/25 with membership comprising Cllr Amirtharaj Cllr Booth Cllr Philip, Cllr Sadagopan and Cllr Winton.

Proposer: Cllr Winton  
Seconder: Cllr Philip  
All in Favour.

**8.3 Proposal:** To agree to a review of the Planning & Highways Committee's Terms of Reference to be carried out by the Committee and presented to Full Council for approval at the next meeting.

The Clerk recommended the Planning & Highways Committee Terms of Reference be reviewed to ensure it was up to date.

All members of the Council agreed.

Proposer: Cllr Winton  
Seconder: Cllr Gourley  
All in Favour.

**9 Standing Orders & Financial Regulations**

**9.1 Proposal:** To adopt the Council's Standing Orders for the 2024/25 term (no revisions)

Proposer: Cllr Winton  
Seconder: Cllr Gourley  
All in Favour.

**9.2 Proposal:** To adopt the Council's Financial Regulations for the 2024/25 term with revisions as per the newly issued NALC template.

Proposer: Cllr Winton



	<p>Secunder: Cllr Gourley All in Favour.</p> <p><b>10. Review of members representation on or work with external bodies and any arrangements for reporting to Council</b></p> <p>None to review.</p> <p><b>11. Register of Councillors' Interests</b> – to confirm that Councillors ROI forms are current and to advise Clerk if any updates are required.</p> <p>Cllr Gourley declared a change to his Register of Interests due to changing employers in the last year. Updated ROI was signed in the presence of The Council and given to Clerk for processing.</p> <p><b>12. Risk Management Assessment</b> <b>Proposal:</b> To approve the latest Risk Management Assessment as per the Finance and HR Committee's recommendation.</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Winton Secunder: Cllr Philip All in Favour.</p> <p><b>13. Fixed Assets Register</b> – To note the Fixed Assets register reviewed and approved by the Finance and HR Committee.</p> <p>The Fixed Assets register was duly noted by all members of The Council.</p> <p><b>14. Risk Assessments</b> – To note the latest Risk Assessments as reviewed and approved by the Finance and HR Committee.</p> <p>The Risk Assessments were duly noted by all members of The Council.</p> <p><b>15. Year End Accounts 2023/24</b> (Clerk as RFO)</p> <p><b>15.1</b> To retrospectively note payments for March 2024</p> <p>All Councillors noted payments made.</p> <p><b>15.2 Proposal:</b> To approve Year End Accounts for 2023/24</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Winton Secunder: Cllr Philip All in Favour</p> <p><b>16. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24</b></p> <p><b>16.1 Proposal:</b> To approve Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24 (detailed auditor's report and page 3)</p> <p>Approval was unanimously agreed by The Council.</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Winton Secunder: Cllr Gourley All in Favour</p> <p><b>16.2 Proposal:</b> To approve Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 (page 4)</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Gourley Secunder: Cllr Philip All in Favour,</p> <p>The Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 was duly signed by the Chair and Clerk/RFO.</p> <p><b>16.3 Proposal:</b> To approve Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 (page 5)</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
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	<p>Proposer: Cllr Gourley Seconder: Cllr Winton All in Favour.</p> <p>The Accounting Statements 2023/24 was duly signed by the Chair.</p> <p><b>17. Financial Report</b></p> <p><b>17.1</b> The bank balance as at 30/04/24 was reported as £62,434.58.</p> <p><b>17.2</b> To retrospectively note payments for April 2024</p> <p>All Councillors duly noted payments made.</p> <p><b>17.3 Proposal:</b> To accept Financial Reports to 30/04/24.</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Winton Seconder: Cllr Gourley All in Favour.</p> <p><b>18. S137 Grants</b></p> <p>The Clerk advised the budget allocation for this round of grant applications was £2,200 in accordance with the Council's Grant Aid Awarding Policy and any grant awarded would not be paid until July.</p> <p><b>18.1 Proposal:</b> To consider approval of grant application from ABC to Read for £500.</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Winton Seconder: Cllr Sadagopan In Favour.</p> <p>Clerk to advise applicants of grants awarded as follows:</p> <p>ABC to Read – £500.</p> <p>Awarded with the condition to evidence what they have done with the monies and present back to SPC at parish meeting or for SPC visit in school setting.</p> <p>Clerk to look to include this clause within the Grant Aid Awarding Policy when it is next reviewed.</p> <p><b>18.2 Proposal:</b> To consider approval of grant application from Speen Allotment Association for £1,500.</p> <p><b>Proposal:</b> Application to be held over until next round of grant applications whilst lease is to be reviewed.</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Winton Seconder: Cllr Gourley In Favour.</p> <p>Clerk to send email confirmation advising of this.</p> <p><b>19 Development</b></p> <p><b>19.1 Proposal:</b> To consider and resolve membership of the Improvements Plan Working Party for 2024/25</p> <p>Council unanimously resolved that the Improvements Plan WP should not continue for 2024/25 due to current councillor challenges and all development matters should be taken by FC. To be reviewed within 1 year.</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Winton Seconder: Cllr Sadagopan. All in Favour.</p> <p><b>20 Online Accounting Software</b></p> <p><b>Proposal:</b> To approve the purchase of online accounting software Scribe</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
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Professional to be used from the beginning of the financial year (retrospectively) at a cost of £49 per month and a one-off set-up fee of £349. Annual cost of £937 to be funded from unallocated reserves for this financial year and then subsequent annual costs of £588 to be included within the 2025/26 IT and Internet budget as per the Finance and HR Committee's recommendation.

The Council unanimously voted to approve the purchase of the Scribe Professional online accounting software from unallocated reserved for 2024/25 at a cost of £937 and add the ongoing annual cost of £588 to the IT and internet budget from 2025/26 onwards.

Proposer: Cllr Winton  
Seconder: Cllr Philip  
All in favour.

**21 AFC Newbury Contract Renewal** – To note that AFC Newbury's contract for the use of Speen Recreation Ground has been renewed with no changes to the terms for 2024/25.

The contract renewal was duly noted by all members of the council.

**22 Streetlighting Contract Renewal**

**Proposal:** To approve the renewed contract for streetlighting maintenance and repairs with the current provider, Volker Highways for 2024/25 as per the Finance and HR Committee's recommendation.

Proposer: Cllr Booth  
Seconder: Cllr Philip  
All in favour.

**23 Community Defibrillator**

**Proposal:** To review and approve the quotation for the installation of the second community defibrillator at The Starting Gate Public House at a cost of £365 + VAT as per the Finance and HR Committee's recommendation.

Proposer: Cllr Winton  
Seconder: Cllr Gourley  
All in favour.

**24 Speen Recreation Ground Cost of Hire** – To review the hire costs of Speen Pavilion and Recreation Ground and agree upon any changes to the current rates.

The council unanimously agreed that more research into the going rates of hire. This would then be reviewed by the Finance and HR Committee.

**25 Councillor Vacancies**

**25.1** The Clerk advised that councillor vacancies are currently being advertised across all local sites, forums and community groups as well as with Volunteer Centre West Berkshire. It is also being advertised in Parish Newsletters and magazines, local schools and shops.

The Council agreed that the best way to recruit new councillors is by speaking to the local community directly. The Clerk advised that a stall at Speen Village Fete has been organised where SPC can attend to meet with members of the community to explain the role of a Parish Councillor and capture details of interested parties to follow up with. Clerk to create a data capture form for this.

**25.2 Speen Fete Councillor Recruitment Stall Representation**

**Proposal:** To decide upon which Councillors will be representing SPC at the fete.

It was proposed that Cllr Philip, Cllr Winton, Cllr Booth & The Clerk would represent SPC at the event.

Cllr Winton  
Clerk



	<p>Proposer: Cllr Winton Seconder: Cllr Gourley All in favour.</p> <p><b>25.3 Speen Fete Advertising Materials</b> To decide upon which advertising materials (if any) should be purchased for use at the event.</p> <p>It was agreed that the current advertising materials (leaflets and boards) were sufficient and no further materials needed to be obtained.</p> <p><b>26 Ordinary Full Council Meeting Dates 2024/25</b></p> <p><b>26.1 Proposal:</b> To agree Ordinary Full Council meeting dates for 2024/25.</p> <p>All Councillors agreed to the proposed dates bi-monthly with one amendment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 being changed to the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024 due to the general election being held on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024.</p> <p>Clerk to send full list of confirmed full council meeting dates to all councillors.</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Winton Seconder: Cllr Philip All in favour.</p> <p><b>26.2 Proposal:</b> To agree Annual Council meeting date for 2025/26.</p> <p>All Councillors agreed the date of the Annual Council Meeting for 2025/26 be set as Wednesday 14th May 2025.</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Winton Seconder: Cllr Sadagopan All in favour.</p> <p><b>27 Matters for information only arising after the preparation of this Agenda which the Chair agrees to take as urgent.</b></p> <p>Cllr Gourley advised that the Active Travel Officer at WBC would like to do a press release on the completion of the Stockcross Cycleway/Footpath with representation from SPC. Cllr Gourley would like to extend invite to Keith Philips (previous SPC councillor who was the driving force behind the project). All Cllr's were in agreement to extend this invitation to Keith.</p> <p>Clerk to send Keith's email address to Cllr Gourley to invite him to attend.</p> <p>Cllr Winton suggested also inviting the Stockcross Grapevine to take photographs which was agreed by the council.</p> <p>The meeting is scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> June, 9am. Chair to attend.</p> <p>The Clerk advised that BALC are currently running a Community engagement course which would be worthwhile for councillors to attend and asked Cllr's to contact her to book their places.</p> <p><b>28 Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024.</b></p> <p>The chair closed the meeting closed at 21:20.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
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<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Name (print):</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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