

Watermead Parish Council Meeting

Thursday 16 November 2023 at 7.30pm
Held at the Village Hall, Watermead

Attendees: Cllr Severn (Chair), Cllr A Schwab, Cllr M Morgan, Cllr M Singleton
BC Cllr Diana Blamires, BC Cllr Peter Cooper, Noreen Shardlow (Clerk), Michelle Jackson (Assistant Clerk)
plus 1 member of the public – Graham Severn

23.57 Apologies

Cllr I Schwab, Cllr D Forder, Cllr A Bond

23.58 Declarations of Interest

To declare any personal or prejudicial interests regarding the agenda - none.

23.59 To Receive Police Report re Protection of Persons & Property

No police report received. A confidential email had been received by a parishioner and it was agreed to discuss under the confidential item 23.67.

23.60 Open Forum for Parishioners at 7.40pm – 8.10pm followed by the Council Meeting

Cllr Blamires reported on the housing strategy document being circulated. The Chairman confirmed that this had been seen and responded to.

Community Board Meeting to be held on Tuesday 21 November in Cublington in person to try and get more interaction. The Clerk confirmed she would be attending on behalf of WPC.

Cllr Cooper reported on the budget consultation and the Chairman confirmed that WPC had responded. BC's budget currently stands at £1.2bn and expenditure just under £600M. Reserves have fallen from £160M 3 years ago to £55-60M currently. It was likely that the amount BC would be able to charge would be capped as it has been for the last few years. There were ever increasing costs on adult social care, children's social care and highways. Property was being sold off to make money. The Community Board budget may be affected by cuts and funding was being sought elsewhere. The Chairman urged that the Community Board budget was not cut because they are highly effective and give the communities what they need and want. Cllr Blamires commented that no decision had been made on the budget as yet. Cllr Morgan queried how much council tax debt there was in Buckinghamshire? Cllr Blamires to find out and also urge for the Precept Calculator be sent.

Cllr Blamires

Cllr Cooper also wished to make the PC aware of devolved services and to think carefully about what it agrees to take on.

Cllr Morgan queried what cost saving initiatives BC putting in place. Cllr Blamires advised that this was being reviewed. Cllr Cooper also commented on the council now being unitary and the cost savings as a result of the synergy.

The number of defibrillators on Watermead was discussed. There was one by the Village Hall and also one at Watermead Dental Centre and another at Westerleigh Crematorium. The Clerk awaiting contact from SCAS. Training sessions to be organised for the Spring.

The Chairman thanked the visitors for their attendance.

Council Meeting

23.61 To agree the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 19 October 2023

The Minutes were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

23.62 Planning Matters

- 1 **To update on any Planning Applications submitted** – no new applications and no updates on existing applications.
- 2 23/03142/APP 26 Ayleswater - Application for erection of car port. It was agreed to express concern regarding the current status of the garage which is temporarily bricked up. The Clerk to request the planning officer check it will be used as garage space as per the original plan. If not the PC would object to the car port on the grounds of inadequate parking spaces.
- 3 23/03320/APP 10 Mallard Close – Application for first floor rear extension and fenestration alterations – the PC had no objections to the planning application.

The Clerk

23.63 Neighbourhood Plan

Noreen Shardlow has re-engaged Sally Chapman our Neighbourhood Plan (NP) advisor who sadly has moved away from the area. However, she can and will continue to support us with our Plan and submission.

Sally has now provided the latest checklist of requirements to enable us to enter the next stage - Regulation 14

Neighbourhood Plan preparation: Pre-Submission Consultation (Regulation 14) checklist

Prior to Pre-Submission:

- **Qualifying Body must formally endorse the NP for Consultation**
- **SEA Screening request (if SEA is required Scoping report & First Assessment must be completed)**
- **If you have a Design Code make sure that this document forms part of the consultation.**

Item	Requirements	Notes
Decide dates	At least 6 weeks	Longer period if over holiday period is suggested
Prepare database of contacts	Regulation requirement, people who live and work in the area, statutory consultees (ask Local Authority NP Officer/contact for these), neighbouring parishes, Local Authority	Include individuals, developers, landowners, interest groups, local groups, schools, businesses
Prepare covering letter/ email	Must include details of period, where to inspect copies, how to make comments, where to send them to	Keep record of who is sent the letter/email
Other publicity	Website, local newsletters, notices, flyers, banners, social media	Keep a record, screen shots etc.
Complete the documents	Draft NP, Design Code (if there is one), Consultation Statement, SEA Screening (or SEA scoping & report)	
Print sets of documents	Hard copies required at viewing points	Can be by appointment if there is no obvious viewing point
Prepare feedback form/online response form	Not a requirement but useful	This is not a requirement, but helps with keeping records
Arrange collection points for forms		
Prepare Event	Not a requirement but useful. Consider displays and refreshments. Record attendees, provide feedback forms, have hard copies of documents available	3 weeks into consultation period, possibly an afternoon/evening or half day at weekend?
Prepare response recording database	Responses will need to be summarised, answered and changes made to draft where appropriate	Word/Excel/access database

Sally has also confirmed the requirement for us to produce a 'consultation statement' which is a document that we will have to submit alongside the NP. Happily, we have most of the information we require to do this, but do need to ensure it is:

- a. In the correct format and;
- b. Maintained as an ongoing document and updated as we continue our engagement

We will now be reviewing the Regulation 14 checklist to ensure that we are ready to fully engage with Buckinghamshire Council as part of the next steps in the process

Whilst also drafting the 'consultation statement'

We have some example formats we can use to help with this and happily Noreen has once again been able to gain support from Peter Dean. We are hugely grateful to both as quite simply the NP would not be anywhere near completion without their help. Stuart Mackay has also offered his assistance with the preparation of documents.

Action Cllrs to agree

Agree the timelines of engagement to ensure we are ready for Regulation 14 and set out the 6 week consultation period.

The NP Team would recommend that we do this after Xmas and New Year as it believes trying to engage prior to Xmas would achieve far less from our community. Also Sally mentioned some time ago that using a holiday period is not favourable.

Once we have agreed the dates, we can engage with Buckinghamshire Council in line with the formal process under Regulation 14. We also have a requirement to collate all the feedback from these dates and again they will be included in our "Consultation Statement".

Template for capturing and responding to Regulation 14 Consultation

Paragraph/policy Number	Person/reference	Summary	Response	Changes to NP
Table need to be in the order of the plan	May have more columns for name/address/contact but you need some sort of reference number e.g. resident 22. If developer/organisation you can list their name	Insert complete comments unless they are very long, in which case summarise and say 'Full comments are available'	Explain why there is a change/no change to the NP (the response can simply be 'noted' if it is a non-NP issue)	Yes/No If change say 'Changes to text/policy XX and/or paragraphs XX, don't put in the full wording of the change
General Comments on NP				
Vision				
Objectives				
Policy XX				
Paragraph XX				
Policy XX				
Policy XX				

We also need to consider and agree how we now communicate the final NP to achieve the greatest success and gain maximum input and feedback

Known Media

- Parish Council Website
- Open Days – potential dates were 3, 10, 11, 12 and 25 February 2024
- Facebook – All About Watermead, Neighbourhood Plan, WM Residents
- Physical Copies located in the Village Hall (inside and outside), Watermead Inn, Watermead News, Gym, Hairdressers
- Consider other locations
- Posters and Banners

23.64 Finance & Administration

1. The accounts to the end of October 2023 were agreed.
2. To agree the payment schedule for November 2023

Payment Schedule		Nov-23			Payment Method (if Chq provide Number)		Comments	
Company	Invoice No	Allocation	Net Amount	VAT	Gross Amount			
Mobile Mini	7003069165	R&M	£58.60	£11.72	£70.32	BACS		
	9th November 2023							
Ian Whittome		Grass	£50.00	£0.00	£50.00	BACS		
CLC Grounds Maintenance	3235-3237	Grass, R&M & Litter	£1,615.00	£0.00	£1,615.00	BACS	Grass, R&M & Litter	
Michelle Jackson	Nov-23	Assistant Clerk	£278.60	£9.00	£287.60	BACS		
Noreen Shardlow	Nov-23	Clerk & Office	£1,822.09	£0.00	£1,822.09	BACS		
HMRC	Nov-23	PAYE & NI	£593.69	£0.00	£593.69	BACS		
G. M. Hall & Co	Nov-23	Payroll	£20.00	£0.00	£20.00	BACS		
Village Hall Management	Nov-23	Hall Management	£600.00	£0.00	£600.00	BACS		
British Gas Business	600026660	Village Hall Gas Supply	£86.73	£0.00	£86.73	DD		
E.ON Next Electricity	A-CA102F38	The Gatehouse	£35.00	£1.75	£36.75	BACS		
Buckinghamshire Council Bins	2205064639	Village Hall & Land	£257.90	£0.00	£257.90	DD		
Dave Lucas	Nov-23	Litter Land R & M VH & Allot	£400.00	£0.00	£400.00	BACS		
Herts Supplies	H112301879	Village Hall Cleaning Supplies	£47.70	£9.54	£57.24	BACS		
Community Heartbeat	18995	Replacement Battery	£297.50	£59.50	£357.00	BACS		
Rachel Seago	WPC 2482	Graphic Design Village View	£865.00	£0.00	£865.00	BACS		
Routine Payments Total			£7,027.81	£91.51	£7,119.32			
Non Routine Payment								
			£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	BACS		
				£0.00	£0.00	BACS		
				£0.00	£0.00	BACS		
Non Routine Payments Total			£0.00	£0.00	£0.00			
Total			£7,027.81	£91.51	£7,119.32			
Approval for Electronic Payments - To be signed by two Cllr. Signatories at meeting of the Parish Council		Cllr Signature:					Date Approved:	
		Cllr Signature:					Date Approved:	

3. Civility and Respect Project – Adoption of Policy

It was proposed and unanimously agreed to adopt the Policy as circulated via email. The Communications and Complaints Policy to be reviewed at the January meeting.

4. Fire Safety Checklist – Adoption of Policy

The proposed policy previously sent sets out some important legislative changes in the responsibilities of Responsible Persons following the implementation of Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022 which came into force in October 2023.

This guidance explains what responsible persons need to do as a result of changes made to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 ('the Fire Safety Order') through the Building Safety Act 2022.

It was proposed and unanimously agreed to adopt the Policy and checklist.

5. Budget 2024/2025 Preparations

The accounts for October 2023, previously sent now have a potential budget column for 2024/2025. Any requests for consideration please do email me prior to the Budget Meeting, 7th December 2023.

6. Leave of Absence Request – Cllr I Schwab

It was proposed and unanimously agreed to offer 6 months leave of absence to Cllr I Schwab.

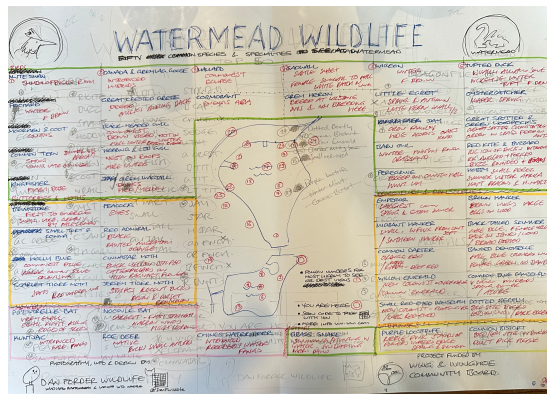
23.65 Reports, Requests and Recommendations Received

1 To update on Land Registry Matters

No update received.

2 To update on Land & Routine Land Work

Bird Information Boards – The application is in progress for the new Wildlife boards, presented at the October 2023 Parish Council Meeting.



Litter Bins

The bins are now reduced to one collection a week and the purple bins have been off-hired.

Dave Lucas as agreed via email has custom built a new surround for the fixed litter bins that was subject to vandalism during the summer.



Existing Benches Ground Works D. Lucas Walkway Brackets and Walkway Caps.

A query had been received as to when the trailer would be removed from Len Bone's Land. To be raised with Mr Bone.

3 Large Lake Walkway Project

The Parish Council was unable to find a way to provide a bridge or walkway over the dip as the Environment Agency (EA) would not approve our plans due the construction being close to the River Thames. This, in turn, meant that we could not obtain grant funding (a condition of which is to have planning permission).

Having researched alternative means we enlisted the help of a specialist company who provide complete structures to cross over water. The company is Maydencroft.

Their advice is that it can be done, but we need to apply to the EA for approval. To gain approval we need to pay an application fee providing technical drawings as well as other information. Total cost of this application is circa £5,000. The process will take several months and Maydencroft's experience in other places has been that permission is frequently refused, despite best efforts to submit best design. If permission were to be refused, we would need to re-apply at the cost of another £5,000 since fresh designs would be required.

Throughout the process of attempting to solve this problem the Parish Council has been in touch with the EA to seek their advice and to request a site visit. To date we have been sent their guidance on activities and permits only. Maydencroft confirm that it is highly unlikely that the EA will attend site. The process is very similar to that of the Local Planning Authority who only become involved once an application is made.

At the time of preparing reports for this meeting the EA have made contact, asking for the Grid References of the land. This has been sent and we are currently awaiting a response. The Local Fisheries Officer of the EA is attending a site visit at Watermead to meet with the Piscatorials. I will be attending this meeting and will ask him to take a look at the area in question.

4 To Report on Allotments

The Allotment AGM had taken place Wednesday 15th November 2023, 7:30pm at Watermead Village Hall.

5 To update on Village View

The issue went to print last Monday but due to an issue with contribution being received late, 4 pages had to be taken out.

6 To report on Village Hall

During a recent review of the Village Hall lease, Tapestart Ltd., (the freeholders) identified what they believed to be three alleged breaches of the Parish Council's village hall lease. We took legal advice, and subsequently received Counsel's Opinion regarding the alleged breaches.

Two of the three alleged breaches were proven as non-breach as they were addressed by a Variation of Deed at the time of transfer to the Parish Council.

The final alleged breach (user clause) was addressed within the original Variation of Deed report, but was not incorporated into the actual deed. Both our solicitor and Counsel advised that the lease may have technically been subject to this breach. The Parish Council had no certainty, were it to challenge the allegation in court, that it would succeed.

A Section 146 Notice under the Law of Property Act 1925 was served detailing the three alleged breaches and advising we must remedy them within a reasonable time. To challenge the Section 146 Notice could have risked an unquantified risk exposure to the Parish Council and public funds.

Lawyers subsequently negotiated and the Parish Council agreed to the Variation to amend the user clause and the loss of our rights to the car park. This revision has caused no risk to the Parish Council and public funds.

We remain vigilant and the Parish Council is determined to do all it can to ensure Watermead retains its unique character and improvements are made which are beneficial to the parish.

**7 To update on Transport/Highways
Buckinghamshire Council – Works That Remain Outstanding**

MVAS & Street Lighting Column Balloon Meadow

Street Lighting column on the Spine Road/The Watermead Inn crossing

MVAS on exit to Watermead

8 Watermead Christmas Fair and Carol Concert

The Fair was fully booked and the Vicar from Christchurch Oxford would attend the Carol Concert.

9 Land Request received from Smiles Charity Mick Dorr

Mr Pardis had given permission for use of the lake for the event. Currently awaiting all required documentation.

23.66 Date of meetings

7 December 2023 (budget meeting)

2024 – 18 January, 15 February, 21 March, 18 April, 16 May, 20 June, 18

July, 19 September, 17 October, 21 November, 19 December (budget meeting).

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.44pm and thanked people for their attendance.

Due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed, it will be necessary for a Councillor to move a motion to close the meeting to the press and public under Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

23.67 2022/2023 Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2023

To agree the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) pay award agreed with effect from 1 April 2023 with an increase of scale – it was proposed and unanimously agreed to backdate to April 2023.