

Watermead Parish Council Meeting

Thursday 21 September 2023 at 7.30pm
Held at the Village Hall, Watermead

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

23.36 Apologies

Cllr M Morgan Cllr D Forder

23.37 Declarations of Interest

To declare any personal or prejudicial interests regarding the agenda – Cllr A Bond on any items relating to Planning, the Community Board or Buckinghamshire Council.

23.38 To Receive Police Report re Protection of Persons & Property

No police report received.

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

Cllr Blamires reported that the next focus for the Community Board would be for youth groups and suggested the PC forward any ideas for projects that may require funding.

The Clerk advised that she had not yet had a response regarding the application made for a quick grant for the Watermead Gardening Society. Cllr Bond to investigate.

Cllr Bond to chase the replacement MVAS.

Cllr Blamires reported that processing planning applications was speeding up.

Cllr Bond

The Chairman thanked the visitors for their attendance.

Council Meeting

23.40 To agree the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 20 July 2023 & Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held 14 September 2023

The Minutes were agreed and signed as true records of the meetings.

23.41 Planning Matters

1 To update on any Planning Applications submitted – no new applications and no updates on existing applications.

Enforcement Reference: 21/00205/CONB Appeal Decision Type: Enforcement

Address: 16 The Comfrey, Watermead, Aylesbury

Enforcement: Appeal against Enforcement notice that without planning permission the material change of use of the land to residential facilitated by the erection of a wooden close board fence, gate and the laying of hardstanding

Appeal Decision: The appeal is dismissed and the Enforcement Notice upheld

23.42 Neighbourhood Plan

An Open Day was held on Saturday 22nd July 2023 at the Village Hall. The purpose of this final date was for the Green Spaces assessment to be presented along with a general update on where we are with the plan.

The next stage will then be the Regulation 14 which requires the draft Neighbourhood Plan proposal to be the subject of a pre-submission consultation before it is submitted to the local authority for independent examination. The consultation for this should last at least 6 weeks.

Our External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn have now completed the review of our Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and they have advised as follows.

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance Assertion in Section 1, Box 2, but it has provided the appointed auditor with an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified.

We received challenge correspondence in relation to the 2022/23 AGAR which we considered before completing our work.

Section 3 - External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of **Watermead Parish Council – BU0195**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with Proper Practices which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2022/23

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

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We received challenge correspondence in relation to the 2022/23 AGAR which we considered before completing our work.

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

External Auditor Name **PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP**

External Auditor Signature *[Signature]* Date **03/08/2023**

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 Form 3
Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities**

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5. Budget 2023/2025 Preparations – the Clerk to send draft budgets out for Cllrs to review.

23.44 Reports, Requests and Recommendations Received

1 To update on Land Registry Matters

Cllr I Schwab had reported that the treasury solicitor is still awaiting a reply from her surveyor.

**2 To update on Land & Routine Land Work
New Walkway Kestrel Way**

As agreed at the July meeting this issue was passed to Focus for their attention. Radu attended 11th September to inspect the uprights and said he would have to speak with Serge. I confirmed with Radu that our contractor is willing to carry out

the works, and invoice direct, in the event the costings would be higher for Radu sending contractors from London. He said he would get back to me.

Radu subsequently confirmed that he they would be happy to pay only half the price quoted by Dave Lucas for these preventative measures as a gesture of goodwill. They don't believe this is part of the remit of the project. Cllrs agreed to proceed.

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

3 **Large Lake Walkway Project**

As agreed at the July 2023 Parish Council meeting the Walkway Project figures were presented at the last Neighbourhood Plan Open Day. One resident was fully supportive of the project at the precept being raised to cover the initial costings one was against and three people advised they would think about it and pop a note through the Village Hall door.

The Clerk

Whilst preparations were being made for the View it was agreed to put a poll on the website. The results received so far are as below. I have an email file and all the responses are being held there.

Yes 8 – No 11

4 **To Report on Allotments**

Cllr Sue Severn had the great pleasure of spending an evening at our allotments judging the best allotment and reported as follows:

“The work undertaken by so many allotmenters is impressive. Some, it's fair to say, are possibly at the start of their cultivation journey, but the winning allotment plots belonging to Diane Lee and Tina Nunes have been designed and cultivated taking account of bio-diversity, wildlife and environmental considerations with effective water collection and management, compost production, places for hedgehogs, birds, bees and worms to call home. I particularly enjoyed the variety of vegetables, flowers and planting.

Each plot has its own character, design and areas of interest. The plot belonging to Mr Ray Howse, who has hand dug his vegetable plots (no easy task in clay soil) producing a really traditional allotment garden particularly caught my eye winning a Highly Commended award.

Our allotments remain a significant community asset, enjoyed by those fortunate enough to have one as well as by their families.

5 **To update on Village View**

Cllr Singleton reported that the deadline for submissions was 26 October. The Christmas Lights competition would be included.

6 **To report on Village Hall**

No update.

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

Permanent bollards on traffic island. The brickwork edging is falling into the road.

Update received from Buckinghamshire Council

Report received from Zoe Ford at Buckinghamshire Council

I have spoken to the ITS team re the VAS and the street lighting team with regards to the bollards and street lights:

The VAS on Watermead - we have been informed that the ITS team will be adding the replacement VAS to the new replacement column LC008, this will be a strengthened column so the VAS can be installed on the column thus avoiding an extra pole and avoiding street clutter. They are awaiting a date when the replacement column will be installed. The Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) on exit from the estate was inspected on 20 March 2023 and the main control Printed Circuit Board (PCB) was found to have failed. This component is now obsolete and we are unable to source a new replacement. We are trying to source a salvaged part to use otherwise we may have to look at replacing the whole sign.

This work is on a programme of works but they are not able to provide me with a firm date unfortunately.

The bollards and street light on Watermead - Column LC018 which needs replacing and 2 bollards also - the column is on an imminent program of works and the Bollards are on a program following the column replacements.

They hope that they will start by the middle of September.

Buckinghamshire Council – Works Completed

Bollards between Fieldfare and Waterlily. Thanks were given to Cllrs Bond & Blamires.



8 Watermead Events Committee Update

Just as the Watermead Events Committee were in the process of finalising all details for the Watermead Film Night and confirming the draft budgets a rather unexpected substantial increase was received.

Film Bank Media made contact to advise that they have restructured their prices and the licence fee now depends on the anticipated audience numbers. We do benefit from a community rate (much lower than commercial) but their restructuring now means for the normal price that we pay we must keep the number of attendees to below 300. We do not have the means to limit the number of attendees. Therefore to obtain our normal licences for the two films we were looking at a cost of £1200.00. Previous licence fees were circa £300 per film.

After speaking with key members of the Committee, the wider Committee were consulted and sadly the decision to postpone this event was made.

Christmas Fair

Graham Severn reported that he was fully booked for the Christmas Fair. The Clerk

The Clerk

to add to the October agenda.

23.45 Date of meetings

19 October 2023, 16 November 2023, 21 December 2023

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00pm 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.

23.46 Village Hall Lease

Council resolved to agree amendment and the necessary documentation was signed.