

Western Valley Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Western Valley Parish Council

Tuesday 11th July 2023 at 19:30, The District Centre, 1 Gention Mews, Didcot

Public Session – Prior to the Start of the Meeting

MoP1: Asked about the parish taking on the land and parks and maintenance,. It was confirmed this was historical on a historical S106 agreement.

Members Present:

Chair	Cllr S Peacock (SP)	
Vice-Chair	Cllr A Thompson (AT)	
Members	Cllr G Clarke (GC)	[Arrived 19:38]
	Cllr P Knowles (PK)	
	Cllr T Williams (TW)	
	Cllr A Dearlove (AD)	[Co-opted, Item 23.02.5]
	Cllr L Durman (LD)	[Co-opted, Item 23.02.5]
	Cllr V Humphries (VH)	[Co-opted, Item 23.02.5]

Officers Present:

Clerk to the Council	Mrs L White (LW)
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Public and Press: At least 3 + Cllr S Povolotsky (SP); DCllr H Gascoigne; DCllr D Dewhurst

Meeting started 19:36

23.02.1. To receive apologies for absence. [LGA 1972 s85(1)]

Apologies have been received from G Clarke, but they will arrive at the meeting as soon as possible.

23.02.2. Declarations of Interests [LA 2011 s31]

Cllr Peacock declared a non-pecuniary interest in the planning application, Item 23.02.11.1, and will abstain from the vote.

23.02.2.1. To receive declarations of interest for items on this agenda

None.

23.02.2.2. To consider requests for Dispensations [LA 2011 s33]

None.

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23.02.3. To approve the minutes of previous council meetings [LA 1972 Sch 12. Para 41(1)]

23.02.3.1. Meeting held on 06th June 2023

It was agreed the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting, and they were duly signed.

[GC arrived, and confirmed they had no declarations of interest on items on the agenda]

23.02.3.2. Matters arising from the minutes not elsewhere on the agenda.

None.

23.02.4. To approve adopting Standing Orders

Appendix A

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to adopt the Standing Orders.

23.02.5. Co-option of Councillors for 3 Vacant Seats (LGA 1972 s89(6))

Each of the candidates were given the opportunity to speak about their application to be co-opted.

Anthony Dearlove: Town Councillor for 8 years in the past. Hope to work well with this council.

Vaughan Humphries: Previously a Town Councillor and want to bring that experience to this council.

Linda Durman: Never been on a council before, but very keen to get involved.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to appoint the 3 candidates present.

All three co-opted councillors signed their declaration of acceptance of office, each declaration was countersigned by the Clerk.

23.02.5.1. To receive declarations of interest for items on this agenda from the Co-opted Members.

All co-opted members are reminded that a Register of Members Interests must be submitted within 28 days of appointment.

Cllr Humphries declared a non-pecuniary interest in the planning application, Item 23.02.11.1, and will abstain from the vote.

23.02.6. District and County Councillor Reports

District and Council Councillor Reports were circulated on the morning of the meeting.

23.02.6.1. District Councillor H Gascoigne

Appendix B/C

Highlighted the large planning application which will need comments by the 27th July.

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23.02.6.2. District Councillor D Dewhurst

Appendix B/C

DCllr Dewhurst introduced themselves and confirmed they were also a Cabinet Member.

23.02.6.3. County Councillor S Povolotsky

Appendix D

Cllr Povolotsky detailed the area of their division. The biggest issue in the division locally is “CESRO” a large reservoir. County reports generally come out on the 11th of each month. Valley Park parcel of land – HIF 1 road expansion is going to planning soon this is a legacy infrastructure project linked to Valley Park, and GWP. It was further confirmed the GWP development is not currently adopted and the schools in the parish are academies and therefore not OCC responsibility.

Current Open Consultations

- Harwell S278 funding – speed engineering

Also keep an eye on S106 funding and there is the possibility to arrange a discussion with them.

23.02.7. Matters pertaining to appointment of staff

Appendix E

23.02.7.1. To approve us of model SLCC Staff Contract, with amendments as detailed.

Modifications included 3 month notice period and 6m probationary period.

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to adopt the Staff Contract.

23.02.7.2. To approve expenses policy.

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to adopt the Expenses Policy.

23.02.7.3. To approve Clerk and RFO role to be 8 hours per week, SCP 24 with up to 8 hours over time per week.

Resolved: Unanimously Approved the Clerk and RFO Role to be 8 hours per week at SCP 24 in the Scale SCP24-27, with up to 8 hours per week overtime if required only.

23.02.7.4. To approve appointing L White and Proper Officer (Clerk) and Responsible Financial Officer

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to appoint Mrs L White as Clerk and RFO.

23.02.7.5. To approve paying for SLCC annual membership for the Clerk, maximum budget £150

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to pay for SLCC membership for the Clerk, maximum budget £150.

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23.02.7.6. To approve LGPS Pension registration for the Clerk, subject to satisfactory completion of probationary period.

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to enrol the Council in the Oxfordshire LGPS, the Clerk will be eligible for enrolment when they have satisfactorily passed their probationary period.

23.02.7.7. To approve registering as an Employer with HMRC for the purposes of managing PAYE

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to register the Council as an employer.

23.02.7.8. To approve purchase of Laptop

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to purchase a parish asset, Laptop, maximum budget £650 (exc VAT)

23.02.7.9. To approve purchase of Smart Phone

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to purchase a parish asset, Smart Phone, maximum budget £250 (exc VAT)

23.02.7.10. To approve purchase of annual subscription to Microsoft Office 365

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to purchase annual Office 365 subscription £10.30 (exc VAT) per month.

23.02.7.11. To approve purchase of printer/scanner/copier or approve remuneration rate for the Clerk to use their own.

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to purchase a parish asset, A3 Printer, with A4 Scanner/Copier, maximum budget £550 (exc VAT)

23.02.7.12. To approve delegating the Clerk purchase of files, paper, folders and other stationery items including stamps as needed within the agreed budget for the year.

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to delegate to the Clerk purchase of stationery, stamps, files and paper etc as required withing the annual budget set by the council.

23.02.8. Finance 2023-2024

Appendix F

Some Finance items in Confidential Section at the end of the meeting.

23.02.8.1. To approve Financial Regulations

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to adopt the Financial Regulations.

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23.02.8.2. To approve Financial Risk Assessment & Management

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to adopt the Financial Risk Assessment & Management document.

23.02.8.3. To approve opening a bank account

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to open a bank account for day to day transactions with Unity Trust.

23.02.8.4. To approve bank signatories

Resolved: Unanimously Approved all councillors and Clerk to be Bank Signatories, the Clerk only for use for emergency payments, with authorisation of one other councillor.

23.02.8.5. To approve making payments by online bank transfer, subject to 2 signature authorisation. Payments to be made by cheque until this is set-up

Resolved: Unanimously Approved.

23.02.8.6. To approve receiving CIL payments for the 2023-2024 financial year

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to receive CIL for the 2023/2024 FY.

23.02.8.7. To approve receiving held funds from Harwell Parish Council, to be held in reserves.

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to receive held funds from Harwell Parish, Clerk to ascertain exactly what these funds are for – CIL; S106; general reserves, and apply as appropriate to the correct EMR.

23.02.8.8. To approve budget for FY 2023-2024

Resolved: Unanimously Approved the budget as per the appendix, to be reviewed as per Financial Regulations at the end of the current quarter.

23.02.8.9. To approve payments to be made as soon as possible once precept has been received.

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to pay the invoices as listed.

OALC Membership	Invoice 4306	£380.62	inc. £63.44 VAT
OALC Chairmanship Course	Invoice 4291	£132.00	inc. £22.00 VAT

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23.02.9. Media and Communication

Appendix G

Some Media & Communications items in Confidential Section at the end of the meeting.

23.02.9.1. To approve Media and Communications Policy

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to adopt the Media and Communications Policy.

23.02.9.2. To approve WVPC Facebook Page, Clerk to administer, outward communication only, commenting switched off.

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to have a Facebook page, the Clerk to be the administrator and use it for outward communication only, with commenting switched off.

23.02.9.3. To approve creation of a Mailchimp mailing list, to be used for notifications of meetings and other important communications to our subscribers.

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to have a Mailchimp mailing list, link on website to subscribe.

23.02.9.4. To approve creation of WVPC website, as required by statute, including:

- Application for WesternValleyParishCouncil.gov.uk or similar
- Appointing the Clerk (Mrs L White) as the Domain Administrator

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to create a website including registering for a .gov.uk domain and appointing the Clerk, L White as the Domain Administrator, and delegating to the Clerk to select the exact domain name, to be as short as possible.

23.02.9.5. To approve approaching the District Centre to have an external noticeboard, and consider other suitable locations in the parish for additional noticeboards for official WVPC communications.

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to seek permission for an external notice board at the District Centre, to bring formal proposal to a future meeting.

[ACTION] GC to forward information on previous noticeboard scheme to the Clerk.

23.02.10. Other administrative items not already covered.

Appendix H

23.02.10.1. To approve ICO registration, to be paid by direct debit to reduce annual cost

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to register with the ICO on direct debit, £35 per year.

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23.02.10.2. To approve purchase of at least 1-off copy of Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration 13th Edition

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to purchase 2-off copies of Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration 13th Edition, budget £274 plus applicable postage. To investigate for subsequent editions, digital copies.

23.02.10.3. To approve purchase of 1-off SLCC Clerk's Manual

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to purchase 1-off copy of SLCC Clerk's Manual, budget £47.50 plus applicable postage. To investigate for subsequent editions, digital copies.

23.02.10.4. To approve purchase of at least 3-off copies of "The Good Councillor Guide" to share between the Councillors.

Motion Failed.

23.02.10.5. To approve purchase of PO Box facility, directed to the Clerk's home address, to be used as the Council's official address for all paper communications.

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to purchase PO Box Facility, budget £396 per year, ongoing cost.

23.02.10.6. To consider list of upcoming training courses and approve budget and attendance by Councillors or Clerk.

Motion Failed.

[ACTION] To seek a planning course from VoWHDC.

23.02.11. Planning

To consider applications and approve response to planning authority.

23.02.11.1. P23/V1480/S73 - Former site of Long Reach Didcot Road Harwell Didcot OX11 6DW

Variation of Condition 1 (approved plans) on application P18/V0112/RM - PV Panels to be added to the dwellings, brickwork changed and windows reduced in size on Plot 9 and 10. (Reserved Matters application following Outline Approval P17/V0348/O for details of the layout, scale, and appearance of the buildings, the means of access thereto and the landscaping of the site. (Outline planning application for the demolition of existing dwelling, and residential development (Class C3) of up to 19 no. dwellings; with associated car parking, turning, public open space, landscaping, and access arrangement - External access not reserved)).

The Chairman gave a summary of the application.

[SP and VH abstained from the vote]

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to submit the response NO OBJECTIONS.

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23.02.11.2. To consider if a Planning Committee should be formed, and appoint members or delegate to the Clerk responding to applications which cannot wait for the next Council Meeting .

Resolved: Unanimously Approved to form a planning committee, and appoint 5-off members: AT; AD; PK; VH; LD, all other councillors can be substitutes to keep to 5.

It was further noted that there is a large application which needs to be considered before the end of the month. The first meeting of the planning committee to be held on 20th July 2023.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously, the Planning Committee has delegated powers to respond to all planning consultations until a formal Terms of Reference has been approved.

23.02.12. Other Governing Documents

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to adopt all of the following policies with amendments to be brought to a future meeting.

23.02.12.1. Complaints Procedure	Appendix I
23.02.12.2. Requests for Information Policy (GDPR)	Appendix J
23.02.12.3. Publications Scheme	Appendix K
23.02.12.4. Privacy Notice	Appendix L
23.02.12.5. General Risk Assessment	Appendix M

23.02.13. To receive Items of Correspondence and agree actions arising.

23.02.13.1. A request to take action on Civil Parking Enforcement	Correspondence 1
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The Council noted the complaint, but is limited in what powers can be used to meaningfully take action, particularly as the roads on the development are not adopted.

[ACTION] To invite the local PCSO to discuss this matter.

23.02.13.2. To approve response to GWR Consultation on closing Ticket Offices	Correspondence 2
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As summary of the proposal was given.

Accessibility was specifically highlighted, particularly that some people cannot use the automated machines.

[AD declared and interest and will abstain from the vote].

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to submit the response: The proposal fails to recognise the real scale of customers and the diversity of their needs making demands on Didcot Parkway, where staffed ticket

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offices are vital. It also does not factor in the increasing population because of the Valley Park development of an extra c.4000 houses. These residents will need a smooth-running station as a major transport hub. Also we seek to avoid residents becoming unemployed by staffing redundancies at the station.

23.02.14. Matters for future discussion.

Items for a future agenda to include:

- Allotments – does the PC wish to manage them – Vale will own the land.
- Procurement Policy
- Parish Logo – UTC or other Secondaries.
- Staffing Committee
- Planning Committee ToR
- Open Space Adoption

23.02.15. To consider and, if thought fit, approve the following motion: In view of the confidential nature of the business about to transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw.

Confidential Papers

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to exclude the public and press.

The Chairman thanked them for attending and invited them to leave the meeting.

23.02.15.1. To consider quotes and approve purchasing parish insurance

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to enter a 3 year Long Term Agreement (LTA), £320 per year with Zurich

23.02.15.2. To consider quotes and approve purchase of finance management software.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to purchase Scribe Accounting Software, £657, £408 ongoing costs.

23.02.15.3. To consider quotes and approve purchases / contracts regarding:

- Purchase of Website Hosting including parish council emails for all Councillors and Staff
- Purchase of Website design and build.

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Resolved: Approved to purchase services through CloudNext/Eyelid Productions, £659.99 first year, £309.99 ongoing costs.

23.02.15.4. A motion without notice to extend for 20min

Resolved: Approved Unanimously.

23.02.15.5. To consider quotes and approve appointing an Internal Auditor for FY 2023/2024

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to appoint Eleanor Greene, Budget £400.

23.02.16. To agree list of items from this meeting to be submitted to any local publication or our Facebook Page as a Parish Council Update.

Clerk proposes a 1 or 2 page monthly parish council update to engage the community, delegated to the Clerk.

To move to the next meeting.

23.02.17. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

Subsequent to the previous resolution on this matter and appointment of the Clerk, the Clerk is not available for evening meetings on Tuesdays. Clerk proposes Mondays or Thursdays if possible, toward the end of the month for accounting purposes.

Resolved: Approved to hold meetings on 2nd Thursday of the month, 19:45.

There being no further business to be transacted, the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:53