

**Minutes of a meeting of Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Council**  
**Held in the King Edward VII Meeting Room, Ascot Racecourse SL5 7JX**  
**On Tuesday 12 December 2023 at 7.00pm**

Members present: A Sharpe (Chairman), B Hilton (Vice Chairman), P Carter, L Davison West, C Herring, J Gripton, D Hilton, C Revilla, C Richardson, D Sanders, B Story, R Tavoletti, S Verma and R Wood.

In attendance: Helen Goodwin, Clerk to the Parish Council.

**8635 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr M Turton and accepted by the members present; Cllr C Roberts was absent.

**8636 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The chairman asked to receive any Declarations of Interest in accordance with the adopted Code of Conduct. The chairman declared an interest in Thames Hospice, which has applied for a grant.

**8637 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October were approved as a correct record and signed as such.

**8638 FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The chairman made the following formal announcements:

1. RBWM has announced it has paused the Public Consultation on the Ascot SPD. When asked about this by some parish councillors RBWM officers apologised for the timing of their press release and gave assurances they are continuing the work. A meeting has been convened this week to which three SAPC councillors have been invited.
2. It has become apparent that expert advice is required by the parish council to provide an alternative to the community facility set out in the planning application submitted by London Square. The Plunkett Foundation has been suggested and approached, which is an organisation that exists specifically to help rural communities plan community facilities. An initial meeting with them is planned for early in 2024 and the borough has been notified that the parish will be doing this; borough officers have given an assurance that this will not be a waste of the PC's time, money or energy.
3. The recent Sunninghill Street Fayre was very successful; thanks were given to all those who helped out in the planning and on the day. When the finances have been completed the Street Fayre Working Group will meet to decide how to distribute excess funds.
4. On being advised, in October, that RBWM would not be funding the Christmas lights on Ascot High Street this year, the clerk emailed all members for their views on whether SAPC should fund the lights; the responses received were overwhelmingly against this as there is no budget available. It was noted that there have been a lot of comments on social media about the lack of lights.
5. Hanging basket injury claim: The claimant's solicitor has provided our insurance company with medical evidence that concluded a minor head injury was suffered resulting in a period of concussion. An out of court settlement has been suggested, to the value of between £2,500 to £3,500; the insurance company are of the opinion that the parish council should accept this option as any court case would be considerably more expensive.
6. Coombe Lane Village Green Application: The period of dates for the Inquiry has been set for 28 February to 08 March. Our solicitor is working on the parameters set and is currently carrying out interviews with members of the public who have come forward to give evidence of having used the land.

The clerk has written to the RBWM solicitors to fully understand the position with regard to meeting the costs involved in preparing for the Inquiry; a response is awaited.

7. South Ascot Lease – a new draft lease was received today at 6.50pm. As time needs to be taken to read through it and consider the terms it was suggested an extension to the current arrangement be requested to allow this to happen. It was agreed that this should be done.

#### **8639 PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was not adjourned.

#### **8640 PRESENTATION OF COMMITTEE MINUTES, EXTERNAL AUDIT, INVOICES & PAYMENTS LISTS**

- The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 17 October and 21 November were presented by Cllr R Wood who highlighted Silwood Manor, which has an application to modernise the old building with 22 apartments plus the construction of 14 dwellings in the grounds of the manor. The committee had slight reservations but overall no concerns. Also highlighted was the application for Montrose House, which has grown sideways and is now, in the committee's view, too big for the site.
- The minutes of the Leisure & Cultural Committee meeting held on 14 November were presented by Cllr L Davison West who highlighted that the budget for 2024/25 was discussed; ideas for projects for the year were discussed as well as fee charges which, it was decided, should remain unchanged. PROWs were also a topic for discussion.
- The minutes of the CIL Committee meeting held on 05 December were presented by Cllr R Tavoletti who explained an update on funds was discussed – currently standing at £1.87m and expected to be at £3.25m by the end of 2025 (based on approved projects). It is anticipated that a report should be received from the Project Centre in time for the March meeting.
- The minutes of the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting held on 20 November were presented by Cllr A Sharpe who reported that officers' salaries were discussed and agreed as well as a move to the clerk's salary grading. The preliminary budget was examined and the South Ascot lease situation discussed as well as the Coombe Lane TVG application.
- The invoices to be paid this month and the lists of payments made in September and October were presented by the clerk.

#### **8641 2024/25 BUDGET**

Cllr R Wood presented the proposed budget for the 2024/25 year and explained the options of increasing the precept and/or cutting the proposed expenditure.

Discussion included:

- Whether the five year plan to raise funds for play equipment replacement would continue beyond that time. It was considered that it should be reviewed after five years and but it was likely not to need to continue at the full £60k per year.
- Whether the Parish Map project (budgeted for £20k) is necessary. Details of the project were explained and the fact that the cost is an estimate; it was noted that the project had been agreed in a previous year and not carried out.
- Possible savings totalling c £35k could be made by:
  - Reducing the number of hanging baskets;
  - Spreading the cost of new Christmas lights over two years;
  - Moving the funding for Parish Maps/Signage to CIL;
  - Paying for the Open Space strategy out of CIL.

It was noted that the average parish precept in 23/24 in RBWM for a band D property was £57, while SAPC was £38, so even with a possible large increase the SAPC precept would only just be coming up towards the average.

Overall, councillors did not wish to change the proposals set out in the budget except for one: it was agreed that the Open Spaces item be funded from CIL funds rather than budgeted for out of the precept budget. On this basis, Cllr D Hilton proposed accepting the budget as set out, seconded by Cllr D Sanders. The proposal was approved unanimously by show of hands.

#### **8642 GRANTS**

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 Section 137, applications for grants were invited and the following awards were made:

- CAB - £1,500
- Parenting Special Children - £1,000
- Thames Hospice - £1,000
- Youthline - £1,800

All above were agreed unanimously by show of hands.

In addition the following awards were made:

- Cordes Hall - £1,000 – agreed by eight votes in favour, four against and two abstentions;
- Food4Children - £1,000 - agreed by 11 votes in favour and three abstentions.

#### **8643 PARISH PLAN UPDATE – LOCALITY BRIEF CONSULTATION**

The Locality brief was presented and councillors' views invited to ensure it meets the needs and expectations of the council and that wording is such that residents understand what is in the power of the parish council.

Discussion included:

- Establishing more specificity around the form does of the interviews;
- The possibility of having smaller groups to brainstorm;
- Ensuring the brief asks for qualitative and quantitative responses;
- The role of councillors as stakeholders;
- The mechanism of sign-off at the end of the work;
- The next steps when the work is completed.

The views expressed will be taken forward and shared with Locality at a virtual meeting to be held in the New Year.

#### **8644 MEETING SCHEDULE**

With a small amendment to a meeting date in July, the 2024/25 Meeting Scheduled as presented was agreed.

#### **8645 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The councillors who were elected in May, and those who were co-opted since May, confirmed their committee membership as follows:

- Leisure & Cultural Committee: Cllrs C Revilla, D Sanders, R Tavoletti.
- Planning Committee: Cllrs P Carter, D Hilton.
- CIL Committee: Cllrs D Hilton, D Sanders, R Tavoletti.

The clerk will check with Cllr M Turton to ask her preference.

#### **8646 LOCAL ACCESS FORUM/PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY**

Cllr C Richardson reported on the recent meeting of the Local Access Forum and advised that the Forum is supportive of the creation of footpath 13.

Cllr Cllr R Tavoletti reported on the PROW meeting held on 15 November with representatives from RBWM to discuss the condition of the various footpaths in our parish and to agree upon a strategy to improve the footpaths and rights of way. In addition, another main objective was to ensure that a specific set of new PROW (Paths and Rights of Way) is completed in the short term to enable SAPC to make connections between our parish and Sunningdale. The meeting was productive and actions agreed for both councils to proceed with before meeting again at a date to be arranged. More detailed notes of the meeting will be uploaded to the Councillor Portal.

Cllr C Richardson reported on behalf of the Walking & Cycling Working Group and advised that the Safer Streets project is moving forward; some councillors met with borough Cllr J Sharpe in November, and Cllr Hill (RBWM Cabinet Member for Highways) in December, to update them on the project. Cllr Biggs responded that he liked the project and was in agreement in principle. *See minute 8658 – 'Cllr Biggs' to be amended to 'Cllr Hill'.*

#### **8647 BOROUGH UPDATE**

Cllr D Hilton reported that the RBWM draft budget will go to public consultation on 14 December. They have been trying to present a balanced budget, which will include a 4.99% council tax increase in the next year as well as savings, which will become apparent when it goes to consultation but which will include a significant reduction in the amount spent on planning. He noted that adult social care accounts for 46% of the budget, despite the fact that 75% of older people in care are self-payers.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.15pm.

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Cllr A Sharpe, Chairman