

# Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council in the Community Office Held at 8pm on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013

Present:

Councillors:

Ian Hill – Chairman  
Tony Williamson  
Robert Barber  
Ted Backhouse  
Barry Adby  
Rhian Woods  
Harvey Batten  
Roger Beattie  
Nick Greaves  
Tim Horton

Officer:

Kristina Tynan

District Councillor:

Angie Paterson

County Councillor:

Caroline Newman

Press:

Janine Rasiah

Members of the Public: 3

31/13 Apologies for absence

David Tindale, Nick Hancock and Charles Rowton-Lee.

32/13 Chairman's Remarks

Ian Hill reported that Roger Beattie will be standing down as a Councillor as from tomorrow so therefore this will be his last meeting. IH thanked RB for all his work during the 14 years he has been a Watlington Parish Councillor. RB intends to carry on with his work with the Youth Club, which is a very valuable part of the community.

We will therefore be looking to co-opt a new Councillor in due course.

33/13 To receive Declarations of Interest

**Planters around the Town) and Mansle Gardens(Agenda items11d)** – Tim Horton declared an interest in both these items as he is the Chairman of Watlington in Bloom. He signed the 'Declaration of Interest' book and left the room for this item.

**Skatepark Project (Agenda Item 6)** – Harvey Batten stated that he does not have a pecuniary interest in this item but as his son is part of the group doing this project he felt that the public could perceive him to have a bias. He therefore declared an interest in this item, signed the 'Declaration of Interest' book and left the room for this item.

34/13 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2013 to be signed as a correct record  
**Resolved:** That the minutes of this meeting are a correct record of this meeting and that they be signed by the Chairman.

35/13 Matters arising from the Minutes  
**Neighbourhood Plan** (Agenda Item 21/13 refers) – TW asked if AP would update Council on this within her report.

**Hardstanding at Junction 6** (Agenda Item 22/13 refers) – TW stated that this has been done and it is an improvement to this area. He said he was pleased that they had not sealed off parking at the gate.

**Skatepark Project** (Agenda Item 27/13 refers) – TW asked if the group had provided any plans or financial costings prior to this meeting. The Clerk stated that they will be bringing information with them tonight.

**Triathlon** (Agenda Item 22/13 refers) – RBr reported that he attended the meeting on this held on 15/2/2013 at Henley Town Hall. There was a good representation of parishes there. Just Racing did not attend and Rodney Rose the County Councillor responsible for this issue also did not attend the meeting. Peter Ronald attended on behalf of OCC. It is all going ahead for this year but there is a potential of a legal challenge to the event.

It is still not clear where the turning point on Howe Road will be.

John Howell has written to Just Racing making it clear that all trust has broken down with them. He received a very obstreperous reply back from them. He also feels that if the event does go ahead this year that there should be a wrap up meeting. Just Racing have already published the route even though official permission has not yet been received. There are a lot of parishes that want this event stopped after having 2 years of their roads being closed. RBr stated that he had not been given authorisation to speak for Council and therefore did not give an opinion to the meeting. He said that Council needs to have a formal view on this issue. Just Racing have reneged on their promise to pay for an economic assessment of the event. They did one last year but admitted it was flawed.

*It was agreed that this be an item for the Strategy Committee to discuss.*

**The Firs** (Agenda Item 22/13 refers) – IH reported that he attended a meeting this afternoon with Anne Nursey who is the Lead Commissioner (Adults) of the Social & Community Services Department. She wanted an opportunity to explain the current situation with the Firs. The building is not now going to be used as a respite centre as a respite care centre as the current need is for respite care with medical facilities. Updating the Firs to include the necessary medical facilities would be totally uneconomic. They do not yet know what they will do with it. She stated that she would welcome a meeting with the WPC and the community to explore opportunities that could be available for this property. It was noted that this property is owned by a third party.

TH said that it is costing the taxpayer £1000 per week and has been doing so for 5 years. He said he thinks it is an OCC management incompetence issue to leave this property empty for so many years and has cost in the region of £1/4 million to date. He stated there is a solution, OCC should pass this property back to the owners as soon as possible which will save the taxpayer £47,000 per year for having an empty building. He stated that this issue is a total disgrace on a National, Regional and Local level.

**Resolved:** That we accept the offer of a meeting with Anne Nursey and that IH, TW, TH, HB and TB be the WPC representatives at this meeting.

36/13 Public Questions  
**Skatepark Project ‘ Watlington Wheels Project’** – Lewis Batten and Francis Evans in attendance. The group had submitted the following information:

### **Project Costs**

All project plans are quoted at £200,000; apart from the Maverick design (Red Kites) which as a supreme quality product would likely be closer to £290,000.

All preliminary ground/site work required for each individual design has been factored in to each quote; including drainage, landscaping and access.

All administration costs would also be covered by the quoted costs.

All companies that have provided quotes/plans will use in-house construction teams, whose costs are also factored into the given quotes.

There is a possibility that the project could be completed in a series of phases. This could help to envisage the plan in a more feasible manner; however costs for construction/site management, for example, could increase.

### **Grants/Funding**

We will be applying for SODC's CIF (Community Investment Fund) which offers two opportunities, the first starting at the beginning of March (for amounts up to £100,000). The second opportunity starts in April and is for applications of up to £15,000.

National Lottery Grants and Sport England are other routes that we will be investigating. We were also encouraged to pursue any of OPFA's funding opportunities as they are very supportive of projects such as ours that promote healthy and active pastimes.

### **Timescales**

We hope to have completed the funding process within the next 18 months as the SODC's funding scheme dictates that all projects must be completed within one year of funding being secured.

Depending on when the final sum is reached, construction would be able to begin immediately. All project designs have an estimated construction time of around 8 weeks (weather dependant).

LB and FE also showed copies of designs they had quotations for and explained the detail.

LB stated they have looked at the prospect of resurfacing the bowl but this would not be possible. They are looking into a better facility with more versatility for both the community and young people which will be unique, high quality and enjoyable. They have looked at providing facilities for all ages and abilities and it will be able to be used by bicycles, rollerblades, skateboards, scooters and for all wheeled sports.

TW said that he welcomed what the group were doing but that when the best scheme has been chosen, the WPC will need to see detailed costings and a detailed plan. LB said that this will be done and they are awaiting one more design.

TH asked if they have a bank account and constitution. LB said not.

RW said that the site area does not encroach on the septic tanks for the pavilion.

RB asked if there would be any cost in the future to WPC? LB said that concrete does not need much maintenance and for eg Maverick gives a 40 year guarantee. He also said the current users already bring brooms over there to sweep the surface prior to using and that it will maintain itself.

It was noted that the ½ pipe has come to the end of its life.

TB said that the bowl has had problems with flooding and would this be an issue with the new design? LB said that this issue has been taken into account within the design as drainage was discussed.

TH asked if the group would be happy to work with WPC and FE said they would.

IH congratulated the group on the amount of effort they have put into this project to date and thanked both LB and FE for attending the meeting.

**SODC Deep Cleanse** – AP has spoken to the Head of the Services Department who said that WPC should be able to specify when they want this doing. The Clerk to contact SODC after contacting WIB to confirm the dates of the competition.

**Housing Allocation Consultation** – There will be a meeting held for the smaller parishes towards the end of April. The comments from Parish Councils are being collated at the moment. A date should be given out soon. AP asked if WPC responded to the consultation and this was confirmed in the affirmative.

**SODC Budget 2013/14** – This has now been set.

**Neighbourhood Plan** – AP reported that she had a brainstorming session with IH and NH. The key worry is that if WPC go ahead with an area that cuts out a key site, it is likely to be challenged. The Henley/Harpsden issue has been resolved as Harpsden has agreed to be included within the Henley NP. AP thinks that an examiner should be appointed at this stage to agree the area and this is supported by the SODC Planning Team. AP is waiting to hear back from the Department of Community and Local Government (CLG) on this issue and will report to WPC as soon as she has any answers.

**Skatepark Project** – There will be grants available for this project from both SODC and OCC.

IH thanked AP for her report and for attending the meeting.

38/13 County Councillors Report – Caroline Newton

**Triathlon** – There is the possibility that there may be a motion to the OCC Full Council meeting on the 2/4/13 that the County do a proper economic assessment on this event. However it is not a certainty that it will make it onto the agenda. Some parish councils are discussing whether to submit a petition to OCC on this issue for the same meeting.

**The Firs** – CN said that OCC have stated that this site has been very badly managed and that it is/has been a waste of money.

TH stated that this comment is very welcome. However this is a very serious matter and a review has to take place. There should perhaps be an approach to the Auditors to see what their view of this issue is. CN said that lessons have been learnt from this and she will personally scrutinise what has been done.

**Budget 2013/14** – This has now been passed with an increase of 1.99%. The Community Budget has survived with a budget amount of £10,000. The Local Stewards Fund has been cut and will no longer exist under this name. The Local Steward will still have a budget but reduced, last year there was £35,000 available and now there will only be £10,000 and will cover a much larger area. It has not yet been decided how this money will be allocated. There will no longer be money for items such as SID's. The assets already owned will be maintained but OCC will not be adding any new items. CN stated that the Community Fund has a wide remit and is easy to apply for. Many OCC Councillors have expressed their disappointment at losing community funding. CN stated that she has had 2 applications from Watlington which have come in within this financial year. One is the Watlington Mini-Soccer School who have been awarded £500 and the other one is from WIB for planters in the Town which has not yet been agreed.

**Accident on Shirburn Road** – CN reported that there was an accident yesterday which involved a mini bus from the school. 4 children were in the mini bus but none needed to be hospitalised. This is the third accident on this stretch of road this winter, she is not sure if there is any common cause but OCC are looking into this issue.

**Potholes** – There are a tremendous amount of these around. Only potholes on A and B roads are being repaired at the moment due to the large amount that need attending to.

TH asked if there has been assessment on insurance claims to OCC from damage caused by potholes. If not a cost assessment should be done.

IH thanked CN for her report and for attending the meeting.

39/13 Thames Valley Police Report

No report had been received.

40/13 To receive the Balance of Accounts and approve the list of Payments

Tim Horton read out the Balances of Accounts and proposed that the payments be settled. He stated that a new printer for the office has been ordered. He thanked IH for putting in the time to identify the best one for the office needs. OALC and ORCC to be taken off this list and to be paid in April as the bills are for the next financial year. He also reported that an application had been made to the Public Charities for the recreation ground grass cutting and they have generously given us a grant of £1500. This will greatly relieve some of the pressure on this budget item. The Clerk will send a formal letter of thanks to the Public Charities.

**Resolved:** That the Balance of Accounts be agreed and the list of payments, with the changes noted above be settled and signed by the Chairman.

41/13 Committees:

A: **FINANCE** - 19/2/2013 – Tim Horton

**Resolved:** That these minutes be accepted by Council.

**Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit**

**Resolved:** That Council agree the following statement;

‘The main role of the Internal Auditor is to check all the financial and accountable records that the Clerk must keep. This is done soon after the end of the financial year and involves all the financial transactions and both the legal authority and procedural authority for such transactions - eg the signed minutes of all meetings. Once the Internal Auditor is satisfied with the accounts and records, the Clerk prepares the relatively brief submission to the External Auditor. During the year the Clerk occasionally seeks his advice - eg in transferring the Receipt and Payment accounts, operated through the year, into Accrual accounts needed for audit. Were the Clerk to leave or become temporarily unavailable, the Internal Auditor would assist a new or acting Clerk’.

**Appointment of Internal Auditor**

TH stated that Roger Symes has been extremely solicitous and helpful with the Audit in previous years.

**Resolved:** That we appoint Roger Symes as our internal auditor for Year End March 2013

NG asked what the letter to Barclays will be about. TH stated that it will be in relation to an agreement relating to a contribution towards the car park costs.

**B: PLANNING** – 5/3/2013 – Rhian Woods

**Resolved:** That these minutes be accepted by Council.

RW reported that the committee only objected to one application- P13/S0340/HH 26 The Goggs, Watlington, which was for the removal of existing rear conservatory and replace with two storey and single storey extensions.

The committee’s comments were that it would be inappropriate and there would be non traditional detailing of fenestration to a domestic extension. The window would have an overbearing impact on views from West Meadow which is identified as an important view within the Conservation Area.

**Lys Mill** – RW reported that a formal application has now been received and it will be on the Agenda for the next Planning Meeting which will be held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March.

**Planning Award** – The committee could not think of any suitable properties eligible for the award. Therefore this issue will be discussed at the next meeting and it may be that there is no award given out this year.

**C: STRATEGY** – There has been no meeting.

**D. OPERATIONS** – 20/2/2013 – Barry Adby

**Resolved:** That these minutes be accepted by Council.

#### **Planters in the High Street**

BA stated that RBr and IH went look at the existing planters on site with Terry Jackson and there was much discussion on size, positioning of tubs, materials etc and came to the conclusion that wood planters would be the best to use. Tom Bindoff has offered to refurbish any existing tubs that are in a good enough condition to be re-used. The planters will not cost the Council anything.

**Resolved:** we approve the following design of planters for the town. There will be 4 half butts and 3 Half Hogshead purchased. Some existing planters will be refurbished. WIB will meet the costs of these and any ancillary costs related to them eg painting, planting and soil/compost needed.

#### **Mansle Gardens**

**Resolved:** That we approve the WIB proposal as shown in the February 2013 Operations Minutes.

#### **Brook Street Road Closure 24/3/2013**

BA reported that we will be sent the map showing the diversions on Friday by OCC. They are not doing a re-surfacing of the road, just filling in the potholes. They will be resurfacing the road in June/July.

**E. ALLOTMENTS** –There has been no meeting.

**F. PAVILION AND SPORTS FIELD** –There has been no meeting

**G. AFFORDABLE HOUSING** – There has been no meeting.

**H. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP** – There has been no meeting.

IH stated that we are still awaiting information on this from Angie Patersons questions on this issue.

#### 42/13 Proposed New Skatepark

There was much discussion on this following the presentation by LB and FE.

It was noted that they will need to demonstrate that they have support by WPC for any grant application. TH referred to our Standing Order 28e which states that when a contract is over £138,893.00 the Council must comply with EU procurement rules. He also referred to our Financial Regulations. TH also stated that he thinks it is too early for a lottery submission.

RBr stated that he is very impressed that 2 young people have come to the meeting to discuss this issue and said they we should be careful not to put any obstacles in their way and that we should share any expertise with them. RW said that the enthusiasm in the meetings she has attended is phenomenal and that WPC should support and assist them in any way that we can.

TH stated that on the SODC CIF application there is a section which stated that there must be a detailed business plan, 2 quotations for all works, a tender process needs to be carried out etc which they will need to do. The time-scale of payments would also need to be known.

It was agreed that IH and KT look into our standing orders so that we adhere to them.

It was agreed that we need to have the application in advance of a meeting which will discuss this. It could be discussed either at Strategy on 26<sup>th</sup> March or Full Council on 9<sup>th</sup> April depending on when the information is received.

IH referred to the paper he had circulated in advance of the meeting titled 'SODC –Arts, Sport and Leisure participation draft strategy'. When Anna Capel-Davies (SODC) heard about this project she asked to have a meeting, which took place with IH and KT. The paper was noted.

The resolution was then voted on: 8 in favour, 1 abstention.

**Resolved:** That this council supports in principle the work being done by the Watlington Wheels Project in preparing a proposal for an enhanced skatepark at the recreation ground and in seeking grants and funding for this work from other sources. The statement below to be issued for their use in seeking funding and support for the project.

*'Watlington Parish Council owns Watlington Recreation ground and endeavors to enhance and improve this area for the benefit of Watlington residents and the wider community.'*

*In 2008 we were very grateful for funding from SODC and other local and national bodies to enable the play equipment and wider landscaping works to be carried out, and this was completed in 2009. In 2010 we obtained funding and implemented a project to install a range of adult fitness equipment. Both projects are widely enjoyed by a cross-section of the community, and the recreation ground is now very well used, and at all times of the day from early morning to late at night.*

*The Parish Council has been very supportive of the project since its inception last year to install new skate facilities. This will replace older existing facilities which are worn out and which were not included in the previous phases of refurbishment. The new skate facilities will also widen the appeal of the recreation ground to sections of the community who may not have been interested in the play or fitness equipment, but who none-the-less will benefit from the physical activity this facility will encourage.*

*In addition, we know that our existing old skate facilities encourage users from outside the town to come, and that they also then use other facilities within the town, to the benefit of local traders and our business community. Improving and enhancing these facilities will therefore provide better support and create other opportunities for businesses in Watlington.*

*We, the Parish Council, view this as the next "chapter" in the development of Watlington Recreation Ground and have given this project our approval and full support'.*

43/13 **Correspondence for Information - List Attached to Agenda**

*Correspondence will only be discussed if urgent and if it cannot be passed to the relevant committee to discuss.*

**Letter N° 62 Wycombe Delivery and Site Allocation Plan** – IH to have a look at this and reply if necessary.

44/13 **Representation on other bodies – To note reports that have been received**

IH Paper on Meeting with Anna Capel-Davies – IH reported that she was very positive about community involvement and also very excited about the Football Club and the new Mini Soccer

School.

**Parish Transport Representatives Meeting** – IH reported that GoRide have been approached by South Stoke to provide a bus service which has between 5-13 services a day and has been well used. They developed a service that people want with times to match with buses and trains. It is a lesson that we should learn from. IH said that he will prepare a note on this. They were very positive also about GoRide who provide Watlington with a weekend service to Oxford and Lewknor-Watlington service.

- 45/13 Other Matters for Discussion at the discretion of Chair  
*To note any other matters raised by Members of the Council*

**THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 10.10PM**