

# **WOOLMER GREEN PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of meeting held 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

**Present:** Cllr A Gribble (Chairman), Cllrs P Corke (Vice Chairman), T Dix, S Hall & R Horton.

**In attendance:** Mrs J. Pearce (Clerk). Borough Cllr T Mitchinson for part of the meeting.

**6.1 To receive apologies for absence:** Cllr G Pinney, Borough Cllrs J Cragg & R Trigg.

**6.2 To consider requests for dispensation and pecuniary & other interests on items on the agenda:** None.

**6.3 To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public:** None.

**6.4 To approve minutes Council Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> October:** Resolved: The minutes of the Council Meeting of 10 October were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**6.5 To receive reports on meetings & events attended by Councillors:** Cllrs Gribble & Hall met with the MP's constituency agent. Cllrs Gribble, Corke, Hall, Horton & Pinney met a representative from Gigaclear (see item 6.8b). Cllrs Gribble, Corke, Dix, Hall & Horton attended the Remembrance Service.

**6.6 To receive correspondence:** The Council received: A letter from a resident about a doctors surgery, waste bins & overgrown vegetation blocking footways to Knebworth. A response from Arriva following the PCs complaint about the 301 bus service. A thank you from the Royal British Legion. Notification from WHBC of a review of Polling Districts. A letter from a resident and from the MP's office about the war memorial; the PC agreed its response. Notification that Castle Water (Southern) Ltd. has been acquired by Castle Water Limited and that billing arrangements will change. A letter from a local business owner asking if they can submit an article for the newsletter about winning a business award. An enquiry from a resident with concerns about a letter they had received from Gigaclear (see item 6.8b). A complaint about the over full clothes bin (see item 6.8d). A letter of introduction from the new internal auditor. A letter from a resident about the Remembrance service.

**6.7 Planning (Cllr Dix & Horton)**

a) 6/2023/2202/HOUSE 11 White Cross Drive, Erection of a single storey rear extension: The Council agreed that the grey bi-fold doors are out of keeping with the original building and the rest of the new development and would look incongruous. The PC will comment that the doors should be white to match the existing materials.

b) 6/2023/2087/HOUSE 4 Bridge Road, Erection of single storey rear extension following the demolition of the existing conservatory: No objection.

c) 6/2023/1786/FULL 22A London Road: Application granted.

d) To receive update on Local Plan Examination: The Local Plan was adopted at a full Borough Council Meeting on 12 October 2023. The PC considers that developing the Green Belt site poses a significant flooding risk and agreed to look in to how to respond to a future planning application. **Action: Clerk.**

**6.8 Hall (Cllr Corke & Pinney) & Grounds: (Cllr Dix)**

a) To consider quote for additional electrical sockets: Resolved: To accept quote for £740+vat.

b) To consider Gigaclear Access Agreement: The Council was invited to a meeting with Gigaclear which is planning to install fibre optic broadband in the village next year. Existing infrastructure will be used so disruption will be minimal, but they wish to keep the community fully informed to reassure residents. The company said it would install and supply the new broadband to the village hall free of charge. Some residents and the Parish Council have been asked to sign a Land Access Agreement if there is infrastructure on their land that Gigaclear will need to access. Resolved: To sign Access Agreement. **Action: Clerk.**

c) To receive a report on the weekly playground inspection: Some planks on the picnic benches are rotten which the Council agreed to consider replacing in the spring. It was reported the wood edging in the tennis court is rotten and fallen down but quotes to replace this are costly. The rotten swing post raised in the annual inspection has been replaced.

d) To discuss clothes recycling bin: The bin provider was slow to empty the bin as it did not hold the gate padlock combination which resulted in some complaints when the bin became over full. This issue has been resolved and the bin has been emptied.

**6.9 Finance: (Cllr Hall)**

a) To receive and approve the payments for October: Resolved: To approve payments for October.

b) To receive and approve the accounts & bank reconciliation for October: Accounts are a little behind budget but the second instalment of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund of £5,000 is outstanding.

Resolved: To approve the accounts & bank reconciliation for October.

c) To discuss budget 2024/25: A £2,642 deficit is predicted at present. It is likely that the Barleyfields Family Centre will close; currently County Cllr Kingsbury is investigating. The PC will need to consider the implications. It is proposed to increase the precept by 5%.

d) To consider a project for the last instalment of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund: If approved by WHBC it was decided to replace the bark play surface in the Garden Road playground with a more durable alternative. Full costings will be obtained. **Action: Clerk.**

e) To discuss One Welwyn Hatfield Community Lottery: No update to report.

f) To receive a report on the 2023/24 pay award: The award amounts to between 6% & 9% and is backdated to April 2023. **Action: Clerk.**

g) To consider paying staff a Christmas bonus: Resolved: To pay staff £50 Christmas bonus.

**Action: Clerk.**

#### **6.10 Environment (Cllr Dix & Horton) & Transport: (Cllr Gribble)**

a) To consider replacing Queen's Green Canopy tree: Resolved: To purchase bare root replacement.

**Action: Clerk.**

b) To receive update on puffin crossing: No update from WHBC Enforcement to report.

c) To discuss other highways matters: (i) Some minor issues were discussed. (ii) A resident informed the PC that they had received a parking fine as the Kellard House carpark only permits a 45 minute stay. The PC considers this is not long enough for visitors to the hair salons or Simmons café. The owners of the shops will be consulted. **Action: Clerk.**

#### **6.11 Community (Cllrs Corke & Pinney)**

a) To receive a report on the Warhammer Club: No report available.

b) To consider charity to support at Carols round the Tree: Two residents had submitted suggestions. The PC agreed that "Mind in Mid Herts" will be supported at the carols event and "Homeless in Stevenage" will be supported at the car show next May.

c) To consider candidates for the Community Award: The PC agreed the award should go to Chris Tyler who inspects the playgrounds and carries out small playground repairs free of charge.

#### **6.12 To receive announcements: None.**

**6.13 To agree the date of the next meeting:** Parish Council meeting Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 7.30pm.

JRP 15.11.23

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_