

WOOLMER GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held 12th May 2024

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

In attendance: Mrs J. Pearce (Clerk). Borough Cllr J Cragg.

- 1.1 To elect a Chairman for 2024/25:** Proposed Cllr Hall, seconded Cllr Corke nominating Cllr Gribble as Chairman. Resolved: Cllr Gribble is appointed Chairman for 2024/25.
- 1.2 To receive the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.** Cllr Gribble signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
- 1.3 To elect a Vice-Chairman for 2024/25:** Proposed Cllr Gribble, seconded Cllr Hall nominating Cllr Corke as Vice-Chairman. Resolved: Cllr Corke is appointed Vice-Chairman for 2024/25.
- 1.4 To receive the Vice-Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.** Cllr Corke signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
- 1.5 To receive apologies for absence:** Borough Cllrs T Mitchinson & R Trigg.
- 1.6 To review Registers of Interest:** Cllrs Dix, Gribble, Hall & Horton signed to confirm their Register of Interest remained true.
- 1.7 To appoint councillors to the following specific responsibilities:**
Cllr Gribble: Transport, Young Persons Liaison & Staffing Committee.
Cllr Corke: Community, Village Hall & Staffing Committee.
Cllr Dix: Planning, Environment & Grounds.
Cllr Hall: Finance, Staffing Committee & Allotments Liaison.
Cllr Horton: Planning & Environment.
Cllr Pinney: Community & Village Hall.
- 1.8 To review Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, policies & risk assessments:** No amendments or changes were recommended. It was noted new Financial Regulations have been published by NALC which will be considered at the June meeting.
- 1.9 To appoint an internal Auditor for 2024/25:** Resolved: To continue with the HAPTC internal audit scheme.
- 1.10 To consider requests for dispensation and pecuniary & other interests on items on the agenda:** None.
- 1.11 To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public:** None.
- 1.12 To approve minutes of the Council Meeting on 12 March:** Resolved: The minutes of the 12 March Meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.
- 1.13 To note minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 16 April:** The minutes of the Annual Meeting were noted.
- 1.14 To receive reports on meetings attended by Councillors:** Cllrs Dix, Gribble, Hall & Horton planted the replacement Jubilee tree. Cllr Hall attended the March market. Cllrs Dix, Hall & Horton attended the April market and took part in the litter pick. Cllrs Gribble, Dix, Hall & Horton met with Knebworth Parish Council. Cllrs Gribble & Hall held an online meeting with HCC Social Services. Cllrs Gribble, Hall & Pinney attended the Wheels on Woolmer Green car show.
Cllr Pinney joined the meeting.
- 1.15 To receive correspondence:** The Council received: A proposal about setting up a village WhatsApp group (see item 1.20c). Details of Network Rail's Biodiversity Programme and an invitation to take part in its survey, Cllrs agreed to complete the survey. Notification that Herts Fullstop will implement electronic invoicing. A Thank you from Knebworth FC for the PC grant. Notification from HCC that Mardleybury Road will be a diversion route while work is carried out to Robbery Bottom Lane. A letter from the owner of Lessiters asking advice on staff housing. A letter from the Woolyfest committee about PC support for the event. General information from the Royal British Legion. Details of the Herts Sports & Physical Alliance conference. A response from Knebworth Estates about the new gate that was erected in Woolmer Green. Information from Lumo & Hull Trains. A request from a resident about keeping bees on PC land (see item 1.19c). A letter from EDF about their system upgrade. Communication from a resident about their neighbours fence. A letter from a resident about vegetation in the hall grounds affecting their property (see item 1.17c). An invitation from Knebworth Care Home to join their D-Day celebrations on 6th June. Details of the Welwyn PC Neighbourhood Plan consultation. A letter from a resident about trees in Twin Foxes estate. A letter from a resident about car show donations.

1.16 Planning: *(Cllrs Dix & Horton)*

- a) 6/2024/0576 46 New Road, Erection of single storey front extension, extension and alterations to front/side dormers, part single storey and part two storey rear extension, alterations to window and door openings following demolition of veranda: Objection due to overdevelopment and impact on neighbour. This has been called in by Cllr Cragg.
- b) 6/2024/0371/LAWP 6 Bridge Road, Certificate of lawfulness for hip to gable roof alteration, rear dormer window and front facing roof lights to facilitate a loft conversion: Application granted.
- c) 6/2024/0288/TPO 3 Woodlands Evergreen Close: Application granted.
- d) 6/2023/2552/OUTLINE Land off London Road: No decision to report.
- e) 6/2023/2433/FULL The Chequers 16 London Road: Application granted.

1.17 Hall *(Cllrs Corke & Pinney)* & Grounds: *(Cllr Dix)*

- a) To discuss Barleyfields Lease: The settlement terms to surrender the Barleyfields lease have not yet been agreed with HCC. The PC has been advised to send the usual annual invoice to YMCA as negotiations could take a long time.
- b) To approve Hall Hire Pricing Policy: Resolved: To adopt the Hall Hire Pricing Policy.
- c) To receive a report on the weekly playground inspection: All is satisfactory. The new resin surface in the Garden Road playground can only be laid when there is no risk of rain.
- d) To consider adding work to grounds contract: The Staghorn Sumac tree in the corner of the hall grounds invades the garden of a neighbour in Bridge Road. The grounds contractor will be asked how much it would cost to include regular management of the plant in the grounds contract.
- e) To consider quote to reattach stop net: The quote to reattach the net is expensive and Cllr Pinney may be able to borrow a cherry picker and arrange for the work to be done. **Action: Cllr Pinney.**

1.18 Finance: *(Cllr Hall)*

- a) To receive and approve the payments for March/April: There was a small deficit at the end of 2023/24. Resolved: To approve the payments for March/April.
- b) To receive and approve the accounts & bank reconciliation for March/April: Resolved: To approve the accounts & bank reconciliation for March/April.
- c) To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24: Deferred.
- d) To approve the Accounting Statement 2023/24: Deferred.
- e) To approve the date of the Period of for the Exercise of Public Rights: Deferred.
- f) To Approve the date the Notice is to be published on the Councils website: Deferred.
- g) To approve payments by BACS & CHAPS for 2024/25: Resolved: To continue to make payments by BACS & CHAPS.
- i) To report bad debts for 2023/24: No bad debts to report.

1.19 Environment *(Cllr Dix & Horton)* & Transport: *(Cllr Gribble)*

- a) To receive update on puffin crossing: The owner of Kellard House has been advised by WHBC enforcement that they could submit a variation to the approved planning application. The PC is not aware why this advice was given but it could take a couple of months for an application to be submitted. Enforcement will be asked for an update at the end of May. The matter was raised at the Annual Parish Meeting and our County & Borough Cllrs are aware of the issue. **Action: Clerk.**
- b) To discuss Knebworth PC proposal for a Knebworth ring road: A map has appeared on social media depicting an arc ring road from north of the Knebworth boundary in Stevenage Road to the Woolmer Green development site. This is different to the details shared by Knebworth PC Cllrs who supported the idea of a new road joining the Swangley's Lane development to Woolmer Green to divert traffic from Knebworth high street. County Cllr Kingsbury confirmed HCC Highways are not aware of any proposals for a new road and thought the scheme was unlikely to materialise. The Council agreed it would resist any proposal to introduce a new road that encouraged more traffic through Woolmer Green and weakened the Green Belt between the two villages.
- b) To discuss other highways matters: (i) The Council noted the noise emanating from traffic when diverted from the A1(M) overnight. (ii) The Council noted the resurfacing of the B197 was progressing. (iii) The waste bin on the corner of London Road/Mardleybury Road is missing and will be reported. **Action: Clerk.**
- c) To consider a request to site bee hives on Parish Council land: Awaiting advice from the PC's insurance company.

1.20 Community *(Cllrs Corke & Pinney)*

- a) To receive a report on Wheels on Woolmer Green: The event was well supported although it was a wet day. The Red Lion and the ice cream provider supplied the trophies for the prize winners. £267.49 in donations was collected. A volunteer who helped organise the car show asked if they could collect donations for Alzheimer's Research. The Council agreed it would divide donations between Herts

Young Homeless and Alzheimer's Research. It was further agreed that Alzheimer's Research will be supported at the Carols round the Tree event on Christmas Eve.

b) To receive update on Village Day: The Council discussed arrangements.

c) To consider purchasing a PC mobile to participate in the crime reporting WhatsApp group:

Resolved: To purchase a mobile up to £200 and a low-cost SIM only contract.

Action: Clerk.

1.21 To receive announcements. (*for information only*): None.

1.22 To agree date of next meeting – Parish Meeting Tuesday 11 June at 7.30pm.

1.23 To exclude the press and public in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed under item 1.24: Resolved: To agree to the exclusion of the press and public.

1.24 To discuss confidential issue: The Council received a report on the meeting with HCC Social Services.

JRP 15/05/2024

Signed: _____
Chairman.

Date: _____