

WINDLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held on

Tuesday 19th March 2024 at 7.00pm

at

St Anne's Church Centre, 43 Church Road, Bagshot, GU19 5EQ

1. **Chairman's Welcome and Introductions**

Cllr Turner extended a warm welcome to everyone attending the meeting and provided a brief overview of the format and essential housekeeping information.

2. **To appoint a Clerk for the meeting**

Cllr Turner proposed and those present agreed to appoint Jo Whitfield, Clerk to the Council to Clerk the meeting.

3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

It was resolved with 15 in favour, 3 against, and 1 abstention, to approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th March 2023. These were duly signed by the Chairman.

4. **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Turner, delivered a comprehensive presentation spotlighting the Council's strategic plan and key priorities. Attendees were furnished with a strategic plan update, along with an annual report encapsulating the Council's endeavors and accomplishments throughout the past year.

Cllr Turner particularly emphasised the Council's attainment of a clean audit once again, underscoring its commitment to fiscal responsibility. Moreover, efforts to enhance communication and community engagement were highlighted, including the appointment of a new communications officer aimed at fostering closer ties with the community.

Cllr Turner also thanked the Planning Committee for all their hard work reviewing and making valid representation on the 244 applications during the year.

Key areas of focus outlined during the presentation included:

- **Community provision:** Every year Council is pleased to provide hanging baskets and summer planting around the villages, as well as festive trees and lighting, which are aimed at enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the locality.
- **Tree Management:** The Council oversees a substantial inventory of trees, with a focus on devising pragmatic solutions for their management. This underscores the significance of preserving and upholding green spaces within the community.
- **Acknowledgment and gratitude** were extended to the planning team for their diligent efforts.

- Allotments: The lease of allotments was addressed, recognising their high demand as a sought-after community provision.
- Greenspace management: Acknowledging a shortfall in greenspace management over the past year, the Council is actively exploring avenues to address the subpar service. Cllr Turner underscored the Council's dedication to improving the overall environment and recreational facilities within the community.

Following this, the Chairman introduced Windlesham Parish Council's Responsible Financial Officer, who delivered a concise presentation on the Council's financial matters. This encompassed details regarding the 2024-25 budget, the existing earmarked reserves, and insights into the 2024-25 precept increase.

Questions

1. Jenny Creamer, a Windlesham Resident - inquired about the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds, specifically questioning the percentage allotted to the Parish Council. In response, Cllr Turner and Cllr Malcaus Cooper clarified that developments in Bagshot or Lightwater garnered 15% of CIL funds, whereas in Windlesham, the allocation was 25%, attributed to the presence of a Neighbourhood Plan in the area.

Cllr Malcaus Cooper also highlighted that the Borough Council retained the remainder of the CIL funds. Regrettably, the Parish Council is ineligible to apply for any portion of these remaining funds for use within the three villages.

2. Nick Dorrington, a Bagshot Resident questioned why the Parish Council persisted in funding a greenspace contract that was underperforming.

Cllr Turner explained that due to the absence of penalty clauses within the contract, the Parish Council had encountered limitations in addressing the underperformance. Acknowledging this as a learning experience, plans were underway to initiate a procurement tender in order to rectify the situation.

5. **Roles & Responsibilities of Local Authorities**

Cllr Malcaus Cooper gave a brief presentation on the roles and responsibilities of local authorities.

Cllr Harris requested a show of hands to gauge how many of those in attendance had never served as a Councillor before. Only a few individuals raised their hands.

Tony Murphy, Windlesham Resident informed those present that although the Parish Council serves as the initial tier of local government, it operates independently and is not subordinate to the Borough or County Council. He then posed a thought-provoking question: "What does a councillor do?" Offering his perspective, he stated that a councillor's primary duty is to represent and advocate for the constituents who elected them.

6. **Resident Engagement**

Engagement boards were set up around the hall to enable residents to give their views and identify priorities on the following topics:

- Environment & Greenspace
- Traffic & Infrastructure
- Policing & Crime

- Health and Social Care
- Planning
- Community Events

7. Resident Engagement Feedback

Feedback from all engagement boards was reported to the meeting

• Environment & Greenspace Feedback

- War memorial lettering
- Comment: It is imperative to conserve and improve all greenspaces.
- Cllr Turner raised concerns that Esso has not adequately restored the area following the works to install the new pipeline. Cllr Stevens remarked that Esso's long-term strategy did not involve immediate engagement in conservation efforts.
- School Lane Field Pond – environmental work

• Traffic & Infrastructure Feedback

- Concerns were raised about the Lightwater M3/A322 junction.
- Comment: Highways may be reluctant to resolve one problem for fear of it causing another.
- A miracle is required for traffic and infrastructure.
- Poor condition of road markings
- Rat runs through the villages should be taken into account when considering traffic and infrastructure.
- Sufficient road signage in the appropriate places.
- Poor Broadband infrastructure in Lightwater

Cllr Willgoss and Cllr Lewis informed those present that there were two Parish-led initiatives whereby the Committees had set up working groups to work in partnership with SCC to deliver traffic calming schemes in Bagshot and Windlesham.

Residents were informed that a scheme had been approved to introduce traffic calming in Bagshot, to which the Parish Council had committed significant funds. This scheme may also extend to a 20mph limit as well as a 7.5 ton limit diverting HGVs back onto the A322 and out of the village centre.

Residents were also informed that the Windlesham Village Committee has committed £7,500 towards a lighting scheme under Broadway Road bridge which will be joined by an ANPR camera in the same location. With a further commitment of £3,000 towards speed surveys in 8 identified areas, to be followed by a consultation with residents once the data is available.

SCC Cllr Tear expressed gratitude to all organizations collaborating with Surrey County Council (SCC) to enhance traffic and infrastructure in the region. He also reiterated his dedication to enhancing pedestrian safety at Broadway Road Bridge.

Tim Dodds, a resident of Lightwater, shared his involvement in speed watch activities on Thorndown Road. He also informed the meeting about his discussions with Cllr Tear regarding signage on the bends along Red Road.

Jenny Creamer, a resident of Windlesham, asked Cllr Tear about the proposal for the M3 Junction 3. While Cllr Tear couldn't provide a specific proposal, he acknowledged residents' concerns about the issues at the M3 junction and promised to continue reporting them. He also informed those present that according to National Highways, any remedial actions were unlikely to occur before 2030-2035.

SHBC Cllrs Julie Hoad and Kevin Thompson confirmed their investigation into the inadequate broadband provision in Lightwater and Bagshot. It was revealed that BT Openreach is making progress and has plans to install broadband in both areas, with installation set to commence in Lightwater in April as part of a two-year plan. Cllr Hoad also confirmed that the Leader of the SHBC pledged to personally contact BT Openreach regarding this matter.

Furthermore, Cllr Malcaus Cooper confirmed that she had also been working alongside residents who had contacted the Parish Council regarding the lack of broadband infrastructure in Lightwater. There were also concerns raised about the quality of road and pavement repairs. Attendees recognised the importance of enhancing provision in the area, emphasizing that any provider must be held responsible for the quality of road and pavement repairs necessitated by their works. Cllr Tear assured those present that if issues persisted six months after the completion of the work, they should contact him, and he would intervene promptly.

- **Policing & Crime Feedback**

- Increased police presence: Attendees expressed a desire for more police officers to walk around and engage in conversations with residents.
- Speed enforcement: Officers present confirmed that the A30 has been a priority for the specialist traffic team, and a community speed watch initiative is in the process of being established. Cllr Willgoss requested that speed enforcement activities also target the village centers.
- PC Howard advised that Speed Officers can be requested if resources allowed.

Cllr Malcaus Cooper highlighted the historical practice of regular information-sharing meetings between the Police and the Parish Council. She then questioned whether it would be feasible to revive this communication channel on a regular basis.

Cllr Lewis raised the issue presented by car meets, while Cllr Hardless raised concerns about speeding on Chertsey Road and Broadway Road between 5 am and 7 am. Limited police resources were cited as a challenge in addressing speeding, with officers emphasising the priority of emergency response. Efforts have shifted towards preventive measures rooted in evidence-based models, although implementing long-term interventions to tackle speeding remains a challenge.

- **Health and Social Care Feedback**

- Concerns regarding the GP Lightwater surgery and future provision.
- Concerns regarding access to GP practice in Bagshot.
- What can pharmacies do?
- Parking at hospitals – concern about costs of parking
- Developing diagnostic centres in communities.

Cllr Tear informed those present that he is a member of the liaison committee for Frimley Health Foundation Trust and is happy to hear residents views.

Tony Murphy, a Windlesham resident, expressed concerns about the parking issues at Frimley Park and the financial burden imposed by parking charges. He also highlighted the lack of proper integration in health and social care services, emphasising the need for addressing this issue.

- **Planning Feedback**

- Does the Lightwater Design Statement still apply? Cllr White informed those present that the design statement is referred to at both a Parish and Borough level although it could do with a review.
- Comment: would like to see a comprehensive approach to planning, rather than knee-jerk reactions to government dictates.
- Comment: Demolish Lightwater Pavilion and replace it with something realistic. We don't need more meeting rooms in the village.
- Tony Murphy, a resident of Windlesham, provided verbal feedback, stating that the Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC) Executive were convening that evening to discuss the Local Plan. He believed that the timetable for the next stage of consultation, would be scheduled for the summer, with the aim of adopting the plan in 2025. Mr Murphy highlighted the National Planning Policy Framework's (NPPF) mandate for local plans to be reviewed at least every five years and that the SHBC local plan is long overdue. He emphasised that the NPPF notes the plan should be succinct, with Mr Murphy stating that extensive documents were unnecessary.

- **Community Events Feedback**

- It is very important to consolidate communities.
- More community events run by the community.

Cllr Gordon emphasised the vital role volunteers play in community events and urged all attendees to encourage members of their communities to support local organisations by volunteering.

The Chair confirmed that all points raised during the engagement session will be submitted to the relevant authority, organisation, or group for consideration.

8. Q & A

Ursula Trentham, a Bagshot resident thanked the Parish Council for providing the outdoor gym at School Lane Field, Bagshot.

The Parish Council was also asked to pass on compliments to the street cleaner in Bagshot.

The meeting closed at 21.11.