

# Wonersh Parish Council

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## **Minutes of the meeting of Wonersh Parish Council held on Thursday 11 February 2021 at 7.30 pm, online**

**Present:** Councillors Mike Band Chris Crouch, Chris Howard, Ben Knight, Stephen Lavender, Malcolm Scott, Anthony Shutes, and Rod Weale (Chair).

**In attendance:** Lisa Davison, Borough Councillor Michael Goodridge and five members of the public

### **20/21 250 To consider and approve apologies for absence.**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **20/21 251 Wonersh Parish Code of Conduct – Declarations of disclosable interests.**

There were no declarations of disclosable interests.

### **20/21 252 Open meeting for members of the public to raise matters with the Council.**

There were five members of the public present initially including the Brough Councillor, three of whom left once the items of interest had been discussed. One member of the public with an interest in 275 and presented a case for reducing or felling a tree on Wonersh Common. Two members of the public were interested in items 261 and 262, stressing the importance of making the key route for the village safer, with increasing speeds presenting a problem since lockdown but, with a particular emphasis on the increased danger on Church Hill, site of the former VAS and an area where there was a recent accident. The member of the public noted recent communication with the Police, MP and local councils on this matter.

Borough Cllr Michael Goodridge noted that a boundary review was underway, with the intention of reducing 57 Borough Councillors to 50, being of greatest impact to the villages in the Borough. He was averse to the suggestions being posed in relation to this.

A further member of the public joined later and the Chair explained that the open session was complete and the member of the public was welcome to observe.

The Chair brought forward items 275 and 261 and 262, to follow item 258, before continuing with agenda below. Discussion is included in agenda order.

### **20/21 253 Briefing by the Safer Neighbourhood Policing Team on issues of local interest and concern.**

No update had been received but the increased police presence in the area had been noted and also ongoing concerns regarding theft from sheds and outbuilding and concerns regarding antisocial behaviour.

### **20/21 254 To consider and approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 January 2021.**

These were considered and approved (proposed by Cllr Lavender) and will be signed in due course.

### **20/21 255 To receive progress reports about matters previously considered and approved by the Council.**

These were largely considered in the agenda items below but additionally Cllr Band noted the progress made in responding to Waverley Borough Council regarding the leases and the Clerk noted that Cllrs Lavender and Howard had delivered the letters to households bordering commons in Wonersh and Shamley Green and Lords Hill respectively. Cllr Howard noted that there had not been progress as yet on the parking area near Shamley Green shop and measurements were required with respect to this, with consideration for the placement of arrows. Cllr Weale said he could assist with the latter.

### **20/21 256 To receive the approved minutes of the Planning Committee Meetings held on 7 January 2021.**

These were received.

**20/21 257 To consider and approve the minutes of the Risk and Audit Committee Meeting held on 28 January 2021.**

These were considered and approved, subject to changes regarding expenditure by the routine maintenance contractors and the allocation of reserves, (proposed by Cllr Shutes).

**20/21 258 To consider and approve the minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 7 January 2021.**

These were considered and approved (proposed by Cllr Band).

**20/21 259 Finance – to consider and approve the following:**

- (a) the list of receipt and payment vouchers in January 2021;**

These were approved (proposed by Cllr Howard).

- (b) the end-December financial statement;**

These were approved (proposed by Cllr Band).

Cllr Band noted the works completed by Council staff in updating the outrun for the 2020/21 financial year. He requested that the allocation of these to reserves be delegated to the Risk and Audit Committee. The Council approved this delegation (proposed by Cllr Shutes).

- (c) the payment of £500 (50% reduction) in rent to Wonersh Cricket Club for the Parish Office and use of meeting room;**

This was approved (proposed by Mike Band).

- (d) the payment of a grant of £250 to Wonersh Cricket Club for grass cutting and general maintenance of the playing field;**

This was approved (proposed by Anthony Shutes).

- (e) the payment of up to £50 for the South West Surrey Domestic Abuse Outreach Service; and**

This was deferred pending approval of 20/21 259 (f).

- (f) a draft grant funding policy for Wonersh Parish Council**

This was deferred to the March meeting.

*Member of the public arrived.*

**20/21 260 To receive an update on the Peppercot and approve next steps.**

It was noted that the feasibility study was underway and the draft report was likely to be available for the next meeting. It was confirmed that discussion with the consultants highlighted the importance of ensuring a safe crossing point in the locale,

**20/21 261 To receive an update on the Vehicle Activated Sign and approve next steps.**

The Council noted local concern on this matter and Cllr Weale provided some context. Cllr Band was pleased to announce that the VAS would be purchased early in the financial year from Surrey County Council's 2021/22 budget. Surrey County Council were seeking reassurance that installation would be funded from other sources, which the Parish Council noted would include, but not be restricted to, Council reserves. It was noted that the installation costs were estimated to be £5,000, which would be in the region of 50% of the overall cost of purchase and installation, which was inline with what had been discussed previously.

**Action: Clerk to contact Surrey County Council to confirm installation costs.**

**20/21 262 To consider concerns regarding vehicle speeds through the parish and approve next steps.**

On a related matter the Council shared resident concerns regarding speeding through and in the parish, with a particular emphasis upon the B2128, including Church Hill. There was discussion that the local concern from the Highways Authority and Police was present but lacked a concrete and effective response, when compared to other areas. The following actions were agreed:

**Action: To work collectively with other rural parish to emphasise the problem and seek an avenue for response.**

**To work up a design for traffic calming throughout the length of this route and present to Surrey County Council for their consideration, alongside seeking to contribute financially through CIL contributions and other sources.**

**20/21 263 To consider recommendations for changes to mowing schedules from the Commons Working Party and Environmental Advisory Groups, with consideration for increasing biodiversity, and approve next steps.**

This review was underway with draft maps being discussed by the Commons Working Party with input from the Environmental Advisory Groups, based on input from key literature and local expertise. The principle is a maximum of two mows a year, with additional cuts for verges, paths through meadow areas and the playgrounds and cricket pitches. Maps are to be finalised with the Clerk, with Cllrs Shutes and Howard's input. It was viewed as a one-year trial, with a view to continuing and developing longer term. Communication to residents bordering the affected has been shared for Council approval and, following discussion and agreement with contractors, with the wider community, including through Parish Magazines and the Spring Newsletter. The desire to extend this to the Wonersh closed burial ground and Church Green was noted.

**Action: Clerk to work with Cllr Shutes and Howard to finalise maps for further discussion and refinement with contractors.**

**Clerk and Cllrs to arrange on site meeting with contractors, with updated prices to be agreed at the March Council.**

**Clerk to finalise letters drafted by Cllr Shutes for local households**

**Cllrs Shutes and Howard to submit articles to Parish Magazines**

**Clerk to communicate plans regarding common land to Wonersh Church administrator with a view to introducing a similar approach there, and, if receptive, discuss further with contractor.**

**Cllr Crouch to communicate plans regarding common land to other Trustees of Church Green with a view to introducing a similar approach there.**

**20/21 264 To consider the collapsed drainage pipe under the Lawnsmead easement, and other underground pipes of concern, and approve next steps.**

Cllr Shutes noted that in the vicinity of Lawnsmead the drain under the easement to Lawnsmead Hall had collapsed and that towards the Pepperpot a culvert was open. Agreed actions with respect to this were:

**Action: Clerk to contact the church to highlight the issue with the culverted drain under the easement to the Hall, including the offer to arrange the works.**

**Clerk to contact Surrey County Council officers to ascertain whether a grid was required for the open culvert and, if so, the preferred size of any openings.**

Cllr Shutes also noted the blockage under the easement near Tanglely Apartments:

**Action: Clerk to contact the management company to highlight the issue with the culverted drain under the easement to the apartments, including the offer to arrange the works.**

The Clerk raised concerns regarding the ongoing parking on the common land in front of the cottages towards The Platt. The Chair highlighted the historic problems there, including noting that residents had been informed of their liability for the drains, should parking result in further collapses. The Council noted the update that all residents had recently received letters advising them of the requirement not to park on common land, including easements. It was agreed that no further actions should be taken in this locale until there is time for residents to respond to recent communications.

**20/21 265 To consider options for protecting the Platt and approve next steps.**

The Council received with interest the offer for earth to be received to improve the Platt and, if appropriate form part of a bund to protect the area, which has brought forward this general discussion.

The Council discussed the proposal to construct bunds following those introduced at the Wonersh Sports Ground area of Wonersh Common. It was agreed that this should be considered as part of a formal review of protecting areas in the parish, either through the construction of buns or posts, the latter of particular importance to some verges, where common land was being eroded by vehicle use. Informal reviews had already taken place.

The Council agreed that, should it be confirmed that the Platt be a priority area for this that bunds be preferred to bunds and ditches. Based on previous estimates, and ongoing satisfaction with other works in Wonersh, AEM is to be approached in the first instance. It was noted that the preferred time for the completion of works of this type is September, so subject to the completion of the report, works should be scheduled for then drawing on Council reserves. It was noted that the resident offering soil may not be in a position to work to this timeline, or indeed this earth may not be suited to these purposes, but this would be discussed further with the resident and contractor,

**Action: Clerk to work with Commons Working Party to put together a formal report on protection of common land.**

**Clerk to work with Commons Working Party to confirm the value of the contract and material requirements for this and, in relation to this, discuss further with the resident.**

**20/21 266 To receive any further updates from the Commons Working Party and Environmental Advisory Groups and approve next steps.**

Cllr Shutes presented an update from the Commons Working Party with requests for Council consideration in relation to particular agenda items.

The Council discussed the option for a further bin on Wonersh Common, near the entrance to Lawnsmead. This led to a discussion whether to replace single bins with double bins for recycling and general waste, which raise awareness and, if used correctly, can reduce waste going to landfill or for incineration. This would have a cost implication in terms of bins and collection schedules. It was noted that recent changes in neighbouring parishes had been driven and funded by Guildford Borough Council and, as yet, Waverley Borough Council had yet to adopt a similar policy.

**Action: Cllr Howard to discuss further with Waverley Borough Council to understand their position before the Parish Council discuss this further.**

In addition to the discussions above, formulating the process for volunteering on Council land had been raised at the Risk and Audit Committee and this was pertinent to a number of items on the agenda, particularly where actions extend beyond an advisory role. Plus, there had been a number of requests to collect litter as part of a Duke of Edinburgh award, which the Parish Council are keen to offer. It had been intended that this be reviewed at the next Risk and Audit meeting but given other matters of important to Council, it was decided that this should, ideally, be expedited for discussion at the March Council.

**Action: Cllrs Band, Shutes and Knight to progress this.**

Cllrs Howard and Shutes also provided an update on the funding of the baseline, environmental surveys in the parish, with funding applications submitted to Wonersh Foundation and Surrey County Council. The Council welcomed this update.

**20/21 267 To receive and approve the 2020/21 register of allotment holders.**

Deferred until March.

**20/21 268 To receive and consider recommendations on the 2022/23 allotment garden rent per full and half plot and approve next steps.**

Cllr Lavender presented a report to Council proposing options for the 2022/23 rent for allotment half and full plot. The council approved his recommendation, for a small increase for 2022/23 of £1 per half plot and £2 per full plot.

**Action: Clerk to inform the allotment holders of the proposed increase for 2022/23, whilst requesting the 2021/22 rent from holders.**

**20/21 269 To review and consider the performance during the probation period of the routine maintenance contractor and approve next steps.**

The Council were satisfied with the performance of jobs completed and approved the contract for CATH services, following a satisfactory probation period. Councillors requested that there be clearer prioritisation of task communicated by the Clerk and that invoicing be provided in a manner which allows for allocation of spend, not just to budget categories but to understand investment in Wonersh and Shamley Green.

**20/21 270 To receive recommendations and approve permitted spends on materials by the routine maintenance contractors and approve next steps.**

This was deferred, awaiting recommended figures to be added to the Risk & Audit Committee meeting minutes.

**20/21 271 To consider the introduction for identity cards for Councillors and approve next steps** *To consider and approve: payment of up to £100 for the purchase of identity cards (20/21 259 (g)).*

Cllr Weale provided examples of possible ID cards and discussed how these may be helpful, particularly during the current lockdown and restrictions on movement. The Council discussed this and decided that, as the work of a Parish Councillor is local to their place of residence or work then most residents were familiar with their role, or could easily confirm, so this was not, at present, required.

**20/21 272 To consider and confirm arrangements for the annual and routine playground inspections and approve next steps.**

This was considered and Council agreed that Play Inspections Ltd would be commissioned for the annual inspection. Noting in particular that there was a budget underspend this year there was a desire by Council to respond to low and very low risk items now that moderate risk items, at the Wonersh, had been responded to. This would allow for a more thorough review regarding whether items required removal and, once fundraising had been achieved, replaced.

Councillors in each village was to review the previous annual inspection report and associated summaries and create a list of tasks for the routine maintenance contractors, to complete in addition to the contracted hours for other works in the Parish. It was noted that bigger jobs, like the replacement of matting should, in future, be referred to the playground manufacturers but smaller jobs be completed by the routine maintenance contractor.

Regarding the weekly inspections the Clerk reminded Councillors to, arrange appropriate rotas and continue to submit their reports in line with existing Council policy and to consider whether to review this policy to reflect guidance on playground weekly inspections and in light of recommendations of the 2018/19 internal audit. The Clerk noted that she was obtaining prices for these inspections to be completed by RPII-qualified contractors, as agreed in the January meeting, and would update in due course, in case this is something the Council would like to consider as part of this policy review. It was noted that contractors offering this are often able to complete the maintenance but that using separate routine maintenance contractors was preferred at present.

**Actions: Clerk to schedule in the annual inspection for June 2021**

**Councillors in each village to review the recommendations of the previous annual inspections, with a view to completing works in advance of June**

**Clerk to work with Councillors to provide a list of requirements to routine maintenance contractors to be completed outside the regular hours.**

**Clerk to review and share recommendations related to routine playground inspections**

**Councillors to follow the currently agreed policy until such time it is reviewed by Council.**

**20/21 273 To receive the requests for comments on the proposed diversion of Public Bridleway 328 (Wonersh) from Surrey County Council and approve next steps.**

The Clerk noted that the Council had recently received a request and reminder to respond to the planned changes to Bridleway 328. The Council agreed to delegate this to the Clerk with assistance from the Shamley Green Councillors and to respond to Surrey County Council at the earliest opportunity.

**Action: Clerk and Shamley Green Councillors to respond to Surrey County Council at the earliest opportunity.**

**20/21 274 To receive the request to introduce grit bins in the Parish and approve next steps.**

This was discussed with relation to a request to provide a grit bin on Barnett Close and Councillor observations that key services, such as shops, in neighbouring parishes appeared to be gritted, whereas this did not seem to be the case in the Wonersh Parish. The Clerk presented a summary of the Surrey County Council policy and requirements in relation to them providing a bin, organisations including Parish Councils funding a Surrey County Council bin and bin purchased by other organisations, plus details of decisions in relation to this from local Parish Councils plus liabilities in relation to this, where the recommendation was for the Parish Council to not grit the area, should they choose to provide facilities.

The Council opted not to progress this on behalf of the Council, viewing highways traditionally as the responsibility of Surrey County Council and, where there are Council tenants, Waverley Borough Council. They did agree to share concerns with local key services and the find out whether there was support in principle for gritting the local area and willingness in practice to provide resources for this, if so.

**Action: Cllrs Shutes and Weale to speak to local shops regarding the gritting of the locales and update the Council.**

**20/21 275 To receive the request to reduce or fell a tree near the cricket pavilion and approve next steps.**

The Council received the request from Wonersh Cricket Club, including the rationale, which extended to concerns about the health of the tree. The Council noted that the most recent tree survey, which provided detail for trees requiring attention, did not refer to the tree in question but they would request an inspection by a tree officer for Waverley Borough Council. If the tree is found to require attention on this basis, Wonersh Parish Council will consider with a view to proceeding, otherwise it was noted that it was not Council policy to fell or complete works on healthy trees.

**Action: Clerk to request an inspection by WBC tree officer and inform the Council and Cricket Club of the outcome.**

**Council to agree next steps on that basis.**

**20/21 276 To receive reports by Members and the Clerk.**

Cllr Howard reported that, with Wonersh Foundation, a way had been found for charitable donations, could be received and ring-fenced for specific works in the Parish, thus also benefitting from gift aid and anonymity of the donor. The Council welcomed this news.

**20/21 277 Members' business and correspondence for noting or including on a future agenda.**

Cllr Weale noted with regret that he had received a letter of resignation from Cllr Walmsley-Beveridge. He opened the meeting and Nathalie Walmsley-Beveridge took the opportunity to thank the Council for the opportunity and shared her desire to continue volunteering with the Environmental Advisory Group and attending meetings as a member of the public. The Council thanked Nathalie for her contribution and time.

The following items were also highlighted for inclusion on future agendas, either by the minutes or Councillors:

- The Council Strategy, Cllr Shutes reminded Councillors to share their comments on the updated draft so a further zoom meeting can be arranged and the final draft be present in March or April
- The updated Emergency Plan, Cllr Shutes discussed the requirements for each village
- The Annual Assembly, scheduled for 22 April 2021, most probably via zoom.
- The Pepperpot Feasibility Study
- The updated Code of Conduct and other policies in due course.
- The volunteer policy
- The leases with Waverley Borough Council for land asset transfer and the community room
- The review of the playground inspections policy
- The allotment register
- The grant funding policy
- The possible change of date to the May Meeting and / or delegation to the Clerk, should the legislation allowing for remote meetings not be extended.

Given the time, some small items were not discussed, including depositing of building waste outside the curtilage of a property and impacts on ditches, which Cllr Howard will progress in her Borough Councillor role and keeping the Clerk and Shamley Green Councillors informed.

**20/21 278 Dates of future meetings:**

**Council:** 11 March 2021

**Planning Committee:** 18 February 2021, 11 March 2021

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