

Wonersh Parish Council

BLACKHEATH • SHAMLEY GREEN • WONERSH

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Minutes of the meeting of Wonersh Parish Council held on Thursday 9 July 2020 at 7.30 pm, online

Present: Councillors Mike Band, Chris Crouch, Chris Howard, Ben Knight, Malcolm Scott, Anthony Shutes, Nathalie Walmsley-Beveridge and Rod Weale (Chair).

In attendance: Lisa Davison, Borough Councillor Michael Goodridge and four members of the public.

MINUTES

20/21 062 To consider and approve apologies for absence.

The Council received and approved apologies for absence from Councillor Stephen Lavender.

20/21 063 To receive the Declarations of Office and the Register of Interests for coopted Councillors.

The following residents of the parish signed their Declarations of Office at the meeting in view of the Proper Officer of the Council, who will sign them upon receipt.

- Ben Knight, Councillor for Wonersh
- Malcolm Scott, Councillor for Blackheath
- Nathalie Walmsley-Beveridge, Councillor for Shamley Green

They were welcomed to the Council and invited to participate in the meeting as Councillors.

The Clerk confirmed that they had submitted their Register of Interest and provided

Action: Clerk to upload to internet and submit to Waverley Borough Council.

20/21 064 Wonersh Parish Code of Conduct – Declarations of disclosable interests and, if requested, consideration and approval of dispensations under the Code.

Cllr Howard declared a disclosable interest in 20/21 083 and 20/21 084.

20/21 065 Open meeting for members of the public to raise matters with the Council.

Members of the public shared their interest in several items that were brought to the start of the meeting and discussed in turn. Specific comments were:

- An interest in the decisions regarding the cherry tree on Wonersh Common and a willingness to contribute to its replacement.
- An interest in item 085 and 086 and surrounding discussions.

A further member of the public was not able to identify themselves and all attendees had received the following information, with consideration for the platform being used, prior to attendance:

“Please ensure from the use of the video camera, or from your name that is clear who you are or private message me to confirm your details.”

For one member of the public this information was not readily available, so they were returned to the waiting room. They returned after sharing their name in full.

20/21 066 Briefing by the Safer Neighbourhood Policing Team on issues of local interest and concern.

There were no updates received on crime or the requests for speed data from the recent monitoring. Cllr Weale noted a recent aggravated burglary in Shamley Green, where reports are likely to be available for the following month.

20/21 067 To consider and approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 June 2020.

These were approved (proposed by Cllr Howard) and will be signed by the Chair in due course.

20/21 068 To receive progress reports about matters previously considered and approved by the Council.

The Council noted that all items for discussion were on the agenda.

20/21 069 To consider and approve the minutes of the Risk and Audit Committee meeting held on 2 July 2020.

The Council considered and approved these (proposed by Cllr Band), Cllr Band will sign these in due course.

He noted that whilst there were no recommendations to be considered at this Council Meeting there were lots of actions being undertaken, which will be presented to the Council during the September Council Meeting. These included:

- updating the Risk Management Register;
- updating the Code of Conduct; and
- formulating a contract and project-related procedures for the Council to follow.

20/21 070 To receive the approved minutes of the Planning Committee Meetings held on 11 June 2020.

These were received.

20/21 071 Finance – to consider and approve the following:

(a) the list of receipt and payment vouchers in June 2019;

This was deferred.

(b) the end-June 2019 financial statement;

This was deferred.

(c) the payment of £400 to SSALC for the provision of an online training course for all Councillors and the Clerk;

The Council resolved to approve this (proposed by Cllr Howard).

(d) the payment of £44.16 for bunting purchased for VE day;

The Council resolved to approve this (proposed by Cllr Band).

(e) the payment of up to £250 for clearance of brambles from common land near Lawnsmead;

The Council resolved to approve this (proposed by Cllr Shutes).

- (f) the payment of £50 as a contribution to the retirement gift of the Headteacher at Wonersh and Shamley Green School;**

The Council resolved to approve this (proposed by Cllr Band).

Action: Cllr Weale to write a letter to accompany the cheque.

- (g) the payment of up to £1,000 for the replacement of posts on Wonersh Common;**

The Council resolved to approve this (proposed by Cllr Shutes).

- (h) the payment of up to £400 to remove the cherry tree on Wonersh Common;**

The Council resolved to approve this (proposed by Cllr Shutes).

- (i) the payment of up to £50 to the Red Cross, with consideration for local support provided; and**

The Council resolved not to approve this.

- (j) the development of a written policy agreeing the type of requests Wonersh Parish Council provide grants for.**

The Council resolved to do this (proposed by Cllr Howard) and noted Cllr Lavender's offer to complete this.

Action: Cllr Lavender to write a policy.

20/21 072 Annual Governance and Accountability Return: To receive the internal auditor's report and approve next steps.

These were yet to be received. The Clerk has requested an extension from the External Auditors.

20/21 073 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Part 3).

This is deferred pending the internal auditor's report.

2019/20: To receive and approve Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement. 20/21 074 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Part 3).

This is deferred pending the internal auditor's report.

2019/20: To consider and approve Section 2 – Accounting Statement.

This is deferred pending the internal auditor's report.

19/20 075 To confirm publication of AGAR on Wonersh Parish Council website from Monday 17 August 2020 to Monday 28 September, to comply with statutory requirements.

This is deferred pending the internal auditor's report.

20/21 076 To receive an update from the Parish Survey Committee and Village Working Parties.

Cllr Crouch provided an update for the new Councillors, highlighting that the Parish Survey Committee provided a Parish-level, in depth response to the results of the Parish Survey, action in Wonersh and Shamley Green was by village-level working parties and a range of activities were underway in this respect. Often centred around three core concerns:

- Transport, travel and parking
- The environment, encompassing many aspects of this
- Communication and public engagement / participation

Cllr Crouch updated the Council regarding the planned meeting at the Pepperpot with Cllr Victoria Young and Officers at Surrey County Council. Cllr Shutes noted that, in Wonersh at least, the aims of the communications group had been fulfilled, Wonersh Connections' draft website was available to view and would be launched in the Autumn; the Wonersh Playgrounds Committee had members who were meeting with trustees imminently.

Regarding Shamley Green, Cllr Band highlighted that the main issue at present was the Vehicle Activated Speed (VAS) sign which required replacement. County Councillor Victoria Young was taking this to Committee with a view to it being a priority. Cllr Howard noted that there had been a meeting of the Shamley Green environment group, with a focus on the ponds but highlighted that this best be considered under the next item, progressing from the Parish Survey to the actions stemming from this.

This led to discussion regarding the current and potential future structure of the Council, Committees and Working Parties and whether a committee, with delegated authority thus reducing the decisions made by Council, and the length of the Council meeting, was preferred over a working party, which could be more agile and inclusive of residents, yet could only make recommendations to Council. And, more generally, what the committees and working parties should be focused on / named.

Councillors agreed that further discussion away from a Council Meeting was required in order to make recommendations on the next step.

Action: Councillors to discuss and agree the Parish Council governance and associated committees and working parties.

20/21 077 To receive an update from the Commons Working Party and approve next steps. *Italicised items added following the August Extraordinary Council Meeting.*

The Commons Working Party had met and the new lead, Cllr Shutes, has proposed a structure, formed of three levels, as summarised in Appendix 1. This comprises the Council, the Commons Working Party, with Councillors from each Ward and three advisory groups, one for each Shamley Green and Wonersh, the villages where there is significant land under Parish Council management, and then a further group focused on the land asset transfer from Waverley Borough Council, led by Cllr Band, involving former Councillor, Anne Powell-Evans. The advisory group in Shamley Green was viewed as being largely in place as a result of actions following the Parish Survey. This group would be required for Wonersh. The Council received this with interest and accepted it in principal subject to the outcome of the discussion under 20/21 077.

Additionally, there was an agreement that there should be further investment in protecting the common, provisionally using posts but initial investigations suggest ditches and bunds might be more achievable than initially considered.

Following a response from a Waverley Borough Council Officer, that noted the commons in the parish were particularly exposed, and suggesting that in Wonersh, shallow ditches excavated and combined with mounds were likely to be the most cost-effective solution. Cllr Shutes reported that this is likely to require in the region of 350m for the common, which based on initial discussion could cost in the region of £3,500-£5,000. Following discussion where there was scepticism regarding the affordability of bunds, countered by support for the potential environmental benefits of wild flower planting (and associated engagement of residents in doing this), the Council agreed to go out to tender, to provide a definitive indication of costs, to inform next steps.

Cllr Shutes expressed the opinion, at the meeting, that public engagement should happen alongside the tendering of the bunds so as work can be carried out at the optimum time for planting, in September. Whilst actions were not explicitly agreed at the meeting, following this the majority of Councillors were supportive of proposed actions to contact households bordering the common and to publicise on the website, on the common and Wonersh village noticeboards. The Clerk noted caution in this respect as bunds had not been included as a specific item on the agenda at this point, and highlighted the importance of more specific agenda items and explicit agreed actions, going forward. It was agreed, that this could be considered urgent, given the desired timescales for completion of the works and that any decision resulting from exploring the feasibility both in terms of resident support and financial viability would be discussed in full, with a view to determining the outcome at an Extraordinary Council Meeting in August.

Shamley Green Cricket Green was also viewed as exposed by Waverley Borough Council Officers but solutions to this are challenging, as any restrictions would impact upon cricket matches. Cllr Band noted that challenges existed with the remaining common land also, which was used for, e.g. parking for the village fete, hence could also be accessed with removal of a post.

There was the agreement that some funds would still be required for posts, as considered above, where bunds weren't appropriate and some thoughts as to post may still be required, as completion of the work could take time.

Actions from the meeting of the Commons Working Party, and discussion at Council Meeting, were as follows:

Action: Cllr Weale to support the Clerk on the review of the AEM contract at the three-month review stage.

Cllr Shutes to support the Clerk on the tender development of the minor works and, as discussed above, bunds.

Actions: Cllr Shutes to support the Clerk in engaging residents bordering the common and via the webpage and noticeboard.

Cllr Lavender to include details in the newsletter.

Cllr Shutes to work with other Womersley Councillors regarding an advisory group, including to review work required on hedges and ditches.

Cllrs Howard and Walmsley-Beveridge regarding hedges and ditches in Shamley Green, including Lords Hill – Clerk to provide draft maps.

Clerk or Cllr Shutes to develop maps to support tender documents.

Cllr Howard reported back on the actions of the Shamley Green Environment Working Group / Commons Advisory Group, including sharing the 'Management of Shamley Green Ponds in The Vicinity of the Green – Proposal – Draft', developed by a resident member. The Council welcomed these updates and extend thanks to the resident, who had created the comprehensive draft proposal. They discussed resident support for the removal of non-native species, which was available already as they had engaged with the process. The Council noted that the group had identified options for funding the proposed actions, independent of the Council. The requirement to get three quotes still stands and there was a reminder that permission would be required from Waverley Borough Council.

Action: Cllr Howard to convey that the Council were delighted with the proposals for the ponds and supported these, subject to the approval from Waverley Borough Council, where necessary.

20/21 078 To receive the report of the Tree Survey on the oak in Shamley Green and approve next steps.

The Council welcomed the Tree Survey received on the oak in Shamley Green. Cllr Band noted that meant the Council had received advice from one specialist recommending it be felled and two specialist recommending remedial work and continued review of the tree. The Council resolved to take the recommendation not to fell the tree and follow the advice of the two specialists. They noted its position within the common area and its public value and thanked the tree surgeon for raising concerns regarding the initial advice.

Cllr Howard noted the advice from members of the Shamley Green Commons Advisory Group regarding the credentials of tree surgeons, in particular those registered with the Arboricultural Association and recommended that registered tree surgeons be contacted for a quote. Cllr Band and the Clerk agreed that they would work together to identify three, appropriately qualified surgeons to approach for a quote.

Further discussion related to the biennial tree survey and the intention to tender for a Tree Surveyor who would assist the Parish Council in overseeing the actions taken in response to advice received.

Action: Clerk to work with Cllr Band to obtain quotes from tree surgeons.

Clerk to include tendering for a biennial tree survey on the September Council Meeting Agenda.

20/21 079 To consider the request to remove Brambles from common land near Lawnsmead and approve next steps.

The Council considered the request and offer to fund for the removal of the brambles on the commons, which were impacting upon a boundary fence. They proposed that each party paid half of the costs, subject to the resident's ongoing support of this.

Action: Clerk to inform the resident and contractor of the decision.

20/21 080 To consider correspondence regarding the health of a cherry tree on Wonersh Common and approve next steps.

The Council welcomed the resident's reports on the poor health of this tree and a further resident's offer to replace it. The Council noted that there was a further request for a tree, in this occasion near Lawnsmead, so this option was not ideal. It was also noted that the Cricket Club would like to replace a further, unhealthy tree on the common and requested whether the species might be identified to replace like for like. It was agreed that the tree should be felled and replaced. It was noted that an earlier tree planning schedule suggested a list of appropriate trees for that location.

Action: Clerk to arrange for quotes to fell the tree.

Clerk to discuss options for the replanting of a tree in this site.

Commons working party to consider an appropriate site near Lawnsmead for a further tree.

20/21 081 To receive an update on the black box near the playground on Wonersh Common and approve next steps.

The Clerk updated the Council regarding the willingness of SGN to screen the black box on Wonersh Common but cautioned that it could provide a screen for unintended activity in that area. Laurels were suggested in the first instance but there was a commitment to discussing and agreeing this with the Parish Council. The Council expressed a desire for an alternative to Laurels, perhaps with consideration for the example species included in an earlier tree planting schedule.

Action: Clerk to share tree planting schedule with all Councillors.

Commons Working Party members to discuss and agree with SGN personnel.

20/21 082 To receive an update regarding the works completed under the Lengthsman scheme and approve next steps.

The Clerk reported that, according to Surrey County Council, the work had been done, albeit a little time ago now. Parish Councillors disputed this and noted that signage and the weeds along the pavement towards Shalford, in particular, required attention.

Action: Clerk to inform Surrey County Council of Councillor concerns.

20/21 083 To receive reports on the playgrounds inspections and approve next steps.

These were received and it was noted that Cllr Lavender was prioritising works at each of the playgrounds and would report back to the Committee. The Council welcomed this.

Cllrs Shutes and Howard highlighted that a Playgrounds Advisory Group had been formed in Wonersh and members were meeting trustees to find out more. There is demand for a similar group in Shamley Green.

Action: Clerk to include as an Agenda item on the September meeting.

20/21 084 To receive an update from Risk and Audit Committee regarding the Council's response to government guidance on the opening of playgrounds and approve next steps.

Cllr Band noted the actions taken by the committee in advance of opening the playgrounds. This comprised a risk assessment, which informed actions taken in advance of opening the playgrounds, including signage.

Action: Council to receive any updates to guidance and review the risk assessment and required actions in response to this.

20/21 085 To consider the introduction of the junior cricket strips on Wonersh Common and whether to retain or remove the associated cordoned off area.

Following the discussion regarding use of the Commons for recreational activities at the June Council Meeting, Wonersh Parish Council and Wonersh Cricket Club met via Zoom to discuss plans with reference to the Memorandum of Understanding between the two parties. At the meeting, Wonersh Cricket Club provided compelling reasons as to why the additional cricket strip had been developed, specifically because of the thriving junior section now meant up to two games held at the same time. The new strip location was chosen as that small piece of ground has the better soil condition, but even then, has had to be improved, particularly for hard ball games, played by the older junior player. They argue that it needed to be fenced off while the hard ball cricket new surface beds in and the cricket club would prefer to keep it cordoned off in the winter, to prevent damage. The Council value local benefit for residents highly, and whilst the club were not able to advise what percentage of users were Wonersh Parish residents, one of their key recruitment locations was Wonersh and Shamley Green School.

The Council, highlighted the importance of following the MoU and Council processes in requesting for changes in cordoned off areas of the common and emphasised the disappointment felt that this had not occurred on this occasion. However, following this meeting, it was recommended to Council that:

- the new strip be retrospectively approved. Wonersh Parish Council is strongly supportive of all the cricket club do and have done;
- a simple rope cordon be permitted, subject to confirming this does not need a Fields in Trust Change request; and
- in relation to 20/21 086, this decision be reviewed if a local Wonersh Parish Sports team make an approach. This would need to demonstrate a greater contribution to the community than the second cricket strip.

The Council agreed unanimously with this suggestion.

ACTION: Clerk to continue checking the legal position.

20/21 086 To consider requests to reinstate a football pitch on Wonersh Common.

The Council welcomed this request but noted that it was from a club outside of the Parish, and as discussed above, the Council was committed to prioritising local sports and recreational activities and, at present, some of this area was reserved for Wonersh Cricket Club's junior cricket teams and matches. The former football pitch area as a whole, was known to

experience some challenges with drainage. This would need further exploration, should a Womersley Parish-based Sports team approach the Parish Council.

Action: Clerk to inform the requestor that the Parish Council declined this request.

20/21 087 To review the Council's current position regarding website accessibility and approve next steps.

The Clerk provided a brief update as to the accessibility of the website, linked to the NALC and Government guidelines, and noted that it was likely some colours would need to be changed and there would need to be greater use of HTML5, or similar. The next step is to get two further quotes for this work, to include an accessibility statement for the website and an action plan of steps to be taken.

Action: Clerk to get quotes and to progress this work.

20/21 088 To consider the feasibility of employing an Assistant Clerk and approve next steps.

Womersley Parish Council are extending the services they provide, taking on a number of responsibilities from Waverley Borough Council. In response, the Council are reviewing their staff requirements. Furthermore, the Clerk reports that existing administrative and statutory requirements takes up the majority of the allocated hours, presenting challenges in providing timely responses to any additional requests from Councillors and residents of the Parish.

20/21 089 To discuss and agree the Council's training needs and priorities and approve next steps.

The Clerk drew the Council's attention to the summary in the Risk and Audit Committee's minutes (R20/21 020):

"The Clerk reported that, following the last Council Meeting, SALC had been approached regarding training of the Council generally and with reference to the development of a strategy. The general training, online, would be scheduled for as soon as practicable after the new Councillors were co-opted. The second may be delayed, given the preference for in-person provision. Discussions by the Committee highlighted the importance of a strategy to the direction of the Council and associated resource management.

The Clerk noted that funds had been agreed in 2019/20 order to complete ILCA. There was not the opportunity last year but completing it this year, with a view to starting CILCA in 2021/22 would be beneficial to the Council."

The Clerk noted the importance of confirming availability for whole Council training this week, so that training could be provided, ideally in advance of the next meeting.

Action: Clerk to create a poll as to Council availability. Councillors to respond.

20/21 090 To receive reports by Members and the Clerk.

The Council noted she was attending training the following week but otherwise had nothing to report at this time.

20/21 091 Members' business and correspondence for noting or including on a future agenda.

Cllr Weale noted that posts had been put up by a householder in Shamley Green. Cllr Howard noted that as this was, at present, under the management of Waverley Borough Council, she would respond as Borough Councillor.

Cllr Howard highlighted the communications between the Shamley Green Village Association and Run Common and requested that the Clerk include details on the Parish Council Website and consider it as an item for discussion on a future agenda.

The Clerk noted the request from Cllr Goodridge regarding the mowing of an area of common land in Wonersh. She had followed up with Waverley Borough Council, in case a householder was responsible, but suspected that this was an area to be considered by Wonersh Parish Council, most likely in relation to the Wonersh contractor, given its position.

Cllr Walmsley Beveridge highlighted the importance of greater connectivity between Shamley Green and Wonersh for users of active travel modes, in particular, walkers. The Council suggested that she work with Cllr Scott in investigating the efforts to date, with the support of the Clerk and for it to be included on a future agenda.

19/27 092 Dates of future meetings:

Extraordinary Council: Thursday 13 August 2020

Council: 10 September 2020

Planning Committee: 23 July 2020

These were approved.