

BASILDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Basildon Parish Council held on the 12th March at the Village Hall in Upper Basildon.

Present: Mr Parsons (Chair), District Councillor Ms L Coyle, Ms Barnes, Mrs Greasley, Mr Chadwyck-Healey, Mrs Kilgour, Mr Gidden, Mr Greasley (Clerk).

Apologies: Ms Cox, Mr Couchman

The following members of the public attended the meeting: Mr Ash, Mr & Mrs Barker, Ms de Villers, Mr Macbeth, Mr Howard

OPEN FORUM

No items were raised.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were raised.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th February having been circulated to members in advance of the meeting was signed by the Chairman.

PLANNING

The meeting reviewed the following applications:

25/00338 Holly Cottage, Beckfords – Single Story rear Canopy

The Parish Council reviewed the application and had no objections subject to the views of neighbours.

25/002233 Oak Tree House, Aldworth Road – Swimming Pool and Pool House

The Parish Council reviewed the application and had no objections subject to the views of neighbours.

25/00171 11 Old Stocks Court – Solar Panel Installation

The Clerk noted that the application had already been approved by West Berkshire Council who had confirmed that the work was classed as permitted development and therefore not requiring planning permission. No concerns from Councillors were expressed.

Confirmed Decisions

25/00171 11 Old Stocks Court, Solar Panel Installation – WBC Approved

24/2673 Arcady House, Porch and extension – WBC Approved, PC No Objection

GENERAL ITEMS

Mr Ash from the Red Lion Campaign Group gave an update to the meeting on the current state of play with regards to the Red Lion pub and their hopes to purchase it. The group have explored both the community and private ownership options and have had various conversations with Stonegate who own the building. Following the completion of a business plan an offer to purchase the pub was put forward by the group to Stonegate as an unfinanced offer. The group were confident that the offer of in excess of £500,000 could be raised by various funding initiatives within 4 months of acceptance but the bid was rejected by Stonegate who it is believed want over a million pounds as things stand.

Mr Ash confirmed that the position regarding public funding via grants has become more difficult since the recent budget and that the group were aware of separate conversations to take on both the ownership and / or tenancy of the Red Lion. In both instances, some conversations have taken place with one group considering a public/private ownership model and another a continuation of the lease from Stonegate with the latter faltering due to the potential length of lease. At the time of writing there is no progress of note to report for either

option and it was noted that a recent note on the exterior of the pub suggesting a proposed change to opening hours was not something that the Red Lion Group (or the Parish Council) were unaware of. The Chairman thanked Mr Ash and the other members of the group for their work.

Upper Basildon's Post Office is linked to Pangbourne's which in turn is located at Collins Hardware Shop in Pangbourne. The current lease holder of the shop is set to retire in 10 months which potentially puts the future of the Post Office at risk. The Chairman outlined the possible scenarios:

1. The lease is taken on by a new tenant who continues to allow the Post Office to operate from the building.
2. No new tenant is found and the shop closes which in turn takes away the Post Office function.
3. A new tenant is found but they do not wish to include the Post Office function meaning a new location is required.

Councillors discussed the value of the Post Office in Upper Basildon and decided that they would support any campaign to retain both the Pangbourne Post Office and Upper Basildon satellite. The District Councillor will make Streatley Parish Council aware due to their lack of Post Office facility.

The local library service was discussed. The Chairman has had conversations with both the library service and the local church around options for a monthly pop up library which will coincide with the toddler group session at the church and a community bookshelf which will visit the church quarterly. The costs for this were quoted at £1737 and £1367 per year respectively and the Parish Council backed a motion by Councillor Greasley to fund both options using recently allocated CIL money. The Chairman will now make the necessary arrangements.

Councillor Barnes gave an update on Speed signage for the Parish. Sites are under consideration; however, the expectation is that they'll be affixed to the white gate entrances to the village of Upper Basildon. Once locations are agreed the Clerk will proceed with any purchase as instructed. The Chairman placed on record his thanks to both Councillor Barnes and Mr Warren for their efforts. It was suggested that the Speedwatch group might like to articulate the case for suitable speed reductions in various locations through The Country Neighbour and ask readers to respond in support of the proposed measures. These responses would then be forwarded to the Speed Limit Review Panel

The Chairman requested a cheque be raised to pay for the new bike repair station which will be located at the Village Green. Local trades people will now be contacted regarding the installation of a concrete base with the Chairman confirming that the Country Neighbour will be asked to publish a short update covering both the repair station and new library arrangements.

The Chairman reported that he had been contacted by a resident regarding drainage problems on Blandy's Lane. This was brought to the notice of the District Councillor who had already been contacted about this matter. It is now in the hands of the Enforcement Officer.

DISTRICT COUNCILOR UPDATES

The District Councillor provided the following update and attachment for the Parish Council:

Local News

Application for extension of 30mph limit in Upper Basildon

I am Working with Michael Warren, a resident in Pangbourne Road, on 28 February 2025, I made representations to WBC's Speed Limit Review Panel asking for an extension of the 30mph zone to cover the whole of the village (including beyond the Hook End Lane junction) unfortunately, the proposal was not passed on this occasion but nor was it dismissed, there is an opportunity to get this if we can show more support for it in the village.

Improved speed signage in Pangbourne Road

Works to put in place the improved signage will be taking place from this coming Monday.

New speed limit for Streatley Hill

The speed limit from the foot of Streatley Hill after the junction with the Coombe is currently 60mph. On 28 February 2025, along with Parish Councillors, I made representations to WBC's Speed Limit Review Panel, which agreed that, subject to a formal public consultation, the speed limit would be reduced to 40 mph from the foot of Streatley Hill to beyond the junction with the Stichen's Green turn off. This should hopefully make the road significantly safer for pedestrians and golfers crossing at the top of the hill.

Bradfield College Road Closure

The road is obviously closed now, albeit open to cars and light vehicles for some of the time. There continue to be complaints from residents and businesses about the closure and the Cabinet member for Highways Stuart Gourley and WBC highways officers will be attending a public meeting on Monday 17 March 2025 at 6pm at Bradfield Village Hall to listen to concerns.

Council wide news

WBC Budget

This was passed last week and followed on from the announcement of Exceptional Funding Support from the Council to help the Council remain financially resilient in these unprecedented times.

The revenue budget is extremely tight due to the pressure on three areas- social care, Special Educational Needs and Home to School Transport.

There were cuts announced in some areas including the following:

- Road gritting – new AI model to be used to work out where gritting is needed as temperatures will vary across the district.
- Retirement of the mobile library – opportunity for pop up libraries in village halls etc
- Move to three weekly black bin collections – this follows a public consultation on the Council's Waste Strategy last year. It is hoped the move will encourage people to recycle more.

However, significant capital spending was announced in the following areas:

Investing £73M in coming year including:

£18.6M into sustainable energy, including a new solar farm

£12.1M Education and school maintenance

£ 12.1M highways

£2.4 Nutrient neutrality

£1.7 Drainage upgrades

£1 EV charging expansion

£1.7M active travel schemes

Local Government Reorganisation

Members will be aware of this from national news reports – the LGA has produced a useful Q and A document which can be found at: [Devolution and local government reorganisation frequently asked questions | Local Government Association](#)

FOOTPATHS, HIGHWAYS AND OPEN SPACES

A local resident has contacted the Parish Council regarding the condition of the footpath at Broom Wood (off the Aldworth Road and just into the Ashampstead Parish) following tree clearing by Yattendon Estate. The Clerk visited the location and noted the dreadful condition that the path section had been left in and it was confirmed by the District Councillor that Ashampstead Parish Council had complained to Yattendon Estates who in turn had made a commitment to put right the path in the near future. The Parish Council will monitor progress over the next month.

FINANCE - UPDATES

The following cheques were presented to the meeting:

Cheque No	Payee	Purpose	Nett	VAT	Total
103686	R Greasley	Salary + Pangbourne toilet subsidy pay back	961.33	0.00	961.33
103687	Cancelled				
103688	Tactical FM – c/o Bibby financial	Grass Cutting (cost over 12 months)	288.50	57.70	346.20
103689	Vision ICT	Support	215.00	43.00	258.00
103690	Turvec	Bike Station Initial Outlay	1455.00	291.00	1746.00
103691	Berkshire Hedges	Hedge Cutting – Village Hall	1500.00	300.00	1800.00
103687	West Berkshire Council	Bus Subsidy for 2024-25	1335.60	0.00	1335.60

The Council accepted cheque numbers 103686 to 103691 and the clerk confirmed the direct debit to HMRC and SSE.

Councillor Greasley confirmed that the VAT reclaim form has been submitted to HMRC.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Gidden asked the meeting to consider a new revision of the Parish Plan which would include a survey to gather up an idea of what residents wanted the Parish Council to focus on. An update was provided by the Chairman and Councillor Barnes on previous work in this area and the District Councillor agreed to talk with Streatley Parish Council about the process they had followed for their revision and to see if a Councillor would be available to outline this at an upcoming meeting.

The meeting concluded at 9pm. The next meeting will be on the 9th April.