



Winnersh Parish Council

Winnersh Community Centre
New Road, Sindlesham, Wokingham
Berkshire RG41 5DU
Phone/Fax 0118 978 0244
e-mail parish@winnersh.gov.uk
www.Winnersh.gov.uk

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 10 MAY 2011 IN THE JOHN GROBLER ROOM

PRESENT: Cllrs J Southgate (Chairman), P Bray, E Cooke, D Green, J Grimson, J Leask, L Lainsbury, J Plant, R Shepherd-Dubey.

IN ATTENDANCE: Inspector Mike Graham, TVP; 14 members of the public; Mr C Hudson (WPC Clerk), Mrs S De Groote (WPC FAO).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Southgate explained that the retiring Chairman of the Council, Cllr J Wakefield, has been unwell recently and was unable to attend. Cllr Southgate, as vice-chairman, took the chair.

Apologies were received from Cllr E Siggery, J Wakefield, K Briscoe, M Armstrong, Mr Penny (Winnersh Primary School), Sgt T Woolford, G Hurst,

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2010 were agreed and the meeting **RESOLVED** to sign them as a true record.

3 ADDRESS BY INSPECTOR MIKE GRAHAM, THAMES VALLEY POLICE

The Chairman welcomed Inspector Mike Graham and thanked him for agreeing to address the meeting at short notice.

Inspector Graham introduced himself as the Inspector with responsibility for Wokingham East Neighbourhood, which includes Winnersh. He has 25 years experience with the police and has taken over Wokingham East earlier this year.

Inspector Graham explained the balance between community policing, being seen by the public and tackling local issues such as parking, speeding and littering, whilst still

concentrating on the 2% of the community responsible for the serious crimes such as burglary, theft and violence against the person.

Inspector Graham explained that the crime figures for Winnersh are very low, and his local policing team, lead by Sgt Woolford, and including the PCSOs, is now stable and is working throughout the neighbourhood.

Questions were invited from the floor:

- Regarding 'cannabis factories': Inspector Graham acknowledged this as a national problem and elaborated on the practical safety issues which can arise with these factories. The police would be grateful for any information regarding these factories. Information would also be appreciated regarding drug dealing.
- Regarding staffing: Given the low level of crime in Winnersh; Inspector Graham explained that it is difficult to correlate the relationship between crime and staff numbers. The low level of crime is reflected by the ongoing response of the public at meetings such as this.
- Regarding burglaries at churches: the issue is one of theft, particularly of metal. Churches are seen as an easy target. Two people have been arrested locally and the police are working with churches to improve security.

There were no further questions and Cllr Southgate thanked Inspector Graham for attending the meeting and for the insight into policing locally.

4 ANNUAL REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr Southgate gave a report as per Appendix 1.

5 REPORT OF THE BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

WBC Cllr Bray gave a report as per Appendix 2.

6 REPORT ON THE WINNERSH FUEL ALLOTMENT TRUST

6.1 Mr G Harper, as Chairman of WFAT, presented the following report:

The Fuel Allotment Trust was set up in 1895 and was given 10.2 acres of land in Winnersh, the proceeds from which are used to pay grants for fuel at Christmas to local people. Income from the rental of this land enabled the trust to give donations of £110 each to 7 people in the parish last Christmas. It is possible that the trust may be able to generate more income by the sale of some or all of the land at a future date.

The trust is run by a maximum of 9 trustees. There are 7 in place at the moment. Mr Harper summarised the duties of trustees and invited anyone interested in becoming a trustee to contact him.

Mr Harper explained the difficulties in identifying potential beneficiaries and asked for any information to be passed on to WFAT.

7 PUBLIC SESSION

- 7.1** Mr Steve Grundy introduced himself as representing Winnersh Ballroom Dance Club. He thanked the Council for the quality of the new hall floor. He also expressed concern about the current problems with parking on Thursday evenings. Cllr Plant explained that the Council had investigated extending the existing car park and was looking into other options.
- 7.2** Mr Alan Bell introduced himself as representing the churches of St Nicholas, Hurst, and St Mary's, Winnersh. He updated the meeting on the progress of re-aligning the church boundaries to amalgamate parts of the parishes of St Mary's and St Catherine's, Bearwood, in order to reflect the community and civic boundaries of Winnersh.

There being no further information from the floor, Cllr Southgate thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 8.22 p.m.

APPENDIX 1

Winnersh Parish Council Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting held on 10 May 2011

John Wakefield is unable to be with us tonight due to illness so I will make a brief report on his behalf.

The Council has moved forward broadly in the same direction as last year, trying to get more community involvement, although perhaps with only limited success.

We have continued with our now regular annual events:

- Winnersh Fete
- Christmas Lighting Up
- Litter Pick

and, although the last of these got only limited support on the day, the first two were extremely well received and were very successful in getting the community together. We have also continued with the publication of *Winnersh Matters* which is well regarded as a local communication tool.

The most notable development in the provision of new amenities was the opening of the Pavilion Cafe last May which has proved a great success and popular with the ever increasing number of people using the facilities on the Bearwood Recreation Ground. I'm sure that we would all like to congratulate the proprietors, Lisa Lainsbury and Claire Pulleyn, on having achieved an excellent start to their new business.

The most costly item on the Recreation & Amenities Committee's agenda was the installation of a new floor in the main hall as the old floor had started to come unstuck from the underlying concrete base.

Other new amenities of note in Winnersh over the last year include a new hotel at Winnersh IQ (Winnersh Triangle) and a revamped public house (The Pheasant).

The number of planning applications remained relatively low this year but there was considerable interest in the development of the Borough Core Strategy and a few larger proposals. Nearby, although just outside our parish, we have had the wind farm and traveller site proposals, and recently the revival of the Hatch Farm Dairies application for 433 houses, a new primary school, burying of high voltage cables and a relief road for Winnersh. There are various issues outstanding on this latter application, the most serious being those related to the proposed new roads and traffic congestion. I am sure that both this Council and our Borough Councillors will be seeking to ensure the best possible outcome for us all in Winnersh over the coming months.

Despite the pressure on funds from last year (for the new hall floor) the Council decided there would be no increase in our part of the Council Tax for the coming year, and it still remains at a level which is less than it was six years ago.

We welcomed two new Councillors during the year: David Green and Lisa Lainsbury (and will be welcoming two more at the beginning of the next meeting: James Leask and Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey).

But we have also lost several Councillors at the end of the year, not re-standing for election:

- John Wakefield – my special thanks for taking over at a difficult time for me last May
- John Peffers – for his efforts on the Recreation & Amenities Committee and at the fete, the latter of which he will continue to be involved this year
- David Hunt and Frank Breedlove – both co-opted members who I hope can be persuaded to rejoin us in the near future
- Malcolm Armstrong – who we are losing to the attractions of the Devon countryside: Malcolm has made an enormous contribution to the work of the Council over the past few years and in particular has edited *Winnersh Matters* and organised the Christmas Lights event
- David Jupp – last but not least, the longest serving member now leaving us who was an excellent Chairman of our Planning Committee over many years.

Thanks to you all, and also to the members remaining on the Council for the next term, for all the work that you have done over the past year.

John Southgate
Vice-Chairman, Winnersh Parish Council

APPENDIX 2

Report of Borough Councillors to the Winnersh Annual Parish Meeting

Annual Parish Meeting: Borough Councillor report from Prue Bray

During the past year I have worked on a large number of issues affecting Winnersh. I have split this report up into the major areas of activity.

Highways

There are significant parking problems in Danywern Drive, around Winnersh Primary School, in Cavendish Gardens, in Wheatsheaf Close and in Baslow Road. During the year Malcolm, Rachele and I have tried a number of different approaches and conducted surveys of both drivers and residents. We have some ideas which we are progressing, and have informed residents what they are. Enforcement of parking restrictions is a major problem which is unlikely to be resolved unless and until the Borough Council opts for decriminalised parking. So far, they have only committed to investigating the possibility of adopting that system.

Traffic congestion continues to be a major issue, which will only get worse if development goes ahead at Hatch Farm Dairies, in Arborfield and in the North Wokingham Strategic Development Location. The traffic lights at the crossroads have been slightly reconfigured, but there has been little improvement. A lot of work has been done on the controller for the traffic lights at the Loddon Bridge roundabout, but there still appears to be an intermittent fault with it. The traffic lights at Winnersh Triangle continue to hold traffic up unnecessarily outside peak times. We will continue to argue for them to be switched off outside peak periods.

The council announced that it intended to close the park and ride in February 2012. However, despite the stated reason being that the landowner would not renew the lease, I understand that the landowner has been willing to engage in negotiations with the council and that negotiations have in fact been going on and may well result in the park and ride staying open.

We have started to campaign for a pedestrian crossing in Robin Hood Lane close to the junction with Arbor Lane. A rumour appears to have been circulating during the election that we were campaigning for the crossing despite knowing that the police would not allow it. I do not know how that rumour arose, but it is incorrect. It is possible that there has been confusion with the short-lived crossing some distance away, by the church, which was put in a few years ago but which had to be removed because it was dangerous. That crossing was put in by the Borough Council against the advice of all three borough councillors of both parties. All three of us knew it would be dangerous.

During the year, repairs were made to the bridge over the A329(M) in Robin Hood Lane, which meant the road was closed for some weeks during the summer. The council did not communicate very well with residents over this closure, which was not as originally planned or advertised.

Planning

Among the major planning applications I have been involved in fighting this year are:

- the application for the gypsy site in Bearwood Road; although this application is just beyond the edge of the parish, there was a good deal of concern amongst Winnersh residents about it; I was allowed to speak at committee against it, despite it being in a neighbouring ward. I also advised the residents who were campaigning against it, and after the council refused the application, I helped the residents' group prepare for the planning appeal, which was held recently.
- Hatch Farm Dairies; as well as going through all the papers associated with the application, I have had a number of discussions with officers about the details of the flood mitigation and the road and road junctions. Another false rumour seems to have arisen in connection with this planning application. Someone appears to have been suggesting to residents that the Lib Dems are in

favour of this development. We categorically are not in favour of it. However, it has to be acknowledged that 20 years of planning history for this site suggest that it will be difficult to stop development altogether. I am particularly concerned about the impact of the new road. The planning application covers the road from Lower Earley Way to King Street Lane. The Borough Council is responsible for the other part of the road which is due to run from King Street Lane to Reading Road. The council has started a feasibility study but has not yet progressed any further. More than £600,000 of S106 contributions from earlier Bovis development at Chatsworth Park had been put aside to help with the cost of the road. That money has been spent, mainly on the work the council has done on the flood mitigation for the current application. Only 3p remains. The full cost of the council's part of the road is not yet known but 3 years ago it was estimated at approximately £3 million. It is not clear where that money will come from. I am deeply concerned that the Hatch Farm Dairies site may be developed and occupied without the council delivering its part of the new road. That would be a disaster for traffic in Winnersh and I will do everything I can to prevent it happening.

- work is about to begin on the houses behind Bromley Garage Services in Poplar Lane. Preliminary work includes work to Poplar Lane itself, which has meant hacking down trees and hedging during the nesting season. Although the contractors were able to show the correct permits to the police and were allowed to continue what they were doing, we now have evidence that nests were actually destroyed, and I am asking the police to take further action.

I have also been involved with a number of smaller planning applications during the year.

Schools

There are still issues over the state of repair of the secondary schools, including Forest. There are also issues over the provision of primary school places: although there are enough places in total for new children, last year a number of parents did not get any of their 3 primary school choices, and although extra places were provided this year and councillors were told it would not happen again, it has. This has affected a small number of parents locally.

Disputes with the council

During the year I have assisted a number of Winnersh residents who have had problems with council services, or have been in dispute with the council over charges, land ownership, drains and flooding, fences, trees, or access. Many of these problems have been successfully resolved, some unfortunately, not. The main reason for problems not being resolved has been money - either the council is reluctant to spend any, or demands a higher price for a service than the resident is prepared to pay.

I am concerned about the considerable number of problems with drains and flooding that we have in Winnersh and the lack of progress in solving them. In many cases the lack of progress appears to be due to lack of resources rather than lack of technical solutions.

Other

In addition I have:

- continued as a governor at Forest Comprehensive
- continued as a member of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, which this year has started construction of a new fire station for Wokingham, with increased staff, which will improve fire cover for this area
- continued as a Vice Chair of the Winnersh Neighbourhood Action Group, and was pleased to be able to ensure the Borough Council did not drop the process of assisting the NAG to apply for lottery funding for improving the public open space at Winnersh Meadows, and am delighted that the bid was successful
- continued to serve on the Tenant & Landlord Improvement Panel, the tenant-led body which scrutinises and advises officers on the management of the council-owned housing, including over

- 100 council houses and flats in Winnersh continued to serve on the Wokingham Borough Strategic Partnership Board and on the Community Safety Strategy Group, on the Personnel Board, Childrens' Services Scrutiny panel, and Constitution Review Working Group.

New municipal year

In the coming year I anticipate two major issues for Winnersh residents being the Hatch Farm Dairies planning application and the forthcoming changes to the waste collection