



Winnersh Parish Council

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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 12 MAY 2015 IN THE JOHN GROBLER ROOM

PRESENT: Cllrs J Southgate (Chairman), J Bray, P Bray, F Breedlove, J Curtis, D Green, S Hanna, G Harper, F Obileye, P Ray, R Shepherd-Dubey, C Taylor.

IN ATTENDANCE: 8 members of the public; Mr C Hudson (WPC Clerk), Miss A Lambourne (WPC FAO), WBC Cllr P Houldsworth.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr N Kilby; Also from Claire Connell; Pat Rowell – NAG; Sgt Woolford – Thames Valley Police.

1.1 Apologies for lateness: Cllr Ullakarin Clark (WBC Mayor);

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2014 were agreed and the meeting **RESOLVED** to sign them as a true record.

3 ADDRESS BY CLLR ULLAKARIN CLARK – WBC MAYOR

The Chairman presented the apologies for lateness from the Mayor. Her address was made later in the meeting. See 8 below.

4 ANNUAL REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr Southgate gave a report as per Appendix 1.

5 REPORT OF THE BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

5.1 WBC Cllr Houldsworth gave a report as per Appendix 2.

5.2 WBC Cllr Bray gave a joint report for herself and WBC Cllr R Shepherd-DuBey as per Appendix 2.

6 REPORT ON THE WINNERSH FUEL ALLOTMENT TRUST

6.1 Mr G Harper, Chairman of WFAT, gave a report as per Appendix 3.

7 PUBLIC SESSION

7.1 Mike Gore of the Keep Mobile Management Committee thanked the Council for its support and gave a brief overview of Keep Mobile's services within Winnersh.

7.2 John Andrews spoke on behalf of Readibus. He summarised the number of journeys supplied by Readibus within Winnersh. He thanked the Council for its continued support.

7.3 Cathy Whittington of Winnersh Brownies spoke on behalf of the Guiding organisations within Winnersh. She thanked the Council for its support of the organisations.

7.4 Neil Brown, trustee of Wokingham Job Support Centre, summarised the scope of the work done by the organisation and the social benefit of helping the unemployed. He thanked the Council for its continued support.

7.5 Tom Conlin of Berkshire County Blind Society thanked the Council for its continued support. The BCBS receives support from Towns and Parishes throughout Berkshire. He reported on the range of activities the Society helps its clients with. He explained the difficulties faced by the Society in contacting with the full range of eligible people in Berkshire and the reasoning behind the Society's change to its new name, Berkshire Vision.

7.6 John Connor of the Citizens Advice Bureau explained the main social issues which the Bureau deals with, and the organisations dependence on its volunteers and funding.

There being no further information from the floor, Cllr Southgate thanked everyone for attending. There was a short intermission pending the arrival of the WBC Mayor.

8 ADDRESS OF THE WBC MAYOR

Cllr Clark apologised for her delayed arrival, this being her third appointment this evening.

She spoke of the role of the Mayor and her 2 years in office. She recalled in a humorous and insightful manner events and memories from her time in office, ranging from receiving a thoughtful gift of flowers from a child through to her meetings with royalty. She recalled more prosaic events, including the drenching she had received in a sudden heavy shower at the Winnersh Fete.

Cllr Clark explained the choices she had made for her Mayor's Charity appeals. The current appeal is More Arts Legacy Fund. This special fund is set aside to help fund activities which will benefit young people in the local area who have a variety of complex needs. These include the most vulnerable and at risk young people in our community who are helped primarily by developing life skills through the creative process.

Cllr Southgate thanked the Mayor for her address.

The meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.

APPENDIX 1

Winnersh Parish Council Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12 May 2015

This year, at the same time as a rather exciting end to the general election with a generally unforeseen result, **Winnersh elected a new Council**. As there were insufficient candidates no votes were actually cast and the candidates were elected unopposed. Many of the former councillors remain but we also welcome some new blood. But more of that later ... this report is for the past year.

During the past year **we lost three councillors**. **Ted Cooke** had been a very active member of the Council for seven years before he died after a long illness and has been much missed. We also received news of the demise of a former Councillor, John Peffers, who several of us remember warmly.

James Leask left us earlier in the year to move northwards and **Lee Gordon-Walker** decided to withdraw from community service for the time being due to work and family commitments. Both of them played a valued role as Chairman of Planning before their departure.

Replacing them we welcomed **Shaun Hanna** and **Phil Ray** who have quickly become valuable members of the Council.

And of course at the end of the year we say goodbye, at least for now, to four Councillors who did not stand for re-election for various reasons: **Richard Holdstock, David Hunt, Imogen Shepherd-Dubey** and **Ric Tilbe**. I thank them especially for their contribution over the past years.

Over the past twelve months WPC has continued to build on its objective to promote a sense of community in Winnersh. We have continued to build on several now well-established events:

- the **Christmas Lighting Up**, with carols and seasonal songs from the children of Bearwood Primary School, mulled wine and mince pies, and a firework finale
- the **Litter Pick** in conjunction with the Big Tidy Up campaign – with a good turn out this year especially from the Brownies
- and of course the **Winnersh Village Fete**, the seventh in succession building in size and reputation every year – the weather certainly did help with increased numbers of stalls and attendees after some years of poor weather - but its success was largely due to all the volunteers on the stalls and to those who led the organisation, especially **Geoff Harper** who organised the arena events and others such as **Richard Holdstock** on the car park. The **Grand Raffle** raised a record amount and, together with other proceeds, allowed us to make substantial donations to our main charities **Thames Valley & Chilterns Air Ambulance** and **Age Concern Slough & Berkshire East**.

At the fete we were pleased to present Winnersh Civic Awards to **Liz Walker** for her work with the Guides and to **Sally Whittaker** for her work with Homestart.

It was relatively **quiet year for Winnersh on the planning front**. Looking back to my report at the end of 2010 I said ... “There was no new application for hundreds of houses on the **Hatch Farm Dairies** site despite several statements that there would be one within a few weeks.”

Little has changed, although a section 106 developer contribution agreement has now been signed and the developers have indicated that they expect to move ahead within the next year. Also WBC has assisted in getting ‘forward funding’ to ensure that the relief road is constructed before most of the houses are built.

Also in 2010 I reported that “**Winnersh Triangle** has moved ahead over the past year and is to be rebranded as **IQ Winnersh** from Thursday with the new Holiday Inn hotel set to open next month.” Now I can report that, under new ownership, the name has changed back to **Winnersh Triangle** and a new **Travelodge** has just opened.

We saw the opening of the new **Wheatfield Primary School** in September and some of us paid a visit in October to see its excellent facilities. We also have an expanded **Sainsbury’s** and work on a new Care Home at Winnersh Farm has begun.

Although there has been little new development this year there has been considerable activity on the **transport front** with several schemes completed or in progress - renewal of the traffic controls at the Winnersh Crossroads and at the Showcase Roundabout; the new Park & Ride Scheme by Winnersh Triangle station, the new Reading Road cycleway – and much discussion about the Winnersh Relief Road and the North Wokingham Distributor Road.

Here at the Community Centre we have **redecorated** the hall and bar, upgraded the **fire and intruder alarm** systems, refurbished the **CCTV** system and perhaps most noticeably improved the **drainage** on the recreation ground which so far seems to have been very effective.

The **allotments** have been actively managed and are now looking at their best for many years. Anyone waiting to get an allotment will be pleased to know that the waiting list is now very short.

There was **no increase in the Council Tax precept per dwelling** levied by the Parish Council this year. Despite this the Council has continued to increase its support to valued local voluntary groups including the Citizens’ Advice Bureau, County Blind Society, Sue Ryder Homes, ARC, Readibus and Keep Mobile. It has also very successfully managed its resources and has come in on budget for the year.

Finally I’d like to thank all those who have contributed to the work of the Council over the past year. In addition to those already mentioned, my sincere thanks go to:

➤ **David Green** as Chairman of R&A assisted by his Vice-Chairman **Richard Holdstock**

- **Clinton Taylor** for leading the Planning Committee after the departure of its previous Chairmen, assisted by his Vice-Chairman **Ric Tilbe**. And also for Clinton's editorship of our community newsletter **Winnersh Matters**
- **Frank Breedlove** as chairman of F&GP and his Vice-Chairman **Geoff Harper** who stood in whilst Frank was away on business in Florida. And also to Geoff for his support to me as the council's Vice-Chairman
- Our Clerk **Clive Hudson** and our Finance and Administration Officer **Amanda Lambourne** for managing the day to day operations of the Council in difficult circumstances
- Our Caretaker **Chris Fazey** and the relief caretakers for maintaining the Council's facilities and looking after their users to a high standard
- And to **all other Parish Councillors** for their work and support throughout the year.

John Southgate

Chairman, Winnersh Parish Council

APPENDIX 2

Report of Borough Councillors to the Winnersh Annual Parish Meeting

Report to Winnersh Parish Council by Philip Houldsworth

I thought that at this time of annual review I would talk about some of the work I get involved as a Borough Councillor which has not necessarily any connection with Winnersh.

One of the most important thing that I do is chair the Affordable Housing Implementation Group (AHIG). This is responsible for monitoring all aspects of affordable housing including existing council estates. It is responsible for the Housing Policy and Tenant services, monitors progress on Fosters and Phoenix avenue building projects. Ensures that the Borough meets the deadline on the Decent Homes project an example of which is the ongoing repairs to the roofs at the Courts.

Every two weeks on a Monday morning I meet with John Kaiser, a planning officer and the Housing Needs Manager to review the pre-applications from developers. We decide how many affordable houses are built on all the sites, what the mix of houses is and the type of tenure. We almost never insist on the full 35% being built onsite but accept commuted sums for those that aren't. These sums can then be used for affordable housing elsewhere. To date we have received £31m and a further £72m is under negotiation in commuted sums. The Borough has just set up an Advisory Panel for the use of these funds which I will chair. The Panel will meet in public.

We have a full meeting of AHIG once a month which involves members and officers and a tenant representative.

As you know I have been the Deputy Executive Member, Environment for the past year with special responsibility for Country Parks and Climate Berkshire. Right now we are considering the future use of Dinton Pastures and California in the light of the growth of population in the SDLs

We have been out to consultation on these Parks but I would welcome any input from the Parish Council on optimising their use.

It's been a difficult time on the roads in Winnersh this year with the extended work on the Showcase roundabout and the implementation of the cycleways. Future road work will include the Northern distribution road and Relief road but I have been very impressed with what has been done in Wokingham with the station relief road which is a huge improvement on what went before.

I am sure that working together we can implement the new roads and junctions with minimum disturbance.

Philip Houldsworth
May 2015

Report of Borough Councillors – Prue Bray and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey Annual Parish Meeting 12th May 2015

The Winnersh issues with which we have been engaged in the last year have centred around roads and traffic, and include:

- Making representations to the Borough Council about the design and implementation of the new cycleway on Reading Road, in particular about the removal of the right turn arrows in the centre of the road which will cause problems for residents in side roads, and about the location of the proposed pedestrian crossings. We have also intervened to secure a temporary pedestrian crossing while the cycleway is being constructed. Phase 3 of the cycleway is now a live project. We hope that this time both borough and parish councillors will be properly consulted during the design process.
- As always, pursuing issues with relation to the phasing of the Winnersh crossroads traffic lights, but also opening discussions on the possibility of getting red light cameras there due to the number of people who jump the lights.
- Looking at the preparations and funding for the Winnersh relief road. During the municipal year, the Hatch Farm Dairies developers signed the legal agreement committing them to funding half the relief road if their development goes ahead. The other half of the relief road is to be funded by the council, and the cost is due to be taken out of a general pot for “future road building across the Borough” which will be made available in 2020.
- Chivvying up the council on the slow progress on the new park and ride site, which is now about 18 months overdue. This included pointing out that the extensions to the contracts to allow the current park and ride to continue to function in the meantime had not been properly authorised.
- Looking after the interests of Winnersh residents with regard to the proposals for the Northern Distributor Road. The route of the road is due to be announced shortly. If Options B or C are chosen, the road will come out through the Winnersh allotments, which will have to be relocated.
- The Matthews Green Farm planning application for over 700 houses in Emmbrook was granted outline approval in March. One of the outcomes of this is that traffic lights will be put at the end of Old Forest Road. We have concerns, which we are pursuing, about the impact of these lights on residents opposite the junction, both on their ability to get out of their driveways and on the air quality at the junction.
- We have begun to look into pedestrian safety again, following an accident in Robin Hood Lane.
- Parking remains a problem. We have been supporting the NAG’s efforts with regard to introducing some more restrictions in Baslow Road to improve safety on the corners of the junctions.
- Reporting a large number of pot holes, which have - mostly – been repaired.

Other activities during the year:

- Raising concerns about the relocation of the post office
- Involvement in the Hatch Farm Dairies residents group
- Various planning issues, including proposals at Winnersh Triangle
- Engagement with council tenants, especially relating to the major works at the Courts to provide new roofs as part of the Decent Homes programme

Our wider roles within the Borough Council

During the year both of us have sat on various Overview & Scrutiny committees. Rachelle has also been on the Planning Committee, and on working groups looking at parking, including decriminalisation, and parking on verges. In the coming year she will be on a panel looking at the impact of commuter parking. Prue has been on the Community Safety Partnership, Tenant & Landlord Improvement Panel and Health & Wellbeing Board, and on working groups looking at affordable housing, gypsy & traveller sites, and the provision of infrastructure.

We continue to do casework on behalf of many individual residents in the parish.

APPENDIX 3

WINNERSH FUEL ALLOTMENT TRUST Report to AGM of Winnersh Parish Council 12th May 2015

Winnersh Fuel Allotment Trust (WFAT) was formally registered as a charity in 1892, although as I discovered recently the practice of giving the proceeds of an area of land in the parish of Winnersh to the poor of the parish to buy fuel for Christmas dates back to 1814, over 200 years. The Trust currently owns just over ten acres of land at the end of Old Forest Road which it rents out to a local stud.

There are currently seven trustees and the Board meets two/three times a year, mainly around Christmas time when it decides and approves beneficiaries for Christmas. At Christmas 2014 there were four beneficiaries each receiving £110. It is becoming more difficult to identify suitable beneficiaries mainly due to the Data Protection Act. Since it came into force Social Services, the Church etc can no longer provide the Trust with names.

The long term vision of the Trust has always been to develop the land it owns, selling some to a developer and using the money generated to build and run social housing, of which there is a scarcity in Winnersh. The Trust had hoped that the land would be zoned for development last year but this did not happen. However, with the development of the North Wokingham Distributor Road which will cross WFAT land it is hoped that the remainder of the land will be zoned for development. I hope to have a more positive address next year

Thank You.

Geoffrey Harper
Chairman – Winnersh Fuel Allotment Trust