



Winnersh Parish Council

Winnersh Community Centre
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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WINNERSH PARISH COUNCIL HELD REMOTELY ON TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER 2020

PRESENT: Cllrs P Fishwick (Chairman); P Bray; S Hanna; G Harper; R Shepherd-DuBey;
J Southgate.

IN ATTENDANCE: P Stoneman (Clerk); Francesca Hobson (WBC).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllrs K Bradeepan; A Caston; A Greenwood;
B Krauze; F Obileye, C Taylor; L Wooldridge.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None

3 RIVER LODDON FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME

- 3.1 Francesca Hobson (Service Manager for Community, Heritage, Green and Blue Infrastructure) from Wokingham Borough Council was welcomed to the meeting and gave a presentation on the River Loddon - Natural Flood Risk Management Scheme.
- 3.2 The scheme was being designed to reduce the flood risk at the Showcase roundabout, and surrounding roads, and WBC were briefing Town and Parish Councils about the proposals.
- 3.3 It was explained that normal storm events cause major flooding across the Borough, and as a consequence significant disruption. This did not relate just to the Showcase roundabout but caused issues upstream and downstream too.
- 3.4 WBC had looked at a range of options to help reduce the flooding and whilst a number of small projects had been carried out in the past, these had not solved the problem and therefore a much larger scale project was necessary.
- 3.5 The options that had been considered included raising the roundabout out the flood plain. Whilst this may solve the problem at Showcase roundabout it would displace water to surrounding roads and cause flooding in the wider area. The feasibility study showed that such a scheme would be prohibitively expensive with services, including surface water drainage, foul drainage and utilities having to be moved. The cost of the work would run into several millions of pounds, would cause a great deal of disruption,

possibly taking up to year to complete, and would impact negatively with flooding displaced elsewhere.

- 3.6 An option to raise Lower Earley Way had also been considered, but discounted for similar reasons as set out above in 3.5.
- 3.7 A third option was to create pocket ponds next to the Loddon River, diverting water into a series of ponds along the route. The feasibility showed that around 50 ponds would be required and there was not enough land available to provide a sufficient number.
- 3.8 The fourth and favoured option was to restrict the size of the culvert under the M4 motorway that, as a result, would flood land to the south of the culvert and slow the flow of water. The modelling showed that this option would prevent the flash type flooding on the road network
- 3.9 The feasibility showed that land to the south of the culvert is agricultural and would be capable to holding the water without causing disruption. The land was owned by the University of Reading and WBC were in the process of discussing the project with the University.
- 3.10 The cost of the project would be around £4m. WBC would contribute around £1m and it would be necessary to secure joint funding from partners and stakeholders. A bid was being made to the government's Innovative Flood Resilience Fund. In addition to solving flooding, WBC were looking at using the scheme to generate hydro-electric power by extracting the energy from turbines as the water flowed through the culvert. WBC were also looking to apply for a DEFRA grant.
- 3.11 At this stage WBC were seeking a response from Town and Parish Councils on whether funding could possibly be made available and/or whether support towards funding bids and focus groups could be offered.
- 3.12 Whilst Members were supportive of the proposal in principle, they explained that the Parish Council was not in a position to offer financial support at this stage, and any contribution in the future would be relatively small. Members did offer support in principle, and it was agreed that Ms Hobson and the Clerk would liaise on how, and when, letters of support would be provided. **ACTION: CLERK**
- 3.13 It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman and **SECONDED** by Cllr Harper and **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council agree in principle to support this project with a potential financial contribution that would be agreed at the February 2021 meeting of Full Council when budgets were set for the next financial year. **ACTION: CLLR FISHWICK/CLERK**
- 3.14 Ms Hobson was thanked for providing a very informative presentation and Members were keen to hear more about the project as it developed.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 10 November 2020 were **APPROVED**, and the Parish Council **RESOLVED** that the Chairman should sign them as a true record.
- 4.2 All actions, with the exception of the following, had been completed.

- 4.3 Minute Item 11.4: Cllr Southgate explained that he and Cllr Wooldridge had met with the Clerk and Assistant Clerk to review the Quarter 2 accounts and they considered that these gave a true reflection of the council's financial position and provided a good firm base from which to maintain a good set of accounts moving forward. It was agreed that the Assistant Clerk would circulate the Q2 Accounts to all members so that they could be considered and signed off at the next meeting. **ACTION: APC**

- 4.4 Minute Item 13.5: The Clerk confirmed that when the architect had developed the specification for the cladding this would be shared with Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service for any observations they may have on the materials proposed. **ACTION: CLERK**

- 4.5 Minute Item 17.3: The issue of Cllr Shepherd-DuBey being unable to access UNITY Bank would be resolved when it was possible to meet with the Clerk in person so that a joint call could be made to the bank. **ACTION: CLLR SHEPHERD-DUBEY / CLERK**

5 PUBLIC SESSION: There were no members of the public or press in attendance.

6 COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- 6.1 The Clerk gave an update on the lockdown (5 November to 2 December) during which the WPC facilities were closed, with the exception of play areas and allotments. The Bearwood Recreation Ground had also remained open for casual use, but not for organised sports.
- 6.2 The Parish Office had remained open with staff working from home where possible and the public had been advised to email or call rather than visit in person.
- 6.3 Whilst the facilities had re-opened on the 2 December, some regular hirers had decided not to return until the new year. Others, including children's early years activity providers had now returned following the decision of Recreation & Amenities Committee to re-open.
- 6.4 Following the positive news that a vaccine had been developed to help fight Covid-19, the Clerk explained that having liaised with WBC it was anticipated that the Health Authority may seek to use community facilities for the roll out of vaccinations, and Winnersh Community Centre would be an obvious choice of venue. Members unanimously confirmed their support and agreed that every assistance would be given to ensure that the Health Authority was able to administer the vaccine as quickly and efficiently as possible. **ACTION: CLERK**

7 WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL MATTERS

- 7.1 Written reports from Cllrs Bray, Fishwick and Shepherd-DuBey had been circulated in advance (Appendix 1), and these were noted.

8 PARISH COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS ON PARISH MATTERS

- 8.1 There were no questions on Parish matters.

9 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- 9.1 Cllr Harper advised that a meeting had recently been scheduled for the Wokingham and District Association of Local Councils (WDALC) but, as there were insufficient members to ensure the meeting would be quorate, it would be re-scheduled for early in the new year.

10 PLANNING COMMITTEE

- 10.1 The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings (17 November 2020 and 7 December 2020) would be presented for approval at the next meeting of Full Council as there were insufficient members of Planning Committee in attendance to confirm they were a true record.

ACTION: CLERK

11 RECREATION & AMENITIES COMMITTEE

- 11.1 The minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee held on the 1 December 2020 were **APPROVED** and the Parish Council **RESOLVED** to sign them as a true record.

12 CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY

- 12.1 The Chairman had circulated a report in advance (Appendix 2), on the activity of the Climate Change Working Group and this was noted. Members were pleased to hear that seven new trees had been planted on the boundary of Bearwood Recreation Ground and Mole Road, one of which Cllr Fishwick had grown from an acorn that had fallen from the 300+ year of Sindlesham Oak and it was growing well.

13 WINNERSH/WINNERSH TRIANGLE RAILWAY STATIONS ADOPTION

- 13.1 The Chairman had circulated a report in advance of the meeting (Appendix 3), and gave an update on a virtual meeting of the North Downs Line Community Rail Partnership he had attended earlier in the day. Issues of graffiti and littering at Winnersh Station were raised at the meeting and contact details of the relevant managers at Network Rail were shared to ensure they were aware of, and could deal with, the issues.

14 HISTORY PROJECT

- 14.1 Cllr Obileye, who had intended to give a verbal update, was unable to attend the meeting. It was understood from other members of the Group that work was progressing well with the validation of documents and artefacts.
- 14.2 Cllr Southgate advised that there had been a very constructive meeting with the History of Reading Society.

15 SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

- 15.1 The schedule of payments, due since the last meeting, was circulated in advance of the meeting (Appendix 4), and upon the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Southgate, **SECONDED** by Cllr Bray, the Parish Council **RESOLVED** to make payments totalling £50,007.18.
- 15.2 The bank balance at the 30 November was confirmed as £235,351.52.

15.3 Cllr Bray asked about the direct-debit payment of £2,201.23 to Gulf Gas & Power which appeared very high. The Clerk explained that the amount was inaccurate and was a result of incorrect meter readings being passed from the existing supplier to Gulf, the new gas and electric supplier. It was expected that the actual amount due would be in the order of between £100 and £200 and the Clerk had raised this issue with Gulf.

15.4 The Clerk explained that it had been necessary to add some additional payments between the last meeting and this meeting. Members considered that in future, payments that were not considered urgent should wait and be included on the next available schedule of payments. Any additional urgent payments required between meetings would require justification and consideration by the two councillors authorised to approve payments during that month.

15.5 The Clerk explained that the CELO and APC were in the process of returning allotment deposits. Members agreed that these should not be added to the bank for payment until they had been included in the schedule of payments for authorisation by Full Council.

ACTION: APC/CELO

16 ANNUAL BUDGET

16.1 Cllr Southgate reminded Members that the budget setting process included consideration of projects for funding in the next financial year (2021/22). It was agreed that Members would suggest projects that would be referred to the relevant committee for consideration. Cllr Southgate emphasised the importance of estimating the cost of each project as accurately as possible.

16.2 Projects and budget costs would then be submitted to F&GP Committee for inclusion in the annual budget that would be presented to Full Council for consideration and approval on the 9 February 2021.

17 WINNERSH FETE 2021

17.1 Cllr Southgate sought views from Members on whether the council should make plans for a Fete in 2021. The 2020 event had been cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic and given the uncertainty about when activities, including outdoor events, could return to normal, planning for an event in June was in question.

17.2 After a discussion about whether to start planning, it was agreed that a provisional date of Saturday 4 September should be worked towards. The Clerk was asked to check the bookings diary and, if available, to reserve that date for the Fete.

ACTION: CLERK/CELO

18 LOCAL ELECTRICITY BILL

18.1 The Chairman had circulated a report in advance (Appendix 5), and it was **RESOLVED** to support the Local Electricity Bill.

ACTION: CLLR FISHWICK / CLERK

19 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED COUNCILLORS

19.1 The Chairman had circulated a proposed response to the consultation on the 'Code of Conduct for Elected Councillors' in advance of the meeting (Appendix 6), and it was **AGREED** this would be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council.

ACTION: CLLR FISHWICK/CLERK

- 19.2 Cllr Harper had reviewed the relevant WPC policies and suggested that these be reviewed further when the outcome of the consultation was known.

ACTION: CLLR HARPER/CLERK

20 CORRESPONDENCE:

- 20.1 The Clerk had circulated three items of correspondence in advance of the meeting.

- 1) 4 December 2020 - Email from Wokingham Borough Council
Subject: Council Tax Base Provisional Notification 2021-22. Noted.
- 2) 8 December 2020 - Email from Wokingham Borough Council
Subject: Planning Enforcement in Wokingham Borough. Noted.
- 3) 7 December 2020 - Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Subject: Public Consultation for a new Joint Health and Well-Being Strategy for Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham. Refer to R&A Committee.

ACTION: CLERK/CLLR WOOLDRIDGE

21 ANY OTHER ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN: None

22 SCHEDULE OF COUNCIL MEETINGS:

- 22.1 The Clerk had circulated a schedule of meeting dates for 2021 (Appendix 7) and, subject to moving R&A Committee from the 5 January to the 19 January the dates were **APPROVED** and would be added to the website. **ACTION: CELO**

- 22.2 A discussion took place about virtual meetings continuing in the future. It was expected that government legislation and guidance would follow in due course at which time the council would consider the arrangements for 'in person' and virtual meetings, and possibly a hybrid arrangement.

23 DATE OF THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

- 23.1 The next meeting would be held on Tuesday **12 JANUARY 2021** at 19:30.
- 23.2 There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.12.

Signed: Cllr P Fishwick _____

Chairman of Winnersh Parish Council

Borough Councillor Report's to the Parish Council Meeting on the 8 December 2020

Cllr Paul Fishwick

Borough Council committee meetings

The following are a summary from meetings held at the Borough Council that I have attended since the Winnersh Parish Full Council meeting on 10th November.

23rd November – Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The key items on the agenda was

Item 54 Medium Term Financial Plan 2021-24: Revenue Budget

Further details can be found here;

[Agenda for Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Monday, 23rd November, 2020, 7.00 pm - Wokingham Borough Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

25th November - Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

The key item on the agenda were;

Item 54 Grass Cutting Review 2020

Item 55 Food Waste Service Review 2019-20

Item 56 Street Cleansing Review 2020-21

Item 57 Quarter 2 2020/21 Performance Monitoring Report

Item 58 WBC Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

Further details can be found here;

[Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on Wednesday, 25th November, 2020, 7.00 pm - Wokingham Borough Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Winnersh specific

Winnersh Relief Road Phase 2 – opening in early 2021

Work is progressing to extend Longdon Road to a new roundabout on Reading Road by the M4 overbridge (Winnersh side). The council plans to open the road in January 2021 with the roundabout also in operation on the crossroads side of the motorway. Temporary traffic lights will remain in operation at Woodward Close junction until late March 2021.

Cllr Prue Bray

Since the last parish council meeting, I have been involved in work to do with the provision of IT equipment for children who need it in order to be able to do their schoolwork, and with liaising with Children's Services to make sure that the borough council is able to adequately support children who need help with mental health or other issues as a result of the pandemic. I also attempted to bring a motion to council on provision of food to children who are eligible for Free School Meals during the school holidays, but the council meeting ended before it could be debated. I have resubmitted it for the next council meeting.

I attended the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee meeting described in Paul Fishwick's report, that looked at the grass-cutting service, food waste, street-sweeping and fly-tipping.

On Wednesday all three of us and the 3 Emmbrook councillors have a meeting about progress on the North Wokingham Distributor Road with officers and representatives of nearby residents.

Cllr Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

There is a new government planning consultation to reduce local input from residents and councils by speeding the planning process on expanding or building new hospitals, schools or colleges. It seems that are trying to expand the planning for the future proposals. Also, they are proposing the change of type of stores in a location (such as changing a clothing store to a nail bar or convenience store). The most positive part of the consultation is to change the rules on converting empty office blocks into flats which includes windows and larger room sizes, but they are still not requiring infrastructure money from the developers to pay for schools, roads, parks and other facilities the new residents will require.

Unfortunately, there's no update on the local plan update changes that are required due to fact that Grazley (which was to take much of the new housing) will not be going forward to the expansion of the increased exclusion zone of AWE in the Southern half of the Borough. The meetings should resume after the holidays.

There are some proposals coming forward for more houses in Winnersh in a few locations that are going through the early parts of the planning process but I'm not yet able to release details yet.

APPENDIX 2

Climate Change Working Group Report

The last Climate Change Working Group was on the 4th November and an update was given at the last Full Council meeting on 10th November 2020.



Since that meeting, the 6 new trees have been planted at Bearwood Recreation Ground adjacent to Mole Road.



A small oak sapling grown in a pot from an acorn taken from the 300 + year old Sindlesham Oak has also been planted as part of this scheme.

Application and contract agreement forms for the feasibility of the potential provision of Electric Charge point facilities have been received and are currently being investigated.



APPENDIX 3

Report from Councillor Paul Fishwick, Chair of the Stations Adoptions Working Group - 8th December 2020.

I attended a North Downs Line Community Rail Partnership meeting this afternoon and can provide a summary update as follows:-

The meeting was attended by 26 people representing a range of interested groups, including South Western Railway, Winnersh Triangle Business Park, Wokingham History Society, and a number of local councils including Rob Curtis from Wokingham Borough Council and Andrew Mickleburgh of Earley Town Council who are looking to adopt Earley station.

There was a useful presentation given by Daniel Wright who leads on the GWR stations on the line related to the origins of Community Rail and the four pillars of the Community Rail Partnership.

- providing a voice for the community
- promoting sustainable, healthy and accessible travel
- bringing communities together
- support diversity, inclusion plus social and economic development

Maddy Mills gave an update on what has been going on with the SWR stations including the proposals for Winnersh and Winnersh Triangle that I reported at the last Full Council (10th November).

There were some good ideas that we may use at our stations that are planned at Wanborough such as a Bug Hotel and Hedgehog Hotel as well as local History map.

Line guides are planned for Easter next year. I suggested that these should also be available on web sites such as the Parish Council to promote walking, cycling connections with bus and the local history in the area.

We were split into two breakout groups, Surrey stations and Berkshire stations. Key points raised were about accessibility of stations and I contributed about building the public confidence following the pandemic in using rail and bus again by promoting safe travel together with the line guides.

I raised the concern about graffiti at Winnersh station (track side) that can only be treated by Network Rail (NR). Fortunately, there was a representative of NR at the meeting. He will investigate it and report back to me. He also provided a useful helpline to report these types of issues 08457-114141.

Finally, they asked for volunteers for a steering Group, which is a group of local authorities, train operating companies, bus companies, businesses, charities, interest groups and local stakeholders who work in partnership. They agree a yearly Action Plan for the Line Officer made up of projects that will help our stakeholders achieve their objectives. The group help the Line Officer to complete the plan in a variety of different ways e.g. by offering advice, contact details, in kind support, resources, financial support etc. The group will meet four times a year. I have volunteered to join the group, but it might be over subscribed as everyone is enthusiastic.

APPENDIX 4

Winnersh Parish Council Meeting Schedule of payments December 2020		
Payee	Description	Amount
Salary Info		
Salaries (PS-CF-JR-KL-JN)	Salaries for December	£ 4,512.07
HM Revenue & Customs	Month 9 Year 2020/21	£ 1,256.01
The Berkshire Pension Fund	Pension Contributions December 2020	£ 1,643.16
TOTAL		£ 7,411.24
To be authorised		
Web Marketing Matters	Website Maintenance & Hosting	£ 164.00
Nick Robbins	November Maintenance	£ 723.60
D Knight	Window Cleaning	£ 100.00
Rialtas	Training	£ 240.00
itQED	Monthly support	£ 98.80
itQED	Anti-virus, PC monitoring, backup	£ 35.64
itQED	365 & Exchange monthly charge	£ 133.02
itQED	365 Exchange & Sharepoint backup	£ 55.20
TGOGC	Outdoor Gym replacement - The Great Outdoor Gym Company	£ 31,209.60
A Solo Security	Community centre fire alarm	£ 87.60
Nick Robbins	Tree Planting	£ 644.40
Pest UK	Annual contract renewal	£ 514.80
Claire Connell	Interim Audit	£ 200.00
CIlr Harper	Replacement Strimmer Line	£ 10.60
TOTAL		£ 34,217.26
Direct Debits		
npower	Allnatt pavilion Electricity	£ 32.80
R collard	Waste Removal & Recycling inv 462443	£ 19.97
R collard	Wheelie bin inv 460445	£ 16.80
R collard	Wheelie bin & waste inv 461771	£ 27.26
R collard	6 yrd skip inv 459703	£ 242.40
R collard	Wheelie bin & cardboard inv 459702	£ 26.83
Plusnet	November - office calls and line rental	£ 68.81
Daisy	Caretaker phone	£ 11.09
Sage	December - sage accounts	£ 54.00
Gulf	Allnatt pavilion Gas	£ 28.01
Gulf	Community Centre Gas	£ 2,201.23
Gulf	Allnatt pavilion Electricity	£ 36.48
TOTAL		£ 2,765.68
Payments made November		
itqed	Support October	£ 98.80
itqed	365 Backup October	£ 21.00
itqed	365 service charge	£ 174.83
itqed	Anti-virus & Monitoring October	£ 30.48
Web Marketing Matters	Website Design and set up	£ 3,950.00
Viking	Gloves & Office	£ 60.16
Viking	Covid Supplies	£ 13.19
Viking	Covid Supplies	£ 64.72
Rialtas	Training	£ 480.00
PFK	Annual Audit 2019-2020	£ 720.00
TOTAL		£ 5,613.18
MONTHLY TOTAL SPEND		£ 50,007.36
Bank Balance		
Unity Bank Balance		£ 222,285.66
Natwest Current Account		£ 2,500.00
Natwest Savings Account		£ 10,565.86
Bank Total		£ 235,351.52

Local Electricity Bill

The national grid is transforming the way it generates electricity to a much lower carbon footprint, with reductions in for example coal fired power stations and increased wind and solar. In 2019 the UK generated a record 37% of renewable energy generation and 20% came from wind power (onshore and offshore).

However, the generation of electricity is still heavily reliant on gas fired power stations, as well as nuclear and the import of energy generated in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

In 2014 a government report concluded that the community energy sector could deliver 3000 megawatts of energy by 2020. This significant potential for community energy is being blocked by licensing rules which benefit the big suppliers and lead to higher energy costs.

The costs and complexity of being able to sell locally generated energy to local people need to be made proportionate to the size of the local energy co-operative's or business's operation.

A Local Electricity Bill has been drafted which sets out the mechanism on how this can be done. If made law, it would give local electricity generators the right to become local suppliers.

If this bill goes through Parliament, OFGEM would be required to enable local energy groups to create renewable energy for use locally with excess power also being used locally by businesses and residents rather than being passed back into the national grid which is currently a costly exercise.

The Local Electricity Bill is co-sponsored by 12 cross-party MP's and supported by 229 cross party MP's including two of the borough's MP's (John Redwood and James Sunderland).

It is also supported by a significant number of Local Authorities, of all sizes from County Councils to Town/Parish Councils.

The world is in a Climate Emergency and enabling the generation of renewable energy locally for local community use would assist in supporting the UK's energy needs.

It is therefore recommended that this Council support the Local Electricity Bill.

Councillor Paul Fishwick, Chairman Winnersh Parish Council – 1st December 2020

Background documents.

[Community Energy Revolution - Power for People](#)

[Local-Electricity-Bill-Briefing.pdf \(powerforpeople.org.uk\)](#)

[Local-Electricity-Bill.pdf \(powerforpeople.org.uk\)](#)

CONSULTATION: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED COUNCILLORS

Response from Winnersh Parish Council

Best practice recommendations and the **current situation** are set out below – potential changes to the Code of Conduct are **highlighted** with Winnersh Parish Council views in italics.

Best practice 1: Councils should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Current situation - Guidance on Bullying and Intimidation is set out in the Borough Council's Code of Conduct. **Views are sought on a proposal that guidance on the use and potential misuse of Social Media also be included in the Code of Conduct together with the following statement:**

“Councillors should be aware that their behaviour in public is, rightly, under public scrutiny and should adhere to the provisions of the Code of Conduct. This includes statements on publicly accessible social media”.

Winnersh Parish Council fully support that guidance on the use and potential misuse of Social Media should also be included in the Code of Conduct with the statement above.

Best practice 2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring Councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation, and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by Councillors.

Current situation – Appropriate provisions are included within the Borough Council's Constitution.

Best practice 3: Councils should review their Code of Conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

Current situation – an annual review of the Code of Conduct will be undertaken by the Standards Committee, with public consultation on significant changes.

Best practice 4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both Councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a Council's website and available in Council premises.

Current situation – Officers are reviewing Code of Conduct information on the Council's website and the effectiveness of the online process for registering complaints.

Best practice 5: Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV (a data record format).

Current situation – The gifts and hospitality register is being updated and will be published in line with Best Practice 5. **Views are sought on a proposal to amend the value of declarable gifts from £25 to £100.**

Winnersh Parish Council have concern that raising the limit to £100 and remaining unlimited could result in a large financial sum over a year. The Parish Council recognise that £25 may be deemed as 'low value' and suggest a mid-range of £50 should be introduced with a maximum cumulative limit of £200 in any municipal year.

Best practice 6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which complaints/allegations are filtered.

Current situation – The public interest test is set out within the Council's Constitution. Each complaint received is considered by the Monitoring Officer, Independent Person and Chairman of the Standards Committee against a number of criteria including Public Interest – is the public interest served in referring the complaint further.

Best practice 7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons who provide independent input and comment into the complaints process.

Current situation – WBC currently retains three Independent Persons.

Best practice 8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation into a complaint and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the Responsible Officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious or trivial.

Current situation – All Code of Conduct complaints are subject to consultation with an Independent Person.

Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the Code of Conduct engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

Current situation – Breaches of the Code of Conduct resolved following a formal investigation are published on the Borough Council's website and reported to the Council. Breaches which are resolved informally (e.g. through mediation or a written apology) are not reported publicly. **Views are sought on three possible options:**

1. **Maintaining the current position whereby complaints resolved informally are not reported publicly on the Council website.**
2. **Publishing the outcome of complaints which are resolved informally on the Council's website.**
3. **Removing the informal route from the Code of Conduct so that all complaints are resolved via a formal investigation.**

Winnersh Parish Council have concluded that all misconduct should be made public. However, if a member admits the misconduct then there is no need for an investigation providing the Council is happy that the member has made a full disclosure.

Best practice 10: Councils should have straightforward and accessible guidance on their website on how to make a complaint under the Code of Conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Current situation – Guidance is provided on the Council's website. Officers are reviewing the guidance in line with Best Practice 10.

Best practice 11: The Committee on Standards in Public Life found ongoing difficulties in resolving standards matters where Town/Parish Council Clerks were not well supported by the relevant Council in making and resolving complaints. It concluded that Town/Parish Councils should take corporate responsibility rather than leaving these matters to the Clerk. Formal complaints about the conduct of a Town/Parish Councillor towards a Clerk should be made by the Chair or by the Town/Parish Council as a whole, rather than the Clerk, in all but exceptional circumstances.

Current situation – The initial handling of complaints of this nature are currently a matter for individual Town and Parish Councils' discretion. **Views are sought, especially from Town and Parish Councils, on the adoption of the procedure set out in Best Practice 11.**

At Winnersh Parish Council the current practice is that Parish Council will take responsibility for all reports of misconduct and has procedures in place through a committee.

Best practice 12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to Town and Parish Councils within the remit of the principal authority (WBC). They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

Current situation – This is part of the Borough Council Monitoring Officer's role. Training and support are provided.

Best practice 13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a Code of Conduct investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

Current situation – Procedures are currently in place in line with Best Practice 13.

Best practice 14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement, and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities

should abide by the Nolan principle of openness, and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Current situation – Regular reports are currently submitted to the Borough Council's Executive which provide updates on finance, operational matters and changes to company directors. Officers will review the accessibility of company agendas, minutes and reports in line with Best Practice 14.

Best practice 15: Senior Officers should meet regularly with political Group Leaders or Group Whips to discuss Code of Conduct issues.

Current situation - Best Practice 15 will be formalised through more regular meetings between senior Officers and political Group Leaders/Whips, including an annual meeting.

Winnersh Parish Council Meeting Dates for 2021

Full Council

Tuesday 12 January
Tuesday 9 February
Tuesday 9 March
Tuesday 13 April
Tuesday 11 May (8.30pm)
Tuesday 8 June
Tuesday 13 July
Tuesday 14 September
Tuesday 12 October
Tuesday 9 November
Tuesday 14 December

Recreation & Amenities Committee

Tuesday 19 January
Tuesday 2 February
Tuesday 2 March
Tuesday 6 April
Tuesday 4 May
Tuesday 1 June
Tuesday 6 July
Tuesday 7 September
Tuesday 5 October
Tuesday 2 November
Tuesday 7 December

Planning Committee

Monday 11 January
Monday 8 February
Monday 1 March
Tuesday 23 March
Monday 5 April
Monday 3 May
Tuesday 25 May
Tuesday 15 June
Monday 5 July
Monday 26 July
Tuesday 17 August
Monday 6 September
Tuesday 28 September
Tuesday 19 October
Monday 8 November
Tuesday 30 November
Tuesday 21 December

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Tuesday 26 January
Tuesday 27 April
Tuesday 27 July
Tuesday 26 October

Annual Parish Meeting

Tuesday 11 May (7.30pm)

All meetings start at 7:30pm (unless otherwise advertised) and take place at Winnersh Community Centre in either the Sindlesham Room, Winnersh Hall or Allnatt Pavilion. During the Coronavirus pandemic, meetings will be held virtually using Zoom.