



Clerk of the Council

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15 April 2010

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREENHAM PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN ST MARY'S CHURCH HALL, GREENHAM
ON 14 APRIL 2010 AT 7.30 pm**

PRESENT: Mr A J Forward (Chairman)
Mr P Planterose (Vice-Chairman)
Mr A Agutter
Mr C Austin
Mr P Barnett to 9.00 pm
Mrs S Huxtable
Mrs D Smith

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Boston (Clerk)
1 member of the Public

1. Apologies for Absence. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr A Beal, Mr W Drummond, Mr D Hale, Mrs T King and Mr J Swift-Hook. The Clerk reported that Mrs Hay had tendered her apologies for absence from the previous meeting but unfortunately he had not received them. She had since forwarded a copy of the email which was sent at 16.41 on 10 March. He asked that in future any email apologies be sent to both the Clerk and the Chairman; this should ensure that they are received and recorded at meetings.

2. Declarations of Interest.

Mr Barnett stated that:

"Any views that I may express about planning matters and other business before this Council tonight are in my capacity as a member of *this* Council (Greenham Parish) and are based on the information before me tonight. If and when I consider any of the items at any future time in my capacity as a member of Newbury Town Council, I will consider each item on its merits at that time, taking full account of all the facts and information which are put before me at that time, as a result of which **I may well form a different view from any view I may express tonight**".

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting. The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2010 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising. Two more completed ID cards and one ready for signing have been received from NTC. The Clerk has written to NTC thanking it for its continued help. When PC Steve Hayward visited the March meeting he reported on the problems experienced with the Greenham NAG. Shannon Carr and PC Hayward are now trying to re-energise the Greenham NAG. They will be arranging a meeting on either Tuesday 11 May or Monday 17 May. It is hoped that some members of GPC will be able to attend and they ask for an indication of which date would be better. There was no favoured date. The Chairman commented that one reason why the Greenham NAG had lost focus was that it had been held at the Greenham Community Centre which was outside the Parish. He suggested that it might be sensible to hold a trial meeting in the Church Hall with GPC meeting the cost. Mr Barnett asked why there should be any charge for holding the NAG meetings when other NAGs did not have to pay. The Chairman said that the reason was that in other areas there was a publicly owned venue available, such as Newbury Town Hall. This was not the case in Greenham. It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr Agutter and carried unanimously that GPC offer to pay for one meeting of the Greenham NAG to be held at the Church Hall.

5. Abbotswood/Pinchington Lane. The Health and Safety issue with the balancing ponds was still not resolved. Mr Agutter said that as well as being unfenced they also lacked any form of life saving equipment. Mr Austin said that the larger ponds on the Common had such equipment but it was often vandalised. Mrs Huxtable reported that over the last weekend queues into the HWRC had backed up onto the A339. This is precisely what GPC had warned of when the site was chosen by WBC. At the 2nd public meeting an undertaking had been given that the gates would be closed if the site was full. The police actively said they would enforce this. A by-pass route between the two slips had been installed to help divert traffic if queues formed.

6. Nationwide Data Centre. When some Councillors visited the Data Centre last year a further visit in May was proposed. The Clerk will write to the site agent to enquire if this is still possible.

7. Racecourse Development Mrs Smith reported that she had been in touch with Andrew Cooch and will be meeting him to discuss warden arrangements for the development. Questions had been asked over the use of the Common for recreation. There seem to be contradictory views over whether such areas should be included in the existing available recreational facilities. Natural England has stated that they should not be but WBC appeared to consider that the Common is an existing facility in Greenham and so reduces the amount necessary in new developments. If the possibility of moving the existing Stroud Green play park to the triangle near the Racecourse entrance is pursued it has been suggested that play facilities for disabled children should be included. This concept was strongly endorsed. It had been noted that the canal towpath had been included in the plans as a commuter route. This would only be achievable if it was properly surfaced and adequately lit, otherwise it would be a danger and not used. Bringing forward Item 17, the Clerk said that in 2009 Thatcham TC had applied for a grant to upgrade the canal towpath including a stretch that runs within Greenham. The application was unsuccessful due to late submission. Thatcham TC has advised the Clerk that it is in the process of preparing another bid for the current Financial Year. The Clerk will be the secondary point of contact after the Thatcham Town Clerk. Mr Barnett recalled that the

towpath had been resurfaced some years ago but it had been badly botched in places with the result that the surface was broken up and it did not drain properly. Mrs Smith also discussed the difficulty of negotiating the tow path as it changed sides of the canal. Currently it is necessary to cross Hambridge Rd to do this. The lack of any controlled crossing or refuge on the 40 mph road was very dangerous. Mr Forward expressed concern that developments had been approved on the basis that the tow path was a good commuter route yet little seems to have been actually done to make this viable.

8. S.106 Developer Contributions. The Clerk has been in touch with WBC regarding the further GPC comments on the S.106 responses. It is hoped that WBC will be in a position to further respond in the next month. WBC has advised the Clerk that the traffic lights in Pinchington Lane have been assessed. The one directly in front of Tesco is working properly. The one by Kingdom Hall was found to be poorly set with too long delays before traffic was stopped and then after people had crossed. It has been adjusted. The original set of lights, nearest to Equine Way and the Deadman's lane roundabout is of an older design but could be improved subject to funding. The Clerk has told WBC to include this in the S.106 improvements if there is sufficient money. He will copy this correspondence to Councillors. Mrs Huxtable asked if a Pelican crossing had been considered. The Chairman said it had but had been discounted on H & S grounds as the flashing amber sequence could encourage drivers and pedestrians to take chances. Mr Austin said that the Kingdom Hall lights caused back up onto the A339 and were a major cause of congestion. Mr Agutter said the A339 College lights had been changed to reduce the frequency of 'pedestrian green'. Mr Forward said this had resulted in people running across the road rather than wait as happens elsewhere. In Mrs Smith's view the lights were too close to the roundabout. As soon as they went red the roundabout became completely clogged up. Mr Agutter had personally written to WBC asking for better signage warning drivers in Pinchington Lane that there were lights just round the corner but WBC stated that the current signage met national standards. Pedestrians often found themselves confronted by vehicles which did not notice the red lights in time as they rounded the bend. A suggestion was made that the lights could be moved southwards especially as students and others had made an access from Tesco lower down the road. Work is underway to identify underground services in the area of the Racecourse Road/Boundary Road mini roundabout to facilitate raising it to make it more visible. The earliest work could start is mid-May

9. Planning.

(a) Applications

<u>No.</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
10/00428/FULD	16 Epsom Cres RG14 7TR Erect attached dwelling to side garden of 16 Epsom Cres Mr William Munro	Object. See Below

GPC is opposed in principal to in-filling within Westwood Farm Estate. The application site is barely large enough for the development and requires use of a shared drive. The garages provided at existing properties are too small for modern vehicles and consequently there is already too much

on-street parking.

10/00565/FULD	45 Greenham Rd RG14 7HY	Object. See below
10/00566/CON	Demolish existing building and	
<i>Adjacent Parish</i>	Construct 6 x 2-bedroom dwellings	
	Ashton Properties.	

1. This large house was previously Grade II listed and was de-listed in 2006. It remains a fine late-Georgian building occupying a prominent position in the street scene and has a commanding position overlooking Stroud Green. GPC recommends that it be refurbished rather than demolished.
2. When the application to de-list 45 Greenham Road was made, the application was in the name of Ashton Properties. This is the current applicant. The application was not opposed by English Heritage on the grounds that the property was not in a conservation area and there were no plans for its demolition. This was clearly incorrect and the reason why English Heritage was misled is unclear. WBC should seek urgent advice from English Heritage in this matter.
3. The proposed pair of semis to the north is shown as being 3 storeys high with brick gable ends. The existing house is 2 storeys with a softer slate hipped roof. The resulting change will dwarf the neighbouring Victorian villa.
4. The proposed pair of semis to the north is also much closer to the adjacent Victorian villa than the existing building. They will therefore dominate it to an unacceptable degree.
5. The tree report undervalues the quality of the yew tree close to Greenham Road. This should be re-assessed.
6. Parking is provided at one space per dwelling. Parking space layout is particularly tight and may be difficult to achieve in practice. On-street parking would be required for second cars, visitors etc and is of limited availability in the area.
7. The property currently provides accommodation for 11. The proposal reduces the sorely needed stock of single-person accommodation.

10/00542/FUL	Unit F Hambridge Lane RG14 5TU	No Objection but see
	Change of Use from B8 (Auto Lease) to	comments below
	B1 (Laundry Service).	
	Berkshire Linen Services	

1. GPC has no objection in principle but makes the following comments:
2. It is unclear if the use is for a commercial laundry or for a 'Laundromat' type of facility. This is likely to affect vehicle movements; WBC should identify proposed usage and assess traffic implications accordingly.
3. Will use be restricted to Light Industrial (B1c) or will all B1 uses be permitted?

10/00655/FULEXT	Former J&P Motors (aka Park House	GPC declined to
<i>Adjacent Parish</i>	Motor Company)	make any comment
	S.73 Relaxation - 07/01687/FULEXT	as recent case law
	Park House Motor Company Ltd	makes this inevitable

(b) Decisions

<u>No.</u>	<u>Proposal.</u>	<u>Decision.</u>
09/00971/OUTMAJ	Newbury Racecourse Housing development	Granted

09/02204/COMIND Newbury Rugby Club Granted
 Construct all-weather playing surface

10. Finance & Accounts for Payment.

The Clerk presented an end of year review of expenditure against budget which had already been made to the FWG meeting on 19 March. In general expenditure closely paralleled the budget. There were significant variations in the following fields:

<u>Clerk's Pay</u>	Underspend due to pay rise being less than 1% instead of budgeted 2½%
<u>Training</u>	There had been no budget line entry for training, previously the cost of training was shown under Office.
<u>Membership</u>	There was an overspend on membership fees due to GPC's decision to join CPRE and a change by BALC to the method of calculating fees (moved from a flat fee to a per capita system). As this change was introduced after the 2010/2011 budget had been set there may be a small overspend next year.
<u>Publicity/PP</u>	There had been no expenditure on publicity or the Parish Plan during the year
<u>Grants</u>	The budget for grants had been increased in anticipation of greater demand in view of the national economic situation. In fact, there had been fewer requests than in previous years.

Overall, there had been an underspend against budget of roundly £10,000.00. While there was no suggestion that money should be spent for the sake of it, the FWG is of the opinion that there were several areas where Consultant's advice could usefully be taken to the benefit of the Parish.

At the March GPC meeting, the Chairman had asked the FWG to consider some purchases in relation to the Clerk's working practices which would benefit GPC. These were access to Land Registry records (which is chargeable), the equipping of the Clerk's PC with a circuit protection system which would also protect telephonic equipment and an upgraded PC memory which would considerably speed up PC processes. Having considered the benefits, the FWG endorsed all 3 potential purchases. It was proposed by Mr Agutter seconded by Mrs Smith and carried unanimously that these purchases be approved.

The Clerk has received applications for grants from Greenham PCC, BBOWT, Relate and Tadley CAB. Greenham PCC has applied for a grant to fund a replacement petrol mower for the Churchyard. The current machine is very old and has reached a stage where repair is no longer cost-effective. Additionally, it is so worn that it has become unstable on rough ground. A replacement machine has been identified at a cost of £300.00. The FWG recommends a grant to Greenham PCC of £300 to fund a new lawnmower. BBOWT has applied for a grant towards the West Berkshire Living Landscape. The project seeks to preserve the Heathland of Greenham and Crookham Commons, Thatcham Reed Beds and Bowdown Woods Nature Reserve. In total, £26,000 is needed to complete funding of this year's expenditure. Costs include £1608 for one month of a seasonal warden's time protecting Heathland birds, £175 for First Aid training for one Conservation Trainee and £15 for a bowsaw. The FWG thought that the prominence of the areas mentioned was such that any grant should be considered by GPC as a whole and therefore makes no recommendation as to grant. Additionally, the FWG thought it proper to question BBOWT on its wider aims, particularly in respect of conserving wildlife in the areas of new developments. It therefore suggests that Ms Akam be invited to a meeting of GPC in order that these matters can be fully explored. Mr Agutter said that BBOWT should support GPC in its efforts to maintain existing open spaces but it appeared to be focused solely on its own agenda. Mrs Smith suggested

that more prominent signs be erected at the Common, making it clear that dogs should be kept on leads. While this is usual at, for example, seaside venues the only reference at the Common was in small print within a general notice. The Chairman suggested that the nature of the signs in general, including those by nesting sites, was only advisory and not enforceable. It was not known if there was a specific byelaw. (*Clerk's Note: He had subsequently checked the Byelaws and there is no reference to dogs*). In applying for a grant, Relate reports that in the last year 22 Greenham residents registered for counselling and 47 appointments were delivered. Each appointment costs Relate £45 and the average client contribution was £25.23; there was therefore a shortfall of £930. The FWG recommends a grant of £600. Tadley CAB has approached GPC for a grant. The Clerk has written to Tadley CAB explaining GPC's parameters for making grants and saying that he felt that as GPC supports Newbury CAB it was most unlikely that a grant could be made to Tadley. The FWG endorsed this view. It was proposed by Mrs Smith, seconded by Mr Austin and carried unanimously that grants of £300 be made to Greenham PCC and £600 be made to Relate. It was agreed that BBOWT be invited to a future meeting (Clerk to arrange) and that no grant be made to Tadley CAB.

The Parish Plan Committee was having difficulty arranging the proposed Fun Day at the Diamond. This was primarily due to Mary Hare School being on half-term with the consequent unavailability of their facilities. Cost of hiring toilets was around £50 per day per unit plus transport. It had therefore been suggested that the event be held at the Church Hall and a grant was sought to cover the cost of hiring both floors for the day. Although the precise cost was unavailable, it was not thought to be excessive and the FWG recommends that the cost be met by GPC. Mrs Huxtable said the church had agreed to cap the amount as a gesture of support for the activity. It was proposed by Mrs Smith, seconded by Mr Planterose and carried unanimously that the cost of hiring the Church Hall for the Fun Day, together with any additional insurance costs, be met by GPC. The clerk will investigate any cover that may need to be obtained.

The Clerk has now completed the end of year Annual Return and it has been countersigned by the Internal Auditor. He now asked the Council to formally approve the Accounts. It was proposed by Mr Agutter, seconded by Mr Planterose and carried unanimously that the Annual Accounts be approved. The Annual Return was then signed by the Clerk and Chairman.

The Chairman explained that in order to progress outstanding planning issues in respect of the Walon permission and its use to facilitate the Wincanton container storage he had had to pay for a copy of the Appeal decision in an identical situation. The sum of £41 is included in the cheques presented for payment.

The following cheques were presented for payment:

Mr J Boston – Clerk's salary & expenses	£1501.55
HM Revenue & Customs – Tax & NI	£176.73
Greenham PCC (Hall Hire)	£32.00
Greenham PCC (Grant)	£300.00
Relate (Grant)	£600.00
CCB (Membership Renewal)	£30.00
Mr A J Forward (copy of Walon Appeal Decision)	£41.00

The Clerk reported that his payment this month was higher than usual. There were 2 reasons for this. He had had to pay £223.60 for the publication of a public notice in the NWN as part of the Stroud Green bollarding consultation, which was included in his expenses. Also, he had been advised by HMRC that he had overpaid tax in 2006/2007.

HMRC repaid the amount by making a credit to this year's payment with the Clerk reducing the amount deducted from his salary. There was no effect on GPC funds. It was proposed by Mr Austin, seconded by Mr Agutter and carried unanimously that the cheques be approved for payment

At this point the Chairman publicly thanked the FWG for its diligence and for managing the improvement in reserves which had now returned to a sensible level. He also thanked the Clerk for his recent hard work, particularly in undertaking the application to the Planning Inspectorate and DEFRA for further bollarding and Grasscreteing of Stroud Green; a task that WBC had been unable to undertake.

11. Parish Plan. It was agreed that Mrs Huxtable should complete the Empowering Young Citizens Survey and return it to Sarah Ward. The Plan is now entering its final stages and it is hoped to be able to present the first draft to GPC before the next meeting. Mrs Huxtable was at pains to make it clear this was not just desirable but an essential part of the process where the endorsement of the PC was compulsory. Mrs Huxtable and Mrs Smith will be meeting on 15 April to finalise the various inputs. After presentation to GPC the Plan will go the WBC and after any necessary amendments it will then be formally presented. After acceptance by WBC it will be published. The intention is to keep the Plan simple and easy to read. The layout and insertion of pictures will be carried out at NGP by Teresa. There is a need to identify a suitable printer. It is also intended to produce a small résumé folder, with perhaps one colour picture, for distribution to all households within the Parish. When all this activity is complete it is intended to hold a small celebratory event.

At this point Mr Barnett left the meeting. Before leaving, with the Chairman's consent, he offered a comment under Item 19. There was currently a major conference at the Racecourse which had generated a large animal welfare protest. There had been a heavy Police presence. Mr Barnett wondered who was paying for the additional policing. Mr Austin said that TVP had a dedicated unit dealing with protests at the Oxford animal laboratories; hunt saboteurs etc which was funded from general Council Tax income. The Clerk commented that it should not be assumed that the public would be meeting the additional cost as pop concert promoters, professional football teams and the like had to meet the costs of additional Police themselves.

On returning to Item 11, Mrs Huxtable said that there was a clear need to bring the community together. A useful meeting had been held with the Youth Council at Greenham Community Centre but the council were all from the Nightingales and surrounding area and not from within Greenham Parish. Earlier in the process when a display had been held at the Willows School advertising a meeting to discuss the Parish Plan a number of people from the Nightingales expressed interest but had to be advised that they were not in the Parish. This generated a short discussion on Parish boundaries generally as it was felt that it would be more sensible if the A339 became the western boundary, with Greenham gaining the Nightingales, Willows School etc and Newbury gaining Sandleford Park and the proposed development there. This will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

12. Web Site & Contract. The Clerk has spoken to Mr Burgess who is broadly content with the draft SLA but is considering some minor changes.

13. Allotments. Contact with the agents for the Sandleford development indicated that they would be prepared to make some land available for allotment use. While Sandleford was a short distance from the present centre of demand it was recognised that with 1000 dwellings potentially being built there, together with the existing housing at Deadman's Lane and in the Monks Lane area, demand was still likely to be high. It was deemed important to state that this informal contact with the developer did not pre-judge GPC's position on any eventual planning application; nor did it imply support for the scheme. It was merely a sensible and pragmatic avenue to explore in the event that the development was eventually authorised. In any event, the development, if approved, was likely to be some years away while the demand was current.

To date, the focus had been on suitable undeveloped farm land. This had been difficult to identify, either because of its location, its orientation (most was on north-facing slopes) and because it was either owned or optioned by developers. It was therefore decided to investigate land in individual ownership. It was also considered that for some people, plots of the traditional size (2½ - 3 poles) might be too big. Additionally, while the remit was to investigate provision of allotments in accordance with the original petition under the 1908 Act, the Group considered that this should be extended to include all methods of food production including community gardens, raised beds etc. Mrs Huxtable said that evidence from the Plan questionnaires was that there was support for gardening clubs. The Clerk sought formal approval for this extension. After useful discussion this was agreed unanimously.

The Clerk said he wanted it to be clear that while the AWG was actively pursuing all possible allotment sites this should not be interpreted as meaning that if a site was found it would automatically result in GPC providing allotments. The costs involved, particularly as they would have to be borne by all constituents to the benefit of the few, would have to be assessed and it would be up to GPC to make a decision. Mrs Smith asked if there was an upper limit to allotment rentals. The Clerk was unsure but this would be one factor to be considered if a suitable site was identified and a cost-neutral rental would be considered.

14. Review of Standing Orders and Financial Orders. The Clerk had completed the review of the GPC Standing Orders and had scrutinised the NALC Model Orders to see if there were any areas where the GPC Orders could be improved. As a result the Clerk had produced new draft Orders which had been circulated to Councillors. The Clerk has made some changes, particularly to Order 13 (Order of Business). It was proposed by Mr Agutter, seconded by Mr Austin and carried unanimously that the revised Standing Orders be adopted. During the review process, the Clerk formed the opinion that GPC should have a dedicated set of Financial Orders, rather than rely on reference to Finance in the Standing Orders. He had therefore created a set which had been circulated to Councillors for comment. It was considered that more time was required to assess the draft Financial Orders and this item was deferred to the May meeting.

15 Local Development Framework. WBC required a response to the LDF consultation by 9 April. The Chairman and Clerk had therefore drafted and submitted a response based

on previous comments by GPC in consultation with the PWG and other Councillors. It was important to make a response as this enables GPC to speak before the Inspector at the eventual hearing. The meeting was supportive and content with the action taken.

16. The Chase Open Space. The Clerk had received a copy of the management plan for The Chase Open Space This had been circulated to Councillors. There was no specific land management apart from the walkways. Declaring a Personal Interest, Mr Austin said that he used to rent all of the area when it was 3 fields; part of it had since been sold by the Racecourse to David Wilson Homes. The Chairman made it clear that Mr Austin's interest was not prejudicial as next year there could well be a different tenant. In Mr Austin's opinion the best way of managing the growth of grass etc was by grazing. He kept cattle in an adjacent field and had asked WBC for permission to graze them in the Open Space. He commented that the occasional presence of his cattle in the Open Space in the past had been due to WBC's failure to erect stock-proof fencing. GPC does not consider the area suitable for mechanical grass cutting and it was resolved that the Clerk should inform WBC that GPC endorses grazing as it reinforces the feel and ethos of the Countryside, it would moderate abuse of the land and it is an eco-friendly way of husbanding the land.

17. Canal Towpath. Included in Item 7.

18. WBC Road Traffic Orders. WBC has issued 2 recent Road Traffic Orders. The first prohibits HGVs (except for loading and unloading) from roads within an area bounded by Burys Bank Road east of Greenham Road, Thornford Road and various roads in Brimpton, Wasing, Midgham and Thatcham. The second Order amends the restrictions in waiting and loading in respect of The Arcade and Northcroft Terrace.

19. Exchange of Information. The Clerk reminded members that the Annual Parish Assembly will be held at the Church Hall on 12 May at 7.00pm, immediately prior to the May meeting. A Street Athletics event will be held in Pigeons Farm Road on 12 August organised by the Family Resource Service (FRS) at WBC. Permission to close the road for the event has already been granted. A steering group meeting will be held at the FRS, 50 Andover Road on 28 April at 3.00 pm. It is also hoped to hold an information session on 25 May at Greenham Community Centre. The FRS would be most grateful for any possible involvement of Councillors. Mrs Huxtable said she had been contacted that morning and would be attending the meeting on 28 April. It was only at her suggestion that GPC had been notified and this appeared to be yet another case of the Parish Council being ignored by WBC. This was a matter of concern to Councillors. Mrs Huxtable was formally asked to attend on behalf of the PC.

20. Date of Next Meeting. The Meeting closed at 9.55 pm. The date of the next meeting is on 12 May 2010 at St Mary's Church Hall at 7.30pm.

A J Forward
Chairman
12 May 2010

Abbreviations:

GPC	-	Greenham Parish Council
NAG	-	Neighbourhood Action Group
NTC	-	Newbury Town Council
PCC	-	Parochial Church Council
WBC	-	West Berks Council