



Clerk of the Council

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREENHAM PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN ST MARY'S CHURCH HALL, GREENHAM
ON 9 JUNE 2010 AT 7.30 pm**

PRESENT: Mr A J Forward (Chairman)
Mr P Planterose (Vice-Chairman)
Mr D Hale
Mrs S Huxtable
Mrs T King.
Mrs D Smith
Mr J Swift-Hook

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Boston (Clerk)
5 members of the Public

1. Apologies for Absence. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr A Agutter, Mr C Austin Mr P Barnett, Mr A Beal and Mr W Drummond.

2. Declarations of Interest.

Mr Swift-Hook 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 limited information before me tonight. If and when I consider any of the items at any future time in my capacity as a member of West Berkshire District Council or 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 19 May 2010 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

4. BBOWT. Jacky Akam and Kate Dent of BBOWT gave a presentation on the West Berks Living Landscape project. The basic aim of the project which will take approximately 3 years is to join together wildlife areas to create a continuous link. Ms Akam also introduced 'Heathland and Beyond' which is a 3 year funded project which started in January 2010. It covers Thatcham Reedbeds, Bowdown Woodland and

Greenham Common Heathland. The focus is on the Heathland as this required the most management. Total cost will be £480,000 including the value of 'in-kind' volunteer time. The aim is to restore up to 20 ha of lowland Heathland and clear up to 75% of trees, at the eastern end of Crookham Common. There was concern over this statement and the Chairman commented that people worry over the loss of trees, which also form a major noise barrier. Mr Hale said that there had been a removal of 75% of trees at the western end of Greenham Common and the area looks very poor as a result. Cattle and sheep bite the tops off of the remaining foliage with the result that it all dies. Ms Akam said that it needs to be properly managed for species such as nightjars and there was no benefit to just letting it grow back. Also a Forestry Commission licence is required and the Commission seeks sustainability. The Chairman said that in his view BBOWT wishes to return to historical Heathland of centuries ago, rather than improve and manage open space as it is now and which the public enjoys. Ms Akam said that the intention is to create a mixed environment. It was recognised that there was a need to raise public awareness and this would be done by public meetings, publicity, leaflet drops and speaking to individual householders. In conclusion, the Chairman thanked Jackie Akam and Kate Dent for their time and a most interesting presentation.

5. Matters Arising. The Clerk had previously notified the CCB conference on 'Common Goals, Different Attitudes' at the University of Reading on 8 July from 10.00 am to 4.30 pm. It has now been announced that a limited number of free places is available to CCB members. As GPC is a member of CCB, any attendance would be free of charge. Mrs King will attend and it was agreed that the Clerk would circulate the latest information from CCB. Mrs Huxtable attended a Street Athletics meeting on 7 June. The project team was present at the Fun Day and is hoping for local community involvement and is training a team of Cheer Leaders. There will be activities based on the Diamond and those involved will be bussed in from Park House School. The event will be held on the afternoon of 12 August. It is understood that funding is still required but there has been no Grant aid application.

6. Abbotswood/Pinchington Lane. The Chairman and Clerk have received a lengthy email from a resident of Deadman's Lane. The issues raised which include further advice from English Cogger are complex and will be investigated before the next meeting. Mr Hale said that WBC's failure to provide a fence between the A3309 and the HWRC site means that children are still running across this busy road and are now forcing apart the growing bushes.

7. Nationwide Data Centre. Nothing further to report. The Chairman explained that this Item will remain on the agenda until the building is handed over by the contractors as there may still be issues arising.

8. Newbury Racecourse – The Way Forward. Nothing further to report. From the public, Mrs Mitchell queried why this subject remained on the agenda. The Chairman said that it was a policy that all recurrent subjects should remain on the agenda. The Clerk made the point that this enabled them to be discussed and decisions made without having to defer them for a month. The Chairman also made the point that although only Outline consent had been granted he thought that many people did not realise just how much was now included as 'Outline'. Mrs Mitchell asked if there would be a further public meeting

when reserved matters were considered and the Chairman replied that he thought there should be – there were considerable weaknesses in the original Permission; for example the planning authority (especially the LDF team) hadn't realised that there was no legal public access to the Racecourse Station despite a large sum being contributed to improve it.

9. Wincanton. The Chairman had emailed Wincanton seeking the latest position and was waiting for a response. He thought noise levels had certainly dropped and it seemed that more containers were being handled during the day. Some Councillors had seen recent night-time movements and it appeared that different companies, and even individual drivers, had preferred routes – either via the A339 and the Town centre or via the M3/A34 and the Newtown straight.

10. S.106 Developer Contributions. The Clerk has asked WBC for an update on the road improvement programme but the responsible officer is on leave until after the meeting. The Clerk has received a letter from The Planning Inspectorate asking for more information on some aspects of the Stroud Green submission. The Clerk has asked for clarification of the request. The outstanding query regarding the NGP S.106 contribution where it seems that £1.7m of S.106 money was offset against charitable contributions made by GCT was mentioned. GPC continues to be concerned about this payment and it was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk would investigate the probity of such an arrangement.

11. Citizens Advice Bureau. The Chairman and Clerk had had a meeting with the Chief Executive of West Berks CAB. West Berks CAB is moving to new premises in August/September and it was thought that this would be an ideal opportunity for GPC to make a visit to gain first-hand experience of CAB's work.

12. Planning.

(a) Applications

<u>No.</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
10/00778/FULD (Adjacent Parish)	Blue Ball public house Demolish and replace by 8 x housing	Object. See below

1. Application form in section 18 says gain of 0.16 homes while describing 8 homes being built. In the DAS the figure of 0.16 becomes clear as it is the hectare area of the site and not the number of units. The density therefore seems quite high.
2. Section 19 says no loss of non-residential space while class A and in particular A4 use as a drinking place is not ticked.
3. Section 20 is left empty and should show existing staff levels which will indicate loss of employment.
4. The parking areas are to be tarmac which is decidedly non-eco friendly. A permeable surface should be encouraged.
5. There is concern that the DAS says 4 other pubs within ½ mile (although it is not clear which pubs are referred to and there is some doubt that there is more than one within ½ mile) yet

says this one is not viable for several reasons but does not explain this fully or why attempts have not been made to make it commercially attractive. This seems an attempt to make a quick commercial profit for an out of area business rather than the preferred option which is to seek an interested commercial user.

6. The proximity to the A339 which is directly in front of the application site would indicate that special care should be taken to check noise levels against the NEC table in PPG24. No noise report is provided. Existing levels are likely to be at least in category "B" and often in "C" where permission should not normally be granted. Measurements taken for WBC by Accon showed levels for the A339 by the new amenity site 2m from the road to be even higher in category "D" where permission should be refused. This part of the A339 has more traffic and the roundabout visible from the site will make things worse.
7. This location is the subject of concern due to pollution levels being so high. The adjacent Burger King roundabout was previously declared an Air Quality Management Area.
8. The previous application for this site (08/01929) was for 10 flats. While the current application changes this to 8 houses, there is no material change to the circumstances which led the previous application to be refused- they add nothing to the street scene and in fact detract from it markedly.
9. The 12 parking spaces at 1½ per property are insufficient in this area. The previous application for the nearby 45 Greenham Road was similarly deficient in parking space provision. There is very little on-street parking in the area and the level of provision is simply not enough.
10. The Stroud Green/Racecourse area is becoming generally increasingly crowded with housing developments. This should not be allowed to continue for fear of spoiling the area as a nice place to live. It does not make sense to remove a social meeting place for yet more houses, especially when there will be an increased demand due to the permitted Racecourse development for 1450 houses.

10/01171/FUL

Woodlands Cottage, Basingstoke Rd
Demolish existing house and outbuildings,
new house and garage.
Mr G Saywell-Lee

Object. See below

1. The application D&A states total floor area of existing buildings is 329.21 sq m for house and existing living accommodation plus 191.96 sq m for garage and store areas i.e. total of 521.17 sq m. Total floor area of new dwelling and garage given as 614.71 sq m i.e. increase of 18%, some 168.38 sq m are below ground therefore minimal impact. GPC does not believe that all outbuildings may be considered relevant therefore the increase could be bigger than this with ENV3/precedent issues.
2. The existing house/bungalow is predominately single storey with a small two-storey area. The proposed house is too big and not in keeping with its surroundings.
3. The plans are misleading - the proposed house is bigger than it at first appears.
4. Due to its size, the house does not make a positive contribution to its setting.
5. Is the track up to the house of an adequate size and quality to deal with the extra traffic a property of this size will surely generate?
6. No pre-application discussions have taken place with GPC or the neighbours.

10/01216/FUL Furlong House, Hambridge Rd No objection
Change of Use Office to Motor Retail
City Motors Ltd

(b) Decisions

10/00726/FUL Woodpecker Cottage Granted
S.73 variation

10/00741/NONMAT Land east of Venture West NGP Approved
Variation to 08/00324/FUL
(LGV/motorcycle test centre)

10/00882/NONMAT Land southeast of Venture West NGP Approved
Variation to 09/01694/NONMAT
(LGV/motorcycle test centre)

It was suggested by Mr Swift-Hook and agreed without dissent that in future the list of WBC decisions would also include GPC's previous recommendations. As previously Minuted, GPC often has to enter an objection in order that recommended Conditions can be brought to WBC's notice. These recommendations are frequently reflected in final consents.

13. Finance & Accounts for Payment. In order to manage receipts and payments more easily, it was decided that all income and expenditure for the Fun Day should be made via GPC; this would permit the Parish Plan funds to be used for minor, day to day expenditure as was intended when the grant was initially made. It was agreed at the last meeting that GPC would meet insurance costs. The Chairman had paid these personally and his expenditure is listed below. Otherwise, current indications are that the Fun Day will be broadly cost neutral. A full I & E account will be drawn up when all invoices have been received and paid.

The following cheques were presented for payment:

Mr J Boston – Clerk's salary & expenses	£1619.28
HM Revenue & Customs – Tax & NI	£299.18
Mr A J Forward (Fun Day insurance)	£649.00
Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance	£750.00
West Berkshire CAB	£750.00
Blendavenda (Fun Day)	£185.00
L M Anderson (Fun Day)	£35.25
Mrs S Huxtable (Fun Day)	£23.73
Mr R Herbert (Fun Day)	£12.00

It was proposed by Mrs Smith, seconded by Mrs King and carried unanimously that the cheques be approved for payment.

Mr Swift-Hook brought up the matter of FWG assessment and recommendations of Grants. He recalled that previously it had been agreed that grants would be assessed 6-monthly whereas it appeared that they were actually being assessed quarterly. The Clerk confirmed that this was the case. He explained that the original policy had been introduced

in order that all applicants were assessed fairly against available finding. However, experience had showed that the Grant budget was routinely under spent. It therefore seemed unnecessary and against the interests of applicants to defer the payment of grants when there was no need to do so. Mr Swift-Hook also questioned the way in which the FWG assessed and confirmed the draft budget. The Chairman said that he knew from personal experience that The FWG took a great deal of trouble in formulating the draft budget which was in any case presented to full Council for approval or otherwise. The FWG was guided by known future costs, past experience and likely future trends. Regarding the Grant budget, the Chairman said that this had been increased as it was foreseen that there would be extra demands due to the recession. In fact, demand had been lower than previously. Mrs King commented that the recession may have caused the failure of some smaller charities. It was also suggested that the reduction in grant applications may have been due to GPC's insistence that projects should normally be to the benefit of Greenham residents. Mr Swift-Hook accepted these points but suggested that more should be done to encourage applications from within the Parish. He said that the bodies to which grants had just been made were fully deserving of support they were nevertheless large organisations and there was some discussion on the relative merits and impact of the same grant to large and small organisations. The Chairman gave examples of recent attempts to generate applications from local groups and it was agreed that the Clerk would pursue methods of publicizing GPC's willingness to consider grant aid, without appearing to be offering an open cheque book. It was also agreed that in future FWG reports would include a table showing the amount recommended for grant together with the amount and date of previous grants and that the FWG will discuss the format of grant applications at its next meeting.

The Clerk reminded the Council that BBOWT had originally applied for a grant for the Living Landscape Project and because of the FWG's uncertainties over the scheme; BBOWT had been invited to make a presentation. The original application therefore still stood. After a full discussion it was clear that Councillors were unhappy with BBOWT's apparent desire to reduce public use of the Common to the detriment of other areas such as Sandleford Park. There was also unease over a lack of consultation over comprehensive changes to the locality – although consultation was promised, decisions had already been made and contracts apparently let. GPC therefore felt that the public would not support expenditure in support of BBOWT at this time.

14. Parish Plan & Fun Day. Mrs Huxtable reported that the Steering Group had agreed that the draft Plan should be submitted to WBC and this had been done on 7 June. The Plan was still awaiting confirmation of some factual information from within WBC but it was felt that this should not be allowed to delay the Plan any further. Mrs Huxtable also reported on the very successful Fun Day which was held on 6th June. She offered her heartfelt thanks, with which the Chairman joined, to all those, including members of the public, who had done so much to ensure a successful day.

15. Web Site & Contract. The Clerk has hastened Mr Burgess for any changes to the proposed SLA.

16. Allotments. The Clerk reported that the next Allotment Working Group meeting would be held on 16 June. Mr Swift-Hook said that a suggestion had been made at the last NTC meeting that a joint search for allotments should be considered. There was no objection to such an initiative in principle although it was known that the majority of applicants wanted a site near to home and a joint search might make this more difficult. The Chairman suggested that a site on the Racecourse near the new golf club might be suitable.

17. Public Open Space. GPC continues to be concerned about the inadequacies of The Chase Open Space. It was accepted that there was public concern about the proposed grazing of the area due to a fear of cattle and cattle churning up the ground, particularly near gates. There had also been a suggestion that play equipment could be installed but many thought the area too remote. Mrs Smith thought it might be a suitable area for play equipment for older children needing no supervision. Seats could also be cut from logs making them more natural and robust. It was agreed that Mr Forward and Mrs Smith would visit the area with Mrs Appleby and Mrs Mitchell from the public together with Sue Everett. The Parish also gave its wholehearted support to the initiative of the local residents group to improve this area. Mrs Mitchell thought the open Space could be improved with S.106 money. The Clerk will research the database to see if there is any indication of how much S.106 money was raised.

18. Greenham Common SSSI. Natural England has advised that it will add the Greenham and Crookham Common SSSI to the list of sites requiring a boundary review. However, it considers the site to be of low priority because of the protection already afforded by the Ranger/Warden system. The Chairman reiterated his view that there should be co-ordination of the different staff on the Common; it was thought that the Natural England/WBC-funded Ranger and the BBOWT-funded Warden could be on leave at the same time unless their activities were co-ordinated.

19. Parish Boundaries. Mrs Huxtable has provided details of the criteria for initiating a Parish Boundary review. Initially a petition signed by 10% of the electorate is required. This will mean around 280 Greenham residents. It was unclear how the matter could be publicised and interest generated when most pressure for a boundary change came from outside the Parish. Mr Swift-Hook suggested that GPC should set up a Working Group to consider the options. However, it was agreed that the Chairman and the Clerk would produce an initial discussion document.

20. West Berks Website. The planning element of the WBC website continues to be very poor, with items missing and out of date. It has also been discovered that there is a WBC policy to expunge information or remove it from public view once planning consent has been granted. The Chairman has been in touch with Peter Neal at WBC and will update him on problems encountered. Mr Swift-Hook confirmed that WBC has a working group dealing with website problems and the Chairman will ensure that it is advised of the difficulties encountered

21. Forthcoming Events. WBC will be holding an Emergency Planning Seminar at the Council Offices on 22 June from 6.30 to 9.00 pm.

22. Exchange of Information. WBC has now confirmed the Order formally adding the West Wood footpath to the Definitive Map. The Clerk has a copy of the map. It was resolved that the Clerk would write to Mr Herbert thanking him for his sterling work in getting the footpath adopted. Mrs King reported that cars are again being advertised for sale on the grass area by the Hambridge Rd/Hambridge Lane roundabout, in defiance of previous enforcement action. The Clerk will write to Planning Enforcement. The fence between the bridleway and The Chase has been broken down and it appears that an informal path has been created from the southern end of The Chase to the bridleway. It is unclear who owns the fence but the Clerk will make enquiries and ask that on repair a gap is created for the benefit of The Chase residents.

23. Date of Next Meeting. The Meeting closed at 10.15 pm. The date of the next meeting is on 14 July 2010 at St Mary's Church Hall at 7.30pm.

A J Forward
Chairman
14 July 2010

Abbreviations:

CCB - Community Council for Berkshire
GCT - Greenham Common Trust
GPC - Greenham Parish Council
NTC - Newbury Town Council
NGP - New Greenham Park
NTC - Newbury Town Council
WBC - West Berks Council