



Clerk of the Council

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12 August 2010

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREENHAM PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD IN ST MARY'S CHURCH HALL, GREENHAM  
ON 11 AUGUST 2010 AT 7.30 pm**

PRESENT: Mr A J Forward (Chairman)  
Mr P Planterose (Vice-Chairman)  
Mr C Austin  
Mr P Barnett  
Mr A Beal  
Mr W Drummond  
Mr D Hale  
Mrs D Smith

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

1. Apologies for Absence. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr A Agutter, Mrs P Hay, Mrs S Huxtable, Mrs T King and Mr J Swift-Hook.
2. Declarations of Interest.

The Clerk recalled that at the July meeting there had been some discussion on the correct moment during proceedings when Declarations of Interest should be made. He thought that this was partly due to the title of this Item which was perhaps a misnomer as the Declarations made by Councillors who were members of other Councils were not Declarations of Interest under the Code of Conduct but rather were statements of position. The Clerk had consulted 3 textbooks and each gave different advice as to when Declarations of Interest should be made. He noted that the training notes issued by WBC in March 2008 (after the introduction of the current regime) state that members must disclose 'the existence and nature of interest before the matter is considered or when interest becomes apparent'. The Clerk recommended that in order to avoid future confusion the title of this Item be changed to 'Statements of Position' and that Declarations of Interest should be made before the Item to which they refer or when they become apparent if subsequent to that. This was agreed unanimously.

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"**.

Mr Drummond 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 West Berkshire District 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. It was proposed by Mr Austin, seconded by Mrs Smith and carried unanimously that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2010, which had previously been circulated, be accepted as a true record. They were then signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising. Mr Swift-Hook had previously queried whether GPC should register under the Data Protection Act. The Clerk had spoken to the Information Commissioner's office and GPC's position was uncertain. However for the avoidance of doubt the Clerk had completed on-line registration and the necessary cheque would be presented under Item 11. Mr Austin asked if there had been any progress on the proposed Police visit to the Common. The Clerk said that he had heard nothing more but would follow it up.

5. Abbotswood/Pinchington Lane. Nothing to report.

6. Newbury Racecourse – the way forward. Mrs Smith reported that a meeting would be held with the Racecourse authorities on 24 August to discuss the future funding of Wardens.

7. Wincanton. The Chairman reported that the noise from the operation was still causing considerable disturbance and he had recently received another complaint from a Hampshire resident. He thought that around 15 people were keeping separate records of disturbance.

8. S.106 Developer Contributions including Highways Improvements. The Clerk was pleased to report that the application to the S of S for permission to erect bollards and grasscrete parking on part of Stroud Green had been successful and detailed planning was now underway in conjunction with WBC. The work will be undertaken in the area of Vine Court where there is significant damage to the Green by residents' parking. No action has been considered in the area near the play park because of possible road re-profiling or the relocation of the play park during the Racecourse development. The traffic survey will be undertaken during the race meeting on 18 September. It was not deemed sensible to do this during busier meetings because of the introduction of one-way traffic flows. WBC

will shortly be starting work to cost and detail the new pedestrian crossing to the Common opposite New Road. The Clerk and Chairman had now finished work on assessing the Annual Parish Report on Developer contributions from WBC. The draft response had been circulated and was approved to be sent to WBC. The Chairman thanked the Clerk for doing such a good job in dealing with the legal issues in the absence of resource being available from WBC.

9. Use of External Resources. The use of External Resources, particularly planning consultants, had been endorsed in principal at previous meetings. The Chairman said that he had personally investigated the potential use of Kirkham Associates, which had previously been used by WBC as Landscape Consultants, and had learned that they would be willing to act for GPC. Additionally, WBC had confirmed that there would be no conflict if GPC chose to employ them. WBC had separately agreed that the GPC comments on the revised Gilson application could be submitted on 12 August. As this gave virtually no time for any appraisal by Kirkham he had undertaken to initially fund them himself and asked that GPC take over the commitment. It was noted that WBC had ignored the landscape implications of the application and that there was no other suitable landscape consultant in the immediate area. WBC had subsequently agreed that further GPC comments based on specialist advice could be submitted up to 24 August. The Chairman advised that Kirkham's costs would be around £440 per day or £55 per hour. The Chairman said the work was likely to take two days to complete. It was agreed that the timescales imposed by the planning process made such process inevitable. It was proposed by Mr Beal, seconded by Mrs Smith that GPC employ Kirkham Associates to appraise the landscape element of the revised Gilson application on the terms previously agreed with them by the Chairman. Mr Forward, Mr Austin and Mr Hale abstained, all others voted in favour. It was agreed that this decision should not be assumed to form any sort of precedent.

The Clerk said that considering the use of consultants generally, each individual use would have to be competitive (assuming more than one provider) and individually authorised unless a consultant was selected and paid a retainer to act for GPC as and when necessary. It was for GPC to decide if the increased flexibility and speed of response inherent in retaining a consultant was worth the additional expense. During discussion it became evident that there was a firm preference for retaining a consultant. Mr Beal observed that retaining a consultant would save time and expense in arranging individual representation and that there was seldom sufficient time where planning matters were concerned. Mr Austin said that the current pressure on GPC was a reflection of the success of Newbury as an area of employment during a recession for which we should be grateful. Mr Drummond said that local planning consultants had often previously been employed by WBC and generally had previous links with WBC. The Chairman stated that competitive tenders would be sought from geographically close consultants who were outside the immediate West Berks area. Mrs Smith said that while planning and possibly landscape consultants should be retained other specialists such as noise consultants should be employed on an Ad Hoc basis. The Chairman commented that previous advice from a noise consultant had enabled him to pursue other noise issues without outside help by using the knowledge previously gained. It was proposed by Mr Planterose, seconded by Mr Beal and carried unanimously that the Chairman and Clerk produce strict terms of employment and seek 3 competitive tenders from appropriate consultants and report back to the Council.

10. Planning. The Clerk had drafted and circulated a letter to WBC regarding the lack

of scrutiny of delegated decisions made by officers. It was agreed that the letter be forwarded to WBC, subject to a minor amendment suggested by Mr Beal.

(a) Applications

<u>No.</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
10/01741/FUL	Marshalls, Unit F, The Triangle Minor extension of showroom Marshall's of Newbury	No Objection
10/01743/ADV	Marshalls, Unit F, The Triangle Erection of 6 fascia signs and I totem sign Peugeot Motor Company	Object See below

Object due to excess number of signs and potential light pollution. Given the plethora of new signs we cannot accept the comment in the application form which describes the signage as “a reduction of the existing” and “an overall reduction in onsite signage”. The current building has a large sign over the main entrance facing into the motor retail park on a 6m tall totem-like structure. The new scheme has 7 different sets of signage all internally or externally lit. There is a similar totem pole where part of the application says it is reduced in height from the current 6m to 5m but the photomontage showing it describes the new one as 6000mm or 6m. This error needs addressing. The current totem is a pole with the Peugeot sign on as a square on top. The replacement is in the shape of a pylon being 5m or 6m high and 1.3m wide for the whole height. The signs are now going to be on all but the rear elevation and even then the flashes which are illuminated will carry round the corners onto the rear elevation. There is concern over the amount of illumination, even if of low wattage and the effect on residential amenity in Deadmans Lane and others in Pinchington Lane as the new signs can clearly be seen outside of the site. As a minimum it is felt that a condition should be imposed to restrict the overnight hours of illumination both for residential amenity and as a reduction in the use of power.

10/01375/FULD	Sandleford Farm Yard Redevelop site to provide 9 Residential units, garages and garden sheds Gilson Engineering.	Object See below
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Prior to discussion Mr Hale declared a prejudicial interest as the owner and occupant of the neighbouring Sandleford Farmhouse and withdrew from the meeting. Mr Austin declared a prejudicial interest in that housing development might increase the value of his adjacent farmland and withdrew from the meeting.

The main thrust of GPCs objection is to protect the aims of the local plan and saved policies in maintaining the balance of the rural economy outside of the settlement boundary. Sustainability is the prime reason for defining settlement boundaries; this application goes against sustainability where core issues are avoiding the loss of employment especially when replaced by housing which will bring more pressure on employment. Combined with this is the importance of landscape and heritage which is embraced by many policies referring especially to locations outside of the settlement boundary. This application is contrary to guidelines both by seeking to allow houses outside of the settlement boundary and by failing to protect and enhance the landscape and protection of our heritage.

The revised plans raise the plots but require so much cutting down as to have a catastrophic effect on boundary planting. In this respect the amended scheme is worse than the previous as it adds to the impact on the historic park and listed buildings in the area.

The tree officer has already confirmed that existing planting will be compromised in all respects.

The application does not include a landscape scheme or consider the WBC policies to protect and improve the historic landscape. English Heritage is particularly concerned about the park. The retaining walls and acoustic fences required for this application will ensure the complete demise of much of the existing landscape with the wide footpath requirement of Highways will destroy all roadside landscaping in place today.

PPG7 proposes greater discrimination in favour of the reuse of rural buildings for business rather than residential purposes.

The applicant just describes the park as degraded but PPS5 now seeks to improve such sites. West Berkshire's own landscape policies particularly describe the park as one to be improved. English Heritage has the listed park as a site of concern for its condition, requiring remedial action.

In the Design and Access Statement the applicant describes the scheme landscape as per the scheme provided. This scheme cannot be found. Such a sensitive site which is subject to policy deserves such a document.

The WBC Planning officer has previously said - '*Clearly the principle of redeveloping this site which has become something of an anachronism in the locality to housing is to be encouraged, since it lies on a brown field site in a relatively sustainable location*'.

The site is in a non sustainable location due to the use of the words 'outside of the settlement boundary', which is understood to also mean 'rural' where it is the Council's policy in 3.5.4 of the Local Plan to restrict new housing unless for exceptional purposes.

**3.5.4 In accordance with policy H5 of the Structure Plan small scale development on unidentified sites will be acceptable in the form of redevelopment and change of use or infilling<sup>(16)</sup> within the identified boundaries of the settlements set out in policy HSG.1. Outside settlement boundaries development will only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances. Details of acceptable categories of development outside of settlement boundaries are set out in policy HSG.2. Special regard should be had to policies of countryside protection and enhancement when considering new housing development outside of settlements.**

There are no details of acceptable categories as HSG.2 has not been saved.

From the structure plan:

C5: that development should not visually intrude into the adjoining countryside or prejudice the maintenance of the rural character of adjacent land.

C9: the protection and enhancement of landscape and features important to its character and history.

Although the structure plan has been superseded, the replacement still supports the above thinking.

The local plan in discussing background studies and strategies describes Berkshire Landscape Strategy (May 1995), the key purpose of which is to provide a framework for developing and implementing landscape conservation and enhancement measures. Caring for the landscape is seen as an important element of a sustainable approach to future development.

The local plan under key landscape aims says:

(iii) to protect important landscape, nature conservation and heritage features from damage due to the adverse effects of development and to encourage their proper management where appropriate;

(iv) to provide for development and change that would benefit the rural economy while protecting and enhancing the landscape and overall environment of the area.

The bulk, massing and form of the proposed buildings do not follow the generally single storey and individual buildings on site today. The development is contrary to policies OSV.5, OSV6, OSV11, ENV4, ENV18, ENV20 and PPS5.

The landscape and its special context within a heritage setting has been completely ignored. The landscape officer who previously commented so robustly on the original scheme had severe reservations but her input has not been sought this time. Such lack of interest by WBC in the landscape and heritage implications of this application are of grave concern to GPC.

In addition to the above objection, The Chairman said that a new tree report had just been received. He thought it unfortunate that the applicant was being allowed to drip feed further information into the planning process as this made a coherent response impossible. The response to the tree report, any new findings and the Kirkham report would be circulated for agreement before submission to WBC.

After this discussion and decision Mr Hale and Mr Austin rejoined the meeting.

(b) Decisions

10/00806/COMIMD	English Provender, Temporary Warehouse	Granted
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GPC Rec: Object on grounds of light pollution, impact on SSSI, noise and doubts over adequate drainage. WBC imposed 5 conditions regarding noise of air handling plant, vehicles to have white noise reversing beepers, no operation between midnight and 6 am, none at weekends or bank holidays

10/01206/FUL	Newbury Racecourse, extend temporary accommodation	Granted
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GPC Rec: No objection

10/01345/HOUSE	4 Rosyth Gardens First floor extension	Granted
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GPC Rec: No objection but request pd rights be removed. No reference to pd rights in officer's report.

11. Finance & Accounts for Payment. During preliminary discussions about the use of External Resources the Clerk had advised on how individual agreements should be made and funded. No provision had previously been necessary in the Financial Orders but the Clerk had drafted a new Order that specifically covered this. The new order had been circulated and was adopted without a vote.

The following cheques were presented for payment:

Mr J Boston – Clerk's salary & expenses	£1229.80
HM Revenue & Customs – Tax & NI	£338.65

Greenham PCC – Hall Hire	£110.50
The Information Commissioner	£35.00

It was proposed by Mr Beal, seconded by Mr Austin and carried unanimously that the cheques be approved for payment.

The Clerk has been informed by the Internal Auditor, Mr Geoff Weir, that he is retiring and will not be undertaking further Internal Audits. The Clerk has consulted local Parishes and has provisionally agreed that Mr David Weller take over as Internal Auditor. Mr Weller is the current Internal Auditor for Thatcham TC and comes highly recommended. It was proposed by Mr Forward, seconded by Mr Hale and carried unanimously that Mr David Weller be appointed the GPC Internal Auditor until further notice.

12. Parish Plan. Mrs Smith reported that a response to the Plan had been received from WBC and was generally positive. The Chairman said that only highways wanted real changes and the rest were generally in approval with minor cosmetic changes. The response would be discussed at the Parish Plan Steering Group meeting on 17 August.

13. Web Site & Contract. Nothing further to report.

14. Allotments. The Clerk reported that after many months investigation, the AWG was hopeful that it might have found a suitable site for allotments. However, negotiations are at an early stage and he preferred to be unspecific at the moment.

15. Parish Boundaries. The Clerk had circulated a briefing paper and asked for comments and input. There are 2 ways in which a Boundary Review can be triggered - either by a petition by 10% of the Parish electorate or by a decision by the Primary Council (West Berks). The Clerk thought it unlikely that GPC could generate sufficient interest in favour of a proposal which would have no direct benefit to existing electors. It would also be expensive to generate such a petition – possibly £1000-£2000 if it took the form of a referendum and it was difficult to justify this when any benefit would be to people currently outside the Parish. He thought it unlikely that WBC would initiate a boundary review without clear support from those affected. Mr Austin asked if it would be possible to hold a referendum at the same time as next May's elections, and so reduce the cost. Mr Barnett had some experience of similar exercises which had been conducted by asking individual householders to sign a petition. The Clerk will ask WBC for further advice on exactly what would be acceptable to them. However, the Clerk cautioned that as the proposal required the transfer of housing and industrial property between Greenham and Newbury it was essential that Newbury agree to the proposal before any further work was done. It was also agreed that agreement by Newbury would increase the chances of WBC agreeing to the plan.

16. Greenham Parish Council. Mrs Smith had asked that GPC discuss the number of Councillors and if it was possible to increase them. The Clerk explained that WBC has a proportional table showing number of Councillors in relation to electorate but it is not a hard and fast rule – numbers may be more or less depending on circumstances. Under the table Greenham's electorate equates to 15 Councillors – an increase of 2. Moreover, the theoretical number would increase when the Racecourse development starts to be occupied. WBC has stated that all Parishes will be asked during the Autumn if they wish to change the number of Councillors at the next election (May 2011). It was agreed that in view of the

ever-increasing demands on individuals GPC was desirous of increasing the number of Councillors. The Clerk was authorised to so advise WBC when it seeks Councils' views.

17. West Berks District Council. The Chairman said that he was concerned that WBC was moving increasingly to electronic records but that those records were not publicly available. Much of the details of approved planning applications were stripped out of public view and only accessible by WBC. He reminded the members we had an undertaking that 106 agreements would be scanned in. Not all have been and those that had were only viewable internally by WBC. He had that day had to ring WBC three times in order to access records. He quoted the example of the recent application to extend the time limit applied to consents at Mews Cottages. While it had been possible to access the current consent the detail was missing making it impossible to see what GPC was being asked to comment on. Mr Beal said that the problem was not one of electronics but of the system used. Mr Hale agreed that it sometimes takes days to access information due to the inadequacies of the system. The Chairman and the Clerk had started work on drafting a letter of concern to WBC about perceived shortcomings but this was likely to be a lengthy task as it involved considerable research. They would focus on what is currently available, what should be available, how it is accessed and how it is described. The Chairman, following advice from the clerk, thought that when the work was complete a non-confrontational approach such as a face to face meeting with WBC might be preferable to a letter.

18. Forthcoming Events. Street Athletics at Pigeons Farm Thursday **12th August** - This is part of the Summer Activities Partnership which organises activities for young people during the summer holidays. A variety of activities will be taking place on the Diamond e.g. a martial arts display, circus circus, Duke of Edinburgh, Greenham Youth, Reading Football Activities, Fitness Centre display, Inflatables , food and refreshments etc. The main aim of the Day is to encourage young people to take part in activities especially those who do not normally take part. Money is available for children from deprived backgrounds so that they can be involved. Volunteers are needed to help. The WBC Core Strategy Pre-Hearing Meeting will be held on **1 September** and the Hearing themselves on **2 November**. GPC has said it will attend the Pre-Hearings but had not yet identified a delegate. The Chairman stated that he thought that as Greenham would be hosting the two large strategic sites bearing most of the house building under the LDF it should be represented by 2 Councillors. Mr Beal indicated that he might be able to attend but it was noted that no times have yet been published. The Clerk will circulate the time of the Pre-Hearing when it is known. Also on **1 September** the AGM of the Newbury & Hungerford branch of CPRE will be held at Newbury Town Hall at 7.00 pm. The TVP Open Day will be at Sulhampstead on **4 September**.

19. Exchange of Information. Mr Planterose asked if here had been any response from WBC to the query regarding the road closures on 'Party in the Paddock' days. The Clerk had had some response but there had been no resolution. He recounted a situation which revealed that no Road Traffic Order had been put in place for the recent road closure which meant that it had no legal effect.

Mr Austin announced that the date of the next Commissioners meeting had been changed to 8 September.

Mr Drummond said that he had reported the dying trees at the HWRC. They would be

replaced at the proper time for planting

Mr Barnett had attended the recent BALC meeting. BALC was anxious to see more representation from West Berks. It was also considering increasing fees. Mr Barnett had warned BALC that this would probably lead to reduced membership.

Date of Next Meeting. The Meeting closed at 9.10 pm. The date of the next meeting is on 8 September 2010 at St Mary's Church Hall at 7.30pm.

A J Forward  
Chairman  
8 September 2010

Abbreviations:

BALC - Berkshire Association of Local Councils  
GPC - Greenham Parish Council  
PCC - Parochial Church Council  
WBC - West Berks District Council