

**Minutes of a meeting of Cold Ash Parish Council on
Tuesday 12.3.2024 at 7pm in the Committee Room of
Acland Memorial Hall**



**Public
Participation**

Representatives of the Reading Education Trust, Cyril Parsons and Nigel Silcock, reported to Council regarding St Gabriels Convent, The Ridge. Reading Education Trust is a Christian faith school, part of One School Global, which is seeking a new school building having held a temporary location in Reading for 5 years. The Trust's offer to purchase St Gabriels has been accepted and the purchase process is ongoing. Should plans be successful, the site will accommodate a small school for up to 160 pupils from Berkshire and Oxfordshire. A new school building will be built but the Chapel will be retained as well as the house towards the property entrance. *The Representatives responded to questions/concerns from Council:*

School run traffic and parking is an existing challenge on The Ridge; this should be not be exacerbated. *Children attend by minibus, not by car. A traffic survey has been undertaken. Might there be an opportunity to work with St Finian's School? Representatives have a meeting arranged with the St Finian's Headteacher.*

Does the School follow the National Curriculum? *Yes. It is also inspected by the equivalent of OFSTED.*

What support is sought from CAPC? *Streetscape and design.* PM highlighted the emerging NDP.

ACTION The Clerk will provide PM with contact information for the Representatives.

Two Councillors were also present from neighbouring Hermitage Parish Council.

Present:

Cllrs Hanks (RH) (Chair), Codling (HC), Murray (PM), Adams (PA) and Wilding (JW)

In

Rosie Jardine (Clerk)

attendance:

**RESOLVED
ALL IN FAVOUR**

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, Cllr Hanks was nominated to Chair the meeting by Cllr Codling. This was seconded by Cllr Wilding.

239426

Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Fenner (MF), McArdle (IM), Clark (BC) and District Cllr Dick

239427

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

239428

Minutes

**RESOLVED
ALL IN FAVOUR**

Minutes of the meeting held on 27.2.2024 were approved and signed

239429

Planning Matters

A Decisions

Council noted the following decisions

NOTED 23/00565/FUL Land Adjacent to Greenbanks, The Ridge – REFUSED

Erection of 4 dwellings and associated works - CAPC OBJECTED

23/02195/HOUSE Arbor Low, Bucklebury Alley – GRANTED

Section 73A application to vary condition 2 (Approved plans) and condition 3 (Materials) of approved 21/03247/HOUSE - Two storey front and rear extensions – CAPC NO OBJECTION

23/02856/REG3 Land Midway Between Heath Lane and Southend and Opposite – WITHDRAWN

Construction of a new agricultural access point to the landowners field to replace the existing one that is to be lost as a result of the Flood Alleviation Scheme currently under

construction at Heath Lane (ref. 21/03135/COMIND). The works will involve the removal of the existing gate used for access and the provision of a 4.8m wide new gate access point, and grasscrete surface to provide a crossing point from the existing kerb line to the existing field. – CAPC OBJECTED

Standing Orders were suspended to accommodate a Public Participation session

239430

Litter & Dog Waste Bins

RESOLVED
ALL IN FAVOUR

Council approved the purchase of the following replacement bins as recommended by CAPC’s contractor using CIL funds currently held in reserve:

- A** Dog waste bin at The Ridge WAG entrance – damaged and too small.
Replace with new, larger capacity 66ltr: £207.00 plus installation at £25.00
- B** Dog waste bin at end of Manor Lane (567n) - too small and incurs additional emptying fees. Replace with new, larger capacity 66ltr: £207.00 plus installation at £25.00
- C** Litter bin at top of Southend (511d): damaged
Replace with like-for-like post-mounted: £158.00 plus installation at £25.00

NOTED

To note that replacement bins for the Recreation Ground approved at Council on 12.12.23 are currently on order and should be installed before the end of March 2024.

239431

Play areas

A NOTED

The bi-monthly inspection report submitted by CAPC’s contractor.

B RESOLVED
ALL IN FAVOUR

Council approved expenditure of £150.00 in response to recommendations made:

| Fault | Recommendation | Risk | Time estimate by contractor |
|--|--|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Southend Toddler Area | | | |
| Planting and bushes are still growing through fencing | Cut back all planting and bushes where growing through fencing | MED | 1.5 hours |
| Algae growth to wet pour surface within area | Remove algae growth from surfaces inside area | MED | 0.25 hours |
| Southend Junior Ball Court | | | |
| There is algae and moss growth to tarmac pathways | Remove algae and moss growth from tarmac pathways | MED | 0.25 hours |
| Planting overgrown and growing through fencing | Cut back planting growing through fencing on a regular basis | MED | 1.25 |
| Algae growth to wet pour surface within play area and tarmac surface in ball court | Remove algae growth from wet pour surface within play area and from tarmac surface inside ball court | MED | 0.5 hours |
| Tree debris on surfaces inside area and ball games area | Clean up and remove tree debris from surfaces inside area and ball games court surfaces | MED | 0.75 |
| Bird droppings all over swing seats | Clean off and remove bird droppings from seats | MED | 0.25 |
| Bushes still growing through side panels | Cut back bushes through side panels | MED | 1.25 |

C NOTED

West Berkshire Council has confirmed to the Clerk that CIL money can be used for play area repairs. Council was asked to consider if it is desirable for the Clerk to seek further quotes for repairs as recommended in the bi-monthly inspection report.

ACTION

The Clerk will seek quotes for repairs to present for consideration at a future meeting.

239432

80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings – Thursday 6.6.24

- A NOTED** IM's report advised of volunteers willing to prepare the site and manage the beacon lighting only and not to run an overall event. IM's recommendation was that CAPC should not run an event given the anticipated potential participants and potential organisers.
- B** Council wished to provide further opportunity for volunteers to come forward before making a decision.
- ACTION** The Clerk will offer the opportunity to run the event via The Bulletin. If no volunteers come forward, Cold Ash will not have an event for this occasion.

239433

Clerk's Report

The Clerk gave a brief report of actions since the previous meeting:

- Online banking is set up and March payments will be made online.
- The finance software provider has offered a free month to get ready for the new financial year. The Clerk has made a start entering the budget.
- The Internal Auditor is due on Tuesday 23.4.24 to work on Year End – the Clerk must review recommendations made at the interim internal audit before then.
- NALC will be issuing new model Financial Regulations later this month; it is recommended that Councils adopt them with as few changes as possible. CAPC's are due for review May 2024 so this will be included on the May agenda.

PART II Exclusion of press and public *Discussion of item 239434 was considered confidential and the meeting entered Part II. The public and the Clerk were asked to leave the room for the discussion and were invited to return to so that the Clerk could record resolutions.*

239434

Staffing Matters

RESOLVED In response to recommendations made by this Council's Staffing Committee
ALL IN FAVOUR

- A** Approved the Clerk's remuneration at SCP24 from 1.4.24
- B** Approved pension contributions of 5% for both Council and Clerk from 1.4.24
- C** Approved the Clerk's request to carry over 5 days of annual leave to the new holiday year. Council urged the Clerk to keep in mind the importance of annual leave and to ensure that it is taken.

239435

Finance

A RESOLVED **Items for payment** - Council reviewed and approved the following items of expenditure:

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| I McArdle -reimbursement | 577.75 |
| Acland Memorial Hall - 27.2.24 | 16.50 |
| Acland Memorial Hall - 12.3.24 | 24.75 |
| SSE - streetlights | 47.54 |
| Cold Ash Volunteer Groups - grant | 290.94 |
| ARD Playgrounds | 127.51 |
| SSE - streetlights | 47.54 |
| Tactical Facilities Management Ltd | 307.68 |
| Google - website back-up storage | 15.99 |
| Microsoft | 12.36 |
| J Hauxwell | 65.00 |
| IONOS | £4.80 |
| BT | £37.14 |
| Grundon | £92.09 |
| A Eardley | £1,200.00 |
| R Jardine | £1,141.01 |
| NEST | £87.66 |
| HMRC | £388.35 |
| Microsoft | £12.36 |

- ACTION** The Clerk will send the Proludic invoice to RH to support completion of the Recreation Ground Project funding process.
- B RESOLVED** Council approved bank reconciliations prepared by the RFO for Feb 2024. The Chair signed the reconciliations and corresponding bank statements.
- C NOTED** The analysis of Payments against Budget to March 2024
- D NOTED** **The VAT reclaim submitted by** the Clerk for 1.1.24-29.2.24
- E RESOLVED** Council approved the transfer of £5,000 from the General Reserve to the Community Directplus Account
- F NOTED** PA presented a report and explained it's a statement, rather than an in depth analysis, to give clarity to recent budget making decisions.
- ACTION** The Clerk will publish the following statement to the CAPC website:
Cold Ash Parish Council has approved a budget of £65,413 for the year 2024-2025. This includes contracts for emptying litter and dog waste bins, grass cutting, tree work and maintaining safe and enjoyable play areas as well as administering the Council's activities and The Poor's Allotments & Recreation Ground Charities. The Poor's Charities provide our Recreation Ground, Allotments and wonderful Wildlife Allotment Garden.

For the past four years, we have been able to use our financial reserves to pay the difference between our budget and the Council Tax precept. Unfortunately, this is no longer sustainable because our reserves are depleting, which means we may be unable to respond to problems as they arise; reserves must be maintained to allow the Council to continue operations while dealing with unforeseen difficulties such as flooding, climate change, and ash dieback. We worked hard to keep the budget as low as possible to mitigate the impact of CAPC's enhanced precept proposal for 2024-2025 on ratepayers. The average Band D household's CAPC contribution should rise by about £10.00 this year.

239436

Cemetery Fees

RESOLVED
ALL IN FAVOUR

Council approved the schedule of fees relating to Glebelands Cemetery with one minor amendment to the definition of a parishioner/resident as below:

| Purchase (Exclusive Right of Burial/EROB) | Suggested CAPC |
|--|-----------------------|
| EROB for a period of 99 years in an ordinary grave | £450 |
| EROB for a period of 99 years in a selected grave and defined area. | <i>remove</i> |
| EROB of cremated remains in a defined area for a period of 99 years | £200 |
| Interments | |
| In an ordinary grave - the body of a person exceeding 18 years of age. | £300 |
| In a selected grave - the body of a person exceeding 14 years of age | <i>remove</i> |
| In an ordinary grave - the body of a person under 17 years of age | £100 |
| In a selected grave - the body of a person under 15 years of age | <i>remove</i> |
| Cremated remains in a casket not exceeding 15 inches square in a grave previously purchased with exclusive right | £160 |
| Grave preparation for interment of cremated remains | £40 |
| Memorials | |
| Right to erect a headstone or cross – grave | £140 |

| | |
|---|------|
| Right to erect a headstone or cross – cremated remains | £140 |
| Right to place an inscribed vase close to the headstone | £60 |
| An additional inscription on any memorial | £45 |
| Non-parishioner rates | X 3 |

CHILDREN'S FUNERAL FUND With the introduction of the Children's Funeral Fund (CFF) in July 2019, no fees should be billed for the funeral arrangements of children aged 17 or under, including babies stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy. A Burial Authority should reclaim all its fees from the Children's Funeral Fund. The Children's Funeral Fund does not extend to funerals for babies lost before 24 weeks of pregnancy; any fees in this instance should be billed in the usual way.

Recommendations from the Clerk:

1. Remove fees relating to selected graves to reduce difficulties when planning grave spacing.
2. Amend classification of adults and children to reflect the definition made by the Children's Funeral Fund (see above).
3. Amend non-parishioner/non-resident fee to triple, in line with neighbouring burial authorities. A parishioner/resident can be defined as someone who resided in the Parish of Cold Ash at the time of their death or had ~~been on the electoral roll of the~~ lived in the Parish for a period of 15 years at any time in their life.
4. The approved fees should be applied from April 2024 and reviewed for April 2025.

239437

Councillors' Reports & Questions

PA: The resurfacing of Cold Ash Hill undertaken in 2023 was of poor quality and is breaking up in places. Is it possible that it can be redone?

ACTION The Clerk will make enquiries with WBC Highways.

JW: Residents have reported speeding along Cold Ash Hill causing difficulty exiting Hatchgate Close.

ACTION PM will enquire about the availability of SID equipment. JW offered his assistance.

PM: The deadline is upon us for the Inspectorate of the Local Review. PM has been liaising with other local parishes and shared pertinent information by email. CAPC will not be submitting anything additional to its original appeal and the traffic survey, there being no additional evidence. Thatcham is appealing on the basis of the GP surgeries not being properly consulted.

ACTION **RH:** Is it possible for the car park lines to be re-painted using CIL funds?

The Clerk will include this on a future Council agenda and check the CIL guidance.

239438

Correspondence

Council noted the correspondence received since the last meeting of Council.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.18pm.

Chairman

Date

