



**Minutes of a meeting of Cold Ash Parish Council on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7pm  
in the Committee Room of Acland Memorial Hall**

**Public Participation** Derek Coulson, a member of the Recreation Ground Project team, briefed Council on the work done for the Project and outlined recommendations which would be put to Council during the meeting under agenda item 239351.  
Council thanked the Recreation Ground Project team for the work undertaken so far. Members asked questions relating to the position of the new equipment and for clarity regarding the service the preferred contractor is offering. These questions were addressed during discussion under agenda item 239351

**Present:** Cllr McArdle (Chair) (IM), Cllr Hanks (RH), Cllr Morrow (AM), Cllr Murray (PM), Cllr Adams (PA), Cllr Codling (HC)

**In attendance:** Rosie Jardine (Clerk)

**239348 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Fenner (MF), Cllr Wilding (JW), Cllr Clark (BC) and District Cllr Dick

**239349 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest

**239350 Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on 24.10.23 were signed and approved as a correct record.

**239351 Project Update**

To receive a report regarding the current Recreation Ground Project and to resolve, if appropriate, the

- a) approval of chosen contractors and place orders, Doc no. 23 (suppliers and Costings).
- b) approval to Recommended position of the Table Tennis + Basketball court, Doc No. 16 (Table Tennis & Basketball court Position)
- c) provision of a purchase order by the Parish Clerk to Proludic in order to proceed
- a) Following discussion to clarify that the chosen contractor offered both the most competitively priced and the most complete package including project management, Council resolved to approve the recommendation.
- b) Following discussion to establish that consideration had been given to all possible options regarding the position of new equipment, that it should not compromise the boundary for cricket matches or prevent a full-sized football pitch and the potential for damage to vehicles in the car park from ricochet balls must be minimised, Council resolved to approve the recommendation.
- c) Council approved the request for the Parish Clerk to prepare purchase orders for the project.

**RESOLVED** All in favour

**ACTION** Clerk to check signage in car park with reference to liability for damage to cars.  
Clerk to prepare purchase orders required to place orders.

**239352 Clerk's Report**

To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the meeting held on 24.10.23

Members received a brief update from the Clerk updating on work undertaken:

- a) The DMMO representation was submitted to WBC and acknowledged
- b) An email from a former Councillor had been received informing his details were still attached to the Council Gmail account. The Clerk advised that these details have been removed including card details to pay an annual subscription for website back-up. The Clerk's debit card has been added temporarily with a view to backing up to Clerk's Microsoft One Drive in future if possible.
- c) The Clerk's clerk@coldashpc.org.uk email address is set up and running. There will be a phased transition from Gmail with continual monitoring of both accounts for the foreseeable. Councillor email addresses will be next.
- d) Office 365 is now operational on the office PC and laptop. The oldest PC has been disposed of as agreed – the Clerk will chase the certificate.

**239353**

### **Interim Internal Audit**

To note the Internal Auditor's Interim Report and to consider and resolve, if appropriate, temporary additional hours for the Clerk to create a retrospective Cashbook for the current financial year, estimated at 3 hours per week across 8 weeks totalling 24 hours  
Council discussed the recommendation by the Auditor to create a retrospective cashbook for 2023-2024 but did not agree that it was a prudent or desirous use of the Clerk's time.

**RESOLVED** To accept the Auditor's recommendation regarding the use of software for the Council's bookkeeping processes but to implement it from April 2024 for the new financial year and not create a retrospective cashbook for 2023-2024 - All in favour  
Cllr PM assured the Clerk that should she wish to commence a finance software subscription sooner than April 2024 it would duly considered by Council.

**239354**

### **Finance & General Purposes Committee**

To receive a report from the Committee and consider recommendations for resolution regarding

- a) Poor's Allotments & Recreation Ground Charity – to discuss future administration of the Charity considering both the Auditors' reports and recommendations as well as the fact that the Council has fully administered the Charity thus far. The Committee proposes to use HALC for legal advice (one hour free but subsequently chargeable) to establish whether the full separation of the Charity business from the Council is in fact required or if there is an alternative, simpler way. Council is asked to consider and approve spending in principle on legal advice from HALC before further work is undertaken.

**RESOLVED** Following discussion Council resolved that legal advice should be sought but that clarity was needed as to what form that legal advice from HALC would take and that, in order to make the best possible use of the free one hour, the questions proposed by the Committee should be circulated to all members before sending.

**ACTION** Clerk to circulate the questions proposed by the Committee before submitting to HALC

- b) Fees & Charges – to adopt the amended Fees & Charges schedule for 2024-2025

**RESOLVED** Following discussion Council resolved that:

- i) contributions to earmarked reserves for the maintenance of the tennis courts should be increased by 5%, to Tennis Club £1600 p/a and CAPC £800 p/a
- ii) rents for the grazing fields should remain the same to reflect the work undertaken and costs incurred by the tenants.

**ACTION** The Fees & Charges schedule should be updated and adopted at the 12.12.23 meeting of Council.

- c) Online Banking – to apply for online banking with the Council’s existing banking provider, The Co-Operative Bank, for a trial period to assess satisfactory function. It may be necessary to consider an alternative banking provider in the future.

**RESOLVED** All in favour  
RH and IM volunteered as authorisers.

**ACTION** Clerk to apply

- d) Library Contributions – to discuss and resolve, if appropriate, a 2024-2025 contribution to the West Berkshire Libraries Service – report detailing other parish contributions to follow

**RESOLVED** Following discussion Council resolved that a contribution of £2738.00 (£1.00 per head of electorate) should be included in the budget - 5 in favour, 1 abstain

- e) Frequency and location of Council meetings
  - i) to return to meeting in the Acland Committee Room as pre-Covid, a cost saving of £38.00 per meeting.  
Memorial Hall is £30p/h x 2 hours  
Committee Room is £11/h x 2 hours
  - ii) to reduce Council meetings to once per month, a cost saving on venue hire and a saving of time for both members and Clerk.

**RESOLVED** Following discussion Council resolved

- i) To return to meeting in the Committee Room
- ii) To return to one meeting per month and to monitor going forward whether this is adequate. The fourth Tuesday of each month will be a provisional meeting date which may be utilised for time sensitive agenda items as required - 3 in favour, 2 against and 1 abstain
- f) Finance Software– to note that a budget line for a subscription to Finance Software was discussed and recommended in principle subject to a decision as to whether a ledger would be required for the Council only or for the Charity as well.

**RESOLVED** Noted

- g) Local Implementation of the NDP – to discuss the addition of a new budget line to facilitate the NDP’s implementation.

**RESOLVED** Following discussion it was resolved to recommend to the F&GP Committee that a budget of £2000.00 be included.

**ACTION** IM to report to F&GP regarding the Ash Dieback Fund  
Clerk to circulate Youth Survey Report received in October from WBC to help identify future projects for youth  
AM: to investigate and draft a proposal to engage parishioners and get their feedback on key questions and proposals. The aim is to increase parishioner engagement and inform council decisions. It is hoped that this will provide objective information to support budget decisions for 2025-2026

### **239355** Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Update

To receive an update from Cllr McArdle

IM reported that the Examiner’s written representations had been received, consisting of four questions. Three of the questions are for WBC and one is for CAPC. CAPC was also invited to opine on one of the questions posed to WBC. Responses are requested to be submitted by 27.11.23.

**ACTION** IM to circulate the NDP Steering Group’s proposed responses to questions to CAPC, by email, prior to submitting them on behalf of CAPC

### **239356** Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2023-2033

To approve the final wording of comments on the Draft Plan for submission to WBC.

**RESOLVED** IM reported on the Plan and how it is likely to affect Parish Councils. He opined that CAPC is in a stronger position than most Parish Councils, as it already has a very active group of volunteers who already do some work on PROW, which could potentially be extended. Following discussion, including concerns for future designation of responsibility if volunteers were unable to continue, Council resolved to approve the final wording.

**ACTION** IM to submit comments to WBC

**239357** **Contractor's Tree Report**

To note the Council contractor's tree report and to resolve, if appropriate, to approve the cost of works recommended following the report, totalling £360.00

**RESOLVED** Following discussion Council resolved to approve cost of works.

**ACTION** Clerk to share reports relevant to the Pre-School Garden with Acland Hall Manager

Clerk to create a form for contractor's use when reporting

Clerk to include the management of the tree work contract for future discussion

**239358** **Flood Warden Equipment – Drain Rods**

To receive a report from Cllr McArdle and to resolve, if appropriate, to approve the cost to purchase professional drain rods for use by the Flood Warden.

**RESOLVED** Following discussion Council resolved to approve cost

**ACTION** Clerk to liaise with Flood Warden regarding order

Clerk to liaise with Flood Warden with reference to clearance of the short drainage gully between Tull Way and Florence Gardens

**239359** **Finance**

1. **Items for payment** - To review and approve items of expenditure

Council reviewed and approved the following items of expenditure:

ARD Playgrounds (36199)	127.51
Greenham Trust (Parishioner Donation)	50.00
IONOS (203038518848)	4.80
SSE Streetlights	44.78
Castle Water (10000390680)	38.65
Green Machine Computers Ltd	380.00
IT Repair Gurus Ltd	122.50
WBC Libraries (580467)	2500.00
Acland Memorial Hall (AMH-1204)	71.00
Tactical Facilities Management Ltd (SI-989)	378.18
April Skies Accounting (INV-0113)	170.00
AD Clark (777)	571.62
AD Clark (767)	571.62
White Stores	48.48
SSE - office	107.44
Newbury Office Supplies	183.00
EnG Property Services	112.50
NJ Perry	2,180.00
SSE	£5.98
SSE	£37.70
Grundon	£61.09
Litter picking	£65.00
Plusnet	£37.39
IONOS	£16.80

Castle Water	£40.18
SLCC	£188.00
Clerk's Salary	confidential

2. **Bank reconciliation for approval** – To receive, approve and sign bank reconciliations prepared by the RFO for October 2023 and Chair to sign the bank statement  
Council received and approved the bank reconciliation which was signed by IM
3. **Payments against Budget** - to note the Analysis of Payments against Budget to October 2023  
Council noted the payments against Budget
4. **NALC annual incremental pay increase** - To note that the NALC annual incremental pay increase for the year commencing 1.4.23 was recently agreed and that backdated pay due to the Clerk and retiring Clerk will be processed accordingly as lump sums using the Council's designated payroll provider and that the Clerk's future salary will be calculated at the increased rate for SCP 15. Back-payments will be included in the December payment schedule.  
Council noted the NALC annual incremental pay increase

239360

**Councillors' Reports & Questions**

To receive reports and questions from Parish and District Councillors

PM: There will need to be future DMMO discussion. How do we want that process to be handled and what should the timeline be? Shall we be proactive and prepare in advance using information that is currently available in the public domain or should we wait for a public session? Members agreed that CAPC should wait and react when necessary.

HC: Remembrance – cars were left parked overnight in car park which caused an issue with the turning circle for “drop-offs”. Precautions were taken to ensure no attempt was made to move those vehicles whilst the parade as forming up. **ACTION:** Clerk to draft a document to share with hirers of Acland Hall and to display in the car park requesting no parking overnight prior to parade in 2024.

239361

**Correspondence**

To note the following correspondence received since the last meeting of Council:

St Mark's Parish News

Clerks & Councils Magazine

Council noted the correspondence.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.03pm

Chairman .....

Date

.....