



**COLD ASH PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON**  
**TUESDAY, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Present:**

**Cllrs McArdle (IM), Adams (PA), Clark (BC), Codling (HC), Murray (PM), Fenner (MF) & Hanks (RH)**  
**Clerk L Randall & R Jardine**

**In Attendance:**

**4 residents**

**Public Participation**

**23/01917/OUT Land Adjacent Pine Lodge Bucklebury Alley**

A resident from Bucklebury Alley asked the Council to consider the following:

Little has changed from the original refused application. West Berkshire Council (WBC) has confirmed that safe access cannot be achieved. There is a need for housing but as the site is small for the proposed development, is this the right site to meet that need? Concerns are lack of safe access, urbanisation of AONB, loss of green infrastructure (including removal of mature trees and hedgerows), damage to root protection area of oaks with TPOs at entry to site and harm to species. The resident asked the Council to support her objection.

**23/01507/FUL Westrop Farm ADJACENT TO PARISH The Ridge**

Mr Clark explained the proposed solar array to power 3 houses. The location is secluded and discrete and the area is already cabled. PM asked about the size of the array – Mr Clark advised roughly half a tennis court or 48 panels (area has been paced). PM asked about access for maintenance – Mr Clark advised the site is open. MF asked if trees would be damaged – Mr Clark advised area is clear. RH asked about longevity to provide power for future/new home owners on the site – Mr Clark advised yes, depending on the battery process.

**239295 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Paul Dick, Cllr Jon Wilding

**239296 Declarations of Interest**

BC, RH declared an interest in item 239301 Planning – item 23/01507/FUL Westrop Farm

MF, RH and IM declared an interest in item 239301 Planning – item 23/01917/OUT land adjacent to Pine Lodge

**239297 Minutes**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023 were approved. They were signed by the Chairman.

**239298 Matters Arising**

- Clerk advised Mr Liebreich will attend the next meeting to present Woodland Leaves restoration project.
- Clerk advised investigations regarding unauthorised training pitch use had been unsuccessful, Clerk will continue to monitor.
- Council agreed that the Pre Planning application for the Recreation Ground project should be submitted.

**239299 Report from District Councillors**

District Councillors' reports had been circulated prior to the meeting; it was agreed not to publish District Councillor Dick's report due to political content. Copies of the report from District Councillor Codling can be requested from the Clerk.

**239300 Clerks Report**

- The developer for Coley Farm has asked Council to propose new street names. This will be added to the next meeting agenda. The Heritage Group will be asked if they wish to contribute any suggestions.
- The Clerk recommended that the new Clerk's salary should be paid by bank transfer and not by cheque.
- The Clerk drew attention to Financial Regulation 6.20 with regard to reimbursements: *Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances*
- The Clerk had received a suggestion from a resident that "slow down for horses" signs should be placed around Cold Ash. Members agreed that this was a request that should be made to WBC as Highways Authority.

**239301 Planning Matters**

**A) Planning applications**

*BC and RH declared an interest in the following application. BC left the room and took no part in discussions.*

**23/01507/FUL** Westrop Farm ADJACENT TO PARISH The Ridge Cold Ash –  
*Proposed solar array to serve various properties at Westrop Farm.*

NO OBJECTIONS subject to the following recommendations

- Solar array should be local to buildings and should be limited to the existing area in future.
- To ensure proper drainage as per SUDS report.

*RH, IM and MF declared an interest in the following application.*

**23/01917/OUT** Land Adjacent Pine Lodge Bucklebury Alley -*Outline Application for proposed new single dwelling on a site within the settlement boundary. Matters to be considered: Access*

OBJECT

- The site is on an already dangerous section of road, with minimal visibility on both directions. This section of the road is already hazardous for the many pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and others who frequent the Alley, quite apart from the many drivers who use it. The area of land on which building is proposed is used as a momentary refuge by walkers from motorised traffic, but not for access of any other kind, owing to the presence of large trees (one of which has only recently, and unexpectedly, been felled) and shrubs (some of which have only recently been cleared);
- The site is very narrow, so the proposed dwelling would necessarily negatively impact the adjacent properties;
- Building here would incur the destruction of one of the few remaining areas of undeveloped land in this AONB, changing the character of the Alley, and removing one of the few unimpeded corridors for wildlife between Westrop Wood and the upper part of Fence Wood.

**23/01916/HOUSE** Birkdale The Ridge - *Erection of 2 wooden garden sheds in the rear garden of the property. One shed to be placed to the side of the main house, the other to the side of the separate garage block as shown on the plans. Each shed will be screened from the front of the house and road by existing close board fencing. We intend to screen the sheds from the rear of the house with additional planting. Construction will be pent roofs, shiplap timber panels, set on a concrete base*  
**OBJECT**

- Not in keeping with neighbouring properties
- Overdevelopment of site
- Contradicts original development planning consent stating that any views between properties should not be obstructed with additional development. The importance of gaps between the houses extends back to the West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (HAS DPD) published in September 2014, and the Landscape Capacity Assessment (LCA) of 2015. The site referred to as COL006 highlighted the importance of gaps in the built form to allow views through the development to the open landscape to the south. This is included below. This was reiterated throughout the planning process by ProVision on behalf of TA Fisher, the intonation being that the proposed plans and resultant houses recognised the importance of this and would conform to it.

**B) WBC (West Berks Council) Planning Decisions** Members noted following decisions:

**23/00077/HOUSE** Pontecums Fishers Lane - Section 73: Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) of previously approved application 22/00744/HOUSE: Replacement garage, single storey side extension loft conversion with dormer. **APPROVED**  
*Previous Parish Council Comments -No Objection - Unanimous*

**C) Appeal**

There were no appeals.

**239302 Finance**

**1. Items for payment.** Members agreed Items for Payment on Sheet No 6 2023/2024.

Summary of sheet:

Room Rental – 60.00

Telephone/Broadband – 31.16

Litter Pick – 65.00

Waste collection – 63.60

Street light Supply – 42.66

Maintenance – 45.38

Website - 4.00

Playground Repair - 65.00

Office Electric – 263.33

Tree work & Maintenance – 375.00

2. **Bank reconciliation** – Members to note Bank Reconciliation for August 2023.

3. **Payments against Budget** – Members noted the Analysis of Payments Against Budget to September 2023.

**239303 NDP Update**

IM gave a detailed update regarding the submission of Regulation 16 to WBC. There were still concerns over selecting an examiner which was holding up progress. Once an examiner is chosen the Parish Council has the right to approve the appointment. HC later confirmed this was being chased within WBC. BC suggested emailing T Vickers directly to explain why progress was taking so long. The Parish Council agreed to send IM's drafted response to WBC. PM agreed to set up a forum to share information with other Parish Council's undertaking an NDP.

**239304 Members Bid**

RH will prepare an application for the Recreation Ground project and noted the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023. Clerk will re-send the application pack to RH and the 2022 application for reference.

**239305 Charity return**

The Clerk explained that legal advice is needed for reporting the Charity Return on the AGAR next year following a suggestion from the Internal Auditor. The Clerk will liaise with HC who has experience as a past Internal Auditor.

**239306 Litter/Dog Bin Contract**

Good references have been received from other Parish Councils currently using Tactical Facilities Management and it was agreed that the Clerk should request a Service Level Agreement or Contract with a view to engaging their service as soon as practicable. The existing contract with WBC can be cancelled a week before a month end.

*HC arrived at 8.10pm*

**239307 Tennis Club**

A representative of the Tennis Club reported that their online booking system for the courts could not accommodate bookings by members of the public and requested that the charge for public use be increased in line with other village facilities in the area. Members agreed that the issue with booking should be overcome and would like to further discuss the charge for public use which should ideally be kept nominal in line with the Poor's Charity. Members requested that the Clerk provide a copy of the original agreement with the Tennis Club for clarity at the next meeting.

**239308 Office IT & Clerks Laptop**

The new Clerk discussed early findings:

- Clerk's Laptop: it may not be necessary to replace the Clerk's PC but rather upgrade the Windows license and supplement it with a laptop to facilitate flexible working and for use at Council meetings. One Office 365 Business Standard subscription would be necessary for both machines. PM offered assistance with selecting an appropriate laptop.
- Councillors' emails, data storage and access to Office 365: The Clerk asked for clarity as to what Councillors' needs are as Office 365 for all members represents a significant investment for the Council. Members would like to see comparative costings for the provision of Council email addresses using the existing @coldashpc.org.uk domain or similar and for the provision of Office 365 for all.

The new Clerk will submit a report with recommendations to the next Full Council meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**239309 West Berkshire Council Budget**

IM was concerned that the new budget may have consequences for Cold Ash Parish Council and its NDP but is content that it does not. District Councillor Heather Codling agreed.

**239310 Crime & Disorder Policy**

The Crime & Disorder Policy was reviewed and approved.

**239311 Committee Reports**

There were no committee reports.

**239312 Reports from meetings with other bodies**

There were no meetings with other bodies

**239313 Councillors' Questions**

PM: is there support from members if he pursues use of the SIDS? IM and RH agreed that Council should proceed. The Clerk reported that an opportunity for training had been received in the office which would be sent to PM.

PA: when will the Finance & General Purposes meeting be? The Clerk advised this will be late October and that a date would be chosen in due course. IM suggested that Council should have objectives for the forthcoming year ready for that meeting. HC suggested that this should be an agenda item for the next meeting of Full Council on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**239314 Correspondence**

A list of correspondence received and sent since the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023 had been circulated as Information Sheet no 6/Sept2023 and was noted by Members.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm

Signed..... Date.....  
Chairman