

Worth Parish Council
Minutes of the General Purposes & Finance Committee Meeting held on
March 6th 2023 commencing at 7.30pm

Present:	Cllr Scott (Chairman)	Cllr Phillips
	Cllr Casella	Cllr Coote
	Cllr Gibson	Cllr Hitchcock
	Cllr Mayer	Cllr Pointer
	Cllr Stewart	Cllr Webb
	Mrs J Nagy (Clerk)	11 members of the public
	Mrs E Smith (RFO)	

114 Public Question Time

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting: Cllr King was present as a member of the public.

The Chairman invited members of the public to speak.

Residents from Bowers Place were concerned about the additional parking proposed for the road. They queried why an entrance to the health centre could not be created off Hophurst Drive. Concerns were also raised over possible parking restrictions.

Cllr Hitchcock said that the Council had been working on the project for over three years. The kerb to on the western side of Bowers Place was continually being damaged, along with the verge. Parking surveys had shown that 22 additional spaces were required in Bowers Place, however, the most that could be incorporated was an additional 19. Working with WSCC Highways, a planning application had been lodged and had been permitted by MSDC. There had been discussion of introducing parking restrictions, but these were not included as a condition of permission.

The parking currently taking place on the western side of the road was not legal; if the Parish Council had not worked on this scheme with WSCC, it was possible that WSCC would put in bollards to stop parking altogether, to protect the verge and kerb. This was thought to be the best solution to provide more parking in the village centre whilst ensuring that the road was passible for people trying to get to the health centre.

It was not possible to create parking for the sole use of Bowers Place residents, as WSCC would not allow it, nor would it get planning permission. It had to be parking open to all.

Cllr Hitchcock said that in the initial stages he had spoken to a named resident who appeared to represent the whole road, and had offered to meet with all residents to explain the scheme. This offer had not been taken up; however, he would be happy to go through the details with residents at a meeting.

The residents said that they supported the increase in parking in principle, and thanked Cllr Hitchcock for his offer to meet.

A resident expressed concern over the level of lighting in the road; the Council will review this.

Four residents left the meeting.

115 Apologies

Apologies were noted and accepted from Cllr Dorey; Cllr Cruickshank was absent

116 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations at this point of the meeting.

117 Minutes

It was AGREED by all present that the Minutes of the General Purposes & Finance Committee meeting held on 6th February 2023 were a true and correct record.

118 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman had no announcements.

119 Correspondence List

The Correspondence List was NOTED.

120 Council Premises and Land

Gig on the Green 29th July 2023

The proposals from the CDRA clarifying how it wishes to manage this year's event had been circulated.

It is proposed that the Green is fenced off to better manage attendance and alcohol consumption. This will also assist in conforming to requirements in the upcoming Martyn's Law, which requires event organisers to carry out risk assessment to manage threat from terrorist activities.

This matter was deferred from the Full Council meeting on 20th February due to concerns over the potential implications of an incident occurring within the fenced area necessitating the need for rapid evacuation.

At this point the Chairman proposed the suspension of Standing Orders to allow members of the public to speak; this was seconded by Cllr Phillips and agreed by all present

A representative from the CDRA advised that he had 20 years experience in fire and rescue, and had overseen the safety aspect of event management of large events such as the South of England show. People bringing their own alcohol onto the green last year had been an issue, as the area is licenced for the duration of the event. Erecting fencing around the green would act as a deterrent to both illegal consumption of alcohol or concealed weapons, as well as the yet-to-be-introduced Martyn's Law. Catering vehicles would be parked along the western side of the green to provide an additional "barrier". The fencing would be 6ft herras fencing.

Cllr Coote was concerned that the fencing may need planning permission; he will enquire at MSDC and get back to the CDRA.

Concerns were raised over the restriction of entry into a village event, via the fencing and via charging admission. Grants had been given in the past as the Gig was open to all.

The CDRA representative said that the CDRA was a non-profit making organisation, and all surplus funds would be ploughed back into other events such as Christmas and Easter.

Councillors appreciated the explanation for the reasoning behind the erection of fencing.

Standing orders were reinstated.

The Clerk advised that Crawley Down Green is not a legally registered green. Restrictions on a registered green include the erection of buildings (unless these are in connection with recreational use), enclosure, encroachment, and damage to the surface. She suggested that once the Bowers Place Parking proposals are completed, the Council could consider registering the Green. However, even if registered, it could be argued that fencing it off for an event for a, say, 24 hour period, would not equate to "enclosure".

Cllr Hitchcock proposed that the Council agreed in principle to the erection of fencing for the Gig on the Green event, seconded by Cllr Pointer.

Cllr Casella thought that given that the event would not be open to all, the Council should

consider charging for the use of the green.

It was AGREED by all present with the exception of two abstentions, that the erection of fencing around the green for the Gig on the Green event on 29th July was acceptable in principle.

The Clerk will bring the suggestion that a fee is charged for the use of the green to the next meeting, and that the Council considers formally registering it.

121 Accounts and Financial Matters

Financial Information

The Chairman asked Councillors to consider details of income and expenditure, bank balances and reserves, as at 31st January 2023 as presented in the meeting pack.

To summarise;

Total receipts for January 2023 of £1,030.64 excl. VAT
Total payments for January 2023 of £32,315.70 excl VAT
Bank Balances as at 31st January 2023 of £436,386.37 of which
Earmarked reserves of £139,706.94

Councillors NOTED the latest financial situation

Street Light Electricity Supply

The Clerk reported that following the last Full Council meeting, the RFO had signed off a contract with EDF for unmetered supply for £27,538 pa so have managed to bring it in cheaper than the £28,587 presented to Council.

Councillors NOTED this information

Street lighting contractor

Emails to our contractor are receiving a generated response that the company has gone into liquidation.

The Council has a maintenance contract with the supplier, which expires on 31st July 2023. The "unused" element of the contract equates to £1,663.76. However, the Council has outstanding invoices with the contractor which total £4,766.00 ex VAT (£56 repairs + £4710 street light survey) All payments are on hold, awaiting further instruction from any receiver.

The Clerk has found two possible alternative private contractors; the RFO is contacting them to see if they can assist. Many local councils are contracted with WSCC for street light repairs, but none have recommended this approach.

Cllr Gibson suggested that the Clerk contacts Turners Hill Parish Council which has an independent contractor.

The Council's potential liability and the Clerk's proposed action was NOTED.

122 Matters for Consideration submitted by the Infrastructure and Environment Working Parties

Copthorne EIWP

At its last meeting, the WP discussed the results of the traffic survey which took place last September; due to the huge amount of data supplied, this took some time to process, hence the delay.

Surprisingly, the results were that speeding is not an issue in the village, as defined by WSCC, in that eg for a 30mph limit, the mean speed must be over 33mph to be classed as speeding.

This was borderline however for Bolders Arms Rd, so the Working Party is looking at options for that area.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, 8th March, with litter issues on the agenda.

Crawley Down EIWP

This Working Party has not met since the last GP&F meeting, but has a meeting on Friday, 10th March.

A litter pick has been organised for Saturday, 25th March and has been advertised on social media and via posters etc.

123 Consideration of items for discussion by the Environment & Infrastructure Working Parties

Cllr Mayor suggested that Crawley Down could consider a community litter pick after the Coronation event at the Haven; he will raise this at the meeting on Friday.

124 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on 17th April 2023

Meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____