

BASILDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Basildon Parish Council held on the 8th July at the Village Hall in Upper Basildon.

Present: Mr Parsons (Chairman), Mrs Greasley, Mr Gidden, Mrs Mealor, Mrs Kilgour, Ms Cox, Mr Chadwyck-Healey, District Councillor L. Coyle, Mr Greasley (Clerk)

Apologies: Mr Couchman

Members of the public in attendance: Mr McCorkell

1.Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

The Chairman opened the meeting and outlined that he wished to revisit the election of the Chairman and Vice Chairman. The Chairman confirmed that he did not wish to contest any election and would be standing down as a Parish Councillor at the conclusion of the meeting. Having asked for anyone wishing to take on the role to make this known to the meeting, Councillor Kilgour stated that she was willing to stand for the role. No other Councillor wished to be considered, and Councillor Kilgour took on the role of Chair with immediate effect. The meeting then considered the position of Vice Chair with Councillor Mealor nominated and appointed with immediate effect

The newly elected Chair suggested that the Councillor Parsons run the meeting and this was agreed by all Councillors, consequently Councillor Parsons will hereafter be referred to as the Chairman within these minutes.

2. OPEN FORUM

None were raised.

2.DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

3.MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10th June having been circulated to members in advance of the meeting were signed by the Chairman.

4.PLANNING

The following planning applications were reviewed:

26/01235/LBC Moorings, Blandys Lane – Install electric vehicle charger
The Parish Council had no objections subject to the views of neighbours.

26/01295 Paddock House, Gardeners Lane – Demolish outbuildings, new garage pool house with glazed link and shed.
The Parish Council objected by majority on the grounds that the proposal was outside of the settlement boundary.

Confirmed Decisions

26/01046, Alda, Kiln Corner – New detached Double Garage – WBC Approved, PC No Objection
26/00904 22 Old Stocks Court – Solar Panel Installation – WBC Approved, PC No Objection
26/00711/OUT Land East of Hippo Pools – Outline Planning for two new houses – WBC Approved, PC Objection

An update on the Eastern Area Planning meeting was given by Councillor Kilgour. It was confirmed that despite presentations by both the Parish Council and District Councillor the application was approved by the committee by 7 votes to 2. Councillor Kilgour placed on record her thanks to District Councillor Coyle for her presentation and offered the following observations which were seconded by the Chairman who was also in attendance:

The Parish Council felt that the overall process was badly managed. It was noted that only 1 district Councillor from the panel attended the onsite meeting and concerns were raised (and subsequently ignored) that many of those residents who had objected were not given details of the planning committee meeting. Additionally, Councillor Kilgour noted the general unprofessionalism of certain Councillors at the meeting along with a dependency on planning officers who were not supposed to be part of the review board and the lack of a right to reply to committee observations (including answers to questions being raised in the time before the meeting). It was confirmed by Councillor Kilgour that the residents of Hippo Pools will be writing to West Berkshire Council to complain.

5. GENERAL ITEMS

An update on the Grotto was provided by District Councillor Coyle. The ownership dispute continues although West Berkshire Council were advised that a resolution should be in place by the end of June. This will now be followed up by the District Councillor.

Councillor Gidden provided an update on the Red Lion pub. There are issues with the proposed management of the bonds raised which need to be resolved with the FCA before things can proceed. It was also noted that the ownership of the frontage will require a conversation between the owners (West Berkshire Council) and both Stonegate / the new owners as the new pub wishes to place outdoor seating and a canopy on land it technically does not own.

An update on the Village Green was provided. Surveys are being reviewed and a summary created. It is expected that there would be further feedback at the next meeting.

Standing Orders were discussed by the meeting. The Clerk confirmed that amendments had been made to the finance section to cover quotes against costs around £3000. Councillor Mealor raised a potential amendment around the terms of office for both Chairman and Vice Chairman and following discussion it was agreed that the standing order document would be amended to show a maximum term of office of 5 years for both positions.

The Chairman noted the Clerk's resignation and both Chairman and Clerk provided an update on the next steps around a successor.

The current Clerk will leave the role on the 31st July. The Vacancy for a new Clerk has been added to the Parish Website and all current Clerks in West Berkshire have been sent details of the vacancy to see if there is any interest; BALC have also been contacted. The Chairman confirmed that enquiries have been received and District Councillor Coyle has also been made aware.

The Clerk confirmed that a handover document has been written; this will be circulated to all Councillors towards the end of the month and will give the new Clerk details on various tasks along with information around local contacts and procedures. Folders relevant to the post were placed in the cupboard in the meeting room for collection by the new clerk.

6. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR UPDATES

The District Councillor continues to work on local issues.

7. FOOTPATHS, HIGHWAYS AND OPEN SPACES

Further fly tipping incidents have occurred on the Aldworth Road and were reported by the Clerk to West Berkshire Council. The Parish Council agreed to look into this further and see what options were available.

No issues were reported during the month with any of the local footpaths or open spaces.

The District Councillor requested a copy of the tree survey undertaken by the Clerk. This was forwarded by the Clerk via email.

8.FINANCE – UPDATES

The following cheques were presented to the meeting:

Cheque	Payee	Purpose	Nett	VAT	Total
103774	R Greasley	Salary + stamps @£28.80p	442.73	0.00	442.73
103775	Scofell	Grass Cutting	533.34	106.67	640.01
103776	West Berkshire Council	Road Gritting – 2025/26	846.29	169.26	1015.55
103777	West Berkshire Council	Wakemans – Commercial Property Rent	41.77	0.00	41.77
103778	I Parsons	Expenses – travel, parking, PC lead	24.05	0.00	24.05

The Council accepted cheque numbers 103774 to 103778 and the clerk confirmed the direct debit to HMRC and SSE. The quarterly bank statement was reviewed and signed off by Councillor Chadwyck-Healey.

Councillor Greasley informed the meeting that the Parish Council has now a registered online bank account. This was required for two reasons, firstly, it allows Councillors to be added remotely to the payment authorisation list held by the Bank and also offers a first step towards a switch to online banking. Councillor Greasley noted that with the resignations of both the Chairman from the Parish Council and the Clerk (who had retained signatory rights for emergencies) that the Council requires new approved signatories in order to process payments next month. The following Councillors agreed to be added to this list:

Councillors Kilgour, Mealor, Gidden and Chadwyck-Healey.

It was noted that Councillor Couchman was a signatory for cheques and he will be asked at the next meeting if this is something he wishes to continue doing for online banking. Councillor Greasley will request and collect the relevant Councillor details and process them.

OTHER BUSINESS

A question was asked about the Internet at the Village Hall. The Chairman confirmed a recent upgrade had taken place and passed on details as required.

Councillors presented the Chairman with a small token of their appreciation for his 13 years of service on the Parish Council which was gratefully received.

The meeting concluded at 8:45pm. The next meeting will be on the 12th August at 7:30pm.