

West Ilsley Parish Council

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held in West Ilsley Village Hall on Monday 15th May 2023.
Commencing at 8:15 pm.

Members Present: Councillor Graham Woods (GW) – Chair
Councillor Alan Muir (AMM) – Deputy Chair
Councillor Alan Bloor (APB)
Councillor Clive Hooker (CH)
Councillor Tim Pearey (TP)

Members Absent: None

Officers Present: Sarah Marshman, Clerk/RFO

In Attendance: Carolyne Culver, District Councillor
Alan Beaumont, outgoing Chair
10 Members of the Public

Minutes

1 Receive apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16th May 2022

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16th May 2023 were approved by those present at the meeting. The Chair signed the Minutes.

3 To hear from the Planning Policy Manager at West Berkshire Council about Neighbourhood Plans

The Planning Policy Manager spoke at length regarding the nature of Neighbourhood Plans (NP) and the possible benefits the community could find from creating one. It should be a community-led document, rather than something created by the Parish Council, and involves consultation with the community throughout the process to ascertain what is important to the community. Once adopted, an NP is part of the West Berkshire Local Plan and has to be taken into consideration when any planning applications come forward. The NP could suggest a site(s) for development or could be used to determine what sort of infilling is acceptable. There is grant funding available to assist with the costs.

4 Report from the District Councillor

Carolyne Culver was re-elected at the recent elections. CC often receives enquiries regarding speeding – the data collected by the WIPC-owned SID will assist West Berkshire Council with

its response. CC has obtained £22,000 over the last 4 years for the six parishes within the Ridgeway Ward through the Members' Bid process.

5 Annual report from the outgoing Chair

I would like to start by saying huge congratulations to Carolyne Culver for retaining her position as District Councillor thoroughly deserved and to Clive Hooker for retaining his position under the current odds. I think Carolyne has been very supportive of the village and look forward to this continuing in the years ahead.

After 10 years on the PC, it is definitely time to step down and let others take over.

I would like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors current and past for their help and support over the years. Although we have had our challenges we have managed to resolve these and feel we are in a good position going forward. The running of the PC has been and continues to be supported by Sarah and I would like to thank her for her continued guidance. It is so important to have a functioning PC for the running of the village and would encourage others to put their name forward when vacancies arise to ensure that we maintain control.

I would like to wish the PC and the new Chair, Graham, all the very best and I know we are in safe hands.

My last role before I hand over to Graham is to provide a summary of key actions from the past year.

The Council has spent funds on maintaining the play area (replacement fencing) and other running repairs as necessary on various village assets whilst keeping a careful check on the village finances which remain in a strong position. We have earmarked funds for certain projects whilst maintaining the precept at the current level.

We saw Liz step down but welcome Tim Pearey onto the PC. This leaves the PC in a healthy position with some new blood, and I wish Tim the very best. Liz is continuing with deploying the Speed Indicator Device around the village so thank you Liz for your continued support.

Thanks to all the clubs and organisations throughout the village and in particular to the new VHM for their efforts and various events that have been well attended. Special thanks to Neil Fowler for his efforts in preparing the new VH constitution, which can now be finalised. The next challenge is to get a new constitution for the West Ilsley Recreation and Social Association (WIRSA) up and running, which will be of great benefit to the village. And also look forward to the re-opening of the Harrow and wish Liam and Martin all the best for a successful venture.

Last but not least we all owe Andrea and Liz a huge thank you for keeping us all up to date with the village news via WIN – however, Specsavers might not be as appreciative!

6 Report from the new Chair

The new Chair, Graham Woods, thanked the outgoing Chair, Alan Beaumont, for his time and effort whilst on the council. The Village Hall Management Committee has evolved quickly over recent months. There is a need to sort out the WIRSA constitution. Thanks to all involved in the recent village events for the Jubilee and the Coronation events.

7 Annual finance report from the Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer

The Clerk gave her report which is in Appendix 1.

8 To receive reports from Village Groups and Organisations

West Ilsley News – The editors confirmed they are happy to continue in their roles and thanked Alan Beaumont for printing and delivering the monthly WIN to those households not signed up to the email list.

Tennis Club – a report from the West Ilsley Tennis Committee is in Appendix 2.

Cricket Club – the Chairman’s Report for 2022 is in Appendix 3.

This season, the Junior section is strong, and the club has been successful in getting some of the older juniors to join the senior team. A fantasy cricket league has been created. It is intended to continue live-streaming senior cricket games. Thanks to the member who has kept the bar going over the winter season. The funds at the end of last year were about £32k. Some of the funds are earmarked for some capital expenditure to be spent shortly but not this year. There are some challenges – there is a general lack of engagement and a lack of volunteers. There is also lack of people volunteering to play at the senior level.

Evergreens – a report from the Ilsley Evergreens is in Appendix 4.

Table Tennis Club – no report was received.

Church Committee – a report from St. Mary’s Church is in Appendix 5.

Village Hall – a new Village Hall Committee was formed in October 2022. The hall is currently averaging 14 bookings per month.

Downland Volunteer Group – the main job of the Downland Volunteer Group (DVG) is to take people in the Downlands area to medical appointments. There are approximately 35 volunteer drivers. In the last financial year, 746 trips were arranged. The other side of this is the Handybus – on Wednesdays, this takes residents shopping to Wantage or Newbury. The bus was gifted to them in 2017 by West Berkshire Council. The DVG plans to buy an all-electric 12-seater bus towards the end of the year. The DVG is always looking for volunteer drivers.

9 To receive questions from members of the public

There were no questions.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9:35 pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Appendix 1: Finance Report

The finance report for West Ilsley Parish Council for the financial year 2022/23 is presented. Please note that all figures are provisional and will be subject to audit.

Income

The total income received from all sources of funding was £23,214. This consisted of:

- Precept £10,700
- Grants towards the replacement of the play area fencing £2,247
- VAT refund for VAT spent during the 21/22 financial year £10,266

Expenditure

The total expenditure for the year was £23,647. Significant figures included in this total are:

- Flood mitigation works £10,150
- Total employment costs £4,094
- New fencing in the play area £3,800
- Donation towards the WiFi costs at the Village Hall £300
- Donation towards the West Berkshire Library Service £130
- Insurance £452
- Audit fees £543
- VAT (reclaimable during the current financial year) £2,923

Looking Forward to 2023/24

The precept will remain at £10,700. A Band D household will pay a total of £68.75 throughout the year or just £1.32 per week.

The council has agreed to earmark an amount each year towards the potential future costs of maintaining the pond. For 23/24, £1,100 will be earmarked, with the intention that this amount will increase by 10% each year going forwards.

The idea of installing a vehicle activated sign at the top of the hill entering the eastern end of the village is currently being investigated. In the hope that this project will be found to be beneficial to the parish, the council has included £4,205 in the budget towards this and hopes to receive £2,100 in match funding to assist towards these costs.

There will continue to be the usual expenses involved in running the Parish Council, such as insurance, website costs, play area maintenance, and employment costs.

Appendix 2: West Ilsley Tennis Committee

The membership for 2022/23 were 32 family memberships, 3 single memberships and 1 junior. This is pretty constant year on year. The fees for 2023 have remained the same at £45 for a family, £15 for a junior and £25 for a single. To date for the year 2023/24 we have 21 family memberships, 3 single and no junior members. Membership generally picks up when Wimbledon starts.

The court is inspected by the committee regularly and it is in good playing condition. There are rust marks which affect the appearance cosmetically, but otherwise just a few blemishes here and there. The fence is firm and the one broken post has been adjusted so it is also solid. We continue to employ a maintenance company who come annually to provide weed and moss control to the court and surrounding area. The grass is also kept neat and tidy.

The addition of the cricket nets nearby has not affected our membership. As the cricket season gets into full swing we are confident that any excessive noise or poor behaviour will not distract from tennis playing enjoyment. Equally, it is good to see the netball club are back on court and use the courts weekly for their sessions.

The online Jezzam booking system continues to work well and we always encourage users to book and equally cancel their sessions as appropriate to ensure all users know when the court is free.

Tennis coaching was offered and advertised for both adults and juniors. Unfortunately, for the second consecutive season, there was not enough interest to run group sessions. If there is future interest in coaching the Committee will try to find another coach.

Committee finances are healthy and there is a sinking fund available for major repairs or replacement of the court. The committee of 6 meet regularly 4 times a year and will consider fund raising as and when appropriate.

Appendix 3: West Ilsley Cricket Club

Chairman's Report 2022

Yet again I am pleased to say we have had a very enjoyable season both on and off the pitch

You will receive a captain's report on seniors cricket and a report on the development of our ladies and girls cricket to go alongside my report so I won't say too much on that myself. You will also receive a treasurer's report and I thank our treasurer for the vast amount of time he commits to ensuring our finances are run efficiently.

The senior side played in division 6B of the Cherwell league having remained at level 6; just moved sideways geographically meaning that we played many new teams this year. We have been very pleased to see the commitment from the younger players who have all improved and made valuable contributions; long may it continue as they are the life blood of the future. Special mentions to the two players who both got their names on the new honours boards by taking 5 wickets in a match and another player who similarly got on the honours board for his century. It is a joy to play in this team.

The committee have procured new wicket covers, a new sightscreen and revamped the numbers on the scoreboard. The new net facility has been invaluable and has had a lot of use both for coaching and on match days by both home and away teams. In addition over the last winter the inside of the pavilion was refurbished and as a result of an initiative by our skipper, the walls now proudly boast honours boards. It is the intention to introduce further honours boards for junior and women's teams.

The committee are now looking at further improvements by finding a new secure home for the roller and other equipment, and with landscaping improvements to enhance the atmosphere on match days and social occasions.

I would like to thank, again, one of our members for his sterling work in opening and running the bar. Again he has offered a service to the village whilst the pub future has been uncertain and started an initiative of opening in the closed season for other sporting events such as the rugby six nations. These were very well received and it is hoped that the pavilion and bar will be open for the World Cup and six nations.

As I said last year, with all members clubs we are reliant on volunteers to help, both on the committee and with works around the ground. We have very little support from a large membership base so if you are able to help please contact any member of the committee, you will be welcome.

The club is in a strong position both financially and on the field with the talent and enthusiasm of its members and players both young and senior and long may this continue.

Appendix 4: Ilsley Evergreens

GROUP REPORT FOR 2023

The "Ilsley Evergreens" are a group who organise monthly coach outings to a variety of destinations between April and October along with a trip to a Christmas Market in November or December.

Our current membership is 41, the majority of whom are senior citizens. Membership is only £10 per person per year and the cost of the coach trips is £15 for Member and £18 for Guests plus any charges for admission to the venue.

The first of our trips in April was a joint visit to Berkeley Castle, the oldest inhabited castle in England, and Slimbridge Wetland Centre, which was founded in 1946 by Sir Peter Scott.

Our May outing on the 17th is to Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens followed by visits to Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, near Romsey, Bletchley Park & Milton Keynes, Portsmouth & Southsea, Evesham including Valley/Country Park and Gloucester.

Theatre trips are also arranged whenever something is of interest to our members. We hold regular Coffee Mornings in the Wilkins Centre Compton and a few Prize Bingo evenings, both of which help towards fundraising. We as a group are financially secure, but do lose money on our trips due to the increasing cost of the coach hire.

We welcome anyone to come and join us on any of our trips.

Information regarding our various outings and events appear in the West Ilsley News, East Ilsley Communicator and Compton Compilations along with Posters on village notice boards.

Appendix 5: St Mary's Church

It is now thirteen years since the formation of the new benefice of the East Downland and our rector has continued to lead the benefice team comprising. With the dedication of our clergy, the pattern of services on the first, second and third Sunday of each month has been re-established since Covid.

The church café has continued since restarting in February 2022 and is usually well attended. It is held during the morning of the second Sunday in the month and moving into the churchyard whenever the weather permits. Coffee, tea and a delicious selection of cakes and biscuits are always on offer, for which there is no charge but a donation may be given to support mostly local charities.

During the time since my last report in May 2022, numerous volunteers within the village continued to look after the church and churchyard by keeping the grass cut, cleaning the church or providing and arranging flowers. We aim to have a major cleaning and tidying inside and out on the Saturdays before the Easter weekend and Remembrance Sunday. This last Easter, the path was given a top dressing of pea shingle in readiness for the upcoming wedding.

In 2022, there was 1 funeral, 1 thanksgiving service and 1 wedding. The church was well attended for Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee but sadly, that was followed three months later by a memorial service and vigil following her death. The church recently held a joyful service following the Coronation of King Charles III.

The church held its first fund-raising event since Covid restrictions were lifted, the Harvest Festival in October 2022. This was followed by a clay pigeon shoot in March 2022. It was well attended and all had a good time. These, together with the generous support of regular donors and a number of other kind contributors meant that we were again able to report a small surplus at our May APCM. This meant that all running costs could again be met from our General fund, for which we are very grateful since churches have to be financially self-supporting with no income from the central church body.

In spite of low numbers at regular services, thanks to the many members of the community who support the church in so many different ways, our village church continues to play its active role locally and in the wider community.