

Minutes of a Meeting of Woodcote Parish Council

Wednesday 19th February 2025 at 19:45, The Function Room, Woodcote Village Hall

Public Session (Prior to the Start of the Meeting)

None.

Members Present:

Chair	Cllr K Davies (KD)
Vice-Chair	Cllr R Peirce (RP)
Members	Cllr S Pritchard (SP)
	Cllr T Over (TO)
	Cllr K Byrne (KB)

Officers Present

Clerk	Mrs L White (LW)
Assistant Clerk	Mrs P Tshering (PT)

Public and Press 7

Meeting Started: 20:36

24.12.1. To receive apologies for absence. [LGA 1972 s85(1)]

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting from Cllrs Booker and Sloper. Cllr Ellis was also absent.

24.12.2. To receive declarations of interest for items on this agenda [LA 2011 s31]

None.

24.12.3. To approve the minutes of previous council meetings [LA 1972 Sch 12. Para 41(1)]

24.12.3.1. Meeting held on 15th January 2025

It was agreed the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed.

24.12.3.2. Matters arising from the minutes not elsewhere on the agenda.

None.

24.12.4. Vacant Seats [Representation of the People Action 1985 s21]

24.12.4.1. To note the resignation of Cllr L Bilbe. Subject to confirmation no election has been called, to note the seat can be filled by co-option.

The resignation was noted, and SODC has confirmed the seat can be filled by co-option.

- 24.12.4.2. To note the council has 2 vacant seats and receive and consider applications from candidates.**

No applicants were present.

- 24.12.4.3. To approve co-opting members to fill the vacant seats.**

- 24.12.4.4. To receive declarations of acceptance of office from newly co-opted councillors.**

- 24.12.5. To appoint a Vice-Chair for Q4 of the Council Year (February-April)**

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to appoint Cllr R Peirce.

- 24.12.6. Greenmoor Ponds**

Appendix A

- 24.12.6.1. To note and approve the tree works for the site access costs have increase to £1,240.**

The donation from WGC was £1500, which covers the entirety of these works.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously the additional cost, caused by the feeling of an additional tree for access.

- 24.12.6.2. To review the proposed restoration plan methodology, to approve methodology to progress and/or agree actions, including updated information from White Horse, which was requested after the last meeting.**

Note contractor to be appointed at the end of the meeting, in the confidential session.

Representatives of the Conservation Group and the Ponds Restoration Committee of the Parish Council gave summary of the methodology, and confirmed the additional information from the White Horse.

A summary of the visit from Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment [TOE], regarding the £25,000 grant application was also given. The TOE representative was very impressed with the application, the methodology, noticeboard on site, new access etc. The total projected cost is approximately £45,000 including a 15% contingency. The Woodcote Conservation Group [WCG] has also offered to do fundraising, but they want to know what value they are aiming for, before they start the fundraising.

It must also be noted that the works can only be done if the pond is dry, so if there is a wet summer the works many need to be pushed to summer 2026.

- 24.12.6.3. To note the advice-note from W J Hatt, stating they will not quote for this work.**

After discussing the matter for a long while, [WJ Hatt] have decided that we will not put forward a tender for this project against the Briefing Document. Having undertaken work on the pond directly, [W J Hatt] does not believe that a puddled clay liner is the right option, either financially & practically, in this scenario. As such, we do not wish to quote for this work as per the document.

Noted.

It was commented that these are ancient ponds and putting a synthetic liner would not be in the best interest of the ponds and this ancient asset. A synthetic pond liner would result in a much lower pond level, and risk the pond drying out in the summer. The Pond Restoration Committee members believe that relining in clay as it has been for thousands of years, is the right method to maintain this ancient asset and reason why our village ever came into existence.

24.12.7. Planning [The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015]

To note decisions of the Planning Authority

All the below were noted.

24.12.7.1. P23/S3441/FUL & P23/S3442/LB - The Oratory School, The Oratory Drive, Woodcote, RG8 0PJ - **GRANTED**

Removal of existing defective roof coverings and replacement with suitable materials; provision of new roof lantern and rooflights; associated carpentry repairs; overhaul of rainwater goods.

WPC Response: *SUPPORT this application subject to views of the Conservation Officer.*

24.12.7.2. P24/S3898/HH – Shamba, Beech Lane, Woodcote, RG8 0PY – **GRANTED**

Single storey side extension to replace existing.

WPC Response: *NO OBJECTIONS*

24.12.8. To approve responses to other requests to consult

24.12.8.1. To receive recommendation from the working group and approve response to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) consultation: Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework **Appendix B**

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to submit the responses as per the appendix.

24.12.8.2. To approve response to the informal consultation to speed limit changes on the A4074 and A4130, this is part of the “Vision Zero Speed Management programme”.

Appendix C

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to submit a comment that this Council has no negative comments about the proposal.

24.12.9. Village Hall

Appendix D

24.12.9.1. To receive tender documents pack, agree amendments to propose to WestWaddy.

The documents were received it was noted that the 2025 dates in the project plan were for example only, and time will need to be allowed to secure grant funding. It was further noted that the pavilion will be out of use for at least 6 weeks, and the main hall for 1 week during the roof lights. It was agreed to submit tender requests to 5 recommended contractors, and use contracts finder, to also seek guarantee of when the works can be completed, e.g. July/August 2026.

24.12.9.2. To approve budget for Parish Council solicitor advice and administration to split the Village Hall and Recreation Ground/Village Green Charity.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to use Tessa Hennesy again, as they are aware of the intricacies of what has gone before, budget: £3,000

24.12.10. To receive a report on the Caversham 3rd Bridge Proposals, agree actions and/or official statement from the Council regarding the proposals.

A verbal report was given, including the following points:

- A meeting was held before Christmas with other neighbouring villages. The proposed bridge crosses at Caversham Lakes.
- The issue is that Reading Borough Council has given high priority to this project as part of their strategic transport strategy.
- The parish councils close to the crossing are predominately against it, mainly due to the much higher volumes of traffic which may result in those parishes.
- SODC and OCC are both against the plans on the basis they only get more traffic and no specific benefit.
- One proposed solution is park and ride, but they would be on the Oxfordshire side of the proposed bridge.
- Potentially for Woodcote it may result in more traffic on the A4074, but it may reduce the traffic through Whitchurch and down through Pangbourne.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to continue to be engaged with any further meetings on this matter, and hold a negative stance to the proposal and support our neighbouring parishes.

24.12.11. Clerk's Report

Appendix E

- 24.12.11.1. To consider and if thought fit, approve purchasing "Unknown Tommy Statues" for the village green and lamp post poppies, subject to approval from OCC, and "lest we forget flag" for the Village Green gate.**

This has been proposed by a member of public who wishes to fundraise for this purpose and make a donation to the parish council, see appendix for further details.

A verbal summary of the proposal was given by the proposer.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to purchase 2 male and 1 female soldier shadow-boards (£325 + £175), 20 Poppies (£4.99 each), 1 Flag (£16), any funds raised and donated to the parish council for this cause would be reserved for further purchases.

- 24.12.11.2. To consider potential Parish Council activities for VE Day 2025, and agree actions and proposed budget.**

Deferred.

- 24.12.11.3. To formally approve P Tshering's appointment as Assistant Clerk at SCP 17, 8 hours per week.**

Note, in accordance with the decision in the December meeting, the hours of the Clerk and Assistant Clerk are managed to ensure the salary budget for each month is not exceeded, if the Assistant Clerk works more hours, the Clerk's hours are reduced by a proportionate amount, and shall be reported to the Council regularly.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to appoint P Tshering as the Assistant Clerk, SCP 17, 8 hours per week, to be incrementally increased as duties are handed over.

- 24.12.11.4. To approve SLCC membership of the Assistant Clerk (Budget £160), to support learning and training.**

Resolved: Approved Unanimously.

- 24.12.11.5. To approve ILCA training for the Assistant Clerk (Budget £120)**

Resolved: Approved Unanimously.

- 24.12.11.6. To note the resignation for P Solomons as Trustee of the Griffith Higgs South Stoke Educational Charity (Or Trust), and formally approve appointing R Hubbard as the successor, as required by the Charity's constitution.**

The resignation of P Solomons was noted.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to recommend R Hubbard be appointed as the successor.

24.12.11.7. To approve update of office furniture, to facilitate safe working of two employees, and firesafe and secure storage of parish files and records.

Resolved: Approved unanimously as below:

- dispose of assets:
 - the under-desk drawers which no longer open & close correctly
 - the large desk which we cannot store in the loft. (Replaced by 2x desks and 1 x drawers purchased last week, £135 inc VAT), to attempt to sell the large desk.
- Purchase 2-off lockable, metal filing cupboards Budget £535.60 to replace 2-off Bookcases and Filing Cabinet
 - 2-off bookcases can be stored in the loft for future use if required, or consider disposal.
 - 1-off filing cabinet to be disposed of
 - Remaining bookcase to be used casually, specifically for items which could be replaced, or non-precious items which do not fit in the filing cabinet / staff personal items when at work, etc.

24.12.12. Finance 2024-2025

Appendix F

24.12.12.1. To approve the finalised payments list for January 2025 & approve payments for February 2025.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously Payments lists as detailed below.

January 2025

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Supplier
152	30/01/2025	£ 61.85	£ 12.37	£ 74.22	Telephone & broadband	British Telecom (BT)
151	16/01/2025	£ 532.98	£ 106.60	£ 639.58	Waste collection	Shield Maintenance Ltd
157	16/01/2025	£ 5.00	£ 1.00	£ 6.00	Mobile Phone SIM Costs	GiffGaff Ltd
158	16/01/2025	£ 10.30	£ 2.06	£ 12.36	MS356 Subscription	Microsoft Limited
149	10/01/2025	£ 600.00	£ -	£ 600.00	Village Hall Staff Grant	Woodcote Village Hall Trustees
	Total Staff	£ 1,844.06	£ -	£ 1,844.06	Total Staff Costs	
	Total	£ 3,054.19	£ 122.03	£ 3,176.22		

February

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Supplier
166	20/02/2025	£ 112.50	£ 22.50	£ 135.00	Furniture	IKEA Limited
167	20/02/2025	£ 1,205.58	£ -	£ 1,205.58	Bench Maintenance	Andrew Jarvis (Chiltern Woodcraft)
168	20/02/2025	£ 235.00	£ -	£ 235.00	General Maintenance	Noel Carter (Noel Carter)
169	20/02/2025	£ 29.25	£ -	£ 29.25	Hall Hire	Woodcote Village Hall Trustees
170	20/02/2025	£ 1,240.00	£ 248.00	£ 1,488.00	Tree care	Heritage Tree Services Ltd.
171	20/02/2025	£ 266.49	£ 53.30	£ 319.79	Waste collection	Shield Maintenance Ltd
172	20/02/2025	£ 249.00	£ -	£ 249.00	Mobile Phone	GiffGaff Ltd
173	20/02/2025	£ 5.00	£ 1.00	£ 6.00	Mobile Phone SIM Costs	GiffGaff Ltd

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PARISH COUNCIL

174	20/02/2025	£ 5.00	£ 1.00	£ 6.00	Mobile Phone SIM Costs	GiffGaff Ltd .
175	20/02/2025	£ 65.00	£ 13.00	£ 78.00	Computer Equipment	Dell Corporation Ltd
176	20/02/2025	£ 570.00	£ 114.00	£ 684.00	Computer Equipment	Dell Corporation Ltd
177	20/02/2025	£ 43.19	£ 8.64	£ 51.83	Computer Equipment	Dell Corporation Ltd
180	20/02/2025	£ 494.74	£ 98.95	£ 593.69	OALC Membership	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC)
181	20/02/2025	£ 400.00	£ 80.00	£ 480.00	Allotment Skip	Hazell & Jefferies
165	13/02/2025	£ 100.00	£ 20.00	£ 120.00	Shredding	Shred Station Limited
159	10/02/2025	£ 600.00	£ -	£ 600.00	Village Hall Staff Grant	Woodcote Village Hall Trustees
	Total Staff	£ 3,078.65	£ -	£ 3,078.65	Total Staff Costs, including PAYE deductions, paid in March	
	Total	£ 5,620.75	£ 660.39	£ 6,281.14		

24.12.12.2. To note receipts for January 2025

The January 2025 receipts were noted.

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Customer
23	15/01/2025	£ 2.00	£ -	£ 2.00	Wayleave	SSE
22	13/01/2025	£ 1,500.00	£ -	£ 1,500.00	Grant	Woodcote Cons Grp
21	09/01/2025	£ 422.25	£ -	£ 422.25	Interest on savings	Lloyds Bank plc
	Total	£ 1,924.25	£ -	£ 1,924.25		

24.12.12.3. To note the reconciled bank balances to 31st January 2025.

The reconciled bank balances were noted.

A	Bank Reconciliation at 31/01/2025		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2024		380,481.22
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2024 - 31/01/2025		264,569.16
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2024 - 31/01/2025		645,050.38 120,856.47
	Cash in Hand 31/01/2025 (per Cash Book)		524,193.91
B	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 31/01/2025	0.00	
	Lloyds Current 31/01/2025	26,603.71	
	Lloyds BB Instant Deposit Account 31/01/2025	497,590.20	
	Public Sector Deposit 31/01/2025	0.00	
			524,193.91
	Less unrepresented payments		
			524,193.91
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		524,193.91
	A = B Checks out OK		

Current Account: £26,603.71

Savings Account: £497,590.20

24.12.12.4. To approve updating the bank mandate for all accounts.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously the changes as listed below:

- Clerk & Assistant Clerk to have Banking Access, be Key Contact, Ability to Set-up Payments etc on all accounts. Clerk to have debit card limited to £500 for any accounts it is available for.
- All Current Councillors to have signatory authority, including internet banking access, and 2 councillor authorisation for payments.
- To remove access for all former members of staff, and former councillors.

24.12.13. Finance 2025-2026

24.12.13.1. To approve receiving Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments for the next financial year.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to receive CIL for the 2025-2026 financial year.

24.12.14. To receive Items of Correspondence and agree actions arising. ~~Correspondence~~

None.

**24.12.15. To consider and, if thought fit, approve the following motion: In view of the confidential nature of the business about to transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw.
Confidential Papers**

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to exclude the public and press due to the nature of business to be transacted.

24.12.15.1. To consider quotes for the Greenmore Ponds Restoration, agree budget and approve contractor.

Resolved: Approved Unanimously to appoint White Horse Budget £45,000, subject to receiving £25,000 grant from TOE. It is hoped that further crowdfunding grant will be received from Woodcote Conservation Group to lessen the burden to the parish council.

24.12.16. Matters for future discussion

- Public Toilet & Borehole.
- Additional Trees – Project Cool 2025-2026

24.12.17. To agree list of items from this meeting to be submitted to Woodcote Correspondent or our Facebook Page as a Parish Council Update.

- Shadow Boards
- Appointment of Assistant Clerk
- Councillor Vacancies.

24.12.18. Confirm the date and time of the next Council Meeting – 19th March 2025

Confirmed.

There being no further business to be transacted, the Chair closed the meeting **22:12**