

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting

Held on Tuesday 23 May 2023

Chairman: Councillor Mr J Pugh
Councillors: Councillor Mr G Chater, Councillor Ms E Farrell, Councillor Mr C Harrison, Councillor Mrs M Lawrence, Councillor Mr P Robinson, Councillor Dr J Walmsley, Councillor A Barlow
Apologies: Councillor Lawrence, Pugh and Harrison
Clerk: Mrs J Flanders
Attendance: Councillors Blamires and Cooper
Parishioners: 3

1. Agree Chairman & Sign Declaration of Office

Councillor Chater proposed Councillor Pugh for Chairman and Councillor Robinson seconded him. IT was RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Jeremy Pugh as Chairman.

2. Agree Vice Chairman & Sign Declaration of Office

Councillor Barlow proposed Councillor Chater for Vice Chairman and Councillor Farrell seconded it. IT was RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Chater as Vice Chairman.

3. Apologies for absences

Councillor Lawrence, Councillor Pugh and Councillor Harrison sent in their apologies. There were no other apologies received.

4. Confirm

- 4.1 Councillor Areas of Responsibility. Councillor Chater went through each entry and made a couple of amendments/additions see Appendix A for final listing.
- 4.2 Standing Orders – Approved by all Councillors present.
- 4.3 Asset Register – Approved by all Councillors present but it was agreed that Councillor Robinson and the Clerk would go through it in more details within the next six months.
- 4.4 Financial Regulations – Approved by all Councillors present.
- 4.5 All publication Documents including financial controls Approved by all Councillors present.
- 4.6 Direct Debits and Standing Orders. The Clerk went through the list of DD and SO and the Councillors approved the list unanimously.

5. Disclosure of interest on items in agenda

No Councillors present needed to disclose for any item on the agenda except Councillor Chater on Item 12.2.

6. Reports from Buckinghamshire Council Councillor and the Police

Councillor Blamires confirmed that the Council Awards would be held on 13th June at Wingrave and that there had been some nominations for Wingravians. She also confirmed that any outstanding streetlights would hopefully be cleared soon although it was pointed out that most within this Parish are the responsibility of the Parish Council. Also that gulley clearing crews were able to clear more around the County. Councillor Cooper confirmed he would update on both the 20mph and sewage works items later in the meeting.

7. Sign off Parish Council Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as an accurate account of the meeting held on 23 April 2023 and were signed by the Chairman.

8. Planning Applications:

8.1 **23/01045/ALB** Yew Tree Cottage Listed building application for replacement of rotten windows and surround with like for like. Confirmation approval given by email consultation with Councillors due to deadline.

IT was RESOLVED that there were no objections to this application unanimously.

9. Wingrave Sewage Works Update – Phil Lees

Resident, Phil Lees, gave a presentation on the current state of the sewage discharge and the tributary which leads down to Rowsham (see Annexe B). He and Councillor Cooper confirmed that they did not consider the footpath safe from a health point of view and Councillor Cooper was asking Rights of Way to close it temporarily to allow the farmer to reinstate the ditch and clear the area so any future discharges could flow more easily. It was estimated this would take approximately 5-6 weeks. It was also pointed out that Thames Water do not have a duty of care once the discharge enters the field and it is the responsibility of the landowner to keep it clear – this was considered very unfair but it is the law. Phil Lees wished to create a Working Group and the Parish Council considered this a good idea and asked him to head it up with both Councillors Walmsley and Barlow offering to help. The intention is to continue to monitor the condition of the stream and number of discharges partly from Thames Water data and from carrying out tests regularly.

Councillor Cooper confirmed he was in discussions with Thames Water who had admitted the sewage works was not able to cope with the volume and it had scheduled it for an upgrade in May 2025. Councillor Cooper asked that due to the current problems this must be brought forward and it is hoped it would now be May 2024. Such works will require extensive tankering with obvious implications for Castle Street especially once it is re-surfaced. Councillor Cooper was hoping to reach agreement between Highways and Thames Water that in the event of damage caused by tankering and upgrade works TW would reinstate the road.

It was suggested that the Working Group bring an update on the situation and identify their needs at the next meeting in June.

10. Elms Leys Res Co. Request Dog Poo Bin

The Parish Council had received a request to assist with providing help with on going maintenance of a dog poo bin if installed within their area. After discussion the Councillors agreed that as bins had been provided at other locations where there were new developments it seemed only fair to offer to provide a bin in the Elm Leys estate and maintain it thereby avoiding setting a precedent of other roads/areas adding to the number of bins and looking to the Parish Council to maintain them.

IT was RESOLVED to provide a dog poo bin in Elm Leys and the Clerk would liaise with the Residents Company unanimously.

11. 20mph Update

Councillor Walmsley outlined the content of her report which had been sent to Bucks Council in which she outlined the contradictions within their own Council. This report was presented at the last Parish Council meeting. Councillor Cooper confirmed that it had been brought up the contradictions in Cabinet who had not refuted anything and reiterated that all three County Councillors and Community Board had and still were in favour of the 20mph limit. It was decided that the Parish Council and County Councillors would continue to fight this cause and Councillor Walmsley's report would be sent to the Bucks Council in letter form.

12. Kirby Fund Requests:

12.1 Improving pathway at bus shelter (£1250.00) – Unanimously approved.

12.2 Church Request for updating kitchen/toilet facilities. The Councillors considered the request and asked various questions concerning funding from the Church and other organisations such as the Community Board and it was confirmed the Church Commission do not fund upkeep of Churches and that it was for the local community/church goers to do so. The Councillors suggested that whilst they understood the need for the upgrade and were sympathetic until the Diocesan had approved the proposed works and costings were available it was difficult to agree to funding albeit they were in favour of agreeing to some. It was suggested that once approval and costings were available the Parish Council would re-visit the application.

13. Building Regulation Costs approval for Pavilion & Clubhouse Projects Upto £8500.

Councillor Chater confirmed that to progress the projects it was necessary to now obtain Building Regulations approval and put together tender documents and asked that costs upto £8500 be agreed for this. The Councillors agreed.

IT was RESOLVED to agree that the sum of upto £8500 be approved for Buildings Regulations Approval and provision of Tendering Documents unanimously.

14. Financials

14.1 Payments since 1 April 2023 – The Clerk presented a Schedule of payments see Annexe C.

14.2 Balance of accounts. The Clerk confirmed the balances as follows:

Current Account £50,003.42; Kirby Fund £60,222.38; Reserve £70,460.78.

14.3 Update on AGAR and 2022/2023 end of year. The Clerk confirmed the Internal Audit has made a report and this had been circulated to the Councillors and would be on the Council's website and the final signing of the AGAR would take place at the June meeting.

14.4 Internal Auditors Report. The Clerk had circulated this report see Annexe D.

14.5 Payment approvals:

Internal Auditor £125 – approved unanimously.

Office Innovation Invoices – approved unanimously.

Meeting closed 2114 hours

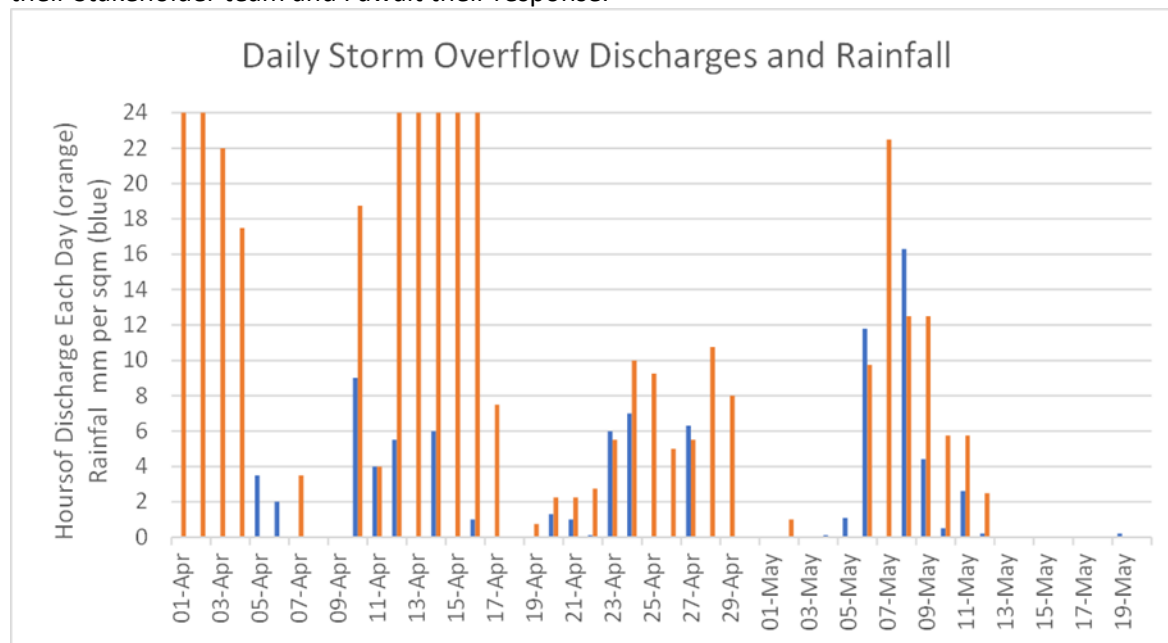
ANNEXE A
See at end of Minutes

ANNEXE B
Sewage Works/Discharge Report

Storm Overflow Discharges Compared to Rainfall

The following chart correlates storm discharges from Wingrave STW against the corresponding daily rainfall figure. The discharges from 1-4 April follow heavy rain on 31 March and above average rain throughout that month. Despite this the discharges look excessive. The discharges around the middle of May appear to coincide with the taking out of operation one of the main filter beds for the filter medium to be cleaned. STW's are allowed to discharge untreated sewage in the event of equipment failure affecting treatment capacity but this does not include planned maintenance which should have been dealt with by tankering the excess waste to the Aylesbury facility. The periods of discharge 19-29 April and 6-12 May coincide with periods of rain none of which could be considered heavy therefore reflecting the difficulty the STW has in coping with average rainfall. The discharge on 2 May followed a period of eight days without rain. This is what is referred to as a 'dry spill and potentially in breach of the STW's Environmental Permit. My complaints to Thames Water regarding these discharges have been referred to

their Stakeholder team and I await their response.



Complaint to the Environment Agency

On 3 May I contacted the Environment Agency to complain about the damage caused to the watercourse and adjacent field by excessive discharges of untreated sewage. They requested copies of my photographic evidence which I provided. I received a reply on 17 May from which I quote following the key points.

'the Environment Agency are aware of operational issues at Wingrave Sewage Treatment Works that have been ongoing for some time. Officers have been to site multiple times to meet with Thames Water engineers and process managers as well as walking the tributary you mention and taking water quality samples of it.

Thames Water have also identified to us that a part of the ongoing issues at Wingrave, is the receiving watercourse has issues with blockages in the form of natural debris. The riparian owner (landowner) is responsible for maintenance of the watercourse to ensure that it can flow as intended.

A plan has been put in place for construction works at Wingrave STW to begin on a date we are still awaiting confirmation of. In the interim a semi-permanent fix has been implemented on site and should help to alleviate issues with un-consented storm discharges.

I want you to know that the activity taking place at Wingrave is also forming part of a larger investigation into historic non-compliance at sewage treatment works. Due to the nature of the investigation, I cannot go into detail with you regarding any further updates. But do be aware that the Environment Agency are working with Thames Water to get Wingrave STW back into legal compliance with its permit.'

In summary the problems with the STW are long standing and have led to un-consented storm overflow discharges (consent for storm overflow discharges is required from the Environment Agency) and a failure to comply with the legal obligations of its Environmental Permit issued by the Environment Agency which has led to the polluted condition of the watercourse and adjacent field.

In regard to the damaged watercourse and field, contrary to the assertion by Thames Water I can find no blockages from natural debris. The blockages have been caused by the deep layer of faecal sediment on the bed of the watercourse which has promoted rapid growth of vegetation leading to the blockage. Whilst Thames Water may say it is the landowners responsibility to ensure flow of the watercourse, at no time have either Thames Water or the Environment Agency spoken to the landowner regarding the volume of untreated sewage that they knew was been discharged into the watercourse, conservatively estimated at 1,600,000 litres this year alone. The landowner will be taking action to clear the watercourse of the matter discharged from the STW but I will be seeking assurances that no further un-consented discharges and/or breaches of the Environmental Permit will occur unless under extreme conditions and then with the landowner, who grazes livestock on the field, the being made aware of the issue.

Next Actions

- Establish water monitoring teams
- Analyse Environmental Permits

- Request STW input flow volumes by time.
- Continue to monitor storm discharges and water quality
- Analyse response from Thames Water when received.

Phil Lees 21 May 2023

ANNEXE C

Payments April 2023

Date	Payee	Amount £	
5/4	RON Smith & Co (Mower)	2431.00*	
28/4	SLCC Membership	146.60	
28/4	BALC Membership	269.02	
28/4	Wingrave Heritage Association	318.00	½ Annual Grant
28/4	URC Churchyard	350.00	Annual Grant
28/4	WCA	2,599.00	½ Annual Grant
2/5	Cllr Walmsley reimburse	89.99	
2/5	Landscape Construction – Bowls Club		
	Subsidence/Bank reconstruction	3,090.00*	

*to be reimbursed.

ANNEXE D

Internal Auditors Report

To Wingrave with Rowsham Parish Council Chairman and Councillors

Wingrave with Rowsham Parish Council - Internal Auditor Report 2022/2023

I have completed the internal audit of Wingrave with Rowsham Parish Council financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

I wish to thank the clerk, Jill, for responding to my requests for information and providing answers to my questions promptly, which was a great help.

There are a few observations, which relate to recording information in the minutes. These are detailed in the attached "Observations Report" and some recommendations shown below but other than that there is nothing of significance to bring to the councillors' attention.

As required any items indicated as "Not Covered" must be explained.

Internal Control Objective F has been ticked as "Not Covered" as the parish council does not operate a petty cash system and there were no cash transactions.

Internal Control Objective 'K' has been ticked as "Not Covered" as the parish council was not exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22.

Internal Control Objective O has been ticked as "Not Covered" as the parish council does not act as a Trustee.

Recommendations:

1. Precept – When the precept is agreed each year, the amount of the precept must be recorded in the minutes for transparency.

2. Members Allowances – There is a requirement to report this on the website, even if no allowances are claimed.

3. Clerk Contract – The contract should be amended to record that the pay grade is not based upon the NJC Pay Scales.

4. Notice of the Exercise of Public Rights - That the "Date of the announcement is to be made/published on the website and period of the Notice of the Exercise of Public Rights" is recorded the minutes. This is a now requirement from the external auditors.

5. Internal and External Audit Reports – Both reports must be considered by Full Council and the minutes should reflect that they have been reviewed and agreed.

..... A.G.Skeggs Cipfa / Cilca

Auditor

4th May 2023

