

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 7:30pm at Bisham Abbey**

**Attendees**

Councillors: Jim Cooke (JC)(Chair), Alan Keene (AK), Ged Wylie (GW), Derek Oliver (DO), Colin Lemmings (CL)

District Councillors: Cllr Mandy Brar, Cllr Mark Howard.

Officer of the Council: Barry Malki (Clerk).

## Part One

**Public Forum**

JC welcomed Cllr Lemming as the newly elected Parish Councillor.

JC welcomed Cllr Howard as the newly elected ward Councillor.

One member of the public asked about when the works were being done to the playground parking spaced. BM explained that the grounds maintenance contractors had been delayed due to weathe and missed the proposed date. BM currently awaiting a new proposed date.

One member of the public noted that Highways England had been inspecting the culvert under the A404 and a leaflet would be going to all local residents regarding the work. Access along The Green would be maintained, and there were measures in place for the protection of wildlife. Bisham Brook will be temporarily dammed, and water will be diverted. There will be six nights where silt will be removed by a tanker stopped on the A404, and four nights for concrete works.

One member of the public reported that the hedge at the school was overgrown and causing problems for pedestrians. Cllr Howard clarified the process that RBWM would go through to ensure the work is carried out by the school. AK noted that the issue would not be solved by trimming, but required hard-pruning.

**16. Apologies for absence**

None

**17. Declarations of Interest**

None

**18. Nomination of Chair and Vice Chair**

AK nominated JC for Chair

DO seconded

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Cllrs agreed.

GW nominated AK for Vice Chair

CL seconded

Cllrs agreed

**19. Nomination of Representatives to Other Bodies**

- i) White Waltham Airfield Consultative Committee – GW and CL
- ii) Berkshire College of Agriculture Residents' Representation Group – AK and JC
- iii) RBWM District Association of Local Councils – DO
- iv) Marlow Society – DO and JC
- v) Local Access Forum – AK
- vi) Rural Forum - AK
- vii) Ice House Rota
  - June 4<sup>th</sup> – CL
  - July 2<sup>nd</sup> – DO
  - August 6<sup>th</sup> – JC
  - September 3<sup>rd</sup> – AK
- viii) Flood Forum – CL
- ix) Flood Liaison Group – CL
- x) Burchetts Green Village Association Liaison – GW

**20. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

The Council RESOLVED to approve the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting of the Council held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

The following items were discussed:

- BM to liaise with guest speaker and move APM to early June pending availability.
- JC asked that Holfords look at clearing slipway wall, which has been partially attended to.
- JC noted that the school had asked for access to the slipway to remove a tree.
- GW gave an update on the quotes for repairing the items in the play ground and noted that the RBWM funding was still available. JC noted that the Cllrs were happy to comment on quotes by email.
- GW noted that BGVA were keen to adopt a Speedwatch programme and were liaising with the PCSO.

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- GW noted that BGVA were also concerning with the finding of the WAGS report. AK asked the ward Cllrs to keep parishioners informed.
- CL noted that there had been a bad accident the previous week, and there was an accident roughly every three days on average.
- GW and AK updated Cllrs on the meeting with National Highways regarding the future of the A404.
- AK noted that the road sign at Stubbings is now in place and correctly orientated.
- AK noted that Temple Footbridge has been closed indefinitely. BM to liaise with Jackie Wheeler and Environment Agency.
- AK reported that the meeting with RBWM regarding the Quarry Wood Road parking measures was shambolic, and many residents were irritated. No one chaired the meeting, and there was no format. Residents were not receptive to the advice offered by the officer that a complete removal of parking would likely exacerbate the speeding situation.

## 21. Planning

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Appn. Date: 17th April 2023 Appn No.: 23/00271

Type: Works To Trees Covered by TPO

Proposal: T1-T3 - Sycamore - Crown height to be reduced by 3m, leaving a height of 12m. Spread to be reduced up to 2m, leaving a spread of 6m. T4 - Sycamore - Crown height to be reduced by 2m, leaving a height of 8m. Spread to be reduced by up to 1m, leaving a spread of 6m. T5 - Thuja - Fell. (001/1951/TPO)

Location: Quarry Wood House Quarry Wood Bisham Marlow SL7 1RF

Determination Date: 12 June 2023

**Cllrs Comments: The Cllrs objected to this application on that grounds that there is no arboricultural report, which is a statutory requirement for the felling of trees covered by a TPO. There were also concerns about the limited information contained in the application to justify the works.**

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Appn. Date: 18th April 2023 Appn No.: 23/00948

Type: Full

Proposal: Part conversion of existing residential outbuilding from garage to habitable accommodation, new roof feature and alterations to fenestration

Location: Penrose Glebe Henley Road Maidenhead SL6 6QW

Determination Date: 13 June 2023

**Cllrs Comments: The Cllrs were negative to this application, and objected on the grounds that the information is incomplete, noting that there is mention of an extension that is not detailed on the drawings.**

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Appn. Date: 21st April 2023 Appn No.: 23/01000

Type: Works To Trees In Conservation Area

Proposal: Please see attached report.

Location: Bisham Abbey Bisham Village Marlow Road Bisham Marlow SL7 1RR

Determination Date: 2 June 2023

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Cllrs Comments: Bisham Parish Council ("BPC") OBJECTS to this Application on the following grounds:

1. The grounds of Bisham Abbey represent one of the finest features of the Bisham Conservation Area and the Application fails to provide sufficient detail or evidence to support the proposed works which would involve felling more than thirteen established, mature trees together with other major works that would affect a significant number of other trees within the site to the overall detriment and character of this vitally important heritage asset.
2. The Plan submitted with the Application cannot be used to identify the trees to which the Application relates as the numbering on the plan is too indistinct for reference purposes and the number of trees shown on the plan is far greater than the trees that are referred to in the Application. The Applicant should be required to submit revised plans that provide a clear indication of the positions of the trees that are referred to in the Arboricultural Report and that identifies precisely the trees that are to be felled and those that other works are proposed to be carried out on.
3. The Arboricultural Report submitted in connection with the Application only provides a summary of conclusions without any explanation of the nature of the examination carried out on each tree or the extent and significance of the symptoms identified.
4. In relation to the trees that the Applicant wishes to fell, there is no satisfactory explanation linking the condition identified in the Arboricultural Report to the proposed treatment, nothing to show that felling is the only and necessary means of dealing with the identified problem and no indication of other forms of treatment that have been considered nor explanation why such alternatives have been ruled out.
5. The deficiencies in the Arboricultural Report referred to in 4. above are exemplified by the use of general and imprecise language "extensive", "large", "several cankers/callouses", "symptoms of decline" and "some degree" and there is only one instance where any reference to the extent of the identified defect or any attempt at quantification of the damage is made ( Ash tree 6702 refers). The Arboricultural Report simply fails to establish the gravity of the condition of the trees in question and to provide the degree of evidence that should be required in a Conservation Area to support a programme of felling trees in such a sensitive setting on such a scale.
6. In some instances the summary findings set out in the Arboricultural Report appear to be at odds with the recommended action of felling the tree in question. Among the trees that are recommended to be felled are the following examples: 6553 Silver Maple "no significant observed structural defect and no observed dieback or disease", 6661 Horse Chestnut "Upright stem with full healthy crown" 6710 Douglas Fir "Upright stem with some minor dieback in the Crown", 6729 Tree of Heaven "upright stem with full healthy crown ..no observed dieback or disease and no significant observed decay". These are particular instances where the Applicant must

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be required to provide further and better particulars before the Application can be considered for approval.

7. The Arboricultural Report is a simple record of observations made at a particular time with no monitoring or assessment of the rate or nature of the decline or of the probable progression of the conditions identified in the Report. The BPC considers that this analysis would need to be carried out before any finding that felling the tree is both necessary and justified can be supported.
8. The grounds of Bisham Abbey are subject to flooding during the wetter periods of the year and the Application fails to make any reference to the impact that the proposed works and, in particular, the felling of the number of established trees would have on the risk of flooding. The Applicant should be required to provide a fully-researched Flood Risk Assessment that addresses these concerns and identifies appropriate measures of mitigation.
9. The BPC is concerned to note that there is only one reference in the Arboricultural Report to the intended replacement of a tree that is proposed to be felled (6579 Scots Pine refers). The BPC considers that it is essential that any approval that may be given to fell a tree pursuant to this or any amended Application is subject to a condition requiring the Applicant to replace the tree in question with a mature specimen of the same type of tree in order to preserve the character and appearance of the Abbey grounds.
10. Having regard to the schedule of works contemplated in the Arboricultural Report, the BPC considers that all conditions attaching to any tree on which works are to be carried out within the 13 week timescale referred to in the Arboricultural Report must be fulfilled in a timely manner and that no other works that may be approved may be carried out on any other trees until the Tree Officer has confirmed in writing that the prior works and conditions attaching to those works have been performed to the satisfaction of the RBWM.

### **Other Concerns**

The BPC is also concerned to note that, as is acknowledged in the Arboricultural Report, a number of trees within the grounds of Bisham Abbey have already been removed: the relevant reference numbers are 6581, 6582, 6583, 6584, 6585, 6586, 6587, 6588, 6592, 6616, 6624, 6634, 6640, 66646677, 6678, 6680, 6681, 66836703, 6711, 6714 and 6721. The circumstances behind the felling of these trees and the times at which the relevant works were carried out are not clear but the BPC is aware that some of the works have been carried out in recent weeks.

The BPC would be grateful if the Tree Officer could look into this aspect of the matter and confirm whether any of these works have been carried out without the approvals required for such works in the Conservation Area.

There is no reference to or evidence that any of these felled trees were replaced with equivalent specimens and the BPC would be grateful if the Tree Officer could also confirm the position in this respect and consider what action could be taken to mitigate the loss of trees evidenced by the Arboricultural Report.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the BPC objects to this Application as the extensive programme of works that are proposed, in so far as those works and the trees that would be affected can be ascertained from the inadequate documentation submitted by the Applicant, would have a significantly deleterious impact on the grounds themselves and the setting of the Grade 1-listed Bisham Abbey which at present form one of the most cherished and important features of the Bisham Conservation Area and would detract from the visual appeal and attractiveness of the site both from within the boundary and when viewed from the River Thames.

To the extent that the RBWM is minded to approve any of the works that are proposed to be undertaken under the Application, the BPC considers that it is essential that strict Conditions on the lines indicated in paragraphs numbered 9 and 10 above are imposed on the Applicant and applied stringently.

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BM to chase Helen Leonard and Victoria Goldberg for a response to correspondence regarding the TPO on Temple Meadow.

## **22. Governance**

Cllrs reviewed and adopted the following policies.

- Standing Orders (no material changes)
- Financial Regulations (no material changes)
- Code of Conduct (no material changes)
- Risk Management (no material changes)
- Complaints Procedure (no material changes)
- Expenses Policy (no material changes)

AK asked that formal correspondence be copied to all Cllrs.

BM to check wording on electronic payments ahead of instituting online banking provision.

## **23. Budget Review**

BM gave an update on the Budget Review meeting, noting that the document contained a typing error which resulted in the 23-24 precept being a 12% increase on 22-23, not a 4% increase as demonstrated.

AK noted that he would not have voted for a precept with a 12% increase.

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JC stated that Council needs to be open and transparent about these matters.

AK believed that transparency had been served by acknowledging the error at a public meeting, and no remedial action should be taken in this instance.

DO stated that the most important factor was to avoid the situation in future, and to ensure documentation is accurate.

BM to table budget discussion earlier in the calendar, ideally October, which will allow a spending review at the halfway point.

**Part 1 of the meeting closed at 22:00**

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**Date Agreed:**

**Signed:**

**Position:** – Chair/Vice Chair/Councillor