



**Minutes of the Extra-ordinary meeting held in the
Council Chamber, Unit 2 Saxton, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 9JX
at 7.30pm on Monday 5 February 2024**

2024-40 - Present

Councillors:

Cllr G Adam, Cllr B Ahier, Cllr D Bird, Cllr P Cragg, Cllr N Crampin, Cllr S Ellahi, Cllr M Fance, Cllr B McShee, Cllr J Messinger, Cllr N Mitchell (Chairman), Cllr B Nagle, Cllr M Price, Cllr C Riley, and Cllr T Wright.

Officers of the Council:

Mrs G White - Clerk to the Council

Members of the public:

Mr M Bruder, Mr I Renshaw, Mrs M Renshaw, and Mrs H Smart.

2024-41 - Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman gave the H&S announcements.

2024-42 - To accept apologies and reason for absence in accordance with the LGA 1972, Sch 1, para 40

Cllr J Snowball had given his apologies. Apologies and reason for absence duly accepted.

The Assistant Clerk had also tendered her apologies.

2024-43 - Public Participation

The Fairlands, Liddington Hall, and Gravetts Lane Community Association (FLGCA) Committee Members did not wish to address the Council.

2024-44 - Declaration of Non-pecuniary Interests

Cllr B McShee declared that he is a member of the Fairlands, Liddington Hall, and Gravetts Lane Community Association Management Committee.

2024-45 - Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) - by councillors in accordance with the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No 1464)

No declarations were made.

For information

Unit 2 Saxton, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 9JX

A five-year renegotiated lease was obtained 16.12.2023 until 15.12.2028. A break clause is available at year four. The long-term security at this site is unknown. The rent is at the current commercial rate.

Zoom meeting held with Wellers Hedleys Solicitors LLP

A Zoom meeting had been held between Wellers Hedleys Solicitors LLP, Worplesdon Parish Council and the FLGCA on 23 January 2024. The recording had been circulated to the FLGCA Committee and all Members of the Council in advance of the meeting. Additionally, the Zoom recording was played prior to the Extra-ordinary meeting to ensure that all Members were in possession of the legal opinion regarding the proposed Your Fund Surrey application for a replacement community centre/Parish office and meeting room facility.

2024-46 - To further consider two possible parish office options within the Parish:

- a) **Hesters Yard - Potential office via a S106 Agreement subject to planning permission being granted. Cost to Parish Council £1 – including an income stream from rentable office space and four acres of wildflower meadow**

The Chairman advised that planning application no: 22/P/01371 was refused by the Local Planning Authority on 31 January 2024. It is likely the developers, Bewley Homes, will appeal this decision.

Since the application was submitted to Guildford Borough Council in August 2022, two of the buildings have burnt down and Dryad Trees Specialists Ltd have relocated to a business park in Send.

The developer has written to the leader of Guildford Borough Council to complain about the way in which their planning application was handled.

It will take at least 6 – 8 weeks to work towards an appeal. It is likely that the appeal process will take at least a year.

If an appeal were to be successful and a S106 Agreement were to be secured (as offered by the developers), the cost of the building, including four acres of wildflower meadow, would be £1. The building would be owned freehold by the Parish Council, in perpetuity. All maintenance costs for both the building and the wildflower meadow to be borne by the Parish Council. This building would come with a separate rentable office space. Any rent obtained from this office space would be used to offset the cost of managing the building.

Cllr G Adam advised that whilst the developers may wish to offer the Parish Council a building and land for £1, the Planning Inspector would decide, via any appeal, whether that would be appropriate or not.

There will also be a management fee at this location. The roads will be unadopted, therefore, the cost of maintaining the roads, street lighting, landscaping, and drainage (within the Estate) will be met by a Management Company. It is standard practice, once the development is completed, for the developer to hand the management arrangements to a Management Company. The management costs are currently unknown but, for comparison, the management costs at Unit 2 Saxton, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 9JX for the financial year 2024/2025 are anticipated to be: £705.04.

The total management costs over 25 years, at today’s prices, would equate to £17,626. Prices will obviously increase subject to RPI.

Business rates are also payable – the rateable value of the proposed building is currently unknown but, for comparison, the business rates on Unit 2 Saxton, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 9JX are currently £8,870 per annum.

- b) Fairlands Community Centre - potential rebuild (Your Fund Surrey and other grant funding opportunities). Potential office space on 1st floor - subject to the availability of grant funding and planning permission being granted. Cost to Parish Council - yearly commercial rent (on a short-term lease basis) or a capital sum to secure a longer lease (minimum 25 years). A capital sum would require a Public Works Loan Board loan to be obtained - anticipated loan required to be a minimum of £775,000 (including interest). A fifty-year lease would result in a loan requirement of £1,522,500 (including interest).**

The Chairman advised that the Community Centre building is ageing and reaching the end of its life expectancy. It is not fit for the 21st century.

Your Fund Surrey grants are available for large schemes, such as providing a new Community Centre for Fairlands; however, the grant is only likely to be 60% of the actual costs and a new Community Centre is likely to cost in the region of £2.5 million for a two-storey building.

Other grants are available. The Parish Council is also permitted to (a) give a grant to the FLGCA towards the building costs or (b) to give a Capital Sum to the FLGCA in exchange for a 25- or 50-year lease.

Whatever happens, if a new Community Centre is constructed, the Parish Council’s play area will have to be removed and a new play area constructed in an alternative location – currently anticipated to be at the front of the new community centre. The anticipated cost being £200,000. This sum cannot be covered by a loan or via a capital sum PWLBL as part of the project, it would be considered a separate project. Funding for this would, therefore, need to be obtained from another source.

The current interest on a PWLBL is 5%, however, the interest rates vary on a daily basis. The interest rate stands throughout the duration of the loan irrespective of whether interest rates go up or down.

Table 1: Cost of a PWLBL per dwelling – duration of the loan including interest

Anticipated loan value being 40% of the anticipated build cost - including anticipated loan interest @ 5%	Tax base (as of October 2023) Tax Base = the number of properties paying council tax	Cost per Band D Property – per month (10 council tax payments per year)	Cost per Band H Property – per month (10 council tax payments per year)	Total Cost Per Band D Property – For the full duration of the lease (rounded to nearest pound)	Total Cost Per Band D Property – For the full duration of the lease (rounded to nearest pound)
£775,000 (25-year lease)	3,704.40	0.84p	£1.68	£8.40 x 25 =£210	£16.80 x 25 = £420
£1.5m (50-year lease)	3,704.40	0.82p	£1.64	£8.20 x 50 = £410	£16.40 x 50 = £820

The Chairman advised that it may be possible to offer 'adjustments' within the PWLBL that would enable the Parish Council to grant money to the Jacobs Well Village Hall Trust and the Worplesdon Memorial Hall and Ground CIO towards the upkeep of these two halls – as was the case in Wonersh recently.

If the Members were willing to consider taking out a PWLBL to facilitate the provision of a new state-of-the-art community building at Fairlands – including parish council facilities, the FLGCA, subject to the support of the community, would be able to apply to Your Fund Surrey (YFS) to establish whether or not a YFS grant would be feasible for a joint project. Once an initial application is submitted, a marker will appear on a map provided on the YFS website. Anyone wishing to support the project can click on the marker to show their support.

If there is sufficient support following the initial application, and sufficient grant funding can be obtained, the FLGCA could then move forward with the joint project.

The FLGCA is at liberty to submit a YFS application for a single storey building which would not include parish council facilities.

Standing orders were waived at 21:48pm to enable the Secretary of the FLGCA, Mr Mick Bruder, to address the Council.

Mr Bruder advised that following initial consultation with both the general public and parents of school pupils attending Worplesdon Primary School, out of the 200 responses received to date, there was 98% support for a new community centre.

Standing orders reinstated 21:51.

A lengthy discussion then took place, during which the following points were considered:

- Unit 3 Saxton is currently on the open market for £550,000 – it may be possible to secure a PWLBL to purchase this property – albeit the property is located outside of the parish. (N.B. The Parish Council is now legally committed to pay the rent on Unit 2 Saxton, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 9JX until December 2027).
- If a unit at Parklands were to be purchased, it would provide a tangible asset at the end of the loan.
- There are other village halls in the parish, which also require financial support.
- There have been cases of Parish Council facilities being provided by developers for £1 (Tanyard Hall, Gomshall and Frensham Parish Council offices).
- Affordable housing is often promised by developers but then the affordability clause kicks in and the housing isn't provided.
- There are a significant number of issues at Hesters Yard that would need to be addressed (as per the borough council's decision notice).
- There is no guarantee that the Planning Inspector will approve the Hesters Yard planning application, though at some stage in the future, this site is likely to be developed.
- To move forward with the Fairlands Community Centre proposal (including parish office /meeting room facilities), the support of the entire parish community would be required (not just the community of Fairlands).
- It would be wise to make the proposal for a new Community Centre (including parish office/meeting room facilities) public at the Annual Parish Assembly on 18 March 2024.
- Once formally announced, the Parish Council will need to raise community awareness via banners, social media, the Parish Council's website, and a leaflet drop.
- Councillors may be required to assist with the leaflet drop.

- What would the community wish to see provided within the proposed new Community Centre?
- Parties and children’s functions can be noisy, what sound protection would be provided to prevent potential disruption during Council meetings, and the standard working day?
- It may be possible to take out a larger PWLBL to assist the Jacobs Well Village Hall and the Worplesdon Memorial Hall – subject to community support.
- Which would the community support – a potential office for £1 with maintenance costs, management costs and business rates, or a community facility incurring loan costs, commercial rent, and business rates? The lease is likely to be on a fully repairing/commercial basis (meaning the Parish Council would be responsible for some of the building maintenance costs).
- Whilst a long-term lease at Fairlands would offer long-term security, it would not result in any tangible asset at the end of the loan term.
- If the Government were to disband Parish Councils, the successor council may not find the facilities at Fairlands of use but would be committed to the terms of the lease, as negotiated.
- What parking facilities would be provided at Fairlands for the Parish Council’s use?
- The FLGCA is required, by the Charity Commission, to charge commercial rent.
- If the FLGCA were to cease, the Charity Commission would require another charity, with similar aims, to take over the running of the building and grounds.
- Business rates are payable on any parish council facilities at the proposed new community centre.
- The FLGCA would not be permitted to charge the Parish Council any ground rent in addition to the commercial rent.
- Fairlands is inset from the Green Belt.
- The FLGCA owns the land on which the new community centre would be constructed.
- Fairlands is the geographical centre of the Parish.
- An office/meeting room facility at Fairlands would be in a more visible location.
- A more regular bus route serves Fairlands than Wood Street Village.

Following the discussion, it was proposed by Cllr N Mitchell, seconded by Cllr G Adam, and **RESOLVED** that, **in principle**, Worplesdon Parish Council is prepared to consider taking on a lease – either on an annual rent basis or via a capital sum in relation to a new build of the Fairlands Community Centre (including parish office/meeting room facilities).

A vote took place: 11 in favour, Cllr P Cragg and Cllr T Wright against – Cllr J Messinger abstain. Motion carried.

It was also proposed by Cllr G Adam, seconded by Cllr N Mitchell, and **RESOLVED** that, **in principle**, Worplesdon Parish Council is prepared to consider, subject to the support of the community and a successful Your Fund Surrey bid, to seek a PWLBL.

If either of these conditions fail, the project for Worplesdon Parish Council fails.

A vote took place: 11 in favour, Cllr P Cragg and Cllr T Wright against – Cllr J Messinger abstain. Motion carried.

2024-47 - Date of next meeting – Full Council Meeting 22 February 2024

Meeting closed 21:12.

Approved by the Full Council – 22 February 2024

Signed:

Chairman of the Council
Date: 22 February 2024