



**Minutes of the Annual Meeting held in the
Council Chamber, Unit 2 Saxton, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 9JX
at 7.30pm on Thursday 16 May 2024**

2024-158 - 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 N Mitchell (Chairman), Cllr B Nagle, Cllr M Price, Cllr C Riley, Cllr J Snowball, and Cllr T Wright.

Officers of the Council:

Mrs G White - Clerk to the Council
Victoria Fear - Assistant Clerk

Members of the public:

Borough Councillors Honor Brooker, Philip Brooker, and County Councillor Keith Witham were present for part of the meeting.

2024-159 - Appointment of the Chairman for municipal year 2024/2025

It was proposed by Cllr G Adam, seconded by Cllr B Nagle that Cllr N Mitchell be appointed as Chairman. No other nominations being received, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Cllr N Mitchell be duly elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for the municipal year 2024/2025.

2024-160 - Chairman to sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr N Mitchell duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

2024-161 - Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman gave the H&S announcements.

2024-162 - To accept apologies and reason for absence in accordance with the LGA 1972, Sch 1, para 40

No apologies were received.

2024-163 - Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2024/2025

It was proposed by Cllr N Mitchell, seconded by Cllr D Bird, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Cllr G Adam be elected as the Vice-Chairman. No other nominations being received, Cllr G Adam was elected as Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2024/2025.

Approved by the Full Council – 27 June 2024

2024-164 - Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

2024-165 - 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.

2024-166 - Declaration of Non-pecuniary Interests

No declarations were made.

2024-167 - To receive and consider written requests for new DPI dispensations, if any

No requests were received.

2024-168 - Amendments to the Register of Interests

No declarations were made.

2024-169 - Declaration of gifts or hospitality over £50

No declarations were made.

2024-170 - Merrist Wood Golf Course – Surrey County Council Planning Application Ref: 2023-0185

The Chairman advised that the Team Leader for Minerals and Waste Policy (Surrey County Council) had submitted his opinion, which stated the proposed developer is contrary to the Surrey Waste Local Plan (SWLP) Policy 5.

The Chairman also stated that the report brought the viability of the project into question during the applicant's timescale due to material availability within 30km of the site. As such, a Bond was suggested.

Whilst the decision about this application is still to be made by Surrey County Council, as the County Council is the Minerals and Waste Authority, following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr G Adam, seconded by Cllr M Fance, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council would request a Section 106 Bond be obtained to ensure that, in the event this planning application is approved, and the developers enter into insolvency during the construction project, sufficient monies will be available to complete the project.

2024-171 - Additional Section 106 request for a Toucan crossing near the entrance to Merrist Wood College

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr D Bird, seconded by Cllr B Nagle that the Parish Council request a Section 278 Agreement that would require the developer of the golf course to pay for the delivery of a Toucan crossing (a crossing for use by both pedestrians and cycle-users at once) near the entrance to Merrist Wood College, should Surrey County Council be minded to approve Planning Application Ref: 2023-0185.

It was noted that after many years of campaigning, Cllr K Witham has already requested an Integrated Transport Scheme (ITS) proposal for the installation of a crossing near the entrance to Merrist Wood College.

2024-172 - Borough Councillor's report

Cllr H Brooker gave the following report:

- a) **Blackwell Farm – Solar Farm** - We are arranging, with the developer, a site visit to review the proposals for the 50-hectare Solar Farm planning application at Blackwell Farm. Hopefully this will be very soon.
- b) **Guildford Borough Council officer resignations** - Annie Righton, one of the executive directors at GBC who stood aside during the investigation into the overpayments on housing maintenance contracts, has now resigned. Dawn Hudd, the Strategic Director for Place has also resigned and will leave shortly. Recruitment is underway to provide replacements.
- c) **Governance at Guildford Borough Council** - The SOLACE report investigating the governance issues at GBC was published on 6th May. It was extremely critical of all aspects of governance perhaps best summarised by quoting from paragraph 4.3 of the report: "There is no coherent improvement plan with suitable strategic and operational elements. There is no clear direction of travel and there is a debilitating and serious absence of a range of important strategies, plans, and systems". There is also criticism of the collaboration with Waverley – again essentially lack of strategy and no cost / benefit analysis. The report also comes with a recommendation to implement 70 changes to current procedures and the new CEO together with the Executive has agreed to implement them all in full. The Leader of the council, Julia McShane, has given an unreserved apology to the residents of Guildford with a promise to put things right.
- d) **Housing Maintenance Contracts** - There are also two ongoing investigations into the issues on housing maintenance contracts, a police investigation into criminal fraud and an internal investigation of existing staff to establish "who knew what, and when".

The Chairman thanked Cllr H Brooker for her report.

A brief Q&A session then took place regarding Governance at Guildford Borough Council.

2024-173 - County Councillor's report

Cllr K Witham had provided a following written report:

- A new financial year. Availability of grants from Surrey County Council to help local voluntary groups. Value of the grant/s and how to apply.
- Police ask for the public's help with Road Safety and Road Anti-social behaviour - Survey to feedback your concerns.
- Advance warning - the next M25 weekend closure 10th - 13th May.
- Improving Surrey's Countryside.
- Highways drains and road works information.
- Information and support for businesses from Surrey County Council.
- Guildford Borough Council – parking charges, housing rent increase.

Approved by the Full Council – 27 June 2024

A short Q&A session then took place which included the changes to the county council boundaries as a result of the recent Electoral Boundary Review by the Electoral Commission. Jacobs Well will remain within the county boundary of Worplesdon. The boundary for Guildford West will move to and include Broadacres and Broad Street.

Your Fund Surrey grant – Worplesdon Parish Council to apply for a grant of 50% towards the cost of a water bowser to water the recently planted trees.

2024-174 - Minutes of the previous meetings:

It was proposed by Cllr M Fance, seconded by Cllr D Bird, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held 4 April 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

It was proposed by Cllr G Adam, seconded by Cllr P Cragg, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning/General Purposes and Finance Committee Meeting held 25 April 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

It was proposed by Cllr B McShee, seconded by Cllr M Fance, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Staffing Committee held 29 April 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

2024-175 - Election of the Planning/General Purposes and Finance Committee

The following Members were appointed to the Planning/General Purposes and Finance Committee for the municipal year 2024/2025:

- Cllr N Mitchell (as ex-officio member – Fairlands Ward)
- Cllr G Adam (as ex-officio member – Fairlands Ward)
- Cllr B Ahier (Fairlands Ward)
- Cllr M Fance (Perry Hill Ward)
- Cllr D Bird (Wood Street Ward)
- Cllr P Cragg (Wood Street Ward)
- Cllr T Wright (Wood Street Ward)
- Cllr M Price (Jacobs Well Ward)

Cllr S Ellahi and Cllr J Snowball were appointed as substitute members.

2024-176 - Election of the Staffing Committee

The following Members were appointed to the Staffing Committee for the municipal year 2024/2024:

- Cllr G Adam (as ex-officio member - Fairlands Ward)
- Cllr C Riley (Wood Street Ward)
- Cllr M Fance (Perry Hill Ward)
- Cllr M Price (Jacobs Well Ward)
- Cllr N Crampin (Wood Street Ward)

Cllr B Nagle and Cllr D Bird were appointed as substitute members.

2024-177 - Finance:

a) Proposed list of payments to be tabled at the meeting for approval

The payment list was presented to the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr M Price, seconded by

Cllr J Snowball, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that payments to the value of £22,254.05 be approved. The payment list was duly signed by the Chairman, Cllr N Mitchell, during the meeting.

Table 1: Proposed list of payments 16 May 2024

Code	Date	Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
M'nance Bus Shelters/Seats Etc.	25/04/2024	Install bench at JW Green by Pond	Stephen Gunner	300.00	0.00	300.00
Staff Costs	25/04/2024	Salaries/ PAYE/ NI/ Mileage/ Pension Conts Ee's & Er's	Staff Costs	13,221.67	0.00	13,221.67
Staff mileage	25/04/2024	Mileage	Mrs G F White	26.65	0.00	26.65
Staff mileage	25/04/2024	Mileage	Mrs V C Fear	22.10	0.00	22.10
Contingency Fund	25/04/2024	Parking Fee - 25.04.2024	Guildford Borough Council	4.00	0.00	4.00
Land Management	25/04/2024	Fuel for tools	Waitrose Shell	6.81	1.36	8.17
Chairman's Allowance	25/04/2024	Refreshments	Caffe Nero	10.80	0.00	10.80
Establishment Charges	26/04/2024	Data Protection Act - Annual Fee	Information Commissioner's Office	35.00	0.00	35.00
Land Management	29/04/2024	Materials	B&Q	10.00	2.00	12.00
Playground Repairs	30/04/2024	Inspection of the Typhoon WMG	Hags-SMP Ltd	450.00	90.00	540.00
IT budget	30/04/2024	Recycle toner cartridges	Zero Waste Recycling	39.99	8.00	47.99
IT budget	30/04/2024	Office 365 charges - Feb 2024 - Apr 2024	BT PLC	357.00	71.40	428.40
Land Management	30/04/2024	Materials	B&Q	5.42	1.08	6.50
Land Management	30/04/2024	Materials	Wickes	33.75	6.75	40.50
Land Management	30/04/2024	Hire of storage container MW - April 2024	Activate Learning	81.00	0.00	81.00
Parish Office	30/04/2024	Gas - Unit 2 Saxton - 23.08.23 - 23.08.23 Bill Correction	British Gas	13.10	0.66	13.76
Perry Hill Environmental Improvements	30/04/2024	Tree Planting - 18.04.2024	Managed Acres	2,175.00	435.00	2,610.00
Community Car Park	01/05/2024	Business rates - Community Car Park	Guildford Borough Council	101.00	0.00	101.00
IT budget	01/05/2024	Xerox Fuser for VersaLink Printer	Scriptum Supplies	199.00	39.80	238.80
Revenue Costs Works Vehicle	01/05/2024	Service plan - 4th instalment of 45	PlanMyService LLP	48.38	9.68	58.06
Revenue Costs Works Vehicle	01/05/2024	MOT Service plan - 4th instalment of 45	PlanMyService LLP	3.78	0.00	3.78
Parish office - Unit 2 Saxton	01/05/2024	Business rates - Parish Office	Guildford Borough Council	968.00	0.00	968.00
IT budget	02/05/2024	BT Business Mobile Broadband	BT PLC	18.51	3.70	22.21
IT budget	02/05/2024	HP ink cartridges	Amazon EU S.a.r.L.	22.97	4.60	27.57
Parish office - Unit 2 Saxton	02/05/2024	External window cleaning	Trevor Porter Window Cleaning Service	20.00	4.00	24.00
IT budget	08/05/2024	External back-up - May 2024	RISC IT	42.00	8.40	50.40
Land Management	08/05/2024	Emptying - Dumpy Bin - WSV Community Car Park	Chambers Waste Management	32.78	6.56	39.34
Establishment Charges	12/05/2024	Boots for Groundsman	B&Q	60.00	0.00	60.00
Establishment Charges	13/05/2024	Stationery	Caboodle	14.89	2.98	17.87
Establishment Charges	14/05/2024	A3 Printer Paper	Triton Media Ltd	16.66	3.33	19.99
Training	14/05/2024	Councillors Training -MP - 15 May 2024	Mulberry Local Authority Services Limited	45.00	9.00	54.00

Code	Date	Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
Grass Cutting	14/05/2024	Grass cutting - Month 3 2024	Holly Landscape and Training	1,630.02	326.00	1,956.02
Playground Repairs	14/05/2024	Spinner Pole removal and Wet Pour Repair	MJR Services	490.00	0.00	490.00
PC Grant Aid to Wards	14/05/2024	Grant - Jazz Festival 2024	Challengers	500.00	0.00	500.00
Land Management	14/05/2024	Materials	B&Q	22.17	4.43	26.60
IT budget	16/05/2024	OnePhone - phone charges - including mobile data	BT PLC	212.20	42.44	254.64
Parish office - Unit 2 Saxton	16/05/2024	Gas & Electricity - Unit 2 Saxton - 01.04.24 - 30.04.24	Octopus Energy Limited	193.55	9.68	203.23
Total				21,433.20	1,090.85	22,524.05

b) Bank reconciliation for reconciliations for March 2024 and April 2024

The Finance Officer (FO) had prepared the bank reconciliations for March 2024 and April 2024 in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, a copies of which had been issued to all Members via email in advance of the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr M Fance, seconded by Cllr G Adam, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the bank reconciliations be approved and signed by the Chairman, Cllr N Mitchell, during the meeting.

Appendices 1 and 2 – March 2024 and April 2024 Bank Reconciliations

c) Monthly budget reports for March 2024 and April 2024

The FO had prepared the budget reports for March 2024 and April 2024 in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, copies of which had been issued to all Members via email in advance of the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr D Bird, seconded by Cllr M Fance, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the budget reports be approved and signed by the Chairman, Cllr N Mitchell, during the meeting.

Appendices 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 - March 2024 and April 2024: Summary Budget Report, Net Position Report and Earmarked Reserves Report.

d) Appointment of a councillor (and a reserve) to undertake the quarterly financial inspections - March, June, September, and December.

It was proposed by Cllr N Mitchell, seconded by Cllr B Ahier, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Cllr M Price be appointed to undertake the quarterly financial checks for 2024/2025. Cllr G Adam was appointed as the reserve Member.

Cllr M Price was thanked for his assistance with this task for the financial year 2023/2024.

e) Engagement – Annual Audit – Mulberry & Co

It was proposed by Cllr P Cragg, seconded by Cllr B Nagle, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Mulberry & Co Ltd be appointed on a three-year basis i.e. for the financial years 2024/2025 until 2026/2027.

Cllr P Cragg proposed a vote of thanks to Mulberry & Co Ltd for their assistance with the Internal Audit.

Power to spend: S111 of the LGA 1972

f) Internal Audit carried out 14 May 2024

The internal audit was undertaken on 14 May 2024 by Mark Mulberry of Mulberry & Co Ltd. A copy of the audit report is provided below:

Executive summary

Following completion of our year-end internal audit on the 14 May 2024 we enclose our report for your kind attention and presentation to the Council. This report contains details of the additional testing conducted at year-end and should be considered alongside the interim audit reports issued following our interim audit on the 8 November. The audits were conducted in accordance with current practices and guidelines and testing was risk based. Whilst we have not tested all transactions, our samples where appropriate covered the entire year to date.

Our report is presented in the same order as the assertions on the internal auditor report within the published AGAR. The start of each section details the nature of the assertion to be verified. Testing requirements follow those detailed in the audit plan previously sent to the council, a copy of this is available on request. The report concludes with an opinion as to whether each assertion has been met or not. Where appropriate recommendations for action are shown in bold text and are summarised in the table at the end of the report.

Our sample testing did not uncover any errors or misstatements that require reporting to the external auditor at this time, nor did we identify any significant weaknesses in the internal controls such that public money would be put at risk.

It is clear the council takes governance, policies, and procedures seriously and I am pleased to report that overall, the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose and whilst my report may contain recommendations to change these are not indicative of any significant failings, but rather are pointers to improving upon an already well-ordered system.

It is therefore our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Worplesdon Parish Council are well established and followed and a model of good practice.

Regulation

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts. In addition to this, a smaller authority is required by Regulation 5(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to “undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.”

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance activity designed to improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes. The purpose of internal audit is to review and report to the authority on whether its systems of financial and other internal controls over its activities and operating procedures are effective.

Internal audit’s function is to test and report to the authority on whether its specific system of internal control is adequate and working satisfactorily. The internal audit reports should therefore be made available to all Members to support and inform them when they considering the authority’s approval of the annual governance statement.

Independence and competence

Your audit was conducted by Mark Mulberry of Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd, who has over 30 years’ experience in the financial sector with the last 13 years specialising in local government.

Your auditor is independent from the management of the financial controls and procedures of the council and has no conflicts of interest with the audit client, nor do they provide any management or financial assistance to the client.

Engagement Letter

An engagement letter was previously issued to the council covering the 2023/24 internal audit assignment. Copies of this document are available on request.

Planning and inherent risk assessment

The scope and plan of works including fee structure was issued to the council under separate cover. Copies of this document are available on request. In summary, our work will address each of the internal control objectives as stated on the Annual Internal Audit Report of the AGAR.

It is our opinion that the inherent risk of error or misstatement is low, and the controls of the council can be relied upon and as such substantive testing of individual transactions is not required. Testing to be carried out will be “walk through testing” on sample data to encompass the period of the council year under review.

Year-End Audit

The year-end audit was conducted on site. Information was requested from the council in advance of the audit taking place, and this was reviewed along with other information published on the council’s website www.worplesdon-pc.gov.uk

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Interim Audit - Points Carried Forward

Audit Point	Audit Findings	Council comments
Financial Regulations	<p>I reviewed the Scribe payments list for all items over £3,000 and was able to verify to the physical invoice, with assistance from the clerk I was also able to verify that council had pre-approved the expenditure in accordance with regulation and that where applicable quotes and estimates had been obtained.</p> <p>If I had one recommendation it would be to add a note or annotation to the financial transaction that denotes the minute references as this type of expenditure will always attract interest.</p>	Completed
	<p><i>Financial Regulation deals with purchase and sale of assets etc. 14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased, or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £500.</i></p> <p><i>14.5. Subject only to the limit set in Regulation 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the Full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council with a full business case.</i></p> <p>I recommend council review the text of regulation 14 and alter the thresholds to match day to day practice.</p>	Completed and updated to £3,000

B. FINANCE REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS

Internal audit requirement

This authority complied with its Finance Regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Audit findings

Check that the council's Finance Regulations are being routinely followed.

Further to the testing conducted at the interim audit, I reviewed the April draft council minutes and noted the approval of March income and expenditure, bank reconciliations, reserves, and other financial matters. I am under no doubt council has the proper opportunity to review and understand financial matters and continues to approve payments in accordance with financial regulations.

C. RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

Internal audit requirement

This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

Audit findings

"We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements."

The Clerk confirmed that they were not aware of any event having a financial impact that was not included in the accounting statements.

D. BUDGET, PRECEPT AND RESERVES

Internal audit requirement

The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.

Audit findings

Comprehensive financial management information is presented to finance committee, including income & expenditure against budget, bank statements and invoices for payment lists, providing councillors with sufficient opportunity to scrutinise the council's overall financial position.

I am under no doubt council property prepares budgets and financial reports and that councillors can make informed decisions based on these.

Analysis of the council's year-end income and expenditure report shows total income for the year reported as 102.77% and total expenditure as 96.49%. This has resulted in a budget surplus of £20,213. The income was due in the main to interest and residents' association (which has been earmarked). The expenditure underspends were due in the main to parks and open spaces.

At the end of the financial year, the council held circa £125,624 in earmarked reserves (EMR) and a further £140,967 in the general reserve. I was able to compare reserve information across the management accounts and the AGAR working documents and found the totals to be consistent.

The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioner's guide states *'the generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a smaller authority's general reserve is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure'* (para 5.33).

The general reserve balance is within the recommended range.

G. PAYROLL

Internal audit requirement

Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

Audit findings

I reviewed the total figure being included within box 4 (staff costs) on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and was able to confirm from the accounting software that this includes only salary payments, HMRC payments and pension contributions.

H. ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS

Internal audit requirement

Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

Audit findings

I confirmed the asset register total matches that included in box 9 (total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets) on the AGAR and was able to trace the changes to the previous year's total against the asset register.

I am under no doubt the register is up to date and correct as at 31 March 2024.

I. BANK AND CASH

Internal audit requirement

Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.

Audit findings

I reviewed the March 2024 bank reconciliation for all accounts and was able to confirm the balances to the bank statements and cashbooks. The balances agreed to the end of year AGAR.

The council has balances in its bank greater than the £85,000 protection limit offered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). The council has an investment policy in place and actively moves balances to ensure interest rates are optimised.

J. YEAR END ACCOUNTS

Internal audit requirement

Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

Audit findings

The council, at its meeting to sign off the year-end accounts, must discuss Section 1 of the AGAR (Annual Governance Statement) and record this activity in the minutes of the meeting. **COUNCIL IS REMINDED THAT THIS MUST BE A SEPARATE AGENDA ITEM PRIOR TO THE SIGNING OF SECTION 2 OF THE AGAR (ANNUAL ACCOUNTS).**

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement

Based on the internal audit finding I recommend using the table below as the basis for that discussion.

	Annual Governance Statement	'Yes', means that this authority	Suggested response based on evidence
1	We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>	YES – accounts follow latest Accounts and Audit Regulations and practitioners' guide recommendations.
2	We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>	YES – there is regular reporting of financial transactions and accounting summaries, offering the opportunity for scrutiny.
3	We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>	YES – the Clerk advises the council in respect of its legal powers.
4	We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>	YES – the requirements and timescales for 2022/23 year-end were met

	Annual Governance Statement	<i>'Yes', means that this authority</i>	Suggested response based on evidence
5	We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>	YES – the council has a risk management scheme and appropriate external insurance.
6	We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>	YES – the council has appointed an independent and competent internal auditor.
7	We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>	YES – matters raised in internal and external audit reports have been addressed.
8	authority and. Where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.</i>	YES – no matters were raised during the internal audit visits.
9	Trust funds including charitable – In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/asset(s), including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	<i>has met all its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>	N/A – the council has no obligations

Section 2 – Accounting Statements

AGAR box number		2022/23	2023/24	Internal Auditor notes
1	Balances brought forward	228,194	246,378	Agrees to 2022/23 carry forward (box 7)
2	Precept or rates and levies	276,900	304,325	Figure confirmed to central precept record
3	Total other receipts	20,824	26,214	Agrees to underlying accounting records
4	Staff costs	130,000	149,079	Agrees to underlying accounting records. Includes only expenditure allowed as staff costs (see section G)
5	Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Confirmed to PWLB documents
6	All other payments	149,540	161,247	Agrees to underlying accounting records
7	Balances carried forward	246,378	266,591	Casts correctly and agrees to balance sheet
8	Total value of cash and short-term investments	252,576	251,397	Agrees to bank reconciliation for all accounts
9	Total fixed assets plus long-term investments and assets	619,717	623,085	Matches asset register total and changes from previous year have been traced

10	Total borrowings	0	0	Confirmed to PWLB documents
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For Local Councils Only		Yes	No	N/A	
11a	Disclosure note re Trust Funds (including charitable)		✓		<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
11b	Disclosure note re Trust Funds (including charitable)			✓	<i>The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.</i>

Audit findings

The year-end accounts have been correctly prepared on an income and expenditure basis with a box 7 and 8 reconciliation properly completed. I have verified the box 7 & 8 items to underlying evidence and schedules. There were no errors.

The AGAR correctly casts and cross casts and last year's comparatives match the figures submitted for 2022/23 and published on the council website.

The variance analysis has been properly completed in detail with numerical values and sufficient description to enable the reader to understand the changes from year to year.

K. ASSURANCE REVIEW

Internal audit requirement

If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")

Audit findings

The council did not certify itself exempt in 2022/23 due to exceeding the income and expenditure limits and this test does not apply.

L: PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION

Internal audit requirement

The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Audit findings

At present no specific guidance has been provided to set out what the 'relevant legislation' is in respect of Control Objective L. We have therefore considered the requirements of Statutory Instruments 2015/480 The Local Government (Transparency Requirements) Regulations 2015 [<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/480/made/data.pdf>] and, 2015/494 The Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements). https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/494/pdfs/uksem_20150494_en.pdf

In addition to this, we have considered the additional publication requirements as set out in the ICO Model Publication Scheme for Parish Councils. <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1153/model-publication-scheme.pdf> & https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1266/parish_council_information_guide.doc

All councils are required to follow The Accounts and Audit Regulations which include the following requirements:

- 13(1)** An authority must publish (which must include publication on that authority’s website)
- (a) the Statement of Accounts together with any certificate or opinion entered by the local auditor in accordance with section 20(2) of the Act; and
 - (b) the Annual Governance Statement approved in accordance with regulation 6(3)
- 13(2)** Where documents are published under paragraph (1), the authority must
- (a) keep copies of those documents for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum; and
 - (b) ensure that those documents remain available for public access for a period of not less than five years beginning with the date on which those documents were first published in accordance with that paragraph.

The council usually has income and expenditure greater than £200k and as such is required to follow the transparency legislation. I have reviewed the council website and can confirm this is up to date at the time of the audit with the relevant information.

The council has an up-to-date model publication scheme published on the council website.

I was able to confirm that pages 4 (Annual Governance Statement), 5 (Accounting Statements) and 6 (External Auditor’s Report and Certificate) of the AGAR are available for review on the council website for financial years 2018/19 to 2022/23 inclusive.

M: EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS - INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS

Internal audit requirement

The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2023 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

Audit findings

Inspection – key dates	2022/23	2023/24 Proposed
Date AGAR signed by council	18 May 2023	16 th May
Date inspection notice issued	2 June 2023	31 st May
Inspection period begins	5 June 2023	3 rd June 2024
Inspection period ends	14 July 2023	12 th July 2024
Correct length (30 working days)	Yes	Yes
Common period included (first 10 working days of July)	Yes	Yes

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2022/23, and assertion 4 on the Annual Governance Statement can therefore be signed off by the council.

I was able to confirm that the proposed dates for 2023/24 meet the statutory requirements.

Achievement of control assertions at year-end audit date

Based on the tests conducted during the year-end audit, our conclusions on the achievement of the internal control objectives are summarised in the table below and are reflected in the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report within the AGAR.

	INTERNAL CONTROL OBJECTIVE	YES	NO	NOT COVERED
A	Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year	✓		
B	This authority complied with its Finance Regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for	✓		
C	This authority assesses the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these	✓		
D	The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded, and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for	✓		
F	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for			✓
G	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H	Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I	Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J	Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K	If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓ N/a
L	The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation	✓		
M	The authority, during the previous year (2022/23) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N	The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR.	✓		
O	Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

Year-End Audit - Points Carried Forward

None

Audit Point	Audit Findings	Council comments

It was proposed by Cllr G Adam, seconded by Cllr M Fance, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Internal Audit report be approved and accepted.

A vote of thanks was proposed to the RFO and FO for the work that they carried out to ensure that the Internal Audit was both successful and carried out in a short period.

g) To review the Council's insurance policy

This item was deferred until the next Full Council meeting.

h) To review the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal controls

Regulation 5(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 imposes a duty on local councils to 'undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal audit standards or guidance'. For parish and town councils, this guidance is set out in the NALC publication "Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England".

The purpose of internal audit is to review and report to the Council whether its systems of financial and other internal controls over its activities and operating procedures are effective.

The year-end audit was carried out by Mark Mulberry on 14 May 2024. A copy of Mr Mulberry's comprehensive report was issued to all Members, via email, on 15 May 2024.

On 16 May 2024 Members undertook a review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit as follows:

Scope of Internal Audit – Terms of Reference issued 30 August 2023 and approved by the Council at the Full Council Meeting held 21 September 2023 - Minute number 348-2023(f) refers. Terms of reference define audit responsibilities in relation to fraud. The internal audit takes into account risk management processes and wider internal control. Internal audit covers:

- Books of Account
- Financial regulations, governance, and payments
- Risk management and insurance (including disaster recovery plans)
- The budget and budget process, precept, and reserves
- Income/VAT
- Petty cash (not operated)
- Payroll (Third Party Provider – Mulberry & Co)
- Assets and investments
- Bank reconciliations and cash-in-hand
- Year-end accounts (income and expenditure basis)
- Limited assurance review
- Transparency
- Exercise of public rights – inspection of accounts
- Publication requirements (Transparency Act 2015)
- Trusteeship (not applicable).

Responsibility for the Council's internal controls (safeguarding systems in place for the prevention and detection of fraud, error, and non-compliance) remains, however, with the Council.

Independence – Internal Auditor has direct access to those charged with governance. Auditing is carried out by Mark Mulberry/Andy Beams of Mulberry & Co with written reports presented to the Council. Auditors do not have any other role within the Council.

Competence – The internal auditors are qualified chartered accountants trained to a high standard who are familiar with the local government sector. Their work is carried out ethically, with integrity and objectivity.

Relationships – Responsible Financial Officer and all councillors consulted on the Internal Audit Plan, issued annually, which details the scope of each audit. Evidence is on audit files.

Responsibilities for officers and internal audit are defined in relation to internal control, risk management and fraud and corruption matters.

The responsibilities of the council Members are understood, and the training of Members is carried out as necessary. Members are appointed on an annual basis to carry out the quarterly financial checks.

Audit Planning and reporting – The Audit Plan properly takes account of corporate risk. The Audit Plan has been approved by the Council. Internal Audit is reported in accordance with the approved Audit Plan.

Internal audit work is planned and is based on risk assessment and designed to meet the Council's governance assurance needs.

Understanding the whole organisation, its needs, and objectives – The Annual Audit Plan demonstrates how audit work will provide assurance in relation to the Council's governance risk assessment.

Catalyst for change – The Internal Auditor offers a supportive role of audit for corporate developments such as corporate governance review, risk management and ethics.

Add value and assist the organisation in achieving its objectives – Demonstrated through positive management responses to recommendations and follow up action, where called for.

Forward looking – Identifying risks and formulating the annual Audit Plan. Internal audit maintains awareness of new developments in the services, risk management and corporate governance.

Challenging – Internal audit focuses on risk and encourages members to develop their own responses to risks.

Correct resources available – Full documentation is provided to enable the internal auditor to complete the audit. Internal auditor understands the body and the legal and corporate framework in which it operates.

It was proposed Cllr N Mitchell, seconded by Cllr D Bird, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the review of the effectiveness of the Council's internal control including management of risk be approved.

i) To review and approve the earmarked reserves for 2023/2024

Details of the year-end earmarked reserves, amounting to £125,623.85, had been issued to all Members, via email, 14 days in advance of the meeting. These figures were included in the Balance Sheet for the financial year 2023/2024.

It was proposed by Cllr S Ellahi, seconded by Cllr D Bird, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the earmarked reserves for 2023/2024, as per the Balance Sheet, be approved.

j) To review and approve the general reserves for 2023/2024

General reserves may be used throughout the year for contingency/emergency purposes. Unexpected projects invariably arise during the year.

As per the Balance Sheet, the general reserves for 2023/2024 amounted to £140,966.97.

It was proposed by Cllr G Adam, seconded by Cllr S Ellahi, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the general reserves for 2023/2024, as per the Balance Sheet, be approved.

k) To receive and approve the Asset Register for the financial year ended 31.3.2024

A copy of the Asset Register for 31 March 2024, showing assets of £623,085.00, had been circulated to all Members, via email, 14 days in advance of the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr M Fance, seconded by Cllr P Cragg, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Asset Register for 31.3.2024 be approved.

l) To receive and approve the Annual Accounts 2023/2024

The accounts had been emailed to all members 14 days in advance of the meeting. The accounts had been checked, and verified as accurate, by the Internal Auditor, during the internal audit held 14 May 2024. It was proposed by Cllr T Wright, seconded by Cllr N Crampin, and **RESOLVED** that the 2023/2024 accounts be approved.

m) To receive and approve the Annual Governance Statements (AGAR) for the year ended 31 March 2024 (Section 1)

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) had had been circulated to all members via email 14 days prior to the meeting.

The Clerk read out the governance statements to the meeting. Members responses to the governance statements were as follows:

Table 2 Section 1 of the AGAR (Annual Governance Statement)

Ref	Question	Response
1	We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	Yes
2	We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	Yes
3	We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	Yes
4	We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	Yes
5	We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	Yes
6	We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	Yes

Ref	Question	Response
7	We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	Yes
8	We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events, or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and. Where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	Yes
9	Trust funds including charitable – In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/asset(s), including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes

It was proposed by Cllr G Adam, seconded by Cllr J Snowball, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that 'Section 1 - The Annual Governance Statement for 2023/2024' (AGAR) be approved.

The Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer then signed Section 1 of the AGAR.

n) To receive and approve the Annual Accounting Statements (AGAR) for the year ended 31 March 2024 (Section 2)

It was proposed by Cllr D Bird, seconded by Cllr B Ahier, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that 'Section 2 of the AGAR – The Accounting Statements for 2023/2024' be approved. This section had been signed by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) in advance of the meeting. The Chairman then countersigned Section 2 of the AGAR.

Appendix 9 – Section 2 of the AGAR for 2023/2024

o) VAT return 1.1.24 – 31.3.24

A VAT refund of £6,285.94 had been received on 14 May 2024 from HMRC (His Majesty's Revenue and Customs).

p) End of Year Pension Return submitted to Surrey County Council

The end-of-year pension return had been submitted to Surrey County Council on 10 April 2024.

q) Annual tree inspection - survey fee (specialist company)

A quotation had been obtained from TGB Tree Consulting Ltd.

It was proposed by Cllr P Cragg, seconded by Cllr J Snowball, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the quotation amounting to £1,800 & VAT, for a walkover survey of all seven sites within the Parish, be approved.

Power to spend: OSA 1906, ss 9 and 10

r) 1st instalment precept 2024/2025

An online payment of £174,662.00 was received from Guildford Borough Council on 11 April 2024 (this included a Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) grant)).

s) Purchase of road legal water bowser to facilitate the watering of newly planted trees and whips

It was proposed by Cllr P Cragg, seconded by Cllr S Ellahi, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the cost of a water bowser, required to ensure that the new trees planted at various locations across the Parish can be watered together with the new planters due to be installed at Perry Hill Green plus training for both members of the Groundstaff (training cost anticipated to be £800 & VAT for both members of staff) be approved up to a maximum cost of £6,000 & VAT.

Total cost of the water bowser including delivery = £4,861.83 & VAT (50% Your Fund Surrey grant to be applied for)

Power to spend: OSA 1906, ss 9 and 10

t) Watering of the trees on Pitch Place Green, Perry Hill Green, and Wood Street Village Green until water bowser obtained

It was proposed by Cllr G Adam, seconded by Cllr T Wright, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Steve Gunner to be paid to water the trees up to two occasions per week, and the whips once a week, until a water bowser and consent to use a standpipe can be obtained by the Parish Council.

Power to spend: OSA 1906, ss 9 and 10

u) Cambridge Building Society

Cllr P Cragg and Cllr N Crampin had both been asked to provide additional information for verification purposes. Cllr P Cragg advised that he did not wish to provide the additional information.

It was, therefore, proposed by Cllr P Cragg, seconded by Cllr G Adam, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Cllr G Adam be appointed to be the fourth signatory to the Cambridge Building Society Account.

At 21:02 the Chairman called a short comfort break. The meeting reconvened at 21:12.

2024-178 - To extend the current Christmas illumination contract by one year

The Clerk advised that the increased Christmas illumination budget of £20,000 does not become effective until the financial year 2025/2026. The budget for 2024/2025 remained at £8,000. Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr P Cragg, seconded by Cllr J Snowball, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the current contract be extended by one year - to include the provision of two illuminated 'tree cones' one to be located near the entrance to the Fairlands Community Centre, the other to be located near the entrance to the Jacobs Well Village Hall. Both organisations to provide power to the respective tree cones.

2024-179 - Planning Applications for consideration

Planning Application No: 24/P/00466 – Land rear of Worplesdon View Care Home, Worplesdon Road, Guildford, GU3 3LQ - Erection of a detached, three storey building to form a care home (use class C2) with associated car/cycle parking, amenity space and landscaping.

It was **RESOLVED**: object to this planning application in the **strongest possible terms on the following grounds**:

Policy P2 - Green Belt - The proposed location for this care home is situated in the Green Belt, within 400km of Whitmoor Common, which forms part of the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (TBHSPA). Whitmoor Common is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature

Reserve (LNR), and Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) of key importance to Surrey's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The LNRS has been launched because, over the last few decades, 11% of Surrey's native species have become extinct. Despite being the most wooded county in England, Surrey's biodiversity loss rate is higher than the national average.

Whitmoor Common is one of only two sites across the UK that hosts the Window-Winged Caddis Fly, one of the rarest insects in the UK. This insect is not mentioned in the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

The proposed care home would result in significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt contrary to paragraphs 142, 143 (a) and (c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 and Policy P2 (1) of the Local Plan.

Policy P5 (1) - Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area - Wildlife Habitat – This site is currently used as an important wildlife corridor. It links Whitmoor Common SPA, SSSI, LNR, BOA to the Surrey Hills National Landscape via a number of commons (Chitty's Common, Rydes Hill Common, Broad Street Common) and other open spaces within the Parish.

Policy P7 – Biodiversity in New Developments - The site is currently very wooded and is known to have protected species present (despite only a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal being carried out and submitted with the planning application). The proposal to fell a large number of trees to accommodate the care home and the associated landscape works, together with a relocation programme, would result in a **significant loss** in terms of Biodiversity Net Gain amounting to **-13.61%** contrary to paragraphs 185 (a) & (b) and 186 (a) & (b) of the NPPF 2023, along with Policies P7 (1), (2) (a) (b) & (c), (3), (4), and (5) of the Local Plan. Worplesdon Parish Council considers the **adverse impact on biodiversity to be unacceptable**, bearing in mind the LNRS being overseen by Surrey County Council.

As per paragraph 188 of the NPPF 2023, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site. The construction traffic and ongoing vehicular movements the care home will generate would result in an increase in both air and light pollution at this location.

The Parish Council notes the ecological survey was silent on providing habitat and modifications to fencing for hedgehogs, the provision of bat boxes, a selection of different bird boxes to attract a variety of species, and the provision of swift/bird house bricks together with bee bricks within the construction of the building.

The local bat population has decreased significantly over the past 30 years due to a number of developments within the Parish. Both the Worplesdon View Care Home and the newly built Silverbirch House Care Home are heavily illuminated at night. Not only would the bat and moth populations suffer from hedge disruption critical to the food supply, but the increase in light pollution would also be severely disruptive, not only on site but also on the periphery of Whitmoor Common.

It is impossible to compensate for the loss of an old, well developed sub-eco system. The suggestion that the loss of habitat at this location could be mitigated by providing provision elsewhere in the County is totally unacceptable.

Local Plan 2015-2034 - Urban Boundary - In the Local Plan 2015 – 2034, the Urban Boundary was moved to accommodate the new development off Keens Lane, which comprised a new 65 bed-roomed Specialist Care Home and 148 new homes.

The proposal to build another Care Home outside of the recently relocated Urban Boundary, behind the Worplesdon View Care Home, is astonishing given there are already four specialist dementia care homes within half a square mile of this proposed site.

Table 1: Existing Care Home provision in Worplesdon and Stoughton

Care Home – Ward	Name of Care Home	No of bedrooms
Worplesdon	Worplesdon View Care Home	78
Worplesdon	Silverbirch House Care Home	65
Stoughton	Claremont Court Care Home	57
Stoughton	Queen Elizabeth Care Home	77
Total of existing specialist dementia care rooms within half a square mile		277

Policy H1 (5) Specialist Accommodation - Homes for All - Whilst an argument for Very Special Circumstances to build within the Green Belt has been put forward by the applicant for the provision of specialist care provision to free up family homes in the area, the Parish Council disputes the need given the existing specialist provision, particularly since the Silverbirch House Care Home is currently only at 20% occupancy levels.

The creation of yet more high dependency need on the local health service, which is already considerably stretched, would be unsustainable and could have a detrimental impact on the lives of other residents living in the locality, who already struggle to access local health services.

Traffic – The proposed location of the vehicular entrance is on a bend in the road, at a 40mph section of the road, where sightlines are severely compromised. Traffic regularly backs up at this location. Whilst not all traffic accidents at this location are Killed/Seriously Injured (KSIs) the chevron signs on Salt Box Road are regularly damaged by vehicles being driven too fast for the road conditions.

The Crash Reports provided with the application show three years and include the Covid lockdown periods. Five-year and ten-year statistics more accurately indicate the dangers at this location to all road users and pedestrians.

Proposed use of the Highway Verge – The Parish Council notes that in Drawing Number LP 01 Revision B the application site includes the use of Highway Verge. Has consent been obtained from Surrey County Council for the proposed use of the Highway Verge, as well as the suggested tree removal, and highway sign relocation?

Policies D1 (Place Shaping) and H1 (5) – (Homes for All) – Design – The appearance of the care home is very institutional – giving the appearance of a prison rather than that of a care home, contrary to paragraphs 131, 135 and 136 of the NPPF 2023 and Policy H1 (5) of the Local Plan. The design of the care home fails to reflect the local vernacular, and the proposed materials are cheap, contrary to the Government’s desire for well-designed and beautiful places.

The bulk, scale, and unattractive design of the building is incongruous. The design fails to reflect the history of the locality or the Listed Buildings adjacent to the site, contrary to Policy D1 of the Local Plan.

Policy S1 (3) (b) – Sustainability - The proposal to use air source heat pumps is unsustainable given the need for elderly people to be kept warmer than most during the winter months and the enormous requirement for hot water. Air source heat pumps are not efficient in the winter atmosphere, only generating heat to 18°C, therefore unsuitable for a care home.

Policy ID1: Infrastructure and delivery - Should the Borough Council be minded to approve this application, a S106 Agreement would be required for the provision of a sub-station to reinforce the electrical main.

Worplesdon Parish for many decades has suffered from repeated power outages, which have recently become more frequent in the adjacent ward of Stoughton.

Conclusion:

Worplesdon Parish Council believes that granting permission for this care home would result in **significant harm that could not be outweighed by the perceived benefits an additional care home may bring** and therefore **this planning application should be refused**.

Planning Application No: 24/P/00421 - The Cottage, Blanket Mill Farm, Goose Rye Road, Worplesdon, Guildford, GU3 3RQ - Conversion of existing stable building into habitable accommodation for use as annex to cottage and front infill extension.

It was **RESOLVED**: that the Parish Council object to this planning application on the following grounds:

1. Policy H4 (3) (b) and (c) – Housing extensions and annexes - The planning application description states “the conversion of existing stable building into habitable accommodation for use as annexe to cottage and front infill extension”. This description is misleading. The proposed conversion of the stable includes the provision of both a kitchen and shower room. Policy H4 3 (b) states the functionality of an annex should be integrated with the main dwelling. Policy H4 3 (c) states that an annexe should clearly and unequivocally share either bathroom or kitchen facilities with the main dwelling. This is clearly not the case.

2. Policy P2 Green Belt – The proposal is to provide an additional and separate dwelling within the Green Belt, however, no Very Special Circumstances have been demonstrated within the Design, Access, and Planning Statement.

3. Policy P5 - Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (TBHSPA) - It should be noted that The Cottage sits within the 400m buffer zone of Whitmoor Common Special Protection Area (SPA), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). There is an effective prohibition on new dwellings in the exclusion zone arising from saved policy NRM6 and policy P5 (2) (a) of the Local Plan. The supporting text for that policy makes the intention of the policy very clear:

"It is not considered possible to avoid impacts from increased residential development within the exclusion zone up to 400m (linear) from the SPA due to the risks of fires, fly-tipping, cat predation and other pressures. Therefore, proposals that would result in a net increase in the number of residential units within the exclusion zone will be refused".

4. Policy P6 – Protecting Important Habitats and Species - Being existing stables within 400m of the TBHSPA, there is every possibility the building is used by bats, but no ecological report has been submitted with the planning application.

Planning Application No: 24/T/00099 – Tree Tops, Perry Hill, Worplesdon, Guildford, GU3 3RE Sycamore Fell (Worplesdon Conservation area).

This application had already been approved by Guildford Borough Council.

Planning Application No: 24/P/00611 - 6 Oak Tree Close, Jacobs Well, Guildford, GU4 7PU - Proposed single storey rear infill extension.

It was **RESOLVED**: to draw your attention to the lack of a Climate Change Questionnaire, which the Parish Council believes invalidates this planning application.

Planning Application No: 24/P/00642 - 12 Liddington Hall Drive, Guildford, GU3 3AE - Erection of outbuilding.

It was **RESOLVED**: that the Parish Council object to this planning application on the grounds that this permanent brick structure will affect the openness of the Green Belt contrary to Policy P2 of the Local Plan. No Very Special Circumstances have been put forward to justify this substantial, brick-built, permanent structure.

If the Borough Council is mindful to approve the planning application, the Parish Council wishes to request the following condition be applied: that the outbuilding must remain ancillary to the main dwelling, in perpetuity.

Planning Application No: 24/T/00097- 9 St Marys Way, Guildford, GU2 8JY - (T1) Oak - Diseased, fell to near ground level. TPO P1/201/406

It was **RESOLVED**: leave to specialist tree officer.

Planning Application No: 24/P/00643 - 4 Oak Tree Close, Jacobs Well, Guildford, GU4 7PU - Erection of a rear single storey extension following demolition of existing conservatory.

It was **RESOLVED**: the Parish Council draw the Borough Council's attention to:

1. The inaccuracy the planning application description - which should have included conversion of the garage to a habitable room, and
2. The lack of a Climate Change Questionnaire.

The Parish Council believes these two errors invalidate this planning application.

Planning Application No: 24/P/00606 - 20 Shelton Close, Guildford, GU2 9YW - Installation of a trellis privacy screen at the front of the property (retrospective application).

It was **RESOLVED**: leave to planners.

Planning Application No: 24/P/00665 - The Folly, Backside Common, Wood Street Village, Guildford, GU3 3EB - Application under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) for the removal of Condition 7 (demolition of outbuildings) & 10 (development within Part 1, Class E) of planning permission 23/P/00793 approved 06/02/24 for the erection of replacement dwelling.

It was **RESOLVED**: that the Parish Council comment as follow: Worplesdon Parish Council believes the conditions applied on 6 February 2024 to planning application 23/P/00793 should remain. No special evidence has been provided for the removal of these conditions.

Planning Application No: 24/P/00693 - 4 Gumbrells Close, Fairlands, Guildford, GU3 3NG - Proposed front and side extension following demolition of garage.

It was **RESOLVED**: leave to planners.

2024-180 - Parish Representatives – Annual reports

Fairwood Helpers – Cllr B Ahier

I have continued to attend meetings of the Fairwood Helpers Committee over the past year. These are usually held quarterly. This year's AGM will be on 1/6/24 at the Worplesdon Memorial Hall and is an opportunity to thank volunteers with an afternoon tea.

There was a change of Chairman during the year as Susan Harris retired after many years dedicated leadership of the organisation. She remains involved as an active volunteer. The former Vice-Chair, Mike Ryan, has taken over the Chairmanship and there is a strong Management Committee who work together to ensure that the charity's work continues seamlessly. Finances are secure.

Fairwood Helpers - A Good Neighbour Group - Summary from the Chairman - Mike Ryan: 2024 Report

Fairwood Helpers (Registered Charity 1093535 & Recipient of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2018) has operated as a voluntary car group since 1997 for people in the local area to use for medical appointments of any kind, be it chiropody, opticians, dentist, doctors, or hospital appointments. That is the core of our work, but we also offer help if we can for other tasks such as household shopping, fetching prescriptions or taking people to visit relatives in hospital. In conjunction with 'Cook' in Burpham we continue to deliver approximately twenty meals per week to those in the community who may be unable to cook a substantial meal for themselves. Recently, we have expanded our service to include befriending some of the residents at the Barchester 'Worplesdon View' Care Home. People using our driving service give a donation to cover car running costs based on £0.45 pence per mile - as set by national guidelines.

COVID presented many challenges for everyone, but for the last year or more we have been pleased to have successfully delivered a full service to all who ask and in the last 12 months we have completed over five hundred individual requests. If you have any concerns about COVID, please do raise it when you call, and we will do everything possible to accommodate you.

Anyone needing our assistance should call our dedicated phone number 01483 237619 on a weekday between 10am and 12 noon when a trained volunteer will take your call. Outside of these hours a voice message can be left, and we will get back to you as soon as possible. Please do leave your name and telephone number so that we can call you back!

Finally, without our wonderful volunteers we simply would not exist. If you feel you might be able to assist in any way – driving, dealing with phone enquiries or non-public related tasks such as IT or finance, please do get in touch via the above number. We would be delighted to hear from you.

Mike Ryan
Chair - Fairwood Helpers

Fairlands, Liddington Hall and Gravetts Lane Community Association – Cllr N Mitchell

The management committee meets monthly and invites councillors to attend every two months. The next meeting with councillors will be on 15 July at 7:30pm in the small hall at Fairlands Community Centre.

Issues that are of concern to the community are: speeding through the estate; flooding due to the lack of maintenance to riverbanks; the replacement of the existing community centre due to its age and general condition.

Speeding through the estate has been monitored by the use of Speed Data Recorder equipment, which indicated that speeds were not excessive. The Management Committee are following this up with Surrey County Council (SCC) to get a 20mph introduced, as per the initiative that the County Council has launched.

A letter drop about Riparian Responsibility has been made to address the question of watercourse maintenance.

The Management Committee are pursuing an application to Your Fund Surrey to fund the construction of a new two-storey Community Centre. They will also require additional grant funding to facilitate the contract, if sufficient community support can be obtained.

Surrey Association of Local Councils (SALC) – Cllr N Mitchell

The SALC conference in October at Dorking Halls was well attended and covered a number of subjects. The most important being planning, which highlighted the lack of input from Central Government to provide direction to Local Authorities. The session was presented by Steve Tilbury.

Sally Harman has taken over as Chief County Officer from Anne Bott.

SALC are now using Zoom to provide Councillor and Officer briefings on a quarterly basis, the next session will be in July and the AGM will be on 19 November at Dorking Halls.

At the last Zoom session there were presentations from SCC on Community Resilience, during which Brockham residents were presented as a leading light. They have a strong community sense and with 2000 residents, many of whom are volunteers able to carry out such things as ditch clearing, which reduces flooding. The Brockham Emergency Response Team (BERT) are funded through Charitable Donations and Legacy funding.

Andy Beams provided an update on the difference between the Annual Meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting. The Annual Parish Meeting is the meeting of the parishioners facilitated by the Parish Council at which residents of the Parish are present. The Annual Meeting is held in May and is the first meeting of the Municipal Year of the Parish Council. It is this meeting where the AGAR has to be agreed by councillors and the end of year financial statement is agreed. In addition, the Chairman for the municipal year is elected and the membership of Council Committees are set.

Wood Street Village Association – Cllr B McShee

The Wood Street Village Association met every month. Meetings are generally held at St Albans Church Hall, although in the winter the meetings were held online via Zoom. The Association, in conjunction with the Wood Street Village Horticulture Society, held the Summer Show on the Green in July; this included a band in the marquee in the evening. The following day there was a Jazz Festival on the Green.

Maypole dancing was arranged on the Green at the beginning of May; and in December, they also held carol singing on the Green, which raised funds for the Children's Society.

Frequent litter picks are held during the year. At the last litter pick, there were over 40 volunteers taking part who, afterwards, enjoyed a free drink at the Royal Oak pub paid for by the Village Association.

At the recent AGM, Terry Wright was elected Treasurer, Alison Johnson was elected Secretary, and Caroline Mankelov was elected Minutes Secretary. The Chairman will be elected at the next meeting.

Worplesdon Flood Forum – Cllr N Mitchell

The walk around in July 2023 was through Wood Street Village and concentrated on the flooding issues in the area. The day was not helped by poor weather.

The November meeting at the Parish Office concentrated on the issues across the parish and possible resolution actions by the Authorities. It was apparent that SCC's priority is Properties rather than road flooding. This came home to bite during Storm Henk.

There was a site meeting at three locations on 29 January to discuss flooding issues. The locations were Liddington Hall Drive, Gravetts Lane and Rickford. As a result, Activate Learning (Merrist Wood College) have dug the ditches and removed brambles etc to provide additional volume for flood water at both Liddington

Hall Drive and Gravetts Lane. Surrey County Council have also dug ditches on Rydes Hill Common and on the common land beside Gravetts Lane. Rickford remains to be resolved: a report is anticipated at the next Flood Forum meeting in November.

The events of Storm Henk are still be felt across the Parish and resolutions of the drainage issues are being addressed gradually. A special meeting was held on 1 March, which was dedicated to events of 4 January 2024. It became apparent that SCC do not have a contact with SF&RS who get called out to flooding issues as first responders. It was suggested that there should be a link between the call outs and the algorithms that SCC use to address flooding issues.

There will be a walkaround on 5 July concentrating on Halifax Close and Merrist Wood Golf Course.

As ever, the maintenance of ditches and storm drains are key to reducing flooding issues.

Worplesdon Parish Charities – Cllr B Nagle

In 2021, the decision was made to amalgamate the Worplesdon United Charity with the St Mary’s Church (Good Shepherd) Charity.

As I understand it this has still not been finalised.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would follow this matter up with the Church.

22:04 Cllr P Cragg left the room.

2024-181 - Deployment of the Community SpeedWatch (CSW) – Cllr N Mitchell

Community Speed Watch

Once again thanks to Residents and Councillors for their assistance in this educational process.

A “thank you” coffee and cake session was held before Christmas to acknowledge the time that is given by CSW volunteers to this worthwhile community visible presence.

I can report that we are seeing a reduction in speeding as demonstrated by the table below:

Year	Number of Deployments	Total number of vehicles noted	Average number of vehicles	Number of offences noted	Average number of offences	Percentage of offences
2021	31	7154	231	236	8	3.30%
2022	42	9498	226	264	6	2.80%
2023	37	8486	229	201	5	2.40%
2024 (to date)	11	3007	273	31	3	0.90%

The one location that is disappointing is Broad Street, where excessive speeds have increased in the same timescale from 9.4% to 10.6%.

We have received three visits from the Casualty Reduction Officer during the year and expect another during Project EDWARD (Every Day Without a Road Death) on 12 June 2024.

We do know, from the figures issued monthly and annually by Surrey Police, that we are one of the most active groups within Surrey.

Speed Data Recorder – Cllr N Mitchell

Working in partnership with Surrey Safer Camera Partnership there have been 15 deployments at ten different locations across the Parish in the last year.

From the data recorded, we have been able to identify locations that need enforcement by Surrey Police to address the speeding issues. We are in the process of making Surrey Police aware of our findings.

The data also allowed use to assess the number of goods vehicles using Aldershot Road, Holly Lane and Worplesdon Road and from the data assess the impact of the potential redevelopment of Merrist Wood Golf Course.

2024-182 - Unauthorised Encampment (UEs) – Annual Inspection Review

Cllr N Mitchell had carried out a desktop review.

There has been no change in the circumstances highlighted in the report from May last year.

We have to accept that UE's will occur on Wood Street Village Green as protection is impossible to provide at a reasonable cost and without Secretary of State approval.

The areas that Worplesdon Parish Council is responsible for are as follows:

- Pitch Place Green.
- Perry Hill Green.
- Harry's Meadow.
- Jacobs Well Recreation Ground including the playground.
- Nevins Copse.
- Wood Street Village Green including the triangle.
- Wood Street Village Car Park.
- Fairlands playground.
- Coombe Lane.
- Wood Street Cricket Ground.
- Worplesdon Memorial Hall playground.

2024-183 - Appointment of Parish Representatives (2024/2025)

It was proposed by Cllr G Adam, seconded by Cllr B Ahier, and unanimously resolved that the following members be appointed to represent a variety of organisations across the parish. See the table below:

Organisation	Appointed representative
Fairwood Helpers	Cllr B Ahier
JWRA - Jacobs Well Residents' Association	Organisation not currently operational
FLGCA - Fairlands, Liddington Hall and Gravetts Lane Community Association	Cllr N Mitchell
SALC - Surrey Association of Local Councils	Cllr N Mitchell
Worplesdon Flood Forum	Cllr N Mitchell
Worplesdon Parish Charities	Cllr B Nagle
WSVA - Wood Street Village Association	Cllr B McShee

22:06 Cllr P Cragg returned to the meeting.

2024-184 - To fix the dates and times of the Full Council and Committee Meetings 2025

The dates for the council meetings scheduled for 2025 had been drafted and circulated to all members in advance of the meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr D Bird, seconded by Cllr T Wright, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the schedule of meetings be approved and adopted.

It was also agreed that the Mayoress, Councillor Sally Barker MBE be invited to attend one of the full council meetings.

2024-185 - Clerk's Report

The Clerk had no items to report.

2024-186 - Chairman's Report

Community Speed Watch

During the six-week period there have been six deployments at locations across the Parish. My thanks to the residents and councillors who assist in these visible educational deployments.

We can see from the monthly data issued by Surrey Police that the Worplesdon Team are one of the most active teams.

Speed Data Recorder

There have been two deployments in the period, one at the junction of Aldershot Road with Gravetts Lane and the other at Broad Street. The resulting data from Broad Street is rather disturbing with 90.5% of vehicles exceeding the speed limit, and a maximum speed of 93mph in a 30mph zone.

4 April

Attended the open meeting at Fairlands Community Centre about the remodelling of Merrist Wood Golf Course. Talking to residents, the key points were vehicle movements, protection of students going into the college, and the possible flooding issues. I was able to point out that WPC had:

1. Requested a turn left policy for vehicles entering the site. With Holly Lane having roundabouts at both ends it is possible to use all routes to the major roads in the area.
2. The provision of a Banksman to control access to the site. There is a 60m road from Holly Lane to the entrance to the Golf Course. Vehicles would then be able to be stacked on the access road rather than on Holly Lane.
3. The provision of wheel washing facilities.
4. The proposal by the applicant included water attenuation that would be used for watering the course, and in the same way reduce flooding on Aldershot Road.

In the evening, I led the Full Council Meeting, and once again thanks to Councillors for their help in finishing the meeting before 10:30pm.

8 April

The Clerk Gaynor White and I attended the cluster meeting with Pirbright and Normandy Parish Council.

These are informal meeting which are not minuted but an opportunity for the three parish councils to discuss items and give their private thoughts to issues.

At the meeting we discussed the distribution of Parish Newsletters. Normandy have outsourced the production of their newsletters at a cost of £800 per quarter. Then volunteers deliver to dwellings in the parish, and they leave copies of the newsletters in waterproof pockets at each of their noticeboard and at strategic location across the Parish. Worth considering but we don't have any volunteers to deliver across the Parish.

Bus services were discussed, and it is becoming obvious that a community vehicle is required for trips to the hospital. Fairwood Helpers are a welcomed voluntary group who serve our area.

We discussed Maryland with the other clerks and chairmen, and the view was that our approach to the planning application was both appropriate and proportionate to the harm that could be caused.

Finally, the remodelling of Merrist Wood Golf Course was discussed. WPC put forward their reasons for supporting the application with conditions and Normandy put forward their reasons for objecting to the application. Pirbright were less concerned by the application. We agreed to disagree on our respective approaches to the proposed remodelling of the golf course. However, it was agreed that the possibility of a large housing estate would be a bad outcome for all three parishes.

22 April

At short notice, the Clerk Gaynor White and I attended an Extra Ordinary Meeting of Compton Parish Council about the planning application for the Solar Farm at Blackwell Farm.

The Borough Councillors for Compton were in attendance to listen to the discussion.

There were three issues running through the presentations:

WHAT, WHERE, WHEN

Compton PC's view was that (brownfield) previously developed sites should be used first, citing the area of car parking available at the University.

The route of the cable was highlighted as being in question due to the losses of power as a result of the length of the cable.

The when, was less questioned, as this is dependent upon the planning application being determined by Guildford Borough Council.

Other issues that were raised was the loss of agricultural land and the possible environmental impacts especially birds, deer, and rabbits etc.

No voting process occurred after the open forum.

24 April

I attended the virtual Councillor Forum which featured items on

- I. Community Resilience
- II. Community Foundation for Surrey
- III. Annual Meetings

I have described this meeting at length in my reports earlier in this meeting.

In a discussion with the Chairman of Normandy Parish Council at the Mayor's Reception, we both agreed that Zoom meetings are not as easy as face-to-face meetings, and the need for the software to be kept up to date is a high priority.

25 April

I attended the Mayor's Reception at the Guildhall with the Clerk Gaynor White and the Vice-Chairman Cllr Gordon Adam. It was an opportunity for networking with other parish councillors and clerks.

Mayor Masuk Miah, Julie McShane (Leader of the Council) and Pedro Wrobel (the newly appointed Chief Executive) all made short presentations thanking the attending parish councillors and clerks for their important role in connecting at the first level with residents of the borough.

The Clerk had an open discussion with Pedro Wrobel and said that she is about to complete 25 years' service with the Parish Council and that there have only been seven clerks in Worplesdon since 1894, whereas in those 25 years there have been at least eight chief executives, and she was able to name them from David Watts in 1998 through to Pedro Wrobel in 2024.

I was able to network with the chairman and clerk from Ash and found out about their Christmas lights, which are paid for through sponsorship. They have also recently reviewed staff salaries and were able to upgrade them due to their reserve funds which had been built up over several years. A change of councillors allowed this review to occur, previous councillors had been reluctant to review salaries. Ash have also appointed new grounds staff, and they used external agencies to source applicants, once again using reserves to pay for the agency costs.

In the evening, I attended the General Purposes Meeting.

Before the meeting I had a discussion with a Fairlands resident about the remodelling of Merrist Wood Golf Course. The resident left before the meeting started as he was not allowed to address the meeting because this subject was not an agenda item.

26 April

In conjunction with the Clerk Gaynor White, the Assistant Clerk Victoria Fear, and the Head Groundsman Peter Trevena at Merrist Wood Golf Club to discuss the proposals for the remodelling of the course. Also in attendance were our MP Angela Richardson and her team, our County Councillor Keith Witham, and Borough Councillor Cllr Bill Akhtar.

The meeting was with the course owners and their professional advisors to discuss the proposals and to highlight advantages to the local community. The meeting was not open to the public, but members of the public queried why it was a closed meeting.

Several points were raised with the owners and a subsequent set of questions sent to them for distribution to the 800 addresses that Angela Richardson MP had written an open letter to. As of 14 May we are not sure the FAQ responses have been sent out, WPC have chased 3 times since 7 May.

30 April

I held an informal meeting with a resident about perceived misuse of councillor privileges. The resident went away reassured that they had been listened to.

12 May

With the Clerk Gaynor White I attended the final service at St Mary's Church for the Rector Alex Russell, before she moved on to her next ministry commencing in June. After the service we attended the reception at St Albans in Wood Street Village. We used the reception to network with residents and were able to discuss the planning applications for Maryland, Merrist Wood Golf Course, the Solar Farm and the third Care Home.

On leaving the reception, I thanked Alex for her assistance over the past eight years.

14 May

As per agenda item 17 g of the meeting on 4 April 2024 Full Council Meeting, I attended the Annual year-end audit which was carried out by Mark Mulberry of Mulberry & Co.

The audit documentation was prepared by the Clerk Gaynor White and the Finance Officer Helen Lawrence.

I can report that because of their attention to detail, the year-end audit was unqualified. Mr Mulberry was able to sign the AGAR.

Finally, it's been a full-on year as Chairman, and I thank Councillors for their support and trust that you will assist me in the next Municipal Year.

2024-187 - Items for inclusion on future agendas

The items previously requested by Cllr B McShee and Cllr J Snowball have been included on the 27 June 2024 agenda. No further items were requested.

2024-188 - Date of next meeting – Full Council Meeting Thursday 27 June 2024 - 19:30.

Meeting closed 22:10

Signed:

Chairman of the Council
Date: 27 June 2024