

To all members of the Children & Young Adults Committee

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Children and Young Adults Committee to be held on
TUESDAY 7th May 2024 at 19.30 at the School Green Centre.



Bruce Winton
Parish Clerk
2nd May 2024

Members: Cllrs Fernandes, Grimes, Johnson, Matic, Montgomery and Tatla

Agenda

1. Public Questions

- 1.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** public questions

2. Apologies and declarations of members' interests

- 2.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** approval of apologies for absence
2.2 To **RECEIVE** members' declarations of interest

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

- 3.1 To **RECEIVE** and **APPROVE** the minutes of 14th March 2024 as a correct record of the meeting and to authorise the Chairman to sign the same*
3.2 To **CONSIDER** matters arising from the minutes

4. Education

- 4.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** further the position regarding Oakbank School following representation made to Full Council on 24th April
4.2 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** update from the Education Working Party

5. Anti-Social Behaviour

- 5.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a verbal update on current Anti-Social Behaviour issues within the parish

6. Young Councillors

- 6.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** an update from the Clerk regarding establishing a Young Councillors Working Party

7. Youth Club

- 7.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** an update on the youth club
- 7.2 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** an update on proposals for a youth event in Shinfield Parish

8. User Friendly Agenda and Paperwork

- 8.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** proposals from the Clerk for more user friendly agenda and paperwork*

9. Correspondence

- 9.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** any correspondence received

10. Date of Next Meeting

- 10.1 To **NOTE** the next meeting of the Children and Young Adults Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, 9th July 2024 at 19:30

* Report attached

** Report to follow

Minutes of a meeting of
Children and Young Adults Committee
Held on Thursday 14th March 2024
At School Green Centre commencing at 19:30

Present: Cllrs Fernandes, Grimes, Matic & Montgomery (Chair)

Attending: B Winton (Clerk)

24/CYA/11 Public Questions

- 11.1 There were no public questions

24/CYA/12 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

- 12.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Johnson & Tatla

It was **NOTED** that Councillors Fernandes, Johnson and Matic have children of school age

- 12.2 There were no declarations of members' interests

24/CYA/13 Minutes of the previous meeting

- 13.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record

Proposed: Cllr Grimes
Seconded: Cllr Matic
Approved: Unanimously

- 13.2 Matters arising from the minutes

- 24/CYA/4.1 Clerk to add Terms of Reference to the agenda of the next Full Council Meeting

This had been done and the Terms of Reference had been approved (Full Council Minute 24/5.5 refers)

24/CYA/5.1 Clerk to invite Anthem Trust to a meeting with SPC

A meeting had taken place on Teams on 22nd February 2024. This would also be covered at Item 4.1 on the agenda.

24/CYA/5.2 Clerk to arrange a meeting of the Education Working Party

A meeting had taken place on Teams on 27th February 2024 between

- Cllrs Grimes, Lias, Montgomery & Tatla
- Clerk
- BCllr Bray, Ming Zhang, Oliver Gill and Rebecca Brookes

This would also be covered at Item 4.1 on the agenda.

24/CYA/8.1 Clerk to draft objectives for the Youth Service in Shinfield Parish

This is on the agenda at Item 7.2

24/CYA/9.1 The Clerk to advise Shinfield St Mary's Church of England Junior School that Cllr Fernandes expressed an interest in joining the governing body

This had been done

24/CYA/14

Education

14.1 Oakbank School

Members considered the discussion with Oakbank school and also the dialogue with concerned Oakbank parents at Full Council on 28th February.

Members then considered the draft letter to the Department for Education's South East Regional Director and approved the final version. A copy of the final version is included at Appendix A to these minutes.

ACTION – Clerk to send the letter to DfE on behalf of Shinfield Parish Council

14.2 Developing a more "User Friendly" Agenda and Paperwork

It was noted that the meetings that have attracted the greatest attendance have been those where education was featuring significantly on the agenda (i.e. school buses in July/August 2023 and Oakbank in February 2024). It was therefore suggested that this committee may be a good opportunity to adopt a more "user friendly" approach this to include:

- Setting out the key items to be discussed at the meeting in addition to the formal summons and agenda
- Revising the order of items on the agenda to put the main business items at the start
- Being clearer about the ability of members of the public to attend and participate in the business of the meeting
- Providing additional information in the newsletter and social media

There was also a suggestion to consider adopting a different start time for the meetings to enable more people to attend.

In more general terms "table toppers" could be used in the café to communicate more about council business e.g. meetings coming up and outcome of previous meetings.

ACTION – Clerk to implement the revised approach for the May meeting

ACTION – Clerk to work with new café operator when appointed regarding use of "table toppers"

14.3 Education Working Party

Members noted the discussions at the Education Working Party meeting which had taken place on 27th February with WBC.

14.4 Membership of Education Working Party

Cllr Hoyle has asked to join the Education Working Party and Cllr Tatla has invited the parent who led the representation by Oakbank parents to also join the working party.

Members **NOTED** the additions to the membership of the working party.

24/CYA/15

Anti-Social Behaviour

- 15.1 The Clerk advised that in general, reports of Anti-Social Behaviour had reduced in the last couple of months. This may in part be due to the relocation of the youth club to the School Green Centre as would be covered elsewhere on the agenda and the improved security measures at Spencers Wood Pavilion. He did however report that the police were investigating an alleged assault on a Saturday afternoon in February at Spencers Wood Recreation Ground. Although the incident occurred at the far end of the MUGA it was caught on SPC cameras and this and other footage has been provided to the police. There had been one report of damage to a shed at Orchard Rise allotments which had been logged with the police.

24/CYA/16

Young Councillors

- 16.1 At the previous meeting it had been agreed that a good time to launch such an initiative would be when either the cinema or Millworth Sport Park were ready for use. With a working timetable for the cinema being installation in August and some "soft" test events in September/October this would suggest a timetable of November to launch this initiative. This could be done in the SPC Newsletter and also by contacting groups directly such as: Oakbank School, Scouts, Guides, ACF cadet force. These communications could be initiated in September at the start of the new school year.

24/CYA/17

Youth Club & Youth Services

17.1 Youth Club

The attendance at the Youth Club has improved dramatically since its relocation to the School Green Centre. There has been no transferral of the anti-social behaviour seen previously at Spencers Wood Pavilion. The Youth Club leader reports that they are now beginning to see some of those who previously attend at the pavilion now coming to the School Green Centre. Numbers for the younger age-group are approximately 30-40 each evening and for the older age group 15-20. The group will be able to make use of the Grazeley Room when it is available (2-3 times per month) and the Tower Room or café area on other nights. There is also a noticeable improvement in the staff's enjoyment of the club.

17.2 Youth Services

The Clerk had circulated a draft policy for Youth Services. Members **NOTED** the additional "meat on the bones" of the terms of reference.

This led to a discussion on a possible adventure weekend for young adults camping out at a location within the parish involving University of Reading, youth organisations and sports clubs. The youth organisations and clubs could be a potential source of support for the event including those working towards the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.

ACTION – Clerk to develop proposals for such an event

24/CYA/18

Correspondence

18.1 WBC Childrens Services Meeting and Education Strategy

The Clerk had circulated the above strategy and members discussed at great length. There was a concern that, while Shinfield was clearly identified as an area of concern for WBC, there were no obvious remedial actions being proposed. Members agreed that questions should be tabled for the meeting.

ACTION – Clerk to draft and circulate questions in relation to WBC's Education Strategy

24/CYA/19

Date of Next Meeting

19.1 The date of the next Children and Young Adults Committee meeting will be 9th May 2024

The meeting ended at _____

List of Actions

24/CYA/14.1	Clerk to send the letter to DfE on behalf of Shinfield Parish Council	Clerk
24/CYA/14.1	Clerk to implement the revised approach for the May meeting	Clerk
24/CYA/14.2	Clerk to work with new café operator when appointed regarding use of "table toppers"	Clerk
24/CYA/17.2	Clerk to develop proposals for such an adventure weekend event	Clerk
24/CYA/18.1	Clerk to draft and circulate questions in relation to WBC's Education Strategy	Clerk

Dame Kate Dethridge
Regional Director for South East
By Email (sent 15th March at 11.28)

Dear Dame Kate

Secondary Education Provision in Shinfield Parish

I have been instructed to write to you by Shinfield Parish Council's Children and Young Adults Committee with regard to recent developments at Oakbank School (Hyde End Lane, Ryeish Green, Reading, RG7 1ER) administered by the Anthem Trust.

As a parish council we recognise the importance of a good secondary school education. As a parish we have doubled in population over the last ten years, however the delivery of secondary education has failed to keep up with that increase in population.

As an indication of our concerns as a Parish council, we have now formed a Children and Young Adults Committee to develop relationships with our local education services and young people services in order to move the agenda along in the direction of improvement.

We have been contacted by the Oakbank Parent Teacher Association and a group of concerned parents and have held discussions with teachers, Anthem Trust and Wokingham Borough Council about the school and its future. The outcome of these discussions is a recognition that relationships between teachers and parents have broken down with the Trust.

Oakbank Free School (and in its previous incarnation as Ryeish Green maintained school) is hampered by a poor reputation and even more so by the limitations of the site with old and poor condition buildings. The fact that there is no 6th form provision is yet another challenge for the school. Despite these many challenges we have noticed that the school appeared to be on an upward trajectory,

Our immediate short-term concern is the absence of a constructive response from Anthem Trust to the recent Ofsted Report in November 2023. The resulting mass long-term absence of the senior leadership team and significant number of staff resignations (currently 17 vacancies) mean that in many respects the school has taken a large number of steps backwards and confirms the impression that it is a "stuck school".

While the Anthem Trust will no doubt say that they are urgently putting together an action plan for improvements, it should be noted that they have been responsible for Oakbank Free School since its opening in September 2012.

Again, the Trust may point to failings of senior leadership, but it cannot just be bad luck that a succession of leadership teams, appointed by Anthem Trust, have not been effective in turning the school around and maintaining the standard of education our students deserve.

As a parish council we wholeheartedly back any initiative, including transfer to a new Trust if appropriate, that will improve the school and have been reaching out to them over a period of time as to how we can provide effective help to the school, the parents and most importantly the students. We have also been building the relationship with Wokingham Borough Council.

We understand that Wokingham BC has a monitoring role, and it is your department which is responsible for performance management and overall regulation of the school. As such, we welcome your thoughts on how improvements can take place and how to protect the education of the current and future pupils.

While we wish Oakbank School to deliver now, in the longer term there is a much more fundamental question around providing sufficient capacity for secondary education with a quality that is attractive to the parents of this parish. Oakbank is only able to take 120 students each year, which is already insufficient for the size of the local population. The massive increase in the parish population is predominantly through young families moving into the area and the situation will only be compounded in the future

According to 2021 census data for Shinfield the 10-14 age group was 6.7% of the population (compared to an average of 6.0% for the whole of England). For 5-9 years the figures stand at 8.0% against 5.9% and for 0-4 years the figure increases to 8.1% against 5.4%. When those children reach secondary school age where are they expected to go?

The solution to this problem was supposed to be Bohunt Wokingham School (Remount Drive, Arborfield, Reading, RG2 9GB) but with Arborfield village also experiencing significant development starting a few years after Shinfield, that school is now effectively closed to Shinfield students.

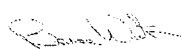
Further proposed local development, called Hall Farm, would see 3,500 homes built between Shinfield and Arborfield and we are advised this would trigger a new secondary school. Our concern is that such a building is at least 10 years away and runs the risk of the same outcome as Bohunt.

All of the above means that we have a school dragging many anchors behind it including each year having to take a large proportion of students who never even listed it as one of their options. We also have significant numbers of students with no option but to travel to schools in Wokingham instead, which largely deprives them of access to after-school activities which so enrich school life. As mentioned earlier access to 6th form education is only available in Wokingham or even further afield for which parents are paying high charges for coach transport (£950 from September 24) and pupils suffer a significant time penalty.

Wokingham Borough Council's Executive Member for Childrens Services in a public meeting described Shinfield parish as "a victim of geography". We appreciate a situation that has evolved over a decade cannot be resolved instantly, however there appears to be no plan to do anything meaningful to give the students of Shinfield parish a stable education.

We would therefore welcome engagement with you on to discuss whether this is an acceptable model for education and how your statutory duties and powers can be brought to bear to help remedy this extremely worrying situation.

Yours Sincerely,



Bruce Winton
Clerk to Shinfield Parish Council

CC:

John Redwood, MP for Wokingham

Prue Bray, Wokingham Borough Council, Executive Member for Childrens Services

Ming Zhan, Wokingham Borough Council, AD for Learning Achievement and Partnerships



Children and Young Adults Committee

Members of the public are welcome to attend these meetings and ask questions

What does the committee do?	This committee is responsible for considering and reflecting the needs of children and young adults in the council's activities and planning
Who is on the Committee?	Cllrs Fernandes, Grimes, Johnson, Matic, Montgomery and Tatla
When is the next Meeting?	Tuesday, 7th May 2024 at 7.30 p.m.
Where is it held?	Meetings are held in the School Green Centre RG2 9EH There is free parking at the Centre and the adjacent car park
How can you be involved?	There is an opportunity to ask questions relating to the work of the committee at the start of the meeting. You do not need to tell us in advance but if you do let us know questions before the meeting, we may be able to give you a quicker and fuller answer. You can stay for all or part of the meeting it is entirely up to you
What will be discussed at the next meeting?	We will be considering the following: ➤ How can we make the agenda for this meeting more user friendly ➤ How can we continue to support Oakbank School ➤ Would Shinfield Parish Council be able to run an event for young people in the parish and how might this work ➤ How we can set up a Working Party for Young Councillors
What else is on the agenda?	We also have regular items which are taken later in the meeting: ➤ General matters relating to education in the parish ➤ Updates on youth related Anti-Social behaviour ➤ Updates on the SPC youth club held at the School Green Centre ➤ Any correspondence received for the committee ➤ Checking actions from the previous meeting not covered elsewhere ➤ Confirming the date of the next meeting

Please note that this is not the FORMAL agenda which is a legally required document and can be found at <https://shinfieldparish.gov.uk/childrens-and-young-adults-committee/> as well as additional information on the committee