

Wootton Rivers Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 18th January 2016

Present:	David Wardlaw	Parish Council Chairman
	David Butler	Councillor
	Michael Farr	Councillor
	Glenn Leech	Councillor
	Steve Rawlings	Councillor
	Neil Worthington	Clerk
	Tony McGarry	NDP Leader
	Jerry Kunkler	Wiltshire Councillor

Apologies:	Paul Neale	Councillor
	Clare Bamforth	Parish Council Vice-Chair
	PC Teresa Herbert	Police Community Beat Manager

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising.

The Minutes of the Parish Meetings held on 23rd and 30th November 2015 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising :-

- Further unsuccessful attempts had been made to set up the website using Wordpress so an alternative host site was to be investigated. Neil Worthington reported that a UK based one used by other parish councils was available with support but would cost £469 to set up and approx. £100 per annum to maintain. Glenn Leech offered to see what cheaper alternatives were available. *Action: Glenn Leech*
- Wiltshire Council had not yet cut back the hedging at Cuckoo's Knob.
- Wessex Print had advised that they could produce a self-adhesive sign for the defibrillator cabinet for £50-75. It was agreed to proceed with this option. *Action: Neil Worthington*
- Following discussions about the Lady Margaret Diary planning application there had been discussions about the need for additional road signage to warn of the farm access and the brow of the hill. David Butler offered to provide additional signs but it was agreed to wait until the decision on the proposed new development had been made to see what Wiltshire Highways had recommended.

2. Declarations of Interest and the granting of dispensations.

Councillors were reminded of the Code for Conduct and the need to declare any interest relating to the items on the Agenda. None were declared.

Glenn Leech requested a dispensation to allow him to take part in and vote on setting the Parish Precept – item 8b on the Agenda. This request had been granted by the Clerk on the grounds that the dispensation was necessary to allow him to take part in the discussion and vote on the Precept in the interests of persons living in the Parish of Wootton Rivers.

All other councillors were still covered by the dispensation issued on the 19th January 2015 which was granted for a 4 year period.

3. Report from Wiltshire Councillor

Following the recent Area Board Meeting Jerry Kunkler reported as follows:-

- There is a survey of public transport arrangements taking place
- The Police and Crime Commissioner was consulting on a 1.9% increase in the Police Precept
- Wiltshire Council were holding a series of meetings regarding their budget options and priorities. It was likely that Council Tax would rise by 1.9%
- There had been only 3 houses flooded in the recent wet weather in Wilts.
- The CATG group had funding available for small transport improvements
- The Queen's 90th birthday celebrations were to be the focus of a nationwide litter clean up in early March.
- The Area Board had funding available for capital projects.

4. Report from Community Police Officer.

As Teresa Herbert had been unable to attend the meeting Jerry Kunkler updated the meeting with the report issued at the AB meeting. There were no incidents in Wootton Rivers but cyber-crime and scams, distraction and outbuilding burglaries continue to be a concern.

5. To approve the Final Draft of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Following further amendments after the latest consultation the Draft NDP had been circulated to all Councillors.

David Wardlaw formally proposed that the Plan was accepted by the Parish Council and should now pass to the next stage. This was seconded by Glenn Leech and unanimously agreed by a vote of the Council.

The NDP would now be passed to Wiltshire Council – the next stage would involve them issuing it to public authorities and other interested bodies for comment.

David Wardlaw expressed the Parish Council's thanks to all the steering group for the tremendous effort in getting the plan to this stage and to the villagers for their enthusiastic engagement in the process.

6. Planning Matters

Update on Lady Margaret Diary application – David Butler reported that he had provided additional clarification on the lighting proposals to the Planning Dept.

Update on Noyes Farm Development – the planners had advised that the decision would be delayed until 31st January 2016 due to a change in the officer dealing with it due to illness.

A new application for stables and tack room at Wootton House had been received. It was agreed that Councillors should look at the site individually and if there were any concerns they should be raised with Neil Worthington before 1st February.

David Wardlaw advised that he had met the owners of Wootton House recently and that they are in the process of preparing Planning and Listed Building Consent applications for repairs and alterations to the house and boundary walls.

7. Finances

The following cheques were authorised and signed :-

- £24.00 to Richard Wojtowicz for NDP expenses
- £348.60 to Last Landscaping for 3rd quarter grounds maintenance
- £160.80 to Tony McGarry for NDP expenses
- £20.00 to Wessex Printing for Winter Contact

The BEAM rebate of £512.20 had been received.

Lloyds Bank had confirmed that the cheque signatories had been changed as requested.

The current state of the Parish Council finances were presented. It is anticipated that the balance of funds at the end of the current tax year (31st March 2016) would be £5,726 which is approximately twice the annual budget.

The budget for 2016/17 is £3,073. Assuming a contribution of £510 from the BEAM scheme the precept necessary to cover the expenditure is £2,563

The top up grant has been reduced again and will disappear next year.

Three options were presented:

1. Maintain the Precept and Grant to the same value as last year at £2,383.60 – there would be a shortfall of £180 which would need to be met from reserves. The Parish Council Tax bill would show an increase of 2.38% on a Band D property – rising from £18.07 to £18.50
2. Reduce the Precept and Grant to £2,328.71 This would show a nil % adjustment to the tax bill (Band D property remaining at £18.07) but would result in a shortfall of £235 to be met from the reserves.
3. Fully fund the expenditure from the Precept and Grant with the reserve kept unchanged. This would increase the Parish Tax by 10.13% equivalent to £19.90 for a Band D house.

It was unanimously agreed to choose Option 2. It was suggested that the shortfall could be met by increasing the number of BEAM members and more publicity would be given to the benefits of buying oil through the scheme as the prices from Ford Fuel Oil are competitive and benefit the residents by reducing the Council Tax.

The Transparency Fund grant application for the purchase of a new laptop, scanner/printer and the costs of setting up a website and training totalling £1,108.94 had been prepared. It was agreed that this would be submitted to NALC.

Tony McGarry reported that he had received quotations for the purchase of replacement swing and see-saw seats from Active Toy but that the quotes needed amendment as chains were included which were not required.

He had also received a quote for laying a hard surface under the cricket net and around the netball stand but as this was very expensive he was negotiating with Active Toy to provide a more reasonable quote just for the cricket mat. Once the figures were agreed a grant application was to be submitted to the Area Board for funding. Active Toy would replace the rotten support post under warranty.

8. Roads Maintenance and drainage issues

David Wardlaw had done an inspection of the gullies, ditches and drains. Keeping these clear was a priority in order to avoid flooding in the village especially on the road up to Hatt Gate where water tended to run off the fields. Wiltshire had a new machine capable of doing this work quickly and this was to be investigated. We need to identify which ditches are the land owner's responsibility and which are Highways so that the correct person can be chased.

David Arnup had again been requested to get the roads swept of leaves, silt and debris as the promised road sweeper had not turned up. Michael Farr suggested that the Parish Council could hire a JCB mounted bucket brush which may be cheaper than a road sweeper if the PC needed to fund the work. *Action : Michael Farr*
David Arnup had also confirmed that he was continuing to monitor the flooding hot spots which were all working well and despite the very wet weather no flooding had occurred.

The new Parish Steward scheme would start in April and this time the work will be directed by the Parish Council. Until that time, and unless Wiltshire Highways take action, it was proposed that a village clean up of the roads and kerbs could be done manually with assistance from David Butler to dispose of the rubbish.

9. Correspondence received.

Notification had been received that the revised bus service would start on 1st February.

10. Matters raised by the public / AOB

It was agreed that the Village Clean up would take place on Saturday 5th March and would be publicised via the village email list and notice boards. Cleaning the phone box and inspecting stiles and gates for damage would also be carried out at this time.

Fly-tipping in the by-way off the Easton Royal and Ram Alley road had been reported to Wiltshire Council.

Damage to the verge near the Triangle had been caused by a lorry which had become lost trying to find East Wick Farm having failed to phone ahead and obtain directions as instructed. David Butler undertook to inspect the damage. Some warning posts or similar may be required to prevent future damage.

Semi-permanent canal boats had been noticed near Brimslade. The Canal & River Trust were to be notified. *Action: Neil Worthington*

Concern was expressed that an ambulance had taken 90 minutes to arrive for an emergency recently. The target time for the service was to be established and the issue could be raised at an Area Board meeting which representatives of the NHS attend.

David Butler confirmed that he had large excavation machinery in the field below Mud Lane where the old water reservoir was being replaced.

11. Future Meeting dates

The meeting dates for 2016 were agreed as follows:

14th March, 9th May, 18th July, 5th Sept, 14th November 2016

Date of the next meeting – 14th March 2015 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall