

Wootton Rivers Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 14th January 2019

Present: Cindy Creasy Parish Council Chair
David Butler Parish Council Vice-Chair
Dean Cowley Councillor
Nick Jones Councillor
Steve Rawlings Councillor
Neil Worthington Clerk

Apologies: Glenn Leech Councillor
Anne Swift Councillor
Jerry Kunkler Wiltshire Councillor

1. 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.

All Councillors had current Dispensations in place to enable them to participate in Agenda item 8.1 (to agree the Parish Council budget and set the Precept).

Nick Jones declared an interest in Agenda item 9 (Nomination of the Royal Oak as an Asset of Community Value).

No further interests were declared.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising.

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 12th November 2018 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

Cutting back trees over car parking spaces – the Parish Council had now received the report from Wiltshire Council’s consultant which stated that ‘the trees in themselves were not in a dangerous condition, however they would continue to grow and push (the wall) until it will eventually collapse’.

As the trees were not unsafe Highways cannot assist. It was proposed that the PC write to Fowler Architects who act as the landowner’s agent and notify them of the consultant’s report highlighting the damage and injury that could occur when the wall eventually collapses. *Action: Clerk*

Defibrillator - the correct heater has now been delivered and fitted.

Alternative location for signboard – enquiries had established that the verge at the bottom of South Bank was ‘owned’ by Wilts Highways and permission had been received from them to erect the signboard on it. It was agreed to proceed with this subject to no objections being received from the nearby residents. Steve Rawlings agreed to carry out the installation as he was covered by the necessary insurance.

Royal Oak direction sign – Wiltshire Council had proposed altering the direction sign on the triangle to include a sign to the Royal Oak. Contact details and costs had been given to John Jones for him to order the signage from Wiltshire.

Church Farm meeting – a meeting with the owners was to be organised.

Action: Clerk

4. Report from Wiltshire Councillor

Jerry Kunkler was on holiday and therefore unable to attend. The next Area Board meeting was scheduled for 21st January 2019 at Woodborough.

5. Report from Community Police Officer.

Nick Mitchell-Briggs reported that he had been in touch with Paul Whiteside following the lack of recent communications and the absence of any feedback from the community intelligence reports that he had sent to the Police. He has received a response and is due to meet the local officers shortly and is hopeful that improvements in communications will result. Should this not be the case he will escalate the complaint.

Monthly Police reports had been received and although crimes had been reported in surrounding villages Wootton Rivers had experienced no incidents recently. However, crime prevention advice should continue to be followed.

6. Planning

The following applications had been received since the last PC meeting:

18/11084/TCA Tree work at Apshill Cottage

This application had been delegated to the clerk to decide, and after receiving comments from councillors, a No Objection comment had been made to the planners.

7. Finances

Precept

Details of the current state of the Parish Council finances and a draft budget for 2019/20 had been issued prior to the meeting. It was anticipated that the balance of funds at the end of this current year would be £6,060 of which £572 is ring fenced for the Recreation Ground. The equivalent figure for the previous year was £6,099. The reserve has therefore been maintained – savings on the grass cutting contract and an increase in the BEAM contribution had been balanced by increases in the Clerk's salary, new costs for monitoring the defibrillator and data registration fees. The size of the reserve was discussed and it was agreed that it would not be sensible to reduce the reserve by a large amount. Jerry Kunkler had previously indicated that as Wiltshire Council finances were under strain (and capped by the Government) responsibility for non-statutory items may fall on the Parish Council.

A budget of £4,045 had been prepared based on the essential Parish Council spending with optional expenditure for various other items included for discussion. The following allowances for these items were agreed – Funding PCAP £50, Donation to purchase a Raiser chair for the Pewsey First Responder £100, grass cutting to Churchyard £100 and repairs to road sign £250.

The budget of £4,045 was therefore agreed which was an increase of £273 from last year.

Last years precept was £2,752.12 and, as the tax base had decreased, tax bills would have to rise by 1.37% just to maintain this level of precept.

Following discussion of the options a motion was proposed by Steve Rawlings and seconded by David Butler to increase the precept by 10% to £2,986.09 which means that a Band D tax payer would pay £24.06 per year for the Parish Council – an increase of £2.19 per year.

This motion was put to the vote and carried unanimously.
The difference of £1,059 between the budget and the Precept was to be funded by the BEAM contribution and drawing from the reserve.

BEAM

It was noted that the BEAM heating oil rebate scheme continued to provide valuable funds and Nick Mitchell-Briggs was thanked for his efforts in continuing to expand the number of participants.

Payments

The following payments were authorised :-

Hew Helps (computer maintenance)	£40.00
Idverde (3Q grass cutting)	£270.96
PCAP funding	£50.00
Funding for Raiser chair	£100.00

Online Banking

On-line banking was being used for payments but there were still issues to resolve to get the correct authorisation in place.

Action: *Clerk/Cindy Creasy*

Audit

Neil Worthington confirmed that, as we certified that the PC accounts for 2017/18 were exempt from audit, PKF Littlejohn would not issue any document or acknowledgement relating to our submission. We had complied with our obligations by publishing the necessary documents on the PC website.

8. Royal Oak

Tony McGarry had enquired at the last meeting about the listing of the Royal Oak as an Asset of Community Value which had been nominated in 2013. This listing which lasts for 5 years expired in July 2018. The listing requires the owner to advise Wiltshire Council if the asset is intended to be sold and must wait until the end of a 6 week interim moratorium period to give time for a community interest group to register as a potential bidder. If such a request is received within the 6 week period then the owners must wait until the end of a 6 month full moratorium period before proceeding with the sale. The owners are under no obligation to sell the asset to the community interest group. There are a number of exemptions to this process set out in the Localism Act.

Following discussion of the options a motion was proposed by Cindy Creasy and seconded by Steve Rawlings to proceed with a new application to list the Royal Oak as an Asset of Community Value subject to understanding any major issues from the Royal Oak's perspective. The motion was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

9. Recreation Ground

Tony McGarry had reported his recent inspection had found the equipment to be in good order.

Moles were causing a problem again and he would contact the mole catcher. Approximately £570 remained in the Recreation Ground budget and the only expenditure anticipated was the purchase of the replacement Wendy house which had been approved at the last PC meeting.

10. Rights of Way

Anne Swift had confirmed that the Rights of Way group had agreed that a permissive path across Blanchard's field is the preferred option as advice from Wiltshire Council

confirmed that it would not limit future options to provide evidence to qualify the path as a Right of Way.

It was agreed to proceed on this basis and to write to Mr Blanchard to ask him to confirm his agreement that the path can continue to be used, but also to advise him that it is the Parish Council's opinion that a Right of Way has been established through over 20 years continual use. We should ask for his agreement to this and for his commitment to keep the access clear.

The Rights of Way group should proceed in gathering the evidence to support an application for a public footpath in case it is required.

The RoW group which was currently doing an audit of the RoW network and will produce a list of actions in order of priority. The RoW officer is being kept informed and a meeting will be arranged with him shortly.

11. Roads and Highways

Parish Steward

Jerry Kunkler had proposed a meeting to discuss Parish Steward issues and we were waiting for this to be arranged.

Metrocount

The results of the traffic survey had been received. For the period between 21/11/18 and 06/12/18 a total of 2556 vehicles were recorded and the 85th percentile (the speed below which 85% of the traffic is travelling) was 27.29mph.

The average speed was 21.7mph.

Based on these figures we have been advised by Wilts Council Road Safety Team that no further action can be taken and the community issue will be closed.

A meeting had been arranged with Richard Dobson the Area Highways Maintenance Engineer to discuss the outstanding issues and agree the work necessary:-

Gulley & drain clearing

The Vactor machine had worked in the village recently and the operatives had found various issues and 2/3 days of further work was necessary. As the machine was only available every 9 weeks it was agreed that we would have it for 1 day in each 9 week period until the whole drainage system had been cleaned and jetted through. On the next visit a drain camera would be used to investigate a problem with the pipework under the drive to Manor Farm.

Interceptor

The large interceptor positioned before the outfall into the canal had a brick screen to prevent leaves etc from being washed into the canal. This was easily blocked and caused the entire system to back up. Richard Dobson agreed to carry out the regular cleaning necessary to prevent this happening.

Heavy duty sweeper

It was agreed that this machine would attend in late February/early March to clear the mud etc which had encroached onto the edges of all the roads leading into the village. This would expose various gullies which had been covered over.

Loose kerbs to parking area

It was agreed that he would organise the loose kerbs to be re-bedded.

Deep holes at sides of roads

Mr Dobson agreed to fill the large holes at the sides of the roads on Martinsell Hill and near the Brimslade turning which were dangerous to vehicles passing each other.

Overlay tarmac near the Triangle

We had previously been advised that the work would be carried out this financial year and we were still waiting for the date when this would be done.

Village Clean Up

The date for the village clean-up was agreed as 2nd March 2019

12. Correspondence received.

A letter had been received from St Andrew's Church regarding the funds which are likely to arise from the Community Infrastructure Levy relating to the Church Farm development, and asking for funding support for the major repairs and maintenance that are required to be carried out. The request, received just before the meeting was noted, but Neil Worthington advised that there was legal disagreement over whether or not Parish Councils were allowed to contribute towards the maintenance of churches. The legal situation regarding payments to assist with grass cutting churchyards was different and these were allowed.

13. Matters raised by the Public

Cindy Creasy advised that some residents had been in touch with her regarding the new fencing to the new boundary between The Chapel and Tom's Cottage. It was confirmed that the fence had been constructed in accordance with approved planning permission. Councillors noted that the owners had confirmed that they would be carrying out planting which would soften the impact especially once some weathering had taken place, and that it was important for fencing to fit with the informal and rural character of the village particularly in the Conservation Area.

A resident was also concerned about the felling of the tree at Bay Tree Cottage for which permission had been granted and it was agreed that the Council's tree specialist should be asked if there was any action the PC could take to identify any particularly significant trees in addition to those identified in the Conservation Area Statement.

POST MEETING NOTE

Cindy Creasy advised that Glenn Leech had spoken to her and that due to his new work commitments he was unable to devote enough time to continue as a Parish Councillor. He had therefore reluctantly decided that he would have to resign his position.

Date of the next meeting – 18th March 2019 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.