

Wootton Rivers Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 16th January 2017

Present:	David Wardlaw	Parish Council Chairman
	Clare Bamforth	Parish Council Vice-Chair
	David Butler	Councillor
	Glenn Leech	Councillor
	Paul Neale	Councillor
	Steve Rawlings	Councillor
	Neil Worthington	Clerk
	Tony McGarry	NDP Leader
	Jerry Kunkler	Wiltshire Councillor
	PCSO Jonathon Mills	Wiltshire Police

Apologies: Michael Farr Councillor

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the Parish Council meetings held on 14th November 2016, and the additional meetings held on 5th, 13th and 28th December were all agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising :-

- SSE had carried out the trimming of the branches close to their cables above the car park bays and the landowner's agent was now to be contacted to carry out the more major tree work required. *Action: David Wardlaw*
- The amount of work actually carried out by the Parish Steward on his monthly visits was raised which was also reported to be an issue with other nearby parishes. He is due again shortly and the same 5 priorities as notified before were again to be sent to Richard Dobson. *Action: Jerry Kunkler would raise the issue.*
- A settlement had been reached with Active Toy to resolve the dispute over the cost of the cricket net base.
- Neil Worthington had spoken to Easton Royal PC about their 20mph speed limit and reported that there would be a need to gather evidence of speeding through a Community Speed Watch group before raising the issue with CATG. Easton Royal's application took 2 years and needed a champion to push the application through the various meetings. CATG have limited funds and ER had to contribute £500 towards the cost. Traffic calming measures were not required.
- There had been no accidents or near misses reported – it was agreed to discuss the issue of reducing traffic speeds at the next meeting.

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.

All Councillors were covered by the dispensations granted on 19 January 2015 (DW, CB, DB, PN & SR) and 18th January 2016 (GL) to allow them to take part in the discussion and vote on the Precept.

3. Report from Wiltshire Councillor

Jerry Kunkler reported the following matters :-

- The Area Board has supported the Police request for an increase of 1.9% in its funding raised through Council Tax (equivalent to £3.17 a year for a Band D house).
- Wiltshire Council were also planning on a 1.99% increase in Council Tax and a 3% increase targeted for the increase in vulnerable adult and child care costs – this was equivalent to about £1 per week.
- The Army Rebasing programme continues but with no effect locally.
- Fuel Poverty is a problem in Wiltshire and it was reported that 26 deaths were attributable to it last year. Jerry drew attention to the warm and safe Wiltshire website which offered help and advice.
- Wiltshire Council were promoting a spring clean on 3 – 5th March. Wootton Rivers had been doing this for many years.
- The next CATG meeting was on 25th January 2017.
- Pewsey Leisure Centre closes for rebuilding at the end of February for 60 weeks – a temporary gym will operate during this time at the Fordbridge Estate.
- The next Area Board meeting is on 6th March 2017 at Bouverie Hall and £4,000 is still available for grant applications.
- A number of issues were raised by Councillors :-
- The amount litter on the verges of the A346 was unacceptable as was the fly tipping at Hatt Gate. Although this was outside his area Jerry would raise the issue with the relevant bodies.
- An update on the flooding outside Pewsey was requested – Wessex Water had investigated 3 times and found that the water was not coming from their mains. Wiltshire Council had also investigated and local opinion was that it was caused by a spring altering its course following building work in the vicinity. Further works were to be undertaken.
- Previous requests for a road sweeper through the village had been ignored – Jerry would speak to Richard Dobson.

4. Report from Community Police Officer.

PCSO Jonathon Mills attended the meeting and issued a report as follows :-

- The only local crime was the theft of a handbag from a car parked at Martinsell. It was noted that the theft warning signs had been covered up and they required cleaning.
- There had been an increase in poaching and 5 arrests had been made in November on suspicion of poaching and hare coursing.

- There was a high (50%) incidence of calls not being answered on the 101 number – this was being addressed.
- Current police priorities were dwelling and non-dwelling burglaries, speed enforcement and hare coursing and poaching.

The Police and Crime Commissioner had invited feedback on the proposed increase in Precept via his website.

5. Neighbourhood Development Plan

Tony McGarry reported that the NDP as approved by the Parish Council had been submitted to Wiltshire Council. The Steering Group had requested regular updates from Sarah Hughes, the Wiltshire Council link officer.

The six-week consultation period starts after Wiltshire posts its notices which has not yet happened. Following this Wiltshire Council will then appoint an external examiner.

6. Planning Matters.

Church Farm 16/11051/FUL

Further revised drawings had been received direct from Fowlers Architectural showing a change to the Plot 4 dwelling which had been redesigned and was now a barn like dwelling with the external elevations faced with timber boarding and facing brick. The ridge height had been reduced to 8m high, the chimneys omitted and the position on site had been altered.

Although the plans were being submitted to Wiltshire Council the Parish Council had had no notification that they had been received and accepted as an amendment to this application.

Extensive discussions took place regarding these proposed alterations but no formal decision could be taken until the revised drawings had been accepted by Wiltshire and the PC advised of a new consultation period.

The Architect who was present raised the possibility that his client may decide to omit the Plot 3 house and move Plot 4 entirely within the Conservation Area boundary to answer criticism of the current scheme.

17/00208/TCA Church Barn

Neil Worthington reported that he had submitted an application to remove 4 trees which were either splitting at the base or growing too close to other trees and to carry out pruning work on a further 6 trees.

It was agreed that Councillors should look at the proposed works and advise of any reservations in the next week or so, otherwise the application would be approved.

7. Finances

The following cheques which had been issued since the last meeting were authorised :-

- PCAP donation - £50.00 (a letter of thanks had been received).
- Wessex Print Centre – NDP printing - £15.50
- Wessex Print Centre – NDP printing - £109.14
- Active Toy – cricket net base - £900.00 (incl VAT)

The following cheque was authorised and signed :-

- Last Landscaping – grass cut 3rd Quarter - £348.60

The current state of the Parish Council finances had been issued prior to the meeting. It is anticipated that the balance of funds at the end of the current tax year (31st March 2017) would be £5,690 which is approximately twice the current Precept.

The budget for 2017/18 is £3,416 excluding any costs for holding a contested election in 2017 which may be £600 - 800. Assuming a contribution of £550 from the BEAM scheme the precept necessary to cover the expenditure is £2,866.

The top up grant received in previous years has now ceased and the tax base has decreased slightly.

Various options were presented:

1. Maintain the Precept at the same value as last year - £2,328.71 – this would result in a shortfall of £538 which would need to be met from reserves. The Parish Council Tax bill would show an increase of 1.27% on a Band D property – rising from £18.07 to £18.30 per year due to the lower tax base.
2. Reduce the Precept and Grant to £2,299.77 This would show a nil % adjustment to the tax bill (Band D property remaining at £18.07) but would result in a shortfall of £566 to be met from the reserves.
3. Fully fund the expenditure from the Precept (£2,866) with the reserve kept unchanged. This would increase the Parish Tax by 24.63% equivalent to a rise of £4.45 to £22.52 for a Band D house.

Following discussion on the various options it was agreed that the policy of maintaining or decreasing the Precept as had happened over the last 11 years needed to change, and that an increase was necessary due to increasing costs of grass cutting and playground essential maintenance as well as general inflation.

The motion that the Precept should be set at £2,530 was proposed by Paul Neale, seconded by Glenn Leech and carried unanimously.

It was noted that this Precept was only marginally higher than the Precept of £2,500 that was set in 2006 and will result in an increase of £1.81 per annum (to £19.88 pa) for a Band D property compared to last year.

There would still be a shortfall against the budget which will mean that £336 will have to be met from the reserve.

It was agreed that future budgets should include an allowance for election costs.

8. Correspondence Received

Elections - the timetable for elections had been issued. Relevant dates were :-

- Before 27th March – Wiltshire to call the elections and issue statutory notice
- 4pm on 4th April – Nomination papers to be submitted by hand to Wiltshire Council
- 4pm on 5th April – Publication of Persons Nominated
- 25th April – Publication of Poll

- 4th May – POLLING DAY
- 8th May – Change of Council Members
- 22nd May – Annual Meeting of the New Council

It was noted that, depending on when Wiltshire Council issue the statutory notice calling the election there may only be a week before the closing date for nominations so efforts should be made to publicise the need for prospective candidates to prepare themselves.

PCAP – the next meeting was to be held on 2nd February 2017 at 7pm at Coronation Hall, East Grafton.

Recreation Ground - Last Landscaping had advised that the 14 cuts this year been insufficient to keep the grass in good condition as the growing season is lengthening – a quote for 14 and 16 cuts was to be requested and a check on when the cuts were carried out would be kept.

9. Matters raised by the Public/ AOB

Village Clean Up – it was proposed that this should be held on 4th March. Neil Worthington advised that he would be away and David Wardlaw agreed to co-ordinate.

Village Notifications – Cindy Creasy had suggested that the informal village email list maintained by Nick Mitchell-Briggs is used to inform villagers about urgent issues affecting the parish and would have been useful to advise villagers about the planning consultation at Church Farm and dates of Parish Council meetings etc.

It was felt that sending emails to a group raised various issues which needed consideration and advice needed to be sought about the use of social media etc. There were legal issues that the Council need to be aware as well as how to communicate to those not on the email list to avoid creating a two-tier system.

It was agreed that some background information should be obtained and the matter discussed at the next meeting.

10. Date of the next meeting – 27th March 2017 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Parish Council Documents are available on the Parish Council Website - woottonriverspc.co.uk