

Wootton Rivers Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 15th March 2021

Present:	Cindy Creasy	Parish Council Chair
	Clare Bamforth	Councillor
	Dean Cowley	Councillor
	Nick Jones	Councillor
	Steve Rawlings	Councillor
	Anne Swift	Councillor
	Neil Worthington	Clerk

Apologies received from David Butler

Cindy Creasy welcomed councillors and members of the public to this meeting of the Parish Council as authorised by the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 issued during the current pandemic.

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. None were declared.

2. Agreement of Minutes

The Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on the 11th January, 25th January and 2nd March 2021 were agreed as a true record and will be signed by Cindy Creasy, Chair. Cindy thanked Rob Mitchenall for the excellent job he had done while standing in as clerk for the last meeting.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Steve Rawlings agreed to provide the plywood for the new backboards for the village map signs and notice boards.

Action: Steve Rawlings

Cindy Creasy reported that the cost of having a tourist information board would be £200-300 and it was agreed in principle that this cost would be acceptable. Cindy would consult with Anne and Dean to establish if there was sufficient content to go on a board as the Royal Oak already has one and the Church are also planning one.

Action: Cindy Creasy

Neil Worthington had spoken to the Cuckoos Knob resident following Wiltshire Council's inspection of the trees at Pontings Piece.

Steve Rawlings had checked the ditch to the east of village which drained surface water from north of the village into the canal and found that it seemed to be running freely especially near the back of the houses and no action was needed.

Wiltshire Council had refused to provide support for the annual village clean up due to Covid 19 restrictions which had therefore had to be postponed.

Anne Swift advised that the meeting with David Butler to consider the replacement of stiles was still to take place.

Action: Anne Swift/David Butler

David Butler had carried out the cutting of hedges to the old Antrobus estate land alongside Forest Road north of the village.

4. Police matters

Nick Mitchell-Briggs reported that online fraud was an ongoing issue and daily attempts continued with criminals becoming ever more sophisticated. Constant vigilance was needed and he would continue to issue his email reminders about new forms of attempted fraud.

5. Update on Road Maintenance etc

Wiltshire Highways had been contacted following the last PC meeting after doubt had been expressed about the effectiveness of the measures they were proposing to improve the flooding situation by changing the open drain inlets to trapped gullies. Highways had confirmed that they believed that the proposed measures would have the desired effect but, if this was ineffective, further measures would be undertaken.

Despite frequent chasing the promised gulley clearing had not been carried out nor had there been any response about the hole appearing above a capped manhole by the church entrance.

It was agreed that Cindy would speak to Jerry Kunkler to ask him to take the matter up.

Action: Cindy Creasy

It was noted that the flooding by the church entrance had not been an issue recently.

The Parish Steward had not been able to visit for a full day in February but had repaired some of the potholes. He was expected again 17th March 2021.

6. Village Hall Management Committee

Linda Hopkins, Christine McGarry and Maggie Worthington (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) of the village hall management committee attended the meeting. Linda explained that she had been in post for 18 years and the other officers and committee members had also done long stints and that it was now time to get new people to take part in the running of the village hall. Sarah Almroth had joined the committee recently and together with Julian Beames had taken on responsibility for the health and safety issues.

An appeal for new members had been circulated with Contact and there had been a positive response.

Christine emphasised that although the current committee were standing down they were committed to giving assistance for future fundraising events and other functions.

The village hall was in a strong financial position having received a £10,000 grant to mitigate rental losses due to Covid.

Sarah Almroth said that she was happy to continue and would act as Chair for the next 6 months while a new team was formed, and would perhaps look at rotating the Chair and other officer's roles to spread the workload so that it does not become too onerous, although this would be difficult during the pandemic.

A list of responsibilities had been drawn up and these could be shared.

Wiltshire Council had done a Covid secure check on the hall and passed it for use in the forthcoming elections.

The next VH AGM was due in May (via Zoom) when the current committee would stand down and the new committee would take over at the next meeting. Sarah confirmed that she and Julian would be prepared to take on responsibility for bookings and try and move the booking and payment system on-line. Cindy Creasy wanted put on record the fantastic job Linda and the team had done looking after the hall and the contribution that their events had made to village life. The next step was to firm up the core of people who had come forward and set up a meeting with the current committee to discuss the way forward.

7. Planning

There were no new planning applications.

Cindy Creasy gave an update on participation with WALPA (the group of town and village councils with Neighbourhood Plans) who were campaigning against changes that have been made to the National Planning Policy Framework which impact on the weight given to NP's after two years, if the LPA has a land supply shortage. WALPA had issued press releases and were asking local MP's to get involved. A meeting with our MP Danny Kruger had taken place and he had been updated with the PC's concerns about the Neighbourhood Plans being given less importance as they got older and the excessive work that would be required to constantly update them. Danny Kruger gave an undertaking to liaise with the other MP's across Wiltshire and to raise the matter with the Secretary of State. The Government is also consulting on further revisions to the NPPF to incorporate the Living with Beauty Design Code to promote more beautiful design within the planning system – it was felt that this would be of little benefit if Neighbourhood and Local Plans could be overridden.

Dean Cowley confirmed that he had submitted the response agreed by councillors to Wiltshire Council in respect of their proposed review to the Local Plan.

It is likely that the revised Local Plan will require a Housing Needs Survey to be carried out but that this will probably need to be done when the Neighbourhood Plan is refreshed.

Neil Worthington reported that the PC response to the planning application for Lady Margaret Dairy (20/11253/FUL), which had been submitted to Wiltshire Planners, had not been forwarded by their administration team to the officer, who had therefore not taken it into account before making his decision. The planning authority had apologised for the oversight and the planning officer had advised that the conditions that the PC requested to be included were unlikely to have been applied as they would vary the extant permission.

The LPA also advised that changes were proposed to the system which would prevent this happening in future but, until this system was in place, copies of PC comments would also be sent direct to the planning officer as well as being submitted via the website.

8. Finance

The current financial position was reported as follows:-

Balance at Bank

Deposit Account	1,899.33
Current Account	<u>4,572.89</u>
Total funds in bank	<u>£6,472.22</u>

The amount set aside for maintenance work and replacement equipment for the Recreation Ground within this figure is £1040

The payment for the BEAM rebate had not yet been made and Ford Fuels had been reminded that it was still outstanding.

Income/Payments

The following payments were authorised to be paid via BACS

1. Neil Worthington for payments made for Zoom (Feb & Mar) £28.78
2. Wessex Print – Spring Contact and flyer £31.50

Budget

Neil Worthington reported that the financial year ends on 31st March and, barring any unexpected invoices, it is likely that final expenditure for the year will be just within the agreed budget of £4,050.

CIL payments

Anne Swift queried when the CIL payment for Church Farm would be paid as development work had commenced. *Action: Neil Worthington*

9. Local Elections

The current Council members will stand down on 10th May 2021 and the new council will then take over. Nominations to stand need to be submitted to Wiltshire Electoral Office between the 29th March (when notice of the election will be publicised) and the deadline of 8th April. If more than 7 nominations are received then Wiltshire Council will organise the election. It was agreed that an email communication should be sent via Nick M-B to encourage more residents to stand as councillors.

It was agreed that the date for the Annual Meeting should be changed to 17th May 2021.

10. Miscellaneous Items

A unmarked clothes recycling bin had appeared behind the Village Hall in addition to the permitted Wiltshire Air Ambulance bin. No permission had been requested or granted for this and the Village Hall committee had authorised WAA to remove it.

It had been noted that parts of the canal towpath had become damaged and may be a safety issue and Dean Cowley reported incidents of anglers using areas near the towpath as a toilet. It was agreed to report both issues to the Canal and River Trust.

Action: Cindy Creasy

An invitation to participate in the Best Kept Village Competition had been received but no action was to be taken.

Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership were trying to get 'Walkers are Welcome' accreditation to promote walking within the area for local people and to encourage local tourism for the benefit of the local hospitality area, and had requested local councils to endorse the application. It was agreed that the Parish Council would do this.

Date of the next meeting (Annual Meeting) – 17th May 2021 at 7.30pm – this will be a virtual meeting held on the Zoom platform

Dates for 2021 PC meetings 12 July, 6th Sept, 15 Nov