

# Wootton Rivers Parish Council

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022

<b>Present:</b>	Dean Cowley	Parish Council Chair
	Clare Bamforth	Vice Chair
	Cindy Creasy	Councillor
	Nick Jones	Councillor
	Steve Rawlings	Councillor
	Anne Swift	Councillor
	David Butler	Councillor
	Julian Beames	Clerk
	Jerry Kunkler	Wiltshire Councillor

### 1. Apologies: None

### 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. Chair Dean Cowley and Councillor Anne Swift declared an interest regarding item 10 on the agenda concerning the request from the PCC for funding for maintenance of the church grounds, and as such would not take part in the discussion or voting on this item.

### 3. Agreement of Minutes

The Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2022 were agreed as a true record and signed by Clare Bamforth – Vice Chair.

### 4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Rights of Way up-date – Cindy Creasy reported that the group had been successful in obtaining funding for three metal gates to replace the current stiles on the path leading from back of the Royal Oak Pub to Heathy Close and at the entrance to the field next to Clare Cottage. The gates had been ordered and would be installed with help from members of the ROW group. Councillor Steve Rawlings stated that he would request sponsorship for any materials required from his trade contacts. Once these had been installed the next priority would be to look at signage.

A meeting has been arranged with Bruce Gauntlett to discuss the footpath from Brimslade to the village. This would endeavour to find a sensible solution to the current problems being encountered with the unofficial route and the blockage of the official right of way at Western end of the farmyard.

*Action: Cindy Creasy to report back on progress and meeting outcome*

Progress with Road Drainage and other Village Works – The Clerk reported that there had been further progress on the filling of potholes and clearing of drains. We are still awaiting news regarding the works at the bottom of Martinsell Hill.

The Clerk will continue to chase the roads engineer on the outstanding items

*Action - continue to chase - Clerk*

## **5. Report from Wiltshire Councillor**

Jerry Kunkler reported that Wiltshire Council had passed its 2022/23 budget. He also reported that the CATG group would be changing its name and that in future there should be more funding available for footpath works. He reported on the outcome of two planning appeals for large housing developments in Pewsey which had both been refused and commented that the NDP seemed to be working in these cases. He was asked a question by Councillor Butler regarding food waste collections and Jerry responded by saying that this will have to be addressed by Wiltshire Council but it is not imminent.

## **6. Police matters**

Nick Mitchel-Briggs stated that the website was only up to date as of January and that there was nothing significant to report.

## **7. Planning**

Application 21/09096/FUL for Little House has been Approved with Conditions. There were no new applications to consider.

The Chair reported that an enforcement case has been raised with regards to cattle being kept in the new barn which has been constructed at the Northern end of the village. When approval was given for these barns, it was on condition that no livestock were to be kept on-site at it was within 400m of residential buildings.

## **8. Finance**

The current financial position was reported as follows:

### Balances at Bank

Business Account	4,573.37
Treasurers Account	4,183.71

Total funds in bank 8,757.08 .....of which £2,138.34 was ring-fenced for recreation ground maintenance and new equipment.

### Income/Payments

The following payments which had been made were approved by the Council

IdVerde Invoice (grass cutting)	£230.32 plus VAT of £46.06
PCC Donation	£100.00
Wessex Print Invoice (Contact)	£28.00

### BEAM Suspension

Nick Mitchell-Briggs, who administers the BEAM scheme had recently advised the Council that it was being suspended by Ford Fuels with whom it is currently run. This was due to the volatility of current fuel prices and their inability to fix prices in advance of delivery. This has a material affect of the council's finances as the income from this scheme contributes to the council's finances. The Clerk stated that

the budget for the coming year had assumed a contribution of £750.00 from BEAM. It is hoped that the Council will still receive the income from the scheme due up to the point of its suspension, and that as this covered the heaviest winter usage period, it should help to mitigate any potential shortfall. In addition, the council expenditure in the current financial year was below budget and a combination of the two would reduce the need to call substantially on the reserves. Nick Mitchell-Briggs who administers the scheme stated he would contact the Burbage group administrator to further understand the situation and report back.

### **9. Recommendation for Neighbourhood Development Plan Review**

The Chair explained that a decision as to whether to review and update the NDP was needed. The current lack of an adequate (five year) supply of land for development in Wiltshire means that our NDP could be ignored because it is more than two years old, although it is otherwise relevant and robust. There is also some risk to carrying out a review, which risks drawing the attention of potential developers to the weakened state of our current Plan. Our very small size offers some protection, and responses to the most recent applications have continued to cite the NDP as a key planning criterion. However, a resolute developer might be able to overturn our NDP. This risk is not acceptable. The Chair therefore recommended that a small Review Group be convened immediately to update and revise our NDP, coincident with the current update of the WCC Local Plan, within which our NDP must operate. This proposal was unanimously supported by the Council.

### **10. Parochial Church Council Request for Maintenance Funding**

Rob Mitchenall, on behalf of the PCC made a request for the Council to consider providing funds for the upkeep of the church grounds. He stated that all parishioners have the right to be buried in the churchyard and many make use of it to visit relatives/friends who are buried there. There is an expectation that the grounds are kept in good condition and that the costs for doing so are currently met from church funds. The church like many organisations is under financial pressure and it was felt by the PCC that the Council should contribute half the cost of the upkeep (£1,000.00). Whilst sympathetic to the request, several councillors felt that the timing was not appropriate as the budget and precept for the next financial year had already been set and did not include this item. To make such a contribution would require it to be taken from the PC's reserves and anyway the PC was already facing a shortfall due to the likely reduction in BEAM income.

A vote was taken of Councillors on supporting the request for this current financial year and this was not supported, with five votes against and none in favour. A second vote to consider the request again in the future for successive years was approved unanimously by those councillors eligible to vote.

### **11. Village Hall Committee Application for Match Grant Funding**

The Village Hall are intending to apply to Wiltshire Council for match grant funding to carry out improvements to the recreation ground. The Council has £2,138 ring-fenced for such expenditure and it is hoped that with match funding this can be doubled. The funds would be used to carry out improvements such as installing a petanque pitch, benches etc. The Council was asked to approve the scheme to apply for match funding using the funds available as the application will have to be submitted prior to the next Council meeting. On condition that the improvements

were appropriate and as described the Council unanimously approved the group to proceed with the match funding application in relation to the ring-fenced funds.

*Action: Cindy Creasy to liaise with the Recreation Ground Team*

### **12. Update on Trees near Canal overhanging Forest Road**

The Chair stated that these trees continue to cause concern since they overhang the road and are now extremely close to the electric power line which is the main power supply to the village. (SSE have subsequently visited and advised they will cut back the branches near the wires). Despite numerous requests from the Council in the past no action has been taken by the landowner to address the fact that the trees present a danger to both people and property. The Chair stated he would again write to the landowner to point out that if there was an incident, they would be liable as they had been made aware on several occasions of the problem and had not addressed it.

### **13. Date of the Annual Village Clean-up**

It was agreed that the annual village clean-up would take place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April.

*Action: The Clerk to publicise and organise*

### **14. Emergency Planning**

Councillor David Butler suggested the Council should consider making a plan in order that if there was an event (such as an extended power outage) then there would be an agreed method of working to address it. It was agreed that this was a good idea and that a sub-group would be set up to put such a plan in place.

*Action: The Chair to arrange the setup of the group*

### **15. Canal Lock Safety**

David Butler said that he was surprised at the lack of safety notices and life-saving equipment at the canal lock. It was mentioned that in the past there had been a life ring on the side of the lock, but that it was no longer there.

*Action: Clerk to contact the CRT to discuss potential improvements*

### **16. Correspondence Received**

An open letter email had been received from the Green Lane Association.

### **17. Matters Raised by the Public**

Clare Bamforth had attended the launch of the new Pewsey Vales circular Way and stated that they were hoping that people would add links to their website to publicise it. It was agreed to add a link to the Parish Council Website.

Nick Mitchell-Briggs said he had been asked to raise the issue of the state of the triangle of roadway opposite Clare Cottage which leads to several houses. David Butler has spoken to Highways and the Chair stated he will write to WC to request some material is delivered so that the area can be levelled.

**18. Date of the next meeting (Annual Meeting) – 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2022 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall**

**Signed as a true record.....**

**Dean Cowley – Chair**