

# Wootton Rivers Parish Council

## Minutes of The Parish Meeting & Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 14th May 2019

### THE PARISH MEETING

The Parish Meeting was Chaired by the outgoing Chair of the Parish Council, Cindy Creasy who welcomed everyone to the meeting and presented her report on the Parish Council's activities over the past year.

Last year I ended my annual report for the Parish Council with some thank you's. This year I would like to start with them as it really is the many wonderful residents in our community that make living here such a privilege. So many people give up their time to help maintain and create spaces and activities that the community and visitors enjoy.

I would like to thank Linda Hopkins and her team who, over many years, have persevered and succeeded in providing us with a welcoming, well stocked and well used Village Hall. Home to a range of activities, events and fund raising extravaganzas....who can forget Singalong a Grease night!

Linda is also to be thanked for her editorship of the village Contact newsletter, keeping us informed of news and events. With a copy delivered through every door, I know that many people appreciate this form of communication in a digital age!

Also, our continuing thanks to Tony McGarry for his sterling work at the recreation ground. It's looking great and is in almost constant use, particularly by younger people in the village. Tony ensures that the facilities are kept updated, with new cricket nets and spring cleans and remains vigilant in the face of unwelcome visits from some friendly moles!

Thanks to Nick Mitchell-Briggs. His work in encouraging take up of the BEAM scheme has seen a welcome rise in income to the Parish Council as well as securing a competitive price for residents. In leading on matters relating to police and crime reduction he continues to inform and encourage us all to remain aware of risks and to minimise the opportunities for crime. We know from the regular crime reports that we are fortunate to enjoy a low level of crime in the village but remaining watchful and informed will help to keep it that way.

There are of course many other people who help make a difference...those involved in supporting St Andrews Church and its wonderful building and grounds...and the host of fund raising activities underway to secure repairs funding for the roof and bells – we wish them every success. Thanks to Dave Wardlaw too for his continuing stewardship of the allotments. It is a pleasure to see families taking up plots and look forward to contributions to the Pet and Produce show in September. (I'll definitely be able to contribute the world's smallest carrot!) Plans to establish a community orchard are underway with agreement reached between the Parish Council and the Butlers. Councillor Anne Swift will facilitate a group to deliver and support the project with tree planting hoped for the Autumn.

So much going on, for such a small village! But now on to the boring stuff that the Parish Council have been doing...

Roads and drainage – we have continued to press Wiltshire Council for assistance in keeping the drainage system working well. A number of volunteers help do what they can to keep things flowing but a meeting in the village with Wiltshire Council's contract manager confirmed, and extracted an undertaking, that more would be done: this includes a further jetting of the whole drainage system throughout the village; a CCTV investigation of possible damaged pipes near the canal; and a heavy duty sweeper to help remove debris that otherwise blocks the drains, reduces road width and covers various gullies at the sides of the roads. However, each time this preventative work is promised, it has yet to be done, despite the tenacious efforts of our Parish Clerk. We will continue to engage with the Council to try and ensure the work is completed before the Autumn.

Kerbstones in the parking bay areas have now been repaired which is welcome but we are still awaiting promised works to fill deep holes at the sides of roads on Martinsell Hill and near Brimslade Farm turnings. We continue to liaise with our Parish Steward for minor works across the Parish including the filling of smaller potholes, ditch clearance and road sign maintenance.

Following concerns about speed of traffic through the village the PC requested a metrocount which was provided in November. The results recorded 2556 journeys over two weeks with 85% traveling at or below 27.29mph and an average speed of 21.70mph. Wiltshire Council confirmed that these results do not meet the threshold for further resources/activity in relation to traffic management.

Councillor Anne Swift has facilitated a project to improve the awareness, maintenance and accessibility of our footpaths throughout the Parish. A team of volunteers have mapped the paths and their issues, met with Wiltshire Council's Rights of Way team, and are preparing a plan of improvement action for the coming year.

The Parish Council has also continued to liaise with local landowners to encourage and facilitate good access and maintenance of footpaths, hedgerow and trees etc as and when concerns arise.

The process of listing the Royal Oak public house as a community asset has started, helping to provide an option for a legally constituted community interest group to make a bid to buy and run the pub if it ever went up for sale. Councillor Dean Cowley will facilitate a working group to look in more detail as to what this would entail.

Responding to planning consultations continues to form a large part of Parish council time, with extra planning meetings called as necessary to ensure strict deadlines for comments can be met. Many of you will know that the owners of Church Farm have applied for changes to the existing planning permission for the site. A recent Parish Council planning meeting saw a large turnout of concerned residents to voice their views, for which the Council is very grateful. We hope that the owners will engage in discussions to ensure that any changes continue to respect the heritage of the site and provide a high-quality development to be enjoyed by its new residents, minimise impact on neighbours and compliment the village streetscape.

Finally, the Parish Council undertook a review of its Standing Orders last year to bring them up to date with best practise. Our budget and reserves are set to meet the key costs of grounds maintenance to the recreation ground, Parish Clerk salary, defibrillator maintenance and other items. Our thanks go to Rob Mitchenhall for undertaking the annual audit of our accounts.

Last, but not least, a big thanks to all the Parish Councillors for the time and effort they put in on behalf of the Parish. Thanks too to Glenn Leech who, due to work commitments had to stand down at the beginning of this year and a welcome back to

Clare Bamforth who has been co-opted to take the vacancy. And finally, a special thank you to our Parish Clerk, Neil Worthington, who's tenacity, patience and calm guidance has helped steer us through another year.

A vote of thanks was expressed by Councillors to Cindy for her way in which she has chaired the Council over the last year and for her diligence and hard work. There being no questions from the floor the Parish Meeting was declared closed.

## **ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

<b>Present:</b>	Cindy Creasy	Parish Council Chair
	David Butler	Parish Council Vice-Chair
	Clare Bamforth	Councillor
	Dean Cowley	Councillor
	Nick Jones	Councillor
	Steve Rawlings	Councillor
	Anne Swift	Councillor
	Neil Worthington	Clerk

**Apologies:** Jerry Kunkler                      Wiltshire Councillor

### **1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Cindy Creasy was proposed as Chair for the next year by Anne Swift, seconded by Dean Cowley and as the only valid nomination was duly elected.

David Butler was proposed as Vice-Chair for the next year by Cindy Creasy, seconded by Steve Rawlings and as the only valid nomination was duly elected.

### **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.

Nick Jones declared an interest in Agenda item 10 (Nomination of the Royal Oak as an Asset of Community Value).

No further interests were declared.

### **3. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising.**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on the 18th March and 29<sup>th</sup> April 2019 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **4. Matters arising from the Minutes**

Signboard/Waste bin relocation – it was agreed that the waste bin at the bottom of South Bank would be better located at the bottom of the track up past Upper Farmhouse and The Fields where there was a problem with dog waste. It was confirmed that Wiltshire Council had stated that they would continue to empty it from this location. There was discussion about exactly where it should be sited and it may need to be on private land so as to not to be too obtrusive or cause an obstruction to car parking. Nearby residents were to be consulted. Moving the bin would allow more space to erect the signboard at the bottom of South Bank. *Action: Clerk Liaison with Wiltshire Tree Officer* – a meeting had been arranged with the tree officer for him to give up to date guidance on trees in the parish which have a

significant landscape value. Residents were to be invited (via the noticeboard and the email group) to highlight any trees which they considered should be included in the assessment. David Butler noted that Ramsbury Estates had started their programme of felling ash trees affected by ash dieback.

Parking near canal bridge – the Canal & River Trust had offered to visit the village to advise what action they could take to manage the car parking situation, but it was decided try to tackle the problem locally at first. Dean Cowley had printed some polite notes to leave on the cars/vans asking owners to ensure the road is kept clear for large farm and emergency vehicles. Concern was again expressed from residents about people living on the leisure moorings on a permanent basis. The Council had been advised in the past by the C&RT that this is considered a planning issue, and Wiltshire will not get involved unless they are presented with enough detailed evidence to support further action by them. Cindy Creasy agree to talk to the local canal forum to see if they have any advice.

## **5. Report from Community Police Officer.**

The police report for April had been received. Current priorities are dealing with anti-social behaviour in Marlborough and Pewsey, rural crime (hare coursing and beauty spot thefts) and targeting vehicle crime including speeding and drink driving. There were no crimes reported in WR. Crimes reported in the surrounding area include thefts from parked vehicles, sheds and garages, and from 3 dwellings in Pewsey on the same day.

## **6. Roads and Highways**

### Maintenance

Neil Worthington advised that he continued to chase Wiltshire's Highways Engineer for the promised works to be carried out. The current position was:

Drain & gully jetting – the Vactor machine had been diverted to deal with flooding incidents but was promised this week (w/c 13/5/19)

Heavy duty road sweeping – Engineer advised that this had been carried out but there was no evidence of the work being completed – the engineer is checking.

Filling of potholes at sides of road – now promised to be carried out this week (w/c 13/5/19)

Repair of displaced kerbstones to car park areas – completed.

Tarmac surfacing to damaged area at the triangle – this will be carried out soon – it has been marked out by the engineer in preparation.

It was agreed to continue to monitor and chase until the works are complete.

*Action: Clerk*

### Parish Steward

The Parish Steward attended in April when he carried out 95% of the work that was scheduled for him. There had been a definite improvement in his performance following the meeting held in Pewsey in March. There is a follow up meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> June to review the situation with Ringway/Jerry Kunkler etc. There will be no visit from him in May as all stewards are on grass verge cutting duties – the next visit is scheduled for 18<sup>th</sup> June. *Any tasks which need doing should be sent to the Clerk.*

## **7. Rights of Way**

Anne Swift reported that all the rights of way had been surveyed and a schedule of new signage was currently being prepared which would be sent to the RoW officer to see what is available. Depending on the response from Wiltshire it may be

necessary to come back to the Parish Council for funding. Work to install the new signs could be done by a working party.

A letter had been drafted to send to Mr Blanchard requesting that the path around his field be established as a permissive path with gated access.

Anne also advised that landowners have an obligation to keep RoW clear of obstructions and the RoW group would be writing to various landowners to request that this is done. David Butler advised that this did not include keeping grass mown short.

The state of the bridleway from Cuckoos Knob towards the Bruce Arms was discussed and David agreed to carry out the necessary work to clear it.

*Action: David Butler*

## **8. Planning**

No applications had been received since the last PC meeting.

Church Farm applications – it was noted that many individual letters objecting to the proposed changes had been published on the planning website. The dates for decisions on the Church Farmhouse and 5 bed house were imminent and it was discussed whether, in the event that the planners were mindful to approve the applications, either of the applications should be called in for decision by the planning committee. Councillors were minded to request the new build 5 bed house to be called in but it was agreed that Jerry Kunkler should first be asked for further advice on the best way forward. Action: Cindy Creasy

Anne Swift advised that she had submitted an application for work to Mulberry House (formally The Finches) and expected it to come to the Parish Council for consultation soon.

## **9. Finances**

9.1 The WRPC financial year 2018/19 ended on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019

9.2 Rob Mitchenall had undertaken the Internal Audit – he had advised that as the accounts were prepared on a receipts and payments basis there were 2 payments which, although invoiced in March, should not be included in the 2018/19 accounts. These payments were therefore excluded from the Accounting Statements and he was therefore able to complete and sign off the internal audit section of the Annual Return.

This alteration changed the figures on the audit forms previously circulated to Councillors and the revised forms would be re-issued after the meeting. Subject to this review it was agreed that the audit forms could be signed off and a motion to this effect was proposed by David Butler, seconded by Anne Swift and unanimously carried.

9.3 It was confirmed that WRPC met the conditions of the Certificate of Exemption and would therefore be able to self-certify as exempt from a limited assurance review as both income and expenditure did not exceed £25,000 and the other circumstances did not apply. The Certificate was signed by Cindy Creasy (Chair) and Neil Worthington (Clerk).

9.4 Section 1 – The Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 was approved by the Council for signature by Cindy Creasy (Chair) and Neil Worthington (Clerk).

9.5 Section 2 – The Accounting Statements 2018/19 were approved by the Council for signature by Cindy Creasy (Chair) and Neil Worthington (Clerk)

- 9.6 The Certificate of Exemption form would be submitted to the external auditor and Sections 1 and 2 and the Internal Audit published on the PC website as required by the auditors. Also required to be published were various other documents including the Bank Reconciliation and the Explanation of Variances. Included in the last document is an explanation for high reserves ie more than twice the precept. This excess of £748 comprised £572 which was ringfenced for the Recreation Ground and £271 as liability for grass cutting carried out in 2018/19 but which had not been paid until April 2019.
- 9.7 The following payments which had been made since the last meeting were authorised:
- Wessex Print – Printing Contact - £18.50
  - Idverde – Grass cutting 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2018/19 - £270.96
- 9.8 The Precept of £2,986.09 had been received.
- 9.9 The insurance renewal quote from Came & Co had been received. There were no changes to the insured items and cover remained in place for the statutory Public and Employers Liability and Council legal liability insurance together with cover for the playground equipment, defibrillator and computer equipment. We were still covered by the 3 year long term agreement which expires in 2020 and the amount of cover has increased by 4% for inflation. The premium has increased because of this to £428.08. Last year was £415.61 and this increase was within the budget. The renewal quote was approved.
- 9.10 The following payments were authorised :-
- WR Village Hall – VH hire - £108.00 by cheque.
  - Came & Company – insurance - £428.08 by Bacs.
  - Rob Mitchenall – ex-gratia payment for carrying out the internal audit - £20.00 by Bacs.
- 9.11 It was agreed that the current Risk Assessment should be reviewed.  
*Action: Clerk*

## **10. Royal Oak**

Cindy Creasy and Neil Worthington had met with the owners who had concerns regarding the scope of the listing and if it should include the B&B house. Advice had been obtained from Wiltshire Council which had now been passed on and a further meeting to resolve the issue would be held shortly. It was emphasised that the scope of the listing has to be determined by the exemptions contained within the legislation so that the listing would protect the Royal Oak as a community asset in the event that the pub and B&B were ever sold together while seeking to respect the concerns of the owners.

## **11. Correspondence received.**

Pewsey Area Board – next meeting was 20<sup>th</sup> May at East Grafton Village Hall  
PCAP – next meeting was 18<sup>th</sup> July at Easton Royal Village Hall

## **12. Matters raised by the Public**

Lucy Francis had raised the need for a Community First Responder in the village and was looking at what was involved and the implications. Councillors were in support of this initiative and Cindy offered to liaise with Lucy.

### **Dates of the next meetings –**

**Planning meeting 3rd June 2019 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall**  
**Full meeting 22nd July 2019 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall**