

# Wootton Rivers Parish Council

## Minutes of The Parish Meeting & Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 22nd May 2017

### THE PARISH MEETING

The Parish Meeting would normally be Chaired by the outgoing Chair of the Parish Council. However, as David Wardlaw was on holiday David Butler took the chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and presented David Wardlaw's report on the Parish Council's activities over the past year.

The following is brief summary of the major issues over the past year;

1. Roads & Maintenance – We have established a Drain and Flood Prevention maintenance program (summary of all the village drains and grips) and agreed responsibilities with Wiltshire Highways. Unfortunately there continues to be cutbacks and personnel changes at Wiltshire so it is still unclear how effective our efforts to establish regular maintenance by Wiltshire will be. However the drainage system appears to working well at the moment and although prolonged downpours will overpower the system capacity any build-up seems to clear quickly. The Parish Steward system and its effectiveness are still not clear.

Wiltshire's reporting system for all highways issues has delivered some results this year but it is not consistent and some issues appear to get lost or closed out without being resolved.

The Parish Council traditional Village Clean-up Day took place in March and this year Wiltshire promoted the program for all villages. Many thanks to all those who participated and also those who periodically collect up litter from the usual blackspots.

2. The Neighbourhood Development Plan draft was completed by the Steering Group under Tony McGarry's leadership and has been approved and adopted by the Parish Council. The draft has now been issued to Wiltshire for its final reviews before it comes back to the village for a referendum. It has already been used by the Parish Council as a key input to planning decisions on the proposed Noyes Farm and Church Farm developments. Thanks are due to Tony and his team for all their efforts in pulling the NDP together and completing it in a very timely fashion given the constraints imposed by the process.

3. Neighbourhood Watch continues to be active under Nick Mitchell-Briggs, with regular updates on the issues of the day, and we continue to get good support from our local Police Officers. Although there is some low level crime we continue to enjoy a very low crime area. Unfortunately the shortcomings of the 101 number, though widely recognised, are still not resolved and continue to put people off using the system.

4. Recreation Ground continues to get good use and has undergone a significant upgrade/maintenance program under Tony McGarry's guidance. The Annual Fun Run on

August Bank Holiday has been extended to a Food Festival and provides income for the Rec maintenance. In addition the Parish Council is now making an annual budget provision so that the cost of periodic maintenance is covered.

5. The Village Hall continues to be well used and well maintained by Village Hall Committee.

6. Planning issues have continued to be a major part of the workload this year and whilst the Noyes Farm application and Wootton House restoration proposals were resolved the proposed development of the Church Farm site is not yet resolved. However, the Parish Council concerns have been addressed and the issue is now under consideration by Wiltshire.

7. Finances Continued cost pressure has resulted in another small increase in the Wiltshire rates and also an increase the Parish Council precept to cover the Recreation Ground maintenance and the increased cost of grass cutting resulting from the longer growing season in recent years. The Parish Council continues to have adequate reserves helped as ever by the BEAM scheme under Ford Fuels.

Finally, thanks to all the Councillors for their input and support in a busy year and to our Parish Clerk, Neil Worthington, for all his diligent work over the year.

Good luck to the newly mandated Parish Council.

David Wardlaw

Outgoing Chairman, Wootton Rivers Parish Council

David Butler continued by expressing thanks to the retiring Councillors, David Wardlaw, Paul Neale, Clare Bamforth and Michael Farr for their dedication and hard work, especially during the past couple of years which had been exceptionally busy.

David then opened up the meeting to the floor.

Tony McGarry (Recreation Ground) reported that following the successful collaboration last year the August Bank Holiday fun run and food festival would again be a joint venture between the Recreation Ground, Church and Village Hall.

Linda Hopkins (Village Hall) reported that the committee was urgently in need of event helpers and committee members. At the Village Hall AGM Lucy Francis had expressed an interest in getting a group of younger villagers to assist with some events.

Tony McGarry reported that the gulley at the bottom of the hill down from St Margaret's Dairy was constantly full of silt and needed to be enlarged to cope with the flows down the hill.

There being no further comments the Parish Meeting was closed.

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

<b>Present:</b>	Cindy Creasy	Parish Council Chair
	David Butler	Parish Council Vice-Chair
	Dean Cowley	Councillor
	Nick Jones	Councillor
	Glenn Leech	Councillor
	Steve Rawlings	Councillor
	Anne Swift	Councillor
	Neil Worthington	Clerk
	Tony McGarry	NDP Leader
	PC Teresa Herbert	Wiltshire Police

**Apologies:** Jerry Kunkler                      Wiltshire Councillor

**This was the first meeting of the new Parish Council following the Local Elections and a full complement of 7 Councillors had been elected to serve, including 4 new members. All Councillors had signed the Declarations of Acceptance of Office.**

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

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

### **2. Declarations of Interest and the granting of dispensations.**

Councillors were reminded that the Register of Members Interests had to be completed online by 5<sup>th</sup> June at the latest.  
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 and no dispensations were requested or granted.

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

The Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising :-

Cutting back trees above car park bays – David Wardlaw had provided the details of the owner’s Agent who was to be contacted. If no action was forthcoming advice was to be requested from Wiltshire Council about what could be done. *Action - Clerk*  
Parish Steward – no response had been received about concerns about the effectiveness of the Parish Steward but it was believed that the matter was being raised at the Area Board.

The letter in support of the Church Faculty had been sent.

David Butler had looked at the road to Cuckoos Knob but was reluctant to start removing debris which was overlying the road surface. It was agreed that Councillors would look at the road and revert back if there were concerns that it was dangerous or unacceptable. *Action - Councillors*

The Recreation Ground working party had been in action and had done a good job in preparing the ground for the summer.

The detailed annual check of equipment was to be carried out soon.

*Action – Clerk & Tony McGarry*

#### **4. Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct which had been circulated to all Councillors was approved and signed by all Councillors.

#### **5. Councillor Responsibilities**

The requirement for Councillors to take responsibility for various tasks was discussed.

Attendance at Area Boards – Cindy would oversee and occasionally attend.

Attendance at PCAP meetings – David had been to these meetings previously and was happy to continue although he would not be able to attend the next one on 20th July. Volunteer needed.

Minutes and Agenda of these meetings were to be circulated so Councillors could get an idea of what was discussed etc.

Rights of Way – it was suggested that a group outside the Parish Council could be set up to walk and monitor the rights of way and organise working parties where necessary. Anne agreed to liaise.

Roads/drainage – David Wardlaw had recorded the work needed to keep the gullies and grips clear with a small working party. It was agreed that this could easily continue on an ad-hoc basis whenever the need arose.

Village Hall Management Committee – there should be a representative on the committee. TBA

Canal Users Meetings – Post Meeting Note – the next meeting was on 1<sup>st</sup> June at Wootton Rivers and David Butler agreed to attend.

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

Teresa Herbert reported on police matters.

The current priority was dwelling and non-dwelling burglaries and over 200 targeted patrols have occurred.

Over the past year in Wootton Rivers police have investigated one case of anti-social behaviour, a burglary to a canal boat, 2 common assaults, a road traffic collision and two thefts from cars at Martinsell car park. Police response times to incidents were improving. A monthly consultation takes place in Bouverie Hall on the first Tuesday of each month. The 101 system is being looked at and online reporting is being introduced.

Teresa was asked about introducing 20mph speed limits in the village which she would support. She thought that metro strip data on current speeds was necessary to enable a Community Speedwatch Group to be set up and undertook to find out more and report back. *Action – Teresa Herbert*

## **7. Neighbourhood Development Plan**

Tony McGarry reported that Wiltshire Council had appointed an examiner who would carry out a desk top survey probably at the end of June. Assuming that all was satisfactory the referendum, which would be organised by Wiltshire Council, would take place at the end of this year. A simple majority of the electors who voted would be sufficient but obviously a large turnout would be desirable.

## **8. Planning**

The following application had been considered since the last meeting :-  
16/11051/FUL – Church Farm. At the last Parish Council meeting it was agreed to support the application based on the revised plans, but that the detailed comments would be drafted and agreed following the meeting. This had been done and concerns had been recorded about proving the economic case for Plot 3 and the proposed narrowing of the road.

The following new application was considered :-

17/03881/LBC Church Farm – this application for listed building consent to convert the existing barns was based on the same plans as application 16/11051/FUL. It was agreed to support the application, but to highlight the necessity that it was particularly important that appropriate materials should be used for this important site and the guidelines in the NDP and Conservation Area Statement should be followed.

## **9. Finances**

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

- Last Landscaping – Grass cutting & new gate post - £636.60
- Wessex Print – printing Contact £24.00
- Wootton Rivers Village Hall - hire of hall £96.00
- Wiltshire Assoc of Local Councils – subscription £99.71
- Hew Helps – computer assistance £30.00

The Precept of £2,530.00 had been received.

The 3 year agreement with Aviva Insurance had ended so our brokers Came & Co have been out for quotes and had offered 3 alternatives, details of which had been previously circulated. It was agreed to accept their recommendation to insure with Axa. The new premium was £407.46 based on a new 3 year agreement which meant that the rate of insurance would be fixed and would only increase as the value of insured assets increased.

It was reported that Last Landscaping were proposing to carry out grass cutting to the Recreation Ground at the same price as last year despite saying earlier that they thought additional cuts may be necessary. It was agreed to proceed on this basis but review during the year if more cuts were needed.

The following cheques were authorised and signed :-

- Hew Helps – computer assistance following HMRC software problems - £30.00
- AJ McGarry – sports equipment - £99.38
- R Mitchenall – internal audit - £20.00
- Came & Company – insurance - £407.46

## **10. Annual Audit**

10.1 The WRPC financial year 2016/17 ended on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and details of the audit had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting.

10.2 Rob Mitchenall had undertaken the Internal Audit – there were no items of concern and he was therefore able to complete and sign off the internal audit section of the Annual Return. Various items had been highlighted during the audit which had been actioned.

- It was agreed that in future expenditure up to £250 would not require prior approval but that expenditure over £250 would need approval from at least 2 councillors unless it was required as an emergency.
- Clarification had been received from CodeWater Solutions that the £40 annual charge was for the cost of hosting the PC website on their server and for registering the domain name.
- The cricket net base had been added to the Asset Register and it was confirmed that the register is being kept in accordance with the Auditors advice.
- A cheque issued in July 2016 had still not been presented. Lloyds had been requested to cancel it so that a replacement could be issued.

Lloyds had also been asked to provide the necessary forms to update the cheque signatories following the change in council as only David Butler and Steve Rawlings were currently authorised to sign cheques.

Lloyds had also been asked if they have a system of online banking that could be set up which would still have the necessary two councillors to authorise payments.

10.3 The Annual Governance Statements were approved by the Council and signed by Cindy Creasy (Chair) and Neil Worthington (Clerk).

10.4 The Accounting Statements were approved by the Council and signed by Cindy Creasy (Chair) and Neil Worthington (Clerk)

## **11. Additional methods of Communication**

The use of emails to notify villagers of forthcoming Parish Council meetings and other special notices such as major planning issues and road closures etc was discussed and agreement was reached that this was desirable as an additional method of communication. It was agreed that Nick Mitchell-Briggs should email his contact list asking members to opt out if they do not want to receive these WRPC emails. A notice would also be put in the next Contact informing people that they can join the email list if not already on it. The emails will be kept short and give the links to the Parish Council website rather than attachments.

## **12. 20mph Speed Limit**

Information on the procedure that Easton Royal went through to achieve the 20mph limit had been circulated to Councillors and following the requested information from the Police on their input further discussions would take place at a subsequent meeting.

## **13. Correspondence received.**

A request from PCAP to advise on roads which needed resurfacing and fly tipping had been requested. A map showing the Parish boundary was to be forwarded to Councillors. *Action – Clerk*

Parish Steward dates were 21<sup>st</sup> June, 19<sup>th</sup> July, and 20<sup>th</sup> September – any issues needing attention were to be forwarded to Neil Worthington.

## **11. Matters raised by the public / AOB**

The phone had now been removed from the BT box. A request was to be made to get the phone box removed. *Action – Clerk*

Concern about the Wikipedia entry for Wootton Rivers had been expressed. Dean Cowley undertook to edit it using information from the NDP.

Glenn Leech highlighted the need for the Clerk's salary to reflect the increasing amount of work involved and undertook to review the current arrangements.

*Action - Glenn Leech / Clerk*

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