

Wootton Rivers Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Meeting & Annual General Meeting held on 9th May 2016

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

Apologies:	Paul Neale	Councillor
	Jerry Kunkler	Wiltshire Councillor

THE PARISH MEETING

The AGM was preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting. As outgoing Chairman of the Parish Council, David Wardlaw took the chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported on the Council activities on what had been a particularly busy year.

- Roads & Maintenance -Wiltshire's contract with Balfour Beatty had not been working well as could be seen with the response to our requests for actions in the village. Their contract had now been terminated and alternative contractors appointed. On the positive side we now have David Arnup as our contact at Wiltshire and he is keen and responsive within his resource constraints. The drainage system is working well and we now have a Drain and Flood Prevention maintenance program agreed with Wiltshire. The Parish Steward scheme will restart in October under the control of the Parish Councils. Wiltshire's new reporting system for all "issues" is having teething problems and has not delivered any benefits so far. Reports have been lost and it does not appear to work.
- WRPC own initiatives continue and have increased to compensate for less work done by Wiltshire. In addition to the traditional Village Clean-up Day we had a drain clearing day which marked the start of a regular monitoring of drains and gulleys by nominated individuals as part of the Drain and Flood Prevention maintenance programme. Many thanks to all those who participate and also those who respond to the occasional emergency – e.g a major branch came down off the tree outside this Village Hall yesterday!
- Neighbourhood Watch continues to be active under Nick Mitchell-Briggs and although there is still some low level crime we continue to enjoy living in a very low crime area. There has been a significant increase in internet scams and the Police and NW are focussing on raising people's awareness to the ingenious methods the scammers use to get access to systems and accounts. Unfortunately the 101 number does not seem to work well and is probably putting people off using it – this needs attention.

- Canal & Rivers Trust last year promised better enforcement of national continuous cruising and other key regulations but we have yet to see any difference.
- Fibre optic Broadband - arrived in 2015, a little later than hoped, but better late than never! Thanks are due to our fibre optic champion, Rob Mitchenall, for driving BT Openworld along.
- PC Website - Whilst on the technology theme, WRPC has been obliged to create its own website "woottonriverspc.co.uk" where all PC documents may be accessed. Also a grant has been received so that a dedicated laptop etc will be purchased on which all WRPC matters will be conducted and which then provides a "transportable" data and filing system.
- The Recreation Ground continues to get good use and upgrades/maintenance under Tony McGarry's watchful eye and has been nominated as a "Green Space" within the NDP to try and secure its future.
- The Village Hall continues to be well used and well maintained by the Village Hall Committee thanks to the active officers and members.
- Neighbourhood Development Plan has made great progress under Tony McGarry's leadership and has been issued for Consultation beyond the Village. It is already being used by WRPC as a key input to planning decisions, notably for the Lady Margaret Dairy extension and for the ongoing Noyes Farm application.
- Planning issues have been to the fore this year, dominated by the Lady Margaret Dairy extension and the Noyes Farm application, plus the Wootton House restoration. This activity is expected to continue through 2016 as the Church Farm major development surfaces.
- Finances continued under control with a small increase in the Wiltshire rates but no increase to the WR precept. We continue to have good reserves helped as ever by the BEAM scheme under Ford Fuels.
- Finally, David thanked all the Councillors on their input in a busy year and in particular to our new member, Glenn Leech, who stepped into a busy time, and to our Parish Clerk, Neil Worthington, for all his diligent work over the year. Next May there will be elections for all Parish Councillors so this will be the last year of this particular Council.

There being no questions from the members of the public present the Parish Meeting was closed.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

1. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

David Wardlaw was proposed as Chairman for the next year by Michael Farr, seconded by Steve Rawlings and was elected unanimously.

Clare Bamforth had been proposed as Vice-Chair for the next year by Paul Neale and seconded by Glenn Leech and was elected unanimously.

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 and no dispensations were requested or granted.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising.

The Minutes of the Parish Meetings held on 18th April 2016 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

The Minutes of the Parish Meetings held on 17th March 2016 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising :-

- The PC website had been setup – the address ‘woottonriverspc.co.uk’ was to be publicised in the next Contact and on noticeboards.
- Wiltshire Council has not yet acted on the request to cut back the hedge at Cuckoos Knob. *Action: David Wardlaw was to discuss with Jerry Kunkler.*
- Tony McGarry had requested PC account information to enable the grant application for the cricket mat base to be completed. The replacement seats for the see-saw and swings had been ordered.
- The road surface at the triangle had been reported and David Arnup had undertaken to look at the situation and direct it to the correct Officer as major works would be required.
- There had been no report back from the Canal & River Trust about the Brimslade moorings. They were to be chased for a response. *Action: Clerk*
- The rent for the Recreation Ground had been paid and an invoice from St John’s had, at last, been issued confirming receipt of the payment.

4. Report from Community Police Officer.

PSCO Jonathon Mills reported that crime in the last year in Wootton Rivers continued to be very low and was restricted to a few incidents of thefts from outbuildings, gardens and Martinsell car park.

Hare coursing remains a problem as does speeding.

There had been an issue with reporting an abandoned car in the village which was on the system as having previously been scrapped. Jonathon reported that he would contact Wiltshire Council to get it removed. Although the Council are responsible for removal of abandoned vehicles if there is concern that the vehicle may have been used for criminal activities an email to Teresa or Jonathon would enable the vehicle to be checked out.

Nick Mitchell-Briggs reported that the email alert system continued to sign up new members and there were now 82 on the list. Many of the recent notifications highlighted the continuous attempts by scammers to access personal data which were overtaking more traditional forms of criminal activity.

5. Neighbourhood Development Plan

Tony McGarry reported that the draft NDP had been sent to Wiltshire and was now in its 6 week consultation period with various external organisations who had an interest including St John’s College, the Antrobus Estate and East Wick Farm. The Parish Council had written to St John’s and East Wick about the intention in the NDP to nominate areas as green space. A meeting had been arranged with St John’s agents, Savills later this month and David Butler had requested a meeting.

The consultation period ends on 6th June 2016 after which the comments from the interested parties will be evaluated by the steering group for inclusion in the NDP before being put back to the Parish Council for endorsement. The NDP will then be handed over to Wiltshire Council for their evaluation.

6. Report on PCAP meeting

David Butler gave a report on the PCAP meeting he had attended. Matters of interest were:

- The Pewsey police station was closing but there would be a bigger team on the ground. The argument had been made that with the use of modern technology and communications the need for a traditional police station was unnecessary.
- WRPC's contribution last year of £50 was about average for the 27 parishes and PCAP were also seeking commercial sponsorship.
- Many problems had been reported by other parishes with Wiltshire Planners slow responses seemingly due to pressure of work and a general disconnect with the Parishes. Concern was also expressed that conditions proposed by PC's were being ignored by Wiltshire.
- Everleigh Recycling centre was being kept open in the short term following protests but seemed to have little long term future.
- Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership was seeking to promote tourism in the area.
- Generally PCAP seemed to be a useful body as it picked up items not always discussed elsewhere.

Future Parish Council meetings should be planned not to clash with Area Board meetings or PCAP meetings if possible.

7. Community Emergency Plan

The Parish Council had received a request for the Parish to prepare an Emergency Plan or at least to complete a Community Plan template sheet. It was generally considered that in an emergency the community would come together informally to take action but it was agreed that the template would be returned giving Wiltshire various contact details. *Action: David Wardlaw/ Neil Worthington*

8. Planning

The following applications had been considered since the last meeting :-

- Field entrance opposite Primrose Cottage – the PC had objected to this application and it had been withdrawn
- Wootton House Alterations and Extensions – the PC had approved but revised plans had since been submitted omitting various proposals. No request had been received from Wiltshire for the PC to reconsider but it was agreed to email Wiltshire Planning to confirm the PC still had no objections.
Action : Clerk
- Wootton House – work to lime tree - approved
- Owl Cottage – work to trees – approved

The following new application was considered :-

- Lock Cottage – new porch – there was no objection to this proposal

Noyes Farm - David Wardlaw reported that there had been no date set for the Committee Meeting to decide on this application.

9. Finances

9.1 The PC financial year 2015/16 ended on 31st March 2016 and details had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting.

9.2 Neil Worthington reported that the finances remain in a healthy position. The balance at the end of the year is £7,242 compared to £5,943 for the previous year but this does not take into account anticipated expenditure on computer equipment for which a grant of £1,109 had been received and £290 paid after the end of the year for grass cutting. Taking these into account the balance was actually £5,843 a reduction of £100. This was met from our reserves which remained adequate.

9.3 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.

9.4 The Annual Governance Statements were read and approved by the Council and signed by David Wardlaw (Chair) and Neil Worthington (Clerk).

9.5 The Accounting Statements were approved by the Council and signed by David Wardlaw (Chair) and Neil Worthington (Clerk).

9.6 The insurance quote from Brokers Came & Co had been received. The new premium was £419.33 which was an increase this year of £17.42 due to the increase in Insurance Tax and a 1% inflation increase in the value of assets insured. We are still covered by the Long Term Agreement which ends next year after which competitive quotes would be sought.

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

- St John's College - Rec Ground rent £175.00
- Wessex Print - Contact £21.00
- Code Water Solutions – Set up website £100.00
- Last Landscaping – Grass cutting - £348.60

9.8 The Precept and Grant of £2,328.71 had been received.

9.9 The following cheques were authorised and signed :-

- Wiltshire Assoc of Local Councils – subscription £94.09
- Came and Company – insurance - £419.33
- R Mitchenall – internal audit - £20.00

9.10 The accounts of the Village Hall Management Committee were to be circulated to all Councillors. *Action: Clerk*

9.11 Neil Worthington reported that he had asked Hew Helps (ex-clerk at Easton Royal) to assist in the choice of computer and other equipment and software and to set up the system. The likely cost will be approximately £100 and this was agreed by the Council.

9.12 The dusk to dawn light above the defibrillator had ceased to work, and had been replaced. An invoice was awaited.

10. Correspondence received.

Linda Hopkins reported that the owners of Young House were seeking a licence to enable them to have vehicle access through the fence on the village hall car park boundary in order to construct a shed on the old tennis court. There was no intention to grant permanent access through the car park.

An invitation had been received to attend the Wiltshire Neighbourhood Watch Association AGM in Devizes Police Station on 25 June at 10.00

Further information on the Community Infrastructure Levy had been received. In view of the likelihood of new houses being built in the village a substantial sum of money may be received by the PC for spending on infrastructure projects. If, for instance, the Noyes Farm scheme was approved it would result in approx. £10,000 being received. Consideration was to be given to drawing up a list of possible uses for any CIL payments.

11. Matters raised by the public / AOB

David Wardlaw was to write to the owners of the trees overhanging the road and electric cables near the canal bridge requesting that they be cut back.

Rob Mitchenall asked if the PC could consider paying a contractor to cut the various 'public' areas of grass in the village. It was resolved to look at the options.

Nick Mitchell-Briggs reported that any home CCTV system which views areas outside your boundary now needs to be licenced which requires a fee to be paid.

Damage to grass verges had been noted following on-road parking of contractor's vehicles at various locations. These need to be addressed on an individual basis.

Linda Hopkins reported that the officers of the Village Hall committee had all been in post for a long time and would like the Parish Council's support to try and encourage new members and officers to come on board. This was a continuing problem with the Parish Council as well as with elections scheduled for 2017 – generally volunteers

are unwilling to come forward and some extent of encouragement is generally required. These village organisations are important for the continuing life of Wootton Rivers and villagers need to be encouraged to do their part. It was agreed to have this as Agenda item at the next meeting.

David Butler had recently organised a first aid refresher course for the farm and pub. If there was the demand for a public course he would recommended the person who ran it.

A query was raised regarding how long the Designation of the Royal Oak as a Community Asset lasted. The records were to be checked.

Date of the next meeting – 18th July 2016 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.