

Wootton Rivers Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 9th November 2020

Present:	Cindy Creasy	Parish Council Chair
	David Butler	Parish Council Vice Chair
	Clare Bamforth	Councillor
	Dean Cowley	Councillor
	Nick Jones	Councillor
	Steve Rawlings	Councillor
	Neil Worthington	Clerk

Apologies received from Anne Swift

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. No interests were declared.

2. Agreement of Minutes

The Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 5th October 2020 were agreed as a true record and will be signed by Cindy Creasy, Chair.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Permanent village maps – carried forward to next meeting.

WCAG website Regulations – Neil Worthington reported that he had written to the website developer to see if he could carry out the assessment to recommend what, if any, modifications would be required and whether complying with them would place a disproportionate burden on the PC.

Canal closure – Cindy reported that the latest information is that the canal navigation will be closed from Wootton Rivers farm bridge to Crofton from 2nd November to 19th March 2021. However, water levels will be maintained for boats currently mooring at Brimslade and Wootton Rivers and the towpath will stay open so the effect on the village will be much less than originally feared.

4. Police matters

As reported last month the monthly police newsletter had ceased and local crime figures were to be available on the police website. However, the website only has information on it up to the end of September and which records one incident of anti-social behaviour in the parish.

It was generally felt that the new website system did not have the same extent of local information and engagement compared to the monthly newsletters but the police emails received and distributed via the village email system was more up to date and proved very useful.

It was agreed not to take any action but to check the website records at the next meeting and monitor the impact of not having local police reports. This is something which could be taken up by the Area Board.

Following the recent courier fraud crime in the village the community volunteers had now contacted all the residents who might be vulnerable to scams and given advice and contact details for support and advice.

David Butler suggested that having CCTV may have been useful in providing evidence and this may be something to consider in future, as costs have reduced and efficiency greatly improved, since the issue was last discussed at the Parish Council.

5. Update on Road Maintenance etc

As reported last month the local Highways Engineer had promised to attend with 'the Vactor jetting machine, root cutter and CCTV camera to get to the cause of the issue for once and all'. Following the visit, he had reported back that the system had been jetted both ways a number of times and that it was not necessary to carry out a CCTV survey. His view is that the problem is caused by the brick screen in the final catchpit and general vegetation around the gullies and rat-holes which, he suggests, can be dealt with by the Parish Steward and by locals checking when heavy rain is due.

It was agreed to continue to monitor the situation, get the Steward to clean around gullies etc, chase for removal of the brick screen and to continue to chase for the road sweeper which had been promised within the next few weeks.

Also, residents with gullies and ratholes outside their homes should be contacted and asked to keep an eye on them especially when heavy rains are due.

The discretionary gulley clearance team had been to the village as requested to clean out approximately 10 blocked gullies but had not completed all of them. Gullies to the north of village had not been cleaned as they were deemed to be 'in a dangerous position'. This was not acceptable and further action would be requested.

Action: Clerk

6. Planning

The following planning applications had been received since the last meeting and had been determined by the Clerk acting as the delegated officer:-

20/07486/TCA Tree work at Young House – no objection

20/08657/TCA Tree work at Dashwood – no objection

20/09027/TCA Tree work at St Andrews House – no objection

Application 20/07293/LBC Revised drawings for Church Farm

Following the confused application for additional windows and rooflights to Plots 5 and 6 revised drawings had been submitted which clarified that the application was for 2no additional rooflights in the rear elevation to provide light over the staircase in each house which otherwise would have no natural light. The planning officer had confirmed that the internal changes are being dealt with as minor amendments which do not require a further planning application and that the Conservation Officer had raised no objections to the proposal. Following discussion, it was agreed that as the rooflights were on the rear elevation they did not affect the important appearance from the village road and would therefore be acceptable. Any rooflights to the front elevations would however be strongly resisted, as would additional rooflights to any other properties on the site, as they would be seen from the street level and would

result in a more urban appearance to the development. It was therefore proposed by Steve Rawlings and seconded by David Butler that the previous Council response to the application should be altered from Mixed to No Objection. The proposal was agreed unanimously.

Cindy Creasy advised that three concerned residents had requested a meeting with her and the Clerk regarding discussions they had been having with Wiltshire Council officers and Danny Kruger MP about their concerns that the Church Farm planning process had not followed the proper procedures. After discussion they recognised that no further action was possible but that they were still waiting for our MP's comments on whether the community had been properly consulted on the changes to the width of the road outside the village hall.

It was agreed that an email should be sent to the owner and architect for the Church Farm development setting out again that the Parish Council want to have a positive relationship with them which would benefit both the development and the village especially when the building starts. *Action : Cindy Creasy*

Cindy Creasy updated the meeting about the proposed Government changes to the planning process and reported on further discussions she has had with Peter Deck, Chair of Pewsey PC Planning Committee.

It was agreed that further information should be sought from Wiltshire about the impact the proposed national changes would have on Wootton Rivers and whether Wiltshire will still be seeking to protect small villages and their designated green spaces as set out in the Local Plan.

Also, clarification should be sought to confirm that the current Neighbourhood Plan remains current for its full lifetime needing only a desk top review after 5 years and not, as suggested in a report from Wiltshire, that the plan becomes less relevant after 2 years. It was agreed in the first instance that Jerry Kunkler should be asked for his comments. *Action: Cindy Creasy*

Cindy also had been advised that there were a group of Parish Councils with Neighbourhood Plans who meet with Wiltshire's strategic planners (WALPA) and it was agreed that we would request to join the group.

7. Finance

7.1 The current financial position was reported as follows

Bank Account	Current Account	£4,206.18
	Deposit Account	£4,572.69
	Total	£8,778.87

Income received since the last meeting	
Village Hall Committee (for Rec Ground)	£1,000.00

The following payments to be paid by BACS payments were authorised

Wessex Print Centre (Oct Contact)	£21.00
St John's College (Rec rent)	£175.00
Clerk's salary – gross amount	£1,548.69
Less tax due to HMRC	£53.80
Net salary	£1,494.89

Clerk expenses	
Zoom (Aug, Sept, Oct & Nov)	£57.56

A request for funding from PCAP has been received to assist with their running costs – the Parish Council have usually given £50/annum and this amount is in the budget for 2020/21. A proposal to make a payment of £50 was made by Cindy Creasy and seconded by David Butler and unanimously agreed.

7.2 Budget review – the budget forecast remains as reported on 1st September (ie based on the costs so far received and anticipated it seems likely that the agreed budget of £4050 will be exceeded by approx. £50 with the contingency expended). Obviously following the donation from the Village Hall the Recreation Ground now has £1000 ring-fenced for repairs and maintenance.

7.3 Precept for 2021/22

Neil Worthington reported that the tax base figures should have been issued by 4th Nov but have been delayed by a week.

The latest date for submitting our Precept request is 18th Jan 2021. The next PC meeting is scheduled for 11th January and the budget and precept will need to be agreed at that meeting.

8. Miscellaneous Items

A request had been received to look at the trees at Pontings Piece, Cuckoos Knob which were overhanging the bungalow at No 6 and causing damp problems. It had been confirmed with Wiltshire Council that the land was owned by them and they would inspect the trees and advise if they would carry out the necessary cutting back. *Action: Clerk*

Neil Worthington advised that he hoped shortly to be submitting an application for a new house in his paddock, the intention being to downsize from his Church Barn. The proposal would be for a single storey 3 bed house, details of which he had already shared with immediate neighbours. Because meetings were now being held virtually it was difficult to show councillors what was being proposed in advance of the formal application but that he was happy for councillors (or other residents) to see the latest drawings if they wanted to contact him directly. Cindy confirmed that as the application was being submitted by the Clerk the process of considering the application needed to be transparent so that there could be no implication that the application was not being considered as thoroughly as usual.

It was confirmed that the salt for use over winter was still being stored at East Wick Farm and the salt bin between the bridges was full. David Butler advised that the Council snow blower which he has used previously was not repairable and he would have to rely on a JCB to clear roads in the event of snow.

It was agreed that the community co-ordinators could be used to contact vulnerable residents in the event of a bad winter.

Notice had been received that the next elections, including for the Parish Council would be held in May 2021.

9. Date of the next meeting – 11th January 2021 at 7.30pm – this will be a virtual meeting held on the Zoom platform