

Wootton Rivers Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 10th January 2022

Present: Clare Bamforth Parish Council Vice Chair
Cindy Creasy Councillor
Nick Jones Councillor
Steve Rawlings Councillor
Julian Beames Clerk

Jerry Kunkler Wiltshire Councillor

1. Apologies Dean Cowley Parish Council Chair
 Anne Swift Councillor
 David Butler Councillor

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.

3. Agreement of Minutes

The Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on the 15th November 2021 were agreed as a true record and signed by Clare Bamforth – Vice Chair.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Updating of the Neighbourhood Plan – Cindy Creasy reported that the PC had received a detailed answer from WC in response to the questions that had been raised by the PC but this had in itself led to a number of further questions. There is a WALPA meeting on the 27th January which will discuss the subject and councillors will be up-dated at the next meeting on the results of those discussions and other council's experiences with regards to the effectiveness of NPs in protecting villages from unwanted development.

It was mentioned by Jerry Kunkler that there are a number of local planning appeal decisions which are up-coming and this will also test the effectiveness of local plans. Cindy Creasy reminded the meeting that WR has more than fully met its targets for providing local housing with 12 new houses approved in the village in the period. The subject of the protection of the recreation ground was raised by Clare Bamforth. In response to Jerry Kunkler's question of who owned the land, it was stated by the Vice Chair that the land was rented from St John's College. It was then agreed that the length of the lease should be reviewed.

A recommended course of action regarding the NP will be presented for discussion at the next Council meeting.

Action: Dean Cowley/ Cindy Creasy

Progress with Road Drainage and other Village Works – The Clerk reported that there had only been minor changes since the last meeting. A number of larger potholes at the bottom of Primrose Hill which he had reported have been filled. However there had been no progress on the issue of flooding at the bottom of

Martinsell Hill despite the promised works programme for a JCB in the coming weeks.

The road engineer had also been chased for dates when the promised alteration work to the road drainage in the village and the cleaning out of gullies was going to take place but had not yet provided that information.

The issues have not been helped by the news that Richard Dobson had apparently left his position in the Highways Department meaning the Clerk was without a contact at Highways. Jerry Kunkler was fortunately able to provide the details for the new engineer who is Matt Perrot and he will be contacted to continue the dialogue.

Action - continue to chase - Clerk

Parish Steward - The Clerk reported that he met the Parish Steward during his visit on the 4th January and discussed the works requiring attention. As a result, a number of smaller potholes were filled in the main village road. The Steward said he would arrange for a road sweeper to visit the village to clear the large amounts of silt and debris in the road and kerbs. Despite requesting that the parking bays be cleared this was not done. Councillors voiced their on-going concerns about the amount of work carried out during visits. Jerry Kunkler also mentioned that Pewsey Council were also disappointed in the level of service received from the Steward.

Fly Tipping at Village Hall – The Vice Chair reported that despite investigations with suppliers it had not been possible to identify the source of the oil cans which had been dumped behind the Village Hall. Nick Jones mentioned that it could be connected to the theft of oil from the Royal Oak which had occurred at the same time. He mentioned that the theft of oil which can then be sold for recycling was a growing problem. In this case the cans which had been dumped were not those which had been stolen, but it may have been that oil was transferred and different cans left at the village hall.

Rights of Way Group – Clare Bamforth up-dated Councillors on the progress with discussions with land owners regarding the replacement of stiles with gates or gaps. The group are focusing on routes which are most heavily used as their priority. The stile at the top of Primrose Hill has now been removed by David Butler and there is now a gap which provides access to the field. Pam Connolly has agreed that her stile can be removed leaving a gap and Nell Light has agreed that the stiles on her land can be replaced with gates.

Jerry Kunkler reported that there was a small amount of funding available for rights of way works through PCAP and this might be a partial source of funding for the works. Cindy Creasy stated that through a mixture of grants, volunteers and fund raising it was hoped that the gates could be purchased and installed.

Cindy also raised the issue of the path from Heathy Close to Brimslade (WR22). The official right of way is currently blocked at the western end of Brimslade Farm. For many years walkers have been using a permissive path which runs North of the official path. However, this permissive path is now reported to be very difficult to use. The Wiltshire Council Rights of Ways Department had been contacted and they had advised that the path should not be left blocked. They suggested that a constructive conversation with the land owner should be instigated to ensure the path is cleared and to also discuss the potential to move the official ROW if this is desired by the land owner. The rights of way staff also pointed out that if the unofficial path has

been used continuously for more than 10 years then an additional ROW may have been created. Rob Mitchenhall who attended the meeting stated that to his knowledge it had been in use in excess of 10 years. It was agreed that the PC should engage in a constructive discussion with Bruce Gauntlett who owns the land to resolve the issue.

Action: Cindy Creasy

Telephone Box Purchase Suggestion – This suggestion has been investigated and it was found that the PC had been offered the old telephone box by BT, but as it was a modern style box the offer was declined. There is therefore no opportunity now to proceed with this suggestion.

5. Report on the Transfer of Duties to the New Clerk

The Clerk reported that the transfer was largely complete. The PC, printer and all the files had now been transferred. The only major outstanding issue was with the Clerk's online access to the bank account which was still not available. The mandate requesting this has been sent to the bank but they have as yet not responded. A letter was recently received by Neil Worthington stating that they had tried to contact him regarding the request by phone but had not been able to contact him. Neil has therefore now contacted the bank. He was advised that the mandate team would be in contact again shortly with him again to discuss the request.

6. Report from Wiltshire Councillor

Jerry Kunkler reported that there will be a CAPG meeting on the 9th February held on Teams. There are still some small pots of money available for health and wellbeing and youth projects. A full Wiltshire Council meeting will take place on the 15th February to discuss the Council budget.

In response to a question from Cindy Creasy regarding a recent suggestion that Parish Councils might be asked to accept electoral costs, Jerry Kunkler reported that this seemed to have gone away for the time being.

7. Police matters

The Clerk had checked the police website for the latest dates available and there was a record of one public order offence in the parish in November.

8. Planning

There were no new applications to consider but the following updates on outstanding applications were reported. The vice Chair gave the following up-date on applications:

House near Canal – (PL/2021/06929) – the application has been refused. The grounds for refusal given were that it was outside the built area, it was detrimental to the rural setting of the village landscape, and its proximity and scale would result in harm to the setting of a grade II listed building (The Halt).

House near Manor Farmhouse – (PL/2021/06385) – the application has been refused. The grounds for refusal were an 'in principle' objection to the erection of a building in this location due to the potential harmful visual impact on the setting of the designated heritage assets, namely the grade II* Manor Farmhouse.

In respect of the above applications, it was proposed by Cindy Creasy that the Parish Council expressed their gratitude to all the residents who had taken the time to attend meetings and make comments regarding these two applications. This was unanimously supported by Councillors.

9. Finance

The current financial position was reported as follows:-

Balance at Bank

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Deposit Account | 4,588.09 |
| Current Account | <u>4,573.25</u> |
| Total funds in bank | <u>£9,161.34</u> |

of which £2,138.34 was ring-fenced for Recreation Ground maintenance and new equipment.

Income/Payments

The following payment had been received - £883.50 in respect of Invoice No. 15 issued to Ford Fuels Limited for BEAM income.

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

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|------------------|--|
| Clerks Salary | £1566.24 (one payment made to Neil Worthington for £1562.84 and one payment to HMRC of £3.40 in respect of PAYE) |
| Neil Worthington | £79.75 in respect of stationery and printer supplies |

The following new payments were approved for payment by BACS

Idverde - Invoice for grounds maintenance covering the period 01/10/21-31/12/2021 – £276.38

A request for a £100 donation towards the maintenance of the church grounds had been received from the P.C.C. Councillors were asked to support this donation and it was unanimously agreed to make this donation and approve this for payment.

Budget

The proposed budget for 2022/23 had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting based on the essential Parish Council spending. Small rises in spending had been included to cover inflationary increases where these are expected. The anticipated BEAM income had been set at £750 to reflect uncertainty and the anticipated reduction in oil use. It was proposed by Steve Rawling and seconded by Nick Jones that budget as proposed of £4,176 be adopted, and this was unanimously agreed.

Precept

The precept request has to be made by 18th January 2022 so councillors discussed at what level to set the precept. With an anticipated income from BEAM of £750, a precept of at least £3,426 would be required to leave the reserves intact. There was general agreement that the precept should be increased and it was proposed that a 6% increase to £3,547.19 would be the appropriate level. This would represent an annual increase of £1.57 for a household living in a typical Band D property This was

then proposed by Steve Rawling, seconded by Cindy Creasy and unanimously agreed.

10. Emergency Planning

In David Butler's absence it was agreed to defer this item and add it to the next meeting agenda

11. Canal Lock Safety

In David Butler's absence it was agreed to defer this item and add it to the next meeting agenda

12 Correspondence received

An email had been received prior to the meeting regarding issues with the BEAM group. Nicholas Mitchell-Briggs had advised that there had recently been difficulties with Ford Fuels not sending out the emails with the BEAM price, extended delivery times being quoted and that some parishioners had stated that the price was not as low as some other suppliers or they had been charged the wrong price. The Clerk had been asked to contact other groups to try to get feedback on their experience. As a result, the clerk reported that he had made contact with Martin Hamer who runs the Burbage BEAM group and he had reported no such problems. Martin did state there had been minor disruption in receiving emails due to the holiday period over Christmas, but other than that, things had been running smoothly.

Action: Clerk to contact Nick

13. Matters Raised by the Public

There were no matters raised by the public

14. Date of the next meeting – 14th March 2022 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall
Councillors and members of the public attending the meeting will be required to comply with then current Covid regulations.

Signed as a true record 

Clare Bamforth – Vice Chair