

# Wootton Rivers Parish Council

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## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> of August 2024

### Present:

Dean Cowley	Parish Council Chair
Steve Rawlings	Councillor
Shelley Whitehead	Councillor
Nick Jones	Councillor
Clare Bamforth	Vice Chair
Julian Beames	Clerk

### 1. Apologies:

Cindy Creasy	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. No declaration was made.

### 3. Agreement of Minutes

The Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2024 were agreed as a true record and signed by Dean Cowley - Chair.

### 4. Planning

#### 4.1 Council Responses to consultations

- i. PL/2024/07290- Moles End - Trees on boundary between Reeves Cottage/Moles End - Cypress Leylandii x 3 – Fell  
Councillors were supportive of the removal of the hedge and resolved not to object to the application
- ii. PL/2024/07314 – Willowbrook - Silver Birch tree – fell  
There was a general acceptance by Councillors that the tree was too large for its position so close to the house and that therefore they would not object the application to remove the tree but did suggest replanting as an option  
PL/ - 2024/07525 – Minley - Beech hedging - reduce to 1.8m, Prunus tree - reduce height by 2m and shape  
Again, Councillors supported the reduction in height of the hedge and the reduction of the tree within the garden and would therefore not object.
- iii. PL/2024/03713 – Alterations to existing cart shed, demolition, re-building of existing boundary wall – Amended plans/additional

information & PL/2024/07270 – Listed building consent for above.

The alteration of the plans to reduce the height of the wall to a level where it had previously been was supported by all Councillors and they therefore resolved to support the change to the application

4.2 The Parish Council's application to fell the Blackthorn tree behind the parking bays is on-going but is not now required to carry out the drainage works.

### **4.3 Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework**

The Chair reported on a briefing recently held by Wiltshire Council which outlined the planning changes being introduced by the new Government and the impact this would have on Wiltshire as a County. The Government are proposing the re-introduction of mandatory house building targets and Wiltshire's target is set to increase from the current 1,917 per annum to 3,476 houses per annum (an increase of 81%). The revised Local Plan which Wiltshire Council have been working on and is just about to be submitted for inspection will still be submitted but even if accepted will immediately be out-of-date and need to be revised, due to the need to address the new higher target figures.

The Chair explained that the major issue for the village is the re-introduction of the 5-year land supply target which is critical, because if the County can't meet this figure (and it has always struggled) then it seriously weakens the protection that the village NDP currently provides against speculative development from house builders.

To address this there may be a need to revise and renew our NDP so that it strengthens the protections again but there are risks to this as we would have to carry out a housing needs survey and it would highlight the village as a potential area for development.

The general view of the Councillors was that we should await the final outcome of the consultation and then take a view later as to whether any action is required.

## **5. Finance**

There was one invoice to approve which was for £330.30 to Idverde for the grass cutting on the Recreation Ground and this was approved by Councillors.

## **6. Report on Police Matters**

David Whitehead mentioned that Police had been called to the village on three occasions recently due to what appeared to be minor disputes between boaters.

## **7. Correspondence Received**

A letter had been received from the Pewsey Community Area Partnership asking the PC to endorse a letter to Wiltshire Council regarding their poor performance in maintaining the Highways. In view of the good co-operation, we have received recently in resolving our local issues, the Council felt it was not appropriate to endorse the letter

## **8. Matters Raised by The Public and Council**

The PC had been contacted to request action was taken to address the issue of sheep escaping onto the village road. Whilst it is an offence to allow animals to wander on the highways and this can be reported to the Police the Council decided that the appropriate action at this time was to contact the shepherdess and ask that she takes more steps to address the issue. The Chair will therefore write to her to ask for her co-operation in controlling the sheep better in the future.

Rob Mitchenall asked if there was any further progress on addressing the problem with the trees over the parking bays. The Chair responded that he had recently had a conversation with Richard Turner who had provided a quotation to Ms Davies, but he had not had any further contact since doing that. The Chair undertook to contact Ms Davies again to request that she carried through on her promise to address the issue urgently.

The Clerk provided an update on the work being carried out in the village. The team will now be continuing the work for another week. The plan is to bypass the current drain and lay a new one in front of it. This is to avoid having to dig out the trees which are over the current drain. The Clerk has provided further information and pictures to the project engineer this week as current thinking is to only replace the pipe behind the parking bays nearest the canal. They have also identified issues with the drain further up the village and will be doing further investigations closer to the Village Hall using CCTV. It is hoped the current work will be completed by the end of the month.

The Chair raised the subject of looking at projects which could be funded by the rise in the precept. It has been the Council's ambition to raise some extra funds to spend on small village projects and this was behind the recent increases in the village precept. The Clerk undertook to provide a summary of Council spending and how much might be available. The Chair stated that the Council would then solicit the view of residents on what projects might be funded.

### **Date of the next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the Parish Council is planned to take place on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2024

Signed as a true record.....Date .....

Dean Cowley – Chair