

Wootton Rivers Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 13th of November 2023

Present:

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| Dean Cowley | Parish Council Chair |
| Clare Bamforth | Vice Chair |
| Cindy Creasy | Councillor |
| David Butler | Councillor |
| Nick Jones | Councillor |
| Steve Rawlings | Councillor |
| Julian Beames | Clerk |

1. Apologies for absence from:

Shelley Whitehead Councillor

2. Agreement of Minutes

The Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on the 11th of September 2023 were agreed as a true record and signed by Dean Cowley - Chair.

3. 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 recorded.

4. Report from Wiltshire Councillor

Jerry Kunkler mentioned the up-coming meeting at the Bouverie Hall in Pewsey entitled 'Highways Matters' which is scheduled for 7-9pm on the 27th of November. It will be hosted by the Pewsey area Board and is an opportunity for anyone from the community to meet and ask questions of Wiltshire Council officers and Councillors regarding all highways related matters.

The Wiltshire council budget is currently in a good situation with only a minor over spend and they expect to manage this year within budget.

Jerry also mentioned the up-coming area board and the fact that requests for funding can be submitted and asked if there was any interest in applying for funding for projects such as the recreation ground. The Chair stated that he would pass on the information to the Village Hall Committee who now manage the recreation ground as they had planned projects which were looking for funding.

The subject of the Local Plan consultation was raised, and Jerry was asked if there had been much reaction. Jerry stated that the local response had been muted but this was due mainly to the fact that its effects locally are not that great, with only very limited local development proposed. Councillor Creasy mentioned that her only concern was around the amended wording concerning infill development in small villages which now omitted the previous wording which defined it as limited to 'one or two houses. Jerry was not aware of why this wording had been changed but would try to find out.

Jerry asked if the Parish Council had been advised of the costs that would be levied by Wiltshire Council for a local Parish election should one be required. The Clerk confirmed that we had not been advised yet.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Local Plan Update – As reported last time, the review of the proposed Local Plan has limited impact on the village, and the only concern is the previously mentioned change in the wording around ‘infill’ development. The Chair proposed; and it was accepted by Councillors, that the team would respond on behalf of the Parish Council to the consultation and raise the concern around this change of wording.

Parish Steward Scheme – The Parish Steward scheme continues to work better than previously with requested tasks being completed. The better communication continues. The Steward will be asked on his next visit to try and clear some of the build-up of mud and silt at the bottom of Primrose Hill.

6. Drainage

Following the recent work to unblock the drain, the system is now working well. A recent survey of the drains identified several issues, and the local highways technician is awaiting the final report. He has promised to arrange an on-site visit to discuss solutions to permanently repair the drains to avoid reoccurrences.

7. Road Closure Forest Road – 20th of December 2023.

Openreach has instigated a one-day road closure to carry out overhead cable work opposite the Royal Oak. It is not expected to cause major issues, but residents should be aware.

8. Recreation Ground - Annual Inspection Report

Th Clerk reported that he had carried out the annual inspection and that in general there were no issues. The fencing, play equipment, and sports equipment are in good condition with only one action identified to replace a rotten plank on one of the wooden structures. This has now been carried out by Sam Keyes-Toyer and the action is closed.

Tony McGarry mentioned that the Velcro on the cricket nets needs weekly checking as it is coming loose.

9. Planning

Application Decisions

PL-2023-05141 – Land off Forest Road – Construction of an additional cattle building. This application has been approved with conditions including the improvement of the access apron next to the highway and the landscaping and tree planting as proposed in the application. There is also the condition that if the building is no longer used it must be removed.

PL/2023/05008 - Manor Farm – Proposal: Removal of roof and windows to existing conservatory and replacement with new. Construction of a brick pier to dining room – Approved with conditions.

PL2023/07331 – Tregarthen, Wootton Rivers, Copper Beech Tree in front garden – Fell. – A provisional Tree Protection Order has been issued by Wiltshire Council. The owner is now in discussion with the planners regarding the decision.

10. Finance Report

Bank balances: are currently as follows:

Treasurers Account £1,455.77

Business Account – £8,335.19

The Parish Council expenditure continues to be in line with the agreed budget and should allow a small surplus to be built up this year for future projects and to cover new anticipated costs such as paying election costs.

Payments

The following payment needed to be approved.

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| R. Mitchenall | Audit Fee | £33.00 |
| St Andrew's Church | Donation | £100.00 |
| IdVerde | Grass Cutting | £276.38 |
| Wessex Print Centre | Contact Printing | £35.00 |

The following payment needed to be authorised.

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| 1. Payroll | Clerk's Salary | £1696.00 |
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These were unanimously agreed.

Action: The Clerk to initiate the payroll payments

Following notification from Lloyds Bank that they proposed to stop sending paper statements the Clerk sort the Council's approval to 'go paperless'. The statements will now instead be posted to an online message box and can be printed out when required. All Councillors were happy to proceed with this rather than 'opting out' and gave their consent to this change.

11. Report on Police matters

Nick Mitchell-Briggs reported that there has been a vehicle break-in near the canal bridge and unfortunately some tools were stolen. Nick expressed his annoyance that he had not been advised immediately and therefore could not pass this information on to residents as soon as he would have liked to.

12. Correspondence received.

Email from Pam Connolly – Pam had raised her concern about some bits of the footpaths being missed during the cutting rounds. Councillor Butler advised that he had taken this on-board and that hopefully the team had now been briefed on all the cutting areas, so nothing is missed in future.

Email from Steve Criddle – Steve had raised his concerns over the narrowing of the road at the bottom of Primrose Hill due to the build up of silt and mud over the years. The Clerk will ask the Steward to work on this area during his next series of visit to try and improve the area. If this is not sufficient then it may be necessary to ask WC to bring in a digger to widen the road again.

13. Matters Raised by the Public

An issue was raised concerning a hedge on the main village road which is now overhanging the highway and causing it to become narrowed. The Clerk will contact the owner and request it is trimmed back.

The next scheduled meeting of the Parish Council is planned to take place on Monday 8th January 2024 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall

Signed as a true record.....Date

Dean Cowley – Chair