

Wootton Rivers Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 9th of September 2024

Present:

Clare Bamforth	Vice Chair
David Butler	Councillor
Steve Rawlings	Councillor
Nick Jones	Councillor
Shelley Whitehead	Councillor
Julian Beames	Clerk

1. Apologies:

Dean Cowley	Parish Council Chair
Cindy Creasy	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. Councillor Whitehead declared an interest in their planning application for tree works and Councillor Jones declared an interest in the item relating to the listing of the Royal Oak as a Community asset.

3. Agreement of Minutes

The Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meetings held on the 21st of August 2024 were agreed as a true record and signed by Clare Bamforth – Deputy Chair.

4. Report from Local Councillor

Jerry Kunkler reported that there will be a meeting of local Wiltshire MPs with the Council leader to discuss the implications of the Government's proposed changes to planning policy as it affects Wiltshire and the new local plan. He also reported that over ten thousand responses had been received as a result of the consultation on the local plan.

There have been a number of refusals to grant planning recently due to phosphate pollution concerns and this could be an issue in the future. He is seeking clarification as to the implications for development.

The next area board will take place in Woodborough on the 23rd of September and any grant applications should be submitted ahead of the meeting.

There will be a representative of the Kennet & Avon Medical Practice at the meeting to talk about the service if any residents want to come and listen and ask questions.

Jerry enquired about progress on the drainage works in the village. A discussion took place regarding the progress of the works. The Clerk reported that the section of drain behind the parking bays closest to the canal bridge which was found to have sunk and had a dip in it has been replaced. The contractors have also dug out and replaced the section of drain under the entrance to the lane at Manor Barn and put in a new manhole and will continue this week to replace a section as far as the driveway to Owl Cottage which appears to have blockages in it. Councillors expressed their hopes that these improvements will alleviate the problems. Councillor Butler also reported that he felt that during the recent heavy rains the flow had improved with a better flow of water coming out of the pipe into the canal. The Clerk did say that he remains concerned that the section of drain behind the first set of parking bays (which is where the main root infiltration takes place) has still not been changed.

5. Report on Actions Arising from the Minutes

Trees on Forest Road

The Chair (through the Deputy Chair) responded to the items regarding the trees on Forest Road. He had contacted Ms Davies, and she had stated that she had received the quotation from the tree surgeons to remove the trees, but it was too expensive, and she was therefore in discussions to find a solution.

Flooding at Bottom of Primrose Hill

The Clerk reported that he had contacted Network Rail who are the owners of the land where the tenant had blocked the flow of water into the waterway which provides drainage of the road at this point. He had provided details of the issue to their technical surveyor and asked that the tenant be reminded of his riparian responsibilities to accept water from the highway over his land and into the waterway.

6. Planning

PL/2024/07862- Lock House Reduce height of leylandii trees

Councillors were all supportive of the reduction of the trees and resolved not to object to the application

The Parish Council's application to fell the tree behind the parking bays has been approved with no objection from Wiltshire Council to its removal. Councillor Butler asked the Council to approve the felling of the tree and after a vote the Council unanimously approved for it to be removed to prevent further root ingress into the drain.

Although not on the agenda, Councillors did discuss the very recent application for tree works at Clare Cottage and were in agreement that the Council should not object and the Clerk will deal with the application through his delegation.

7. Finance

The Clerk reported the Council's bank balances as follows:

Treasurers account: £10,917.32

Business account: 600.66

There was one payment for the Council to approve which was the direct debit of £35.00 to the Information Commissioners Office. The Council unanimously resolved to approve the payment.

The Clerk then presented a summary of the Council overall finances and current reserves. This was following the Chairs request to understand how much additional money the Council had to potentially spend on small projects following the decision this year to raise additional funds through the Parish precept.

The following summary was provided:

Current Banks Balances	
Business account	£10,917.32
Treasurers account	£600.65
Anticipated further income	£450 (BEAM)
Anticipated further expenditure	£3,131.60
Anticipated year end reserves	£8,836.37
Earmarked reserves	£1,338.28
General reserves	£7,498.09 (equivalent to 17.5 months revenue)

For small Council it is recommended that they hold 12 months revenues as a reserve. However, as we are a very small Council this recommendation needs to be seen in the light of the fact that a single unforeseen event could lead to a significant impact on the reserves. Our equivalent monthly revenue is £430 per month.

In light of the absence of the Chair and the fact that we do not yet know the income we will receive from BEAM this year it was agreed to defer the subject to the November meeting.

8. Re-registering the Royal Oak as a Community Asset

The current registration is due to expire, and the Council needed to decide as to whether it wanted to re-register the Royal Oak with Wiltshire Council as a Community asset and continue avail themselves of the protections that this provides. Councillor Whitehead asked to be reminded what protections are from registering the asset. It was outlined by the clerk and others if the asset is registered then the asset cannot be sold or any development applications made, without the community being made aware and then if they choose to, being provided with a window of opportunity to make an offer for the asset.

Following a vote, it was unanimously agreed that the Council should apply to have the asset registered again.

9. Report on Police Matters

There had been one house burglary reported in Easton Royal which residents had been made aware of through an email to residents.

10. Correspondence received

None

11. Matters raised by the public

None

12. Next meeting date – 11th November 2024

Signed as a true record.....Date

Clare Bamforth – Deputy Chair