

Woodchester Parish Council

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Minutes of the Remote Meeting of Woodchester Parish Council held on 23rd July, 2020 at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs. Lead, Baldauf, Baynham-Honri, Dunbar, McNealey and Warnes.

In attendance: County Councillor Steve Robinson and the clerk.

2020/61 To receive apologies for absence.

An apology was received from Cllr. Hamilton.

2020/62 To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

There were no declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

2020/63 To receive questions from members of the public and those attending in an official capacity.

There were no members of the public present.

2020/64 To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 4th June, 2020.

These were confirmed. It was agreed they be signed at a later date.

2020/65 To receive County Councillor report.

Cllr. Robinson reported the resurfacing of the A46 from Lightpill to Nailsworth is now underway. Some complications had led to delay, but the work is finally taking place. Issues relating to the 'cycle path' were discussed. Trees down south of Station Road were quickly cleared after being reported to Gloucestershire Rights of Way. There had been a couple of incidents of cars being driven along the cycle path from the Nailsworth end. Collapsible bollards were quickly installed to prevent this, whilst still allowing access for maintenance vehicles.

Councillors expressed their thanks to those responsible for the resurfacing work.

During the wetter months, when other paths were too wet to access, it was used extensively, as it has been recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cllr. Robinson reported that the funding for the work came jointly from Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), Stroud District Council (SDC) and the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust through funding from a European grant. Cllr. Simon Pickering has also been involved in the scheme. GCC through Alan Bently are now responsible for continued maintenance. It was Cllr. Robinson's understanding that the two remaining sections of unsurfaced path at Rooksmoor and Frogmarsh would both be completed once the boards at the Rooksmoor development come down.

Cllr. Robinson reported that as far as he was aware, there has been no further work to look at designating the path.

Councillors discussed the potential for a meeting between Nailsworth Town Council and Woodchester Parish Council to discuss developing the path further and keeping up the momentum of the wonderful work carried out to date. Heritage and information boards, sculptures and benches were mentioned as possibilities to further enhance the track.

Initials.....

As well as the resurfacing of the bottom of Bospin Lane, Cllr. Robinson had agreed to funding signage at Frogmarsh and St. Mary's Hill, and markings for Selsley Road.

Councillors thanked Cllr. Robinson for this funding.

Cllr. Robinson had recently met the newly appointed Assistant Chief Constable Rhiannon Kirk and raised the issues associated with wild swimming at Woodchester Park. She was aware of these issues.

An advisory white line has recently been added to St. Mary's Hill by Gloucestershire Highways. It is hoped this will discourage visitors from parking here.

Cllr. Robinson left the meeting.

2020/66

To receive the clerk's report.

This was received.

The issue of customers of the snack van on the A46 using the land adjacent to the 'cycle path' as a toilet was also discussed. The Environmental Health Department of SDC had suggested that as anti-social behaviour, it was a matter for the police. The clerk had been in contact with the PCSO. Unless there is a police presence there at the time an incident occurs, it will be very difficult for them to act.

Councillors agreed to approach the owner of the snack van to place a notice on the counter asking customers not to use this land and to advise that public toilets are available locally at Nailsworth Bus Station. A similar sign could be displayed on the slope down to the path.

An issue at Hillgrove House had arisen involving the disposal of asbestos and the burning of rubbish on the site. The Environmental Health Department of SDC had been made aware and had visited the site. Local residents will be monitoring the situation and will report any further incidents to SDC.

The clerk mentioned that Woodchester Endowed School PTA are planning to hold a Lion Hunt around the village. It was agreed this should be publicised on the website and Facebook to inform residents.

2020/67

To note the latest financial statements.

These were noted.

2020/68

To approve expenditure and approve cheques as per annex.

There was no expenditure to approve.

2020/69

To note planning applications, decisions and appeals from SDC as per annex.

These were noted.

Once more details are received on the permitted development application at Woodchester Mill, Councillors agreed to pass those details to Cllr. Robinson.

2020/70

To review the report from the internal auditor and amend or provide an explanation for any issues that arose.

Councillors had been sent a copy of the report prior to the meeting. There were no issues raised by the internal auditor.

2020/71

To approve and sign the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the Annual Return).

This was approved and it was agreed would be signed by Cllr. Hamilton at a convenient time.

2020/72

To approve and sign the Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the Annual Return).

Section 2 was approved and it was agreed would be signed by Cllr. Hamilton at a convenient time.

2020/73

To approve and sign the Certificate of Exemption to confirm the higher of gross income or gross expenditure did not exceed £25,000 in the year ended 31st March 2020.

Initials.....

This was approved and it was agreed would be signed by Cllr. Hamilton at a convenient time.

2020/74 To discuss the financial situation regarding the Woodchester Word and agree any action.

For a number of years, revenue from advertising has just covered printing costs. In the current pandemic there has been a drop in advertising revenue which, if editions continue as they have done, will not cover the cost of printing. In recent years, the Woodchester Word has been funded entirely by advertising, but this was not always the case. In the past the Parish Council contributed to the cost.

Since the meeting, a quote for a much smaller edition of a folded A3 sheet has been sourced. The reduced cost would be £145 per issue, compared to the current cost of £395.

It was agreed that discussion should consider whether the Woodchester Word is a service to the Parish. If it is, whether funding therefore be allocated through the precept. It was agreed this would be discussed at the meeting in September.

2020/75 To receive an update on the issue of 'wild swimming' at Woodchester Park and agree any further course of action.

Issues are ongoing, relating to access, barbecues, parking etc. As well as parking in St. Mary's Hill and Convent Lane, visitors are now also parking further afield. The National Trust are giving more attention to the problem and are considering a 'non-penetrable' gate at the lower entrance.

Gloucestershire Highways have now painted a white line on St. Mary's Hill and a sign for St. Mary's Hill has also been agreed. It's hoped this will deter some visitors from parking inconsiderately.

2020/76 To discuss potential plans to mark the centenary on the 31st October of the unveiling of the War Memorial in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councillors agreed that it's unlikely we'll be significantly out of lockdown in time to hold an event and that, with social distancing measures required, an event will not be feasible. It was agreed an informative article be written for the Woodchester Word.

2020/77 To discuss issues relating to the 'cycle path' including resurfacing works and signage and agree any action.

This was discussed under item 2020/65.

The clerk will follow up reinstatement of the cycle path over the water main just south of Birds Crossing.

2020/78 To receive an update on the work of the Community Outreach Group, supporting vulnerable members of the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. To agree any further course of action.

Recently there have been no new requests for support, although there remain several volunteers who are providing regular support for residents for shopping and prescription collection.

It was agreed that the newspaper delivery has now run its course, but it was hoped that ongoing support could be given to anyone who was still not able to source a paper by another means.

2020/79 To receive comments from members of the public on items discussed at this meeting.
There were no members of the public present.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Initials.....

Chair..... Date.....

Initials.....