

Woodchester Parish Council

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Minutes of the Meeting of Woodchester Parish Council held on 5th March, 2020
in the Village Hall at 7pm

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

In attendance: The clerk; County Councillor Steve Robinson; representatives from Rooksmoor Mills, Mr. Cooper and Mr. Tyndall; representatives from St. Mary's Church, Mr. Pemberton and Mrs. Bull, and three members of the public.

2020/22 To receive apologies for absence.

An apology was received from Cllr. McNealey.

2020/23 To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

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

2020/24 To receive questions from members of the public and those attending in an official capacity.

The Parish Council was asked whether it had considered the guidance from the Commission for Dark Skies, which has been taken on board locally by Minchinhampton Parish Council. Cllr. Hamilton confirmed that this was not something the Parish Council had discussed. It was agreed it be considered at the Full Council meeting in May. Councillors were asked whether they had looked to identify 'lost paths' within the village as part of a drive from the Ramblers Association to identify these paths by 2026 to ensure they're added to the definitive map. It was agreed the Highways and Rights of Way Committee would consider this issue at their next meeting, although Councillors were not aware of any such paths in the village. Councillors were made aware that Complete Utilities have not yet put right the verges at Frogmarsh. The clerk will follow this up.

2020/25 To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 9th January, 2020.

These were confirmed as a true record and signed by Cllr. Hamilton.

2020/26 To receive an update on the Rooksmoor development and to receive questions from members of the public.

Mr. Cooper and Mr. Tyndall were welcomed to the meeting. They gave an update on the development.

Unfavourable weather over recent months has left the ground very boggy, putting the development up to five weeks behind schedule.

Piling for Block F is complete and the ground beams are in place. Contractors are currently working on the retaining wall. Completion of Block F is expected in July/August.

Work will commence on Block B in May/June with a nine month contract for completion. Mr. Cooper confirmed that all piling will be augured, creating less noise for local residents.

Discussions with the Environment Agency are ongoing to provide an otter tunnel through one of the culverts.

Initials.....

Following flooding outside The Old Fleece in January, contractors reported the blocked drains on the A46 to Gloucestershire Highways (GH). Some concern had been raised at the time of a possible link with the Rooksmoor Development. Mr. Cooper confirmed that all water courses were checked with dye during the planning phase of the development. Only one drain was found to go into the site from Rooksmoor Hill, which has not been affected by the development. The excessive rainfall and blocked drains were the cause. The drains have now been cleared by Gloucestershire Highways. The area at the north of the site has outline planning permission for commercial use. The developers are considering an application for affordable houses rather than commercial use and asked for the views of Councillors.

Although Councillors would not wish to see large commercial units on the plot, with the visits by large lorries that potentially brings, they agreed that small workshop-style units might be beneficial to the area and questioned whether Stroud District Council (SDC) had carried out research into the local demand for such units. Mr. Cooper explained the potential issues in financing mixed-use developments. The time-frame for this section of the development is 18-24 months.

Mr. Cooper confirmed that traffic lights will be expected on the A46 during the building of Block C in approximately nine to twelve months. Mr. Cooper was aware that a gas main was expected to be installed along the A46 (not part of Rooksmoor development), which is far from ideal if it takes place following the resurfacing work. Cllr. Robinson agreed to contact Gloucestershire Highways and suggest the section of the A46 due to be dug up by the gas company be resurfaced once this work is complete.

Mr. Cooper and Mr. Tyndall were thanked for their time.

2020/27

To receive a presentation on Phase 2 of St. Mary's Church project which aims to further develop the use of the church building for the benefit of the Woodchester community.

Mr. Pemberton and Mrs. Bull were welcomed to the meeting. They described the extensive work already carried out as part of improvement plans for the Church and wider community. Phase 1, nearing completion, saw the installation of the new kitchen, new toilets and storage. The base of the tower will be opened up to bring it back to the original design.

Phase 2 is about improving the flexibility of the space by removing the pews. It will also require changes to the heating system, currently above floor level; the option for a new heating system will be dependent on what level of occupancy might be expected. The goodwill of the community was tapped for Phase 1. It's hoped that Phase 2 can be brought to fruition through grant applications where there will be the need to demonstrate the potential for use by the wider community. Demand must be established before the Church are able to move forward.

The views of Councillors were sought to support fund-raising opportunities.

It was agreed that there would be little conflict with the Village Hall, which is often fully booked. The Church will offer a larger capacity.

It will provide opportunities for meetings, more space for the Village Show, groups for youth and the elderly and opportunities to bring these two groups together. A scheme where this occurs in Stroud, called 'Interplay' was mentioned.

Concerts have also been considered, but parking would be an issue in the winter as the Church Green currently stands. Matting has been considered for the Green, but it's important that aesthetics are not compromised.

Cllr. Robinson mentioned a new overhead heating system in the Youth Centre in Nailsworth and welcomed members of the Church to visit and look at the system in place.

Councillors supported plans which offer maximum flexibility whilst being in keeping with the church setting.

2020/28

To receive County and District Councillor reports.

Cllr. Robinson confirmed the A46 (between Kitesnest Lane and the Shell Garage) will be resurfaced as part of work for the first quarter of 2020-21. He will make a suggestion to Gloucestershire Highways that the section of road involved in the gas works be delayed.

He had received many emails about blocked drains on the A46 which have now been cleared.

Currently the area has limited Police cover as Local PC Paul Matthews has left and the area is therefore without a Neighbourhood Police Officer. When on duty we have PCSO Steve Phillipson, but otherwise there is no cover for the area.

Forty six officers are being recruited from April with funding from Central Government. With eighty six officers expected to retire next year, those will also need to be replaced with new recruits.

Cllr. Robinson mentioned Highways Local funding and the possibility of including marking for Selsley Road in this.

2020/29

To receive the clerk's report.

This was received and is available on the village website.

In addition, the clerk confirmed that Mrs. Kath Gay has resigned from her work for the Village Hall after some 35 years involvement. She will be hard to replace. The Village Hall Committee had already met and discussed the idea of tasks being shared. Cllr. Hamilton may have more to report at the next meeting.

SDC have agreed to reseed the bank of the Church Green following damage by vehicles accessing the Southbank site.

The A46 and Rooksmoor Hill will be resurfaced between the 1st April and the 1st July as part of a larger programme of resurfacing work. Closures will take place at night (between 7pm and 7am).

Ian Smith is retiring at the end of March after 19 years work for the Parish Council. He has provided a good service for the village over the years. It was agreed Councillors sign a farewell card. It was suggested Woodchester Valley Village be approached for a donation as a gesture of thanks from the village. His retirement will be mentioned in the Woodchester Word.

2020/30

To note the latest financial statements.

These were noted.

2020/31

To discuss issues with Lloyds Bank and agree a course of action.

Following issues trying to alter the level of online access, Councillors discussed whether the Parish Council look to move funds to another bank. It was agreed that a third form be signed and taken to a Lloyds Branch, and that the clerk would make enquiries as to the experience of other local Parishes.

2020/32

To approve expenditure and approve cheques as per annex.

Expenditure was approved and cheques signed at the end of the meeting.

2020/33

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

These were noted.

2020/34

To approve an internal auditor.

Mr. Iain Selkirk was appointed as internal auditor.

Initials.....

- 2020/35 To discuss and approve a quote for village maintenance for 2020-21.**
A quote from Mr. Tim Curtis was agreed by Councillors.
- 2020/36 To discuss the centenary on the 31st October of the unveiling of the war memorial and agree Parish Council involvement in an event to mark the occasion.**
A service was held ten years ago for the 90th anniversary. Councillors agreed the importance of a commemoration and agreed the schools and churches should be involved. It was agreed that Councillor Warnes contact the Rector of St. Mary's Church, the clerk will contact the Headteacher at the Endowed School to discuss an event to mark the occasion.
- 2020/37 To agree the format for the 2020 Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 14th May and to discuss and agree key issues to include in the Parish Council report.**
It was agreed that reports be requested from local organisations as has been done in the past.
It was agreed appropriate for a review of the Village Plan to take place with an opportunity for representatives of the Church to speak at a public meeting. A display was suggested which would invite comments about updating the Parish Plan that could link with the possible uses of the church.
It was agreed Andrew Pemberton be approached to talk about Phase 2 plans for St. Mary's, with the opportunity to seek the views of those present and that the meeting be held in St. Mary's Church, if available.
Cllr. Dunbar agreed to give a presentation on Highways issues following on from his presentation in May 2019.
Cllr. Hamilton will draft a report from the Parish Council and asked Councillors for input into this.
- 2020/38 To receive a report from the Highways and Rights of Way Committee to include a report on a meeting with the GCC Highways Commissioner on road safety, road drainage/repairs and related issues and agree on immediate and long term priorities for roads in the Parish.**
Cllr. Dunbar reported that information given at the meeting led to the conclusion that a 20mph speed limit through the village is not achievable. Data supports the idea that a change to the speed limit here would not be worth the money or effort.
Although a 30mph limit on the A46 is not encouraged by GH, it may still be possible. It was agreed the Highways and Rights of Way Committee discuss this at their next meeting.
The majority of funding Gloucestershire Highways allow for road repairs has already been allocated this year for repairs to weather-damaged roads.
Cllr. Dunbar learnt that additional road signage does not always require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), as was previously believed to be the case. Although any additional signage would need to be agreed by GH, it is then possible to install prescribed signs at cost price. The Highways and Rights of Way Committee agreed to discuss improved road signage at their next meeting.
Cllr. Warnes provided an update on the state of footpaths in the village.
All footpaths continue to be very wet. The path between Church Road and Lager Lane continues to be closed for work by Severn Trent, although no work is currently taking place.
The path from Church Road across Little Hill to Woodchester House remains open with a diversionary path in place around the pipework.
The path from Selsley Road to the 'cycle path' has been resurfaced and is much improved. It's unclear whether this will be the permanent surface. The flooding issues

between Cholmeleys Drive to Friggs Mill have been made much better and water no longer sits on the track.

The section of the 'cycle path' just north of Paul's Rise regularly floods. Contractors carrying out the resurfacing work believed this would be resolved by raising the track. This has not been officially confirmed.

Cllr. Warnes reported several issues with the 'cycle path'. It was agreed the clerk report these to Gloucestershire Highways, copied to other agencies involved in the resurfacing and improvement works.

2020/39 To discuss improvements to the 'cycle path' being implemented by Stroud Valleys Project and to agree a response.

The clerk had received details of improvements planned (some already in place) for the 'cycle path'. This included the planting of native shrubs and the installation of two benches.

Councillors fully supported the proposals and agreed they were 'a breath of fresh air' in that they had clearly been very well thought-out in terms of the types and locations of shrubs and benches.

The clerk will respond thanking the Stroud Valleys Project for their excellent proposals.
9.05pm Cllr. Robinson and a member of the public left the meeting.

2020/40 To discuss and agree a response to Gloucestershire County Council's Local Transport Plan.

Although Councillors identified some interesting and positive points in the documents, for example the proposal for hubs near motorway junctions, the overarching view was of a document which lacks coordination and doesn't appear to tie in with SDC's Local Plan. There has been very little prior consultation with District and Parish Councils.

Councillors questioned whether large employers have been consulted to enable different working hours to be taken into account when considering the provision of public transport. The document could also have gone much further, for example extending the motorway hubs to provide parking for car share.

A response will be drafted.

2020/41 To receive an update from the Events Committee.

It is hoped that Open Gardens will take place this year, with a provisional date of 5th July. The Village Show will take place on the 12th September. The Events Committee currently has funds of £1,270.

2020/42 To receive comments from members of the public on items discussed at this meeting.

Although drains have been cleared on the A46 just south of Frogmarsh, pipes appear to be blocked.

A resident was pleased that the issue of 'lost footpaths' was raised and that the Highways and Rights of Way Committee would consider any issues for the village.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

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

Initials.....