

Woodchester Parish Council

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Minutes of the Remote Meeting of Woodchester Parish Council held on 5th November, 2020 at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs. Hamilton, Baynham-Honri, Dunbar and McNealey.

In attendance: County Councillor Steve Robinson, the clerk and one member of the public.

2020/97 To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Councillors Lead, Warnes and Baldauf.

2020/98 To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

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

2020/99 To receive questions from members of the public and those attending in an official capacity.

A request was made for an update on the sale of The Ram car park and a question raised as to why Convent Lane had been recently closed. Responses to these issues were given under item 2020/114.

Lunch with Friends are hoping to deliver a frozen Christmas dinner to those residents who, under normal circumstances, attend Lunch with Friends. These meals will be provided by the Long Table at Brimscombe. Councillors were asked to pass details to the clerk of any residents who may not already be known to the Lunch with Friends volunteers.

2020/100 To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 3rd September, 2020.

These were confirmed as a true record. It was agreed they be signed by Cllr. Hamilton at a convenient time before the next Full Council meeting.

2020/101 To receive the County Councillor report.

Issues of a deteriorating road surface have been reported for the bottom of St. Mary's Hill, Church Road to the junction with Southfield Road and the stretch from the cattle grid on Selsley Road to the junction with the B4066.

Work to Water Lane will be completed commencing on the 17th November for three days.

Cllr. Robinson had requested the hedge on the junction of Beech Grove and Selsley Road be cut back. The work has been carried out, but not thoroughly. Cllr. Robinson will go back to Gloucestershire Highways (GH).

Cllr. Robinson reported that school meal vouchers for the Christmas holidays will be available to those children eligible for Free School Meals.

Cllr. Robinson was thanked for his support.

Cllr. Robinson left the meeting.

2020/102 To receive the clerk's report.

In addition to items on the report, the clerk raised the situation regarding the Bike Trails, in the light of the current 'lockdown'. Playgrounds are permitted to remain open. The clerk had received no clear guidance about Bike Trails. Councillors agreed the clerk refresh the signage at the trails regarding social distancing. The clerk will seek definitive guidance on this, although the closing of them is very difficult to enforce as rope can be removed or riders climb over the fence in order to use the trails.

Initials.....

- The Woodchester Word is in a slightly better financial position than was the case in September with advertising revenue having increased.
- 2020/103 To note the latest financial statements.**
These were noted. The second precept payment of £6,250 had been received from Stroud District Council (SDC).
- 2020/104 To approve expenditure and cheques as per annex.**
Expenditure was approved. Cheques will be signed at a later date.
- 2020/105 To note planning applications, decisions and appeals from SDC as per annex.**
These were noted.
- 2020/106 To receive an update on the Rooksmoor Mills development.**
Mr. Cooper had kindly provided a report for the meeting. There have been many factors causing delay to the project. Heavy rain, delays in obtaining materials and COVID-19 amongst other issues have meant work remains three months behind schedule, although progress has improved.
Block F is now nearing completion. The first two units will be finished in late November, four more before Christmas and the last two in mid-January.
Block B should start piling in early December with first units being complete in August, with the rest by November.
Block A should start at the end of May 2021.
It is hoped that development will be complete by mid-July 2022, but final completion dates will be subject to COVID-19 and any restrictions that may affect work on site.
- 2020/107 To discuss a quote for work to ash trees on the Bike Trails and agree a course of action.**
The developers of Rooksmoor Mills had requested that three trees on the Bike Trails be taken down. Two of them have limbs which extend onto the Rooksmoor site.
The clerk sought advice and quotes from a tree surgeon, who provided a range of priced options.
Although safety is of paramount importance for users of the cycle path and Bike Trails, Councillors were reluctant to fell any tree which was considered by an expert to be in good health and stable.
Councillors unanimously agreed that four branches overhanging the building works be removed from the ash tree at the south of the site.
This tree has some degree of ash dieback, but this is not yet considered to be affecting the stability of the tree.
It was also agreed the two goat willows be cut to 4-5 metres in height. This will, in most cases, enable regrowth which will need to be managed about every five years.
The clerk will confirm this with the tree surgeon who is expected to carry out the work in the new year.
Notices will inform users of the date work is expected to take place and the developers will be informed of the decision.
The situation will be reviewed in a year.
- 2020/108 To agree adoption of a Grievance Policy and Equality and Diversity Policy.**
These policies were agreed for adoption.
- 2020/109 To review the Risk Management Matrix and Complaints Policy.**
Amendments were agreed.
- 2020/110 To discuss final arrangements for Remembrance Sunday on 8th November.**
Government guidance on COVID-19 now prevents Church services taking place.
Previous guidance on Remembrance events allowed them to go ahead with essential personnel, but insisted there be no encouragement for public to attend.

Initials.....

The Church has organised a remote service on Sunday morning. Therefore it has been agreed that three wreaths will be laid at 11am on Sunday morning at the War Memorial. A very short service will be held with a two-minute silence. Any members of the public attending will be asked to respect social-distancing guidelines.

2020/111 To agree dates for Parish Council meetings in 2021.

Councillors agreed that Parish Council meetings should continue remotely, but the situation be reviewed as restrictions are lifted.

Provisional dates for 2021 were agreed as 7th January, 4th March, 13th May for the annual meeting followed by the Annual Parish Meeting, 3rd June, 1st July, 2nd September, 4th November. Once confirmed, these dates will be published on the village website.

2020/112 To receive an update from the Highways and Rights of Way Committee

Cllr. Warnes had provided an update on the Ramblers Association 'Don't Lose Your Way' campaign. 49,000 miles of lost paths have been identified, of which 910 miles are in Gloucestershire. They are now in the process of raising £49,000 in order to carry out work to provide historic evidence of these 'lost paths'.

2020/113 To receive an update from the Events Committee.

No events have been held this year. The 'Carols around the Village' event seems unlikely to go ahead, although no firm decision has yet been made.

The 'Made in Woodchester' event planned for the end of November will not go ahead, but if 'lockdown' restrictions are lifted at the beginning of December, there will be a craft trail organised for the 12th December.

Councillor McNealey agreed to contact the organiser for details to advertise the event on social media.

2020/114 To receive comments from members of the public on items discussed at this meeting.

There are several road signs which have not been removed following work in the village. The locations of these were provided. The clerk will contact GH to ask that they are removed.

A member of the public had asked for an update on the sale of The Ram car park; Councillors had nothing further to report.

The clerk was unaware of the reason for the recent road closure on Convent Lane.

The meeting closed at 7.54pm.

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

Initials.....