

# Woodchester Parish Council

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Minutes of the Remote Meeting of Woodchester Parish Council held on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2021 at 7pm.

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

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

**2021/1 To receive apologies for absence.**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2021/2 To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.**

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

**2021/3 To receive questions from members of the public and those attending in an official capacity.**

There were no questions from members of the public.

**2021/4 To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> November, 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.

**2021/5 To receive a County Councillor report.**

Work to Water Lane is complete. Councillors reported that although the work is a vast improvement, a more thorough job, incorporating drainage, would have been preferable.

Cllr. Robinson agreed to chase up a replacement sign at Frogmarsh.

Cllr. Robinson reported that Stroud District Council (SDC) have agreed funding of £160,000 towards the bridge repair at Giddynap. This funding will come from CIL payments.

Work to the surface of the bridge just north of Birds Crossing will be carried out in February/March.

Cllr. Robinson asked that he be informed of any street lamps in the village which have not yet been replaced with LEDS.

Regarding the issue of the closure of the bus stop at Rooksmoor, Cllr. Robinson asked to be included in a meeting with Jonathan Roberts, Traffic Infrastructure Officer at Gloucestershire County Council.

It is understood that once the Rooksmoor development is complete, Royal Mail will carry out an inspection to resolve where best to place the letter box to allow their operatives to safely stop and collect post.

There is uncertainty as to whether local elections will take place in May as scheduled.

SDC will encourage residents to apply for a postal vote to reduce the numbers visiting polling stations. Should they be postponed, Woodchester will continue to be without a District Councillor representing the Parish. Cllr. Hamilton agreed to write to the Chief Executive of SDC with the concerns of the Parish Council in this regard.

*Cllr. Robinson left the meeting.*

Initials.....

2021/6

**To receive the clerk's report.**

This was received.

The clerk had received correspondence from a resident concerned that the stone trough on the High Street, just above The Ram, was at risk of being damaged by a vehicle. The trough had in the past been protected by a slab which had become dislodged.

Councillors expressed appreciation for the significance of heritage features in the village. It is believed that the parking space adjacent to the trough is used regularly by the same residents. Councillors agreed the clerk will try to find out who that is and contact them to reiterate concern for the trough. The clerk will also contact the maintenance contractor to ask that a stone is placed to protect the trough, although with limited car parking availability, this should not encroach on this space.

Councillors discussed the Bike Trails in relation to the new lockdown situation. There had been no clear guidance as to whether facilities of this kind should be closed.

Advice from the Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association had been sought.

Councillors agreed the site remain open. Cllr. Dunbar agreed to renew signage on reducing the spread of the virus.

A resident raised an issue of parking at Frogmarsh opposite Convent Lane. Parked vehicles cause drivers turning right out of Convent Lane to exit on the wrong side of the road. Councillors agreed that limited space for parking is an issue in several parts of the village. There is already a sign in that location asking drivers to refrain from parking there. Councillors agreed that, unless enforced, further signage or parking restrictions would have very limited effect.

It was noted that debris from the Rooksmoor Mills site is entering the stream.

Councillors agreed the clerk write to the owner to request the contractor be more diligent in keeping the site tidy and debris away from the edge of the stream.

2021/7

**To note the latest financial statements.**

These were noted.

2021/8

**To approve expenditure and approve cheques as per annex.**

Expenditure was approved. Cheques will be signed at a later date.

The issue of electronic banking was raised. This had been discussed in the past with the agreement to continue with the use of cheques. This issue may be raised again following the appointment of a new clerk.

2021/9

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

These were noted.

2021/10

**To note and agree the recommendations of the Finance Committee for the budget and precept requirement for 2021/22.**

Councillors agreed a budget of £14,800 and a precept of £12,700. Councillors agreed the shortfall be taken from reserves. Further details can be found in the minutes of the Finance Committee (7<sup>th</sup> January, 2021). The clerk will inform Stroud District Council.

2021/11

**To agree recommendations of the Finance Committee for review of Financial Regulations.**

These were agreed and will be signed by Cllr. Hamilton at a later date.

2021/12

**To agree adoption of a Website Accessibility Policy and Code of Conduct.**

These were agreed.

2021/13

**To agree a date for the Litter Pick.**

Councillors agreed that in the current circumstances with COVID-19, the litter pick be cancelled again this year. It was suggested that any larger abandoned items be taken to the layby on the A46 for collection by SDC.

Initials.....

**2021/14**

**To receive a report from the Highways and Rights of Way Committee including a report from Cllr. McNealey on a Cycling Summit attended in November.**

Cllr. McNealey reported that the remote summit chaired by Siobhan Baillie MP had been well-attended by local Parish and Town Councillors and some local cycling activists. Officers from Gloucestershire County Council reiterated the aim of increasing cycling by 50% in Gloucestershire between 2015-2031. Stroud District has a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan and a budget, although most funds have already been allocated.

Several issues were discussed, many of which were linked to the desire for improvements to cyclist safety. Plans for the introduction of a cycle path in the A419 corridor were discussed. Research and advice had been sought on plans for a cycle path, but frustration was clear at the lack of funding available to see delivery of these improvements. There is a strong lobby for improving road safety and cycling links between the new housing at Stonehouse/Standish and Stroud and Gloucester.

Cllr. Warnes gave a report on footpaths, which are currently very muddy, partly due to increased footfall as a result of COVID-19.

The Ramblers' 'Don't Lose Your Way' campaign identified several 'lost' footpaths in the village. Cllr. Warnes will provide updates on these as more information becomes available.

The traveller recently residing on the verge just north of Station Road was mentioned. Councillors agreed that the wagon and residents are not creating any nuisance and no further action need be taken.

Cllr. Dunbar had drafted a response to a survey on road safety by the OPCC. Councillors were asked for their comments in the next few days.

**2021/15**

**To receive an update from Cllr. Lead on discussions with the National Trust concerning visitors to Woodchester Park.**

Cllr. Lead had spoken with Lisa Edinborough of the National Trust. They have agreed to an information board at the Park Lane entrance. It is expected that they will send a draft of this to the Parish Council for comments. They are still considering a secure gate at this entrance, but are concerned that some visitors may then access the Park across private land.

This is a difficult issue to solve. It is hoped that by working with and educating visitors they will be more respectful of the Park and local residents.

Cllr. Lead will remain in communication with the National Trust.

**2021/16**

**To receive an update from the Personnel Committee on progress with the appointment of a new clerk.**

Councillors thanked the clerk for the work she had done over the past nine years and wished her well in her new job.

Councillors agreed to appoint Mrs Sylvia May who was welcomed to the Parish Council.

**2021/17**

**To receive an update from the Events Committee.**

The committee did not formally meet in 2020, however there had been two events organised by village residents.

There had been a good turn-out for the Craft Trail held before Christmas. As a result of this success, there are plans to hold something similar later in the year, possibly tied in with another village event.

Carol singing on the Village Green was also a great success, with a turnout of approximately 200 residents, singing whilst socially distancing.

**2021/18**      **To receive comments from members of the public on items discussed at this meeting.**  
There were no comments from members of the public.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

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

Initials.....