

# Woodchester Parish Council

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Minutes of the Meeting of Woodchester Parish Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 in the Village Hall at 7pm

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

In attendance: The clerk and eight members of the public.

**2020/1 To receive apologies for absence.**

An apology was received from District Councillor Phil McAsey.

**2020/2 To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.**

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

**2020/3 To receive questions from members of the public and those attending in an official capacity.**

Cllr. Ashley Smith was welcomed to the meeting, a Parish Councillor for the Amberley Ward of Minchinhampton Parish Council. Councillors agreed to Cllr. Smith briefly addressing the Council. Cllr. Smith explained that he was intending to stand as a candidate for the Amberley and Woodchester Ward in the District Council elections to be held in May. A full-time student and consultant for charities in the environmental sector, he reported a strong interest in conservation and environmental issues.

Through other roles, including a trustee of the local branch of the CPRE, Cllr. Smith has an interest in and knowledge of planning policy.

When asked what is motivating the Councillor in standing for District Councillor, Cllr. Smith expressed his interest in current affairs and is currently studying politics and international affairs. He did not wish to hide the fact that the process will benefit his professional development, but success in the election would also allow him influence in the District Council and allow him to represent local peoples' views. Cllr. Hamilton welcomed Cllr. Smith to attend future Parish Council meetings as a member of the public.

The door to the telephone box on Selsley Road was reported as being difficult to open. Cllr. Dunbar agreed to apply some WD40 and look at whether the springs might be adjusted. He will report back to the clerk.

Complete Utilities have recently carried out work at Frogmarsh. Residents reported damage to verges and piles of soil having been dumped on the side of the road. Stroud District Council had kindly agreed to carry out a street clean along that section of road. Councillors agreed the clerk contact the company and ask that they make good the damage done.

Residents reported a white van having been parked at Frogmarsh for a prolonged period of time preventing local residents from parking. Councillors agreed the clerk contact the Neighbourhood Warden to ask for advice.

Contractors re-surfacing the 'cycle path' have now begun work north of Paul's Rise. They have not however cleared the area at Frogmarsh. Piles of material have been left on the edge of the track and the surface is very muddy from construction vehicles.

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Gloucestershire Highways (GH) have agreed that the path will be cleared before the contractors finish work, but Councillors agreed that, with the date they will return to finish the Frogmarsh section unknown, the clerk contact GH and ask that the Frogmarsh section is cleared at this stage as it is currently unpleasant for users of the track. The clerk will also enquire as to whether a significant retention is held by GH, should the contractors go bust.

As a Councillor at Minchinhampton, Cllr. Smith reported his Council having had issues with historic comments having been removed from Stroud District Council's Planning Portal with GDPR being given as the reason for this. He asked if Woodchester had experienced this. Cllr. Lead agreed to share contact details and share information if this issue arose.

A member of the public asked what the Parish Council's view was on SDC's plan to build 80-90 houses in Minchinhampton, particularly in light of the Glover Report which proposed consideration be given to the Cotswolds being given National Park status. Cllr. Hamilton did not give a response, but explained that the Local Plan would be discussed later in the agenda.

**2020/4 To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2019.**

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

**2020/5 To hear from Mr. Stuart Harrison on the current situation regarding Woodchester Football Club and agree any action for the Parish Council.**

Mr. Stuart Harrison was welcomed to the meeting. He outlined the predicament Woodchester Football Club finds itself in. The Club has been running since 1905 and has been based at Villa Field for many years. Mr. Harrison has been with the Club for 15-20 years and has this year made the decision to retire as Chairman; Club Secretary James Collins has also stepped down. For the first time this year the Club was unable to form a team. The Club are looking for a couple of people to take on the administration before the season begins in August.

The club is set up as a charity and as such receives sponsorship from Renishaw. This, together with player subs, covers costs including an FA referee each week, grass cutting etc. The role will take approximately five hours per week during the season to phone round players each week to organise a team, wash kit, collect subs etc.

A couple of people to volunteer for this role would ensure viability of the Club and continuity at least for another year.

Councillors suggested Mr. Harrison write a detailed 'job description' for the next edition of the Woodchester Word. Although players need to be at least 16 years of age to play, Woodchester School will be approached to ask for publicity through their newsletter as parents may have older children who might be keen to play whilst a parent helps to run the Club.

**2020/6 To receive County and District Councillor reports.**

Neither report was received.

**2020/7 To receive the clerk's report.**

This was received.

Since the clerk's report was written a report had been received from the National Trust (NT) in response to concerns relating to a perceived lack of action over 'wild swimming' at Woodchester Park. This report sets out actions taken by the NT. Councillors agreed much more could be done by the NT, particularly on community engagement.

Councillors agreed there would be little merit in holding another meeting.

**2020/8 To note the latest financial statements.**

These were noted.

Initials.....

- 2020/9 To approve expenditure and approve cheques as per annex.**  
Expenditure was approved and cheques signed at the end of the meeting.
- 2020/10 To note planning applications, decisions and appeals from SDC as per annex.**  
These were noted.
- 2020/11 To note and agree the recommendations of the Finance Committee for the budget and precept requirement for 2020/21.**  
Although the proposed expenditure for 2019/20 is approximately £1000 below the budget, spending has been above budget in a couple of areas. Work has been required to trees at the Bike Trails and costs have been incurred for the running of the defibrillators.  
A budget of £14,180 was proposed for 2020/21, £820 higher than budgeted in 2019/20. An additional £550 was proposed for maintenance, which is anticipated will rise with the retirement of the current contractor and the suggestion of additional jobs. £220 was proposed as ongoing costs for the defibrillators. The remainder of the increase is £30 for the Bike Trails and £20 for the clerk's salary.  
To cover these additional costs, the Finance Committee proposed an increase in the precept to £12,500, the remaining budget to be paid for from reserves.  
Councillors agreed these proposals.  
Cllr. Dunbar agreed to contact Trailcraft, the construction company for the Bike Trails to discuss potential costs of resurfacing when required in the future. This will then allow a costed long-term plan which will be reviewed by the Finance Committee in July. It will then be possible to budget a certain amount per year to cover these costs in the future.
- 2020/12 To agree recommendations of the Finance Committee for review of Financial Regulations.**  
These were agreed, and signed by Cllr. Hamilton.
- 2020/13 To discuss recommendations from the Finance Committee on the maintenance contract for 2020/21.**  
Councillors agreed a working party look at work undertaken currently as part of the maintenance contract and agree additional work required. Cllrs. Baynham-Honri, Lead and Warnes agreed to form a working party.  
Following this, Councillors agreed to meet with a contractor known to Mr. Ian Smith to discuss the role.  
A decision will then be made on whether to put out the contract to tender.
- 2020/14 To discuss Stroud District Council's Local Plan Review and agree a response.**  
It is anticipated the new Local Plan will be adopted in the winter of 2021 and covers the period to 2040.  
In terms of housing, 638 additional homes are required per year; 12,800 in the District over the next 20 years. SDC have considered the location of these in relation to need and have proposed concentrations of housing in certain areas.  
It was agreed the impact on the Cotswolds as an AONB with a number of SSSIs was vague. The new Core Policy DCP1 sets out the Council's commitment for the District to be carbon-neutral by 2030 and briefly sets out how this will be delivered.  
North and South Woodchester are classed as tiers 3a and 4a respectively, reflecting the numbers of facilities.  
The piece of land west of Lawns Park was again identified as a potential for housing growth, which the Council thought had been eliminated from consideration following the response to the previous consultation.  
Councillors agreed the document to be well-intentioned.

The document does not mention any potential to designate the area as a National Park which would have huge implications for housing and transport. Transport was not dealt with in any depth in the proposals, this being a responsibility at County level. The clerk will draft a response.

**2020/15**

**To discuss details of a consultation from the Home Office on ‘strengthening police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments’ and to agree a response.**

Councillors agreed the proposals were a positive step forward, but that if the Police do not have the resources, results will be limited. Where resources allow, these proposals will allow the Police to act much quicker as they will, in many cases, remove the need to go through the courts.

Councillors agreed to send their comments to the clerk to draft a response.

**2020/16**

**To agree a date for the Litter Pick and discuss and agree whether or not to provide refreshments.**

The litter pick will take place on the 29<sup>th</sup> March and Councillors agreed to limit refreshments.

**2020/17**

**To receive an update on the situation regarding the sale of The Ram.**

The clerk summarised an update from the Ram Supporters Steering Group received on the 16<sup>th</sup> December. This outlines their consideration of several options following advice having been sought from The Plunkett Foundation, a group with expertise in this area. Given the likely market value is less than the current asking price of £850,000, the group have decided not to make an offer at this time, but to look to pursue other options.

**2020/18**

**To receive a report from the Highways and Rights of Way Committee to include a report from the Stroud District Road Safety Group.**

The Council received a complaint from a resident about the condition of the footpath from Church Road to Lager Lane, being very muddy where Severn Trent are working. This path has now been closed, but as yet there are no notices. Due to erosion, the step up the bridge from Lager Lane has become substantial. The Land Manager has agreed to look at what might be done to improve this.

Councillors expressed concern that the path between Church Road and Tower House Drive isn’t closed as this is widely used.

Gloucestershire Highways did a good job in clearing the pavement from Bird’s Crossing from Station Road, but unfortunately dumped the material on the edge of the ‘cycle path’.

Cllr. Dunbar summarised results from the VAS camera, in operation in the village over the Christmas period.

The A46 (at the bottom of Paul’s Rise) saw 95% within speed limit, with 1% above the 46mph prosecution threshold.

Selsley Road (at Lawn’s Park) saw an average speed of 21mph. 10% of vehicles exceeded the limit whilst travelling uphill, compared with only 5% downhill.

The machine was also in use whilst appearing to be turned off as it still records speeds in this state. Results showed a 25% reduction in the 30mph speed limit whilst the display was switched on.

Cllr. Dunbar explained that Gloucestershire Highways have currently put a ban on Councils purchasing and installing speed cameras and have questioned whether Town and Parish Councils have the power to spend money on speed monitoring devices. They are worried about civil liberties being compromised through the use of such devices.

The Council were due to discuss the potential purchase of an AutoSpeedWatch device, but this discussion has now been put on hold.

Councillors raised the issue of the re-painting of road markings on Selsley Road. The clerk will contact GH.

**2020/19 To discuss any maintenance issues and agree a course of action.**

It was agreed any additional maintenance issues will be discussed and agreed by a working party.

**2020/20 To receive an update from the Events Committee.**

Cllr. McNealey reported a very good turnout for the Carol Singing on the 23rd December.

**2020/21 To receive comments from members of the public on items discussed at this meeting.**

A resident raised concern that the surface being used on the 'cycle path' does not look as though it will withstand horses being ridden on it. A Councillor knew of an example where it had been used elsewhere and was recommended for use by horses.

A resident asked to be brought up to date on progress on a joint force working for road safety. Cllr. Dunbar gave a brief overview of the work of the SDRSG to date. He explained they had looked to submit a plan for a multi-site TRO, initially supported by GH. This plan has not been pursued as GH now appear to be interested in improving road safety only in areas which have seen serious injury or death.

A resident said that he had set up a village Facebook page for residents to post news and comments, but that it was no longer used. Councillors explained that there is currently a village Facebook page with three administrators. It was agreed this be publicised through the Woodchester Word.

The meeting closed at 8.57pm.

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

Initials.....