

Woodchester Parish Council

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Minutes of the Meeting of Woodchester Parish Council held on 13th May, 2021 at 7pm.

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

In attendance: County Councillor Steve Robinson, the clerk and two members of the public.

- 2021/36 To elect a chairman and vice chairman and for relevant councillors to sign Acceptance of Office forms.**
Cllr Lead was elected as Chairman (proposed by Cllr Hamilton, seconded by Cllr Baynham-Honri). Cllr McNealey was elected as Vice-Chairman (proposed by Cllr Lead and seconded by Cllr Noon). All Councillors signed Acceptance of Office forms.
- 2021/37 To receive apologies for absence.**
Apologies were received from District Councillor Ashley Smith.
- 2021/38 To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.**
Agenda item 2021/52: Cllr Lead declared an interest as a resident of Convent Lane close to St Marys Hill and Cllr Noon declared an interest as an employee of the National Trust.
- 2021/39 To receive questions from members of the public and those attending in an official capacity.**
A member of the public mentioned that the roofing felt on the bus shelter on the A46 at the bottom of St Mary's Hill needed attention.
Clerk to contact PC maintenance contractor to request a quote for the work.
- 2021/40 To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 4th March, 2021.**
It was agreed that these were a true record of the meeting.
- 2021/41 To receive County and District Councillor reports**
Cllr Robinson reported that Selsley Road will be resurfaced this financial year and that all road markings will be reinstated.
Cllr Robinson reported that he plans to use his Councillors budget to resurface Church Road in Woodchester and to mark a school zone outside Horsley School. Cllr Lead thanked him, and commented that there are significant pot holes in St Mary's Hill. Cllr Robinson said he would bear that in mind for future planning.
Cllr Robinson stated that the dip on the 'cycle track' near the priory is to be resurfaced and that he would be using Lengthsman's money to clear vegetation along the A46, at least from Culver Hill to Frogmarch and eventually as far as Giddynap lane.
Cllr McNealey mentioned that Rooksmoor Hill is very overgrown and run down with numerous potholes and needs attention.

Cllr Noon mentioned that some gullies in Frogmarsh couldn't be seen due to a covering of debris. A resident cleared them after a car got stuck, but the gullies are getting damaged and the road is being narrowed as a result. It was noted that these gullies are brick lined and an important feature of the historic streetscape in South Woodchester.

Clerk to contact Gloucestershire Highways re the potholes in St Mary's Hill.

Clerk to contact maintenance contractor re gullies in Frogmarsh

2021/42

To receive the Clerk's report.

This was received. The Clerk also mentioned that with Cllr Warnes stepping down, the Parish Council needed a new signatory for the bank. Cllr McNealy agreed to be the new signatory. Cllr Dunbar agreed to hold the back-up memory stick for the Parish Council.

Cllr Hasinski queried whether there should be signage for the new footpath between cycle track and A46 at Rooksmoor Mills. Cllr McNealy commented that if it's an existing public footpath then Gloucestershire Highways need to provide the signage, however if it has been moved then it would be to the Parish or the developer to provide it.

Clerk to ask Rooksmoor Developers if they will provide the signage.

Cllr Noon raised the issue of a path that has been closed for some time that runs from fields behind the priory under a bridge at the 'cycle track'. She wondered if this is allowed to remain closed for so long?

Cllr McNealy to look into this.

Cllr Lead asked Councillors to consider if they would like to attend the CPRE planning course previously circulated. Cllr Lead may attend one. No Councillors were available. Cllr Hamilton suggested the PC consider joining the CPRE at a future date.

Cllr Robinson left the meeting

2021/43

To note the latest financial statements.

These were noted.

Cllr Bonham-Honri/Clerk to look at the possibility of extending online banking to include electronic payments.

2021/44

To approve expenditure and approve cheques as per annex.

These were approved

2021/45

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

These were noted

A member of the public raised a local planning issue of ongoing concern. A note was made of their concerns and the issue will be addressed in a Public Planning Meeting to be held in the near future.

One member of the public left the meeting.

2021/46

To review the Standing Orders

These were reviewed and agreed.

2021/47

To note that minutes of Highways and Rights of Way Committee for 4th September 2019 have been agreed

This was noted

2021/48

To note the appointment of PKF Littlejohn LLP as external auditor.

This was noted

- 2021/49 To consider quotes for Parish Council Insurance and authorise the Clerk to renew the council's insurance policy for the first of a new three-year agreement.**
The Parish has been insured in recent years by Zurich through Community First, the insurance is due for renewal on 1st June. The renewal premium for that insurance is £608.19 for the first year of a three-year agreement. A comparison quote was obtained from Came and Company, who recommended Hiscox at a total annual premium of £887. It was agreed to remain with Zurich with whom the Parish have been very pleased.
Clerk to renew the PC insurance with Zurich through Community First on the first of a three year term.
- 2021/50 To consider outsourcing the council's PAYE to PATA**
Councillors agreed to Clerk outsourcing the PAYE to PATA.
Clerk to contact PATA to set it up.
- 2021/51 To note the budget for the Woodchester Word and the agreement made with the Editor.**
Due to COVID restrictions (to reduce meeting time) Cllr Dunbar circulated a report of a recent meeting with the Editor of the Woodchester Word prior to the Parish Council Meeting. See Annex below. Cllr Dunbar confirmed that there were no updates to this report. The report was noted.
- 2021/52 To receive an update on parking on St Marys Hill and agree a way forward**
Due to COVID restrictions (to reduce meeting time) the Clerk circulated a report of a recent meeting with the residents of St Marys Hill prior to the Parish Council Meeting. See Annex below. Councillors noted the contents of the report. Councillors agreed not to cover the cost of the cones as they were concerned that the cones would be misused/stolen/lost and it would not be a good use of Parish resources. Councillors agreed to paper notices (not sticky) being issued by residents to people who park in an obstructive fashion. See Annex for the wording of the notice.
Cllr Lead/Clerk to contact residents present at the meeting with the decisions and to update residents on outstanding actions in the meeting notes.
- 2021/53 To agree terms of reference for a working party to consider a four-year plan for the Parish Council with aims and objectives for the term.**
Cllr Lead introduced the idea of developing a four year plan for the Parish Council, trying to engage with the residents of Woodchester regarding what they would like to see done in the Parish. This could be done through the Woodchester Word and the proposed Village Forum.
- 2021/54 To review membership of committees, representatives and working parties.**
Cllr Lead suggested the Parish Council consider restructuring such that instead of a number of Committees responsible for various aspects of running the Parish, individual representatives are responsible for each area with Councillors choosing their areas of interest. He proposed more informal meetings with Full Parish Council Meetings occurring bi-monthly to take final decisions. Cllr McNealey commented that there is a great deal of untapped expertise in the village and that she would be keen to try to bring more people into meetings and to ask people to act as advisors to the Parish (Mrs Warnes has already agreed to take on this role for Public Footpaths and

Rights of Way). Representatives would then make their report at Full Parish Council Meetings and final decisions would be made. Cllr Lead pointed out that Finance committee would need to remain as it is (with membership to be confirmed). Cllr Hamilton stressed that all decisions needed to be made and to be seen to be made at public forums.

Cllr Hamilton commented that response rates for surveys tend not to be very high, so suggested other methods of engagement should be used. The Woodchester Word could be used. Cllr McNealey suggested at the Parish Forum there could be a flip board with post-it stickers for ideas. Cllr Lead suggested the Council offer Parish surgeries at routine and publicised intervals that Councillors would attend to encourage residents to engage with the Parish Council and raise any concerns/ideas they may have. These could be run, for example at a village pub or as an informal walk.

Cllr McNealey pointed out that the Parish FaceBook page has increased in popularity over the last year with 315 followers in May 2020 and 618 in May 2021. She pointed out this is a good way to connect with some people (although many groups would not be involved e.g. young/older people)

It was suggested that Councillors make contact before the next meeting to discuss what their areas of interest might be. It was proposed that the next meeting (on 3rd June) should be followed by an informal gathering to discuss the idea further. Until a way forward is agreed membership of Committees will remain as in the previous Council, although the Finance Committee is not currently quorate.

2021/55

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

A member of the public said that if the Parish Council want to seek the views of older people in the community, they should do a letter drop to individual households with an offer to pick up their responses in a certain time frame. Cllr Noon pointed out that 'lunch with friends' already makes visits to some 86 older residents and may be able to incorporate a letter with their next delivery (on 21st May).

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm

Chairman Date

Annex 1

Meeting to discuss the future of the Woodchester Word.

07 May 2021

Attended by Rod Harris, Peter Lead, Iain Dunbar.

The purpose of the meeting was to establish a future strategy for the Woodchester Word which would guarantee its future as part of the proposed 4-year strategic plan for Woodchester Parish Council. The key issue of funding was discussed in detail.

The following plan is proposed:

- The Woodchester Word will be published three times a year in Spring (March), Summer (July) and Autumn (November).
- It will be distributed to all households in the Parish.
- It will be a 12-page black and white publication.
- It will focus on parish-based news and information.
- Rod will continue as Editor
- The Parish Council will sponsor the centre spread for Parish Council News, but can request additional space if required, for example for surveys etc.
- Iain will act as Parish Council liaison with Rod regarding Parish Council copy and other content.
- To resolve the ongoing financial concerns, advertising will be ceased and a single 'title sponsor' will be sought to support the publication each year, paying the balance of the production costs after the Parish Council contribution. Iain will initiate this change, seek a sponsor, handle the financial side of the Word, and will resolve any issues with outstanding advertising.
- Iain and Rod will review current distributors and seek additional distributors as required.

This is an exciting new era for the Woodchester Word, hopefully with its financial future guaranteed and its important place in the community assured.

Annex 2

Notes from informal meeting held on St Mary's Hill on 8/4/21

Four members of the public, Peter Lead (Cllr), Clerk

The informal meeting was to discuss ideas to address the problem of parking on St Marys' Hill.

Peter summarized that the problem was ongoing and that the PC is liaising with National Trust, Highways and the Police about the issues. A new sign has been provided by GCC saying 'No parking emergency access required at all times'

Suggestions:

A risk assessment could be completed regarding access for emergency vehicles, with a view to trying to build a case and increase the priority given to the problem by Gloucestershire Highways.

Residents could place concrete boulders at strategic locations e.g. outside St Mary's Hill House.

Residents could put sticky notices on windows where cars are parked illegally (e.g. pavements or near junctions) – Clerk to provide residents with the current PC 'no parking near junctions' flier. Peter has source of sticky labels.

NT could shut the access -but it was agreed this wasn't practical and local residents also like to use the access

Illegal parking (such as on the pavement and near the junction) could be repeatedly reported to the police. Residents reporting these incidents could ask for an incident number so the complaint is properly logged. Providing the number plate allows the police to follow it up with the owner of the car.

Double yellow lines were discussed but at apx £15000 they remain too expensive for the PC to fund and enforcement would still be the issue.

Other 'no parking' signage could be attached to church wall. The idea of parking in the church was also suggested but this has been tried and caused problems with services (weddings and funerals as well as regular services) in the church.

NT could provide official parking, but it was felt that even if they did that it would fill up quickly and overspill into the road anyway.

PC could provide cones to place down the road. Cones could be distributed among residents. The clerk has approached Gloucestershire Highways about this idea and their response is below. Peter will raise this idea at the next PC meeting in May with a view to them being available for the last Bank Holiday in May if possible.

A new sign could be provided in the layby near the bottom to say 'passing place, no parking'. Peter to speak with another resident who has one.

The new 'No parking emergency access required at all times' sign should be moved to the layby at the bottom of the hill where it can be seen better. Peter to arrange.

A white line could be provided across the gateway to the field near the bottom to discourage parking there. PC to look into feasibility of this.

Draft wording for notice:

Woodchester Parish Council.

Signs clearly indicate that parking on St Mary's Hill obstructs emergency vehicle access, lorries and farm vehicles. Please do not park here but use the official National Trust car park as indicated.

Repeat parking could involve police enforcement.

Letter from Gloucestershire Highways 7th April 2021:

Generally, Gloucestershire Highways do not permit residents to cone-off spaces outside their homes to prevent visitors from blocking up local roads.

I am though mindful of the ongoing issues at St Mary's, despite new road markings and signage to deter on-street and obstructive parking.

In principle GCC Highways would have no objection on a trial basis only, however there would be some limitations on their use:

- This arrangement is an informal one
- GCC Highways will not be held responsible for any third party claim for damage caused
- GCC Highways will not be held responsible if the cones are either moved, damaged or stolen
- GCC Highways reserve the right to request the cessation of this informal arrangement following any complaints received
- Cones must not be left on the highway 24/7 or during the hours of darkness
- Only deployed during known problematic parking times and not during the hours of darkness
- These cones will hold no legal bearing if ignored by road users
- The police remain the priority authority for enforcing obstructive parking offences
- Cones are not to be used by local residents to secure their own on-street parking space

I trust this clarifies this matter, please contact me if you have any further questions.

Kind regards.

Paul.

Paul Helbrow

Local Highways Manager (Stroud South)

Area Highways – Southern

8/5/21 Additional info collected after meeting:

Since the meeting I have had a conversation with PC Phillipson which touched upon St Mary's Hill, he said that if a car is obstructing the road and a resident is unable to get by (as had happened just before our meeting) then the police can issue a fixed penalty notice. If police are unable to attend at

Initials

the time, then the resident could take a picture of the car in question clearly showing that it is obstructing the road (not just parked inconveniently) and the police will get in contact with the owner of the vehicle by letter. This also applies where cars are parked on the pavement where they are causing a danger to pedestrians (so he suggested if their parking caused the pedestrian to have to step into the road by the A46, rather than on the lane further up where there is less traffic). Photographic evidence would be sufficient to send a letter, but not issue a fine. It may also be worth noting if there are repeat offenders.