

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WHITMINSTER PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT WHITMINSTER VILLAGE HALL, WHITMINSTER AT 7.30PM ON WEDNESDAY 7th APRIL, 2010.

00/04

Present

Cllr Jones (Chairman), Mrs Gilmore (Vice-Chair), Mrs Coleman, Hughes and Mrs Pockett. The Clerk was also present along with 1 member of the public.

01/04

Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Paynter and Douglas along with Stonehouse Police for the fact that there would be no police representation at the meeting. Neighbourhood Warden, Phil Drew, had advised that he would attend later in the meeting.

02/04

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Jones declared an interest as a member of the District Council in connection with agenda item 4 relating to the proposal to site affordable housing on an exception site within the village. Cllr Mrs Pockett returned a completed updated Declaration of Member's Interests form to the Clerk for onward transmission to the Monitoring Officer at the District Council. Cllr Mrs Coleman had some queries in relation to her form and she was advised to liaise with the Monitoring Officer at the District Council direct.

03/04

Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings of 3rd March, 2010, and 22nd March, 2010, were signed as a true record without amendment. It was noted that the Minutes of the meeting of 22nd March had not been listed on the Agenda as being for approval but this was because the Agenda for the April meeting had been issued before the meeting of 22nd March had been scheduled.

04/04

Affordable Housing

Pippa Stroud from Stroud District Council and Chris Knibbs from Severn Vale Housing Society attended the meeting to put forward proposals for a development of an anticipated 14 new affordable housing units on land adjoining the school in School Lane and presently farmland owned by Robert Hitchens Homes. This would be an exception site outside of the settlement boundary. Ms Stroud explained that the information given by her predecessor, John Shaw, was incorrect in that the site could be taken forward without Council's support and Cllr Jones stated that the desire to increase the District's Affordable Housing Stock is such that it would most likely receive support from the planning committee. The need for the units arises from the Housing Needs Survey carried out in 2007 and identifying the need for 35 units across the Severn Voice area. Concern was raised that Whitminster already has a significant stock of affordable housing and that those seeking affordable housing in say Slimbridge or Frampton are unlikely to want to move to Whitminster thus the housing is unlikely to be occupied by local people. Furthermore, those identified in the survey as having a need cannot be contacted directly and applications must be made using the internet based Choice Based Letting System. There were concerns voiced that those with a desire for a local house and who may qualify would not be actively looking and using this system but Ms Stroud stated that promotion would be carried out. It was noted that the site was being taken forward as there were no other suitable sites being

offered by willing landowners at present. The Clerk reminded Councillors of their previous completed opposition to such housing within the Parish and it was agreed that that view remained but it was further resolved to comment on the proposals before Council so as to influence the design and housing mix if the scheme is inevitable. Cllr Jones reported that he had shown the plans to Cllr Paynter who's comments would be that he would prefer to see social housing mixed in with market units and better still for more affordable smaller open market housing units to be built. There was some discussion about the design and tenure types and this is detailed within the resultant letter sent to the District Council, copy attached.

05/04

Matters Arising

Javelin Park Incinerator Action Group

The Clerk reported on email correspondence received from the GlosVAIN group advising that the next group meeting would take place on 26th April at 7:30pm in Quedgeley Community Centre and Paul Connett would be returning to give a talk on Zero Waste at the same venue on 11th May 7:30pm. Help was requesting publicising the event and publicity material was being produced.

Post Office

Two letters had been received from the post office advising of the decision regarding the branch re-opening and thanking Council for its support and advising that promotional material was available at the Post Office in the garden centre. This had all been reported at the last meeting as Nigel Parry of the Post Office had telephoned. Cllr Jones confirmed that he had collected the promotional leaflets but that they only detail the services provided and not the location. The leaflet were being distributed with copies of SPAN but it was agreed that further mention should be made in SPAN within the Parish Council notes. It was also agreed that Council should write to Mr Parry suggesting that a Post Office sign should be erected.

Skate Ramp

Cllr Jones advised that he had received an email from Phil Drew, Neighbourhood Warden, regarding the condition of the skate ramp. This had been highlighted at the last meeting and was deemed to be due to wear, weathering and 'picky fingers' causing the rotting elements to deteriorate. As the condition posed a safety issue Cllr Jones had initiated repairs between meetings and invoice had been presented to consider under accounts later in the meeting. The damage was not considered to be a Police matter.

Village Sign

The Clerk had written to Mr West asking for a quotation for the overhaul of the sign. He had telephoned to discuss the matter and a quotation had been received to consider under the item of accounts.

Annual Parish Meeting

The date of 26th April, 2010, at 7:30pm had been set for the Annual Parish Meeting. An agenda was agreed and it was decided that as well as representatives from the Police, the District and County Councils, Village Organisations and the Neighbourhood Warden, the Village Agent would also be invited to attend and discuss her role.

Parish Council Election

The Clerk reported that he had received election notices and nomination papers from the District Council. The notices should have been displayed by 29th March but the frank from the District Council shows that they were not posted until that day. This meant that when displayed there were only two working days to enable candidates to see the notices, obtain papers and nominations and return them to Ebley Mill. After consultation with the Chairman the Clerk had written to the CEO and Electoral Registration Officer, Mr Hagg, making a complaint. The letter was read at the meeting and all agreed with its contents.

06/04

Police & Community Safety

There was no police presence at the meeting but crimes figures had been provided by email as follows:

1 x theft of motor vehicle – later found.

1 x assault – suspect arrested but no further action as no independent witness.

1 x criminal damage to a vehicle – no lines of enquiry.

13 x miscellaneous incidents.

Neighbourhood Warden, Phil Drew, attended part of the meeting and gave an update on his various activities including removing graffiti following a recent spate. He was beginning to become better known in the area and had spent a good amount of time in the Parish. He was advised that Council had voiced concerns that he had not previously been making an impression but it was also noted that he does have a large area to cover and with the associated administration it is difficult.

07/04

Planning

Decision Notices received:

None.

Applications considered:

None.

Other planning matters:

The Clerk reported that he had not received any response or even an acknowledgement from Conrad Moore following after writing with Council's views on the Core Strategy. Cllr Jones agreed to follow this up.

08/04

Parish Plan & Website

Proposed plan of footpaths and walks within the village

Cllr Paynter was not present at the meeting but it was understood that he was starting to research various footpath routes. The letter the Clerk had sent regarding including the Fromebridge Mill public house is referred to in the general comments on action points below.

Welcome Pack

After the Clerk had circulated copies of the proposed final version of the pack printed in booklet format at the March meeting, it was felt that it would be better if the text could be enlarged for ease of reading and to better suit the size of the photographs included and that reference to a website giving bus timetables should be included. It was agreed that the CD would be passed back to the volunteer who had type set the document and that then the Clerk would print off a number to be agreed. Cllr Jones had thought that he had returned the CD to the Clerk but this was not the case. Cllr Mrs Pockett recalled it being given to Cllr Douglas and Cllr Jones agreed to trace its whereabouts ready for the next meeting.

Website

Website statistics for the month of March had been provided and it was noted that the Village Hall had received the most interest. Cllr Jones informed the meeting that the various Councillors Wards and contact details had been published on the website. Cllr Mrs Pockett expressed her concern that her mobile telephone number and email address had been published when she had emailed the Chairman requesting that only her home telephone number should be shown. The Chairman said he had not received this email but agreed to arrange for the details to be removed.

Actions Points

As the meeting had been running for some time due the presence of guests at the meeting from the District Council it was agreed that consideration of action points would be deferred until the May meeting but that the item would be moved yet higher up the Agenda.

The Clerk reported that he had received no response from the Manager of Fromebridge Mill with regard to his letter concerning the village walks guide. However, it was noted that the Headteacher of the village school had responded advising that the schoolchildren had participated in an Environmental Awareness Day on 12th March when litter was discussed. A letter had also been received from Mr Novoth of the District Council stating that there were no plans to take forward kerbside cardboard collection or green waste collection. He did not respond regarding Council's request for consideration to be given to a cardboard bank being sited in the village but did refer to compost bins being available to purchase at a discounted rate. As reported previously, Highfield Nurseries had advised that they would not be interested in running a composting scheme due to the problems of policing the material deposited.

Cllr Mrs Pockett commented on a letter GRCC included with the correspondence pack circulated and advising that Angela Burlow had left GRCC but the best wishes could be passed on to her through the office. It was agreed that Council's thanks and regards be sent in order to reflect the great deal of help she gave to the Parish Plan Working Group.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Mr Novoth asking if the District Council garden waste chipper could visit the Parish.

09/04

Highways & Byways

The Clerk had received a reply from Jo Walker, Director – Environment at the County Council, stating that repairs had been carried out in School Lane and more were planned with surface dressing scheduled for the summer. The school safety zone had not progressed due to funds being required elsewhere following the two severe winters experienced but she would ask Chris Riley, the new area manager, to make contact and discuss the matter further. Finally, she confirmed that the agreed works to the A38 would be carried out when any resurfacing works are planned. Cllr Jones had emailed Chris Riley expressing concerns about the condition of School Lane but no reply had been received by the time of the meeting. It was noted that the County Council's Highway Scrutiny Committee would be discussing Highways Inspection policy.

Cllr Jones reported that at the recent meeting of Severn Voice the A38 – Perryway junction was considered but the County Council deemed there to be a low level of accidents and therefore alterations or improvements were not justified. He also reported that the County Council representative had stated that there was to be a general review of speed limits.

10/04

Accounts

The following accounts were approved for payment:

D Lord	
£275.00	Clerk's salary.
D Lord	
£54.99	Clerk's expenses.
Moore Stephens	
£1,039.88	Audit fee.
Mike Woodward	
£240.00	Skate ramp repair.

Audit

The Clerk advised that the various additional information that had been requested by the Council's Auditors, Moore Stephens had enabled them to complete the Audit of the past two years. The Auditor's comments were read to the meeting and it was noted that Council was being encouraged to increase its reserves and also to adopt Financial Regulations. Standard regulations were available for the NALC as was a Notice of Completion of Audit that Council also must display. It was agreed that the Clerk could investigate membership of NALC or GAPTC as appropriate and arrange for the Council to join between meetings to expedite matters.

The Clerk presented that accounts for year to 31st March, 2010, along with the completed audit forms and these were approved by the Council and it is thus hereby recorded as Minute reference 10/04 of the Minutes of the Meeting of 7th April, 2010.

VAT Reclaim

The Clerk reported that he had submitted a VAT reclaim but had not yet received any response. All information relating to the Village Hall had been fully disclosed to enable the relevant authority to arrive at its own decision.

Memberships

It was agreed that Council would not join CPRE but would could consider rejoining GAPTC or NALC subject to investigations as referred to above.

A quotation was received from Rob West Signwriter to repaint and overhaul the Village Sign situated in the Village Hall car park. At £900.00 this was considered to be more expensive than anticipated and it was agreed that at least two other quotes would be obtained.

A letter of thanks was received from the Cotswold Car Hospice thanking Council for its donation. The Clerk reported that he had encountered problems once again with Lloyds refusing to provide him with a bank balance. Cllr Jones had assisted and it was agreed that consideration would be given to changing banks if the problem persisted.

It had been drawn to Council's attention that Minute 03/09A of the meeting of 19th September 2006 refers to Council ceasing paying the grass cutting costs for the playing field until the Public Works Loans Board Loan taken out in order to contribute towards the Village Hall project had been repaid. This had not been done. It was noted that in the absence of Councillors Douglas and Paynter there would not be a quorum of members without any interest relating to the Whitminster Village Hall & Playing Field Management Committee in order to discuss the matter and it was agreed that it would be considered under accounts at the next meeting.

11/04

Parish Emergency Plan

Mrs Jones was invited to give a brief update on the working groups activities and explained that notice boards would be erected in the village hall shortly and that two emergency boxes full of essential equipment and information were being prepared. She asked if it would be possible for the Parish Council to draw down some of the grant aid funds allocated by the District Council. The paperwork seemed to suggest that amounts could be drawn down to cover work in progress and it was agreed that if Mrs Jones were to supply receipts to the Clerk then an application with covering letter would be sent to the District Council.

12/04

Correspondence

The following items of correspondence were received:

Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service newsletter.

GRCC Invitation to enter Gloucestershire Vibrant Village of the Year 2010 – this was discussed and declined.

13/04

Chairman's Items & District Councillor's Report

Cllr Jones did not have any District Council issues to report. He reminded those present that the next meeting would be the last meeting of the present Council and reminded that Clerk that there was an opportunity for the large volume of dead files that he holds to be transferred to the Gloucestershire County Archive.

14/04

Other Business

Cllr Mrs Gilmore gave her apologies in advance as she would not be able to attend the next meeting.

15/04

Agenda Items for the next meeting

None.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10.10 pm.

CHAIRMAN – Wednesday 5th May, 2010