

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WHITMINSTER PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE WHITMINSTER VILLAGE HALL, WHITMINSTER AT 7.30 PM ON WEDNESDAY 2nd JULY, 2014.

00/07

Present

Cllrs Jones (Chairman), Mrs Gilmore (Vice Chair), Douglas, Hay, Hughes, Paynter and Peters. The Clerk was also present together with 7 members of the public in attendance. The Clerk confirmed those Councillors attending as being those duly elected as a result of the uncontested election of 22nd May 2014.

01/07

Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor Blackburn who was unable to attend whilst being in recovery from a recent operation. However, he had sent various email updates on matters of relevance particularly relating to works ongoing on the A38.

Before the meeting proceeded Cllr Jones reminded Council of the sad death of Basil Booth who had been the County Councillor for the ward for a number of years. As advised, Cllr & Mrs Jones attended the funeral, and also represented Council. Cllr Jones went on to report the sad death of Len Tomlins who had served as a councillor on the District and County Councils giving almost 40 years of service. Cllr & Mrs Jones had attended the funeral, also representing this Council, and thanks were recorded on the part of the people of Whitminster.

02/07

Declarations of Interest

At this stage in the meeting the Clerk advised that he was still awaiting the receipt of Declaration of Interest forms that would be circulated in due course. There were no declarations made relating to any agenda items or business for which notice had been given.

03/07

Minutes

The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 4th June 2014 were signed as a true record subject to two minor amendments within 08/06 and 09/06.

04/07

Matters Arising

First World War Centenary

Cllr Peters informed Council that he would be meeting with the Head Teacher at the village school the coming Friday and Cllr Jones was also invited to attend if he was available. It was agreed by all that a decision must be reached soon as to what the Council would like to do as a project to commemorate the anniversary and a grant application submitted before the funds are no longer available. Ideas discussed included cleaning the plaques and stonework on the war memorial, protecting the environs of the memorial using fencing or railings, researching the background of selected servicemen and explaining their background and the impact of their loss and combining this information and a greater awareness of the importance of the memorial and the impact of the war on the village through the placement of a new notice board. In addition it was suggested that some research could be undertaken to ensure that no names had been missed and perhaps to add any relevant names from more recent conflicts.

Gloucestershire County Council Chartered Parishes Meeting

Cllr Peters had attended and reported on this meeting saying that the challenges facing the County Council over the coming 3 years had been outlined and consultation was taking place in regard to future spending priorities. The meeting also covered the transfer of the County Highways Contract to Amey and the Fastershire programme to improve broadband speeds throughout the County.

Parish Project Aspirations

Carried forward from the last meeting a request had been made by the SDC Regeneration Officer for Council to identify projects within the community that could be supported from payments arising from potential new development. The following possible projects were identified:

- Outdoor gym equipment – possibly to include table tennis.
- Additional children's play equipment (for the over 5s) namely swings.
- Replacement playing field pavilion (estimated cost circa £300,000).

05/07

Police & Community Safety Matters

Cllr Jones advised that he had received an update regarding the offenders who had set fire to the skate board ramp. Following a court hearing they had received cautions and may be compelled to carry out 10 hours of community service. Cllr Peters commented that the Police 101 non-emergency number seemed to be working well and that PCSO Lifton was very active locally. Crime figures had been received by email for the previous months and these were read out. Generally there were very few incidents concerning the Parish. The Clerk reported that he had arranged for the Parish stock of sandbags to be replenished.

06/07

Planning

Decisions to Note

S.14/1007/HHOLD 6 Rickyard Way, Whitminster.

Proposed ground floor and first floor extension.

Permission granted.

Applications to Consider

S.14/1079/OUT Land at 1 Paynes Meadow, Whitminster.

Erection of two dwellings and formation of new vehicular access.

Council opposed this application on the basis that the design and materials proposed were not in keeping with the local street scene, the proposed buildings were imposing and out of character in terms of scale and height and there was inadequate parking and turning provision. The relevant planning policies were cited. However, Council confirmed that it was not opposed to development on the site in principle but would prefer to see a single dwelling of one storey.

S.14/0716/OUT Parklands Farm, School Lane, Whitminster.

Outline planning application for residential development of 31 dwellings, associated open space and community facilities.

Further to Council's previous comments a detailed discussion of the issues of concern relating to this application reinforced the following points:

- The site is identified on the local biodiversity plan and the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should take note of such matters.
- The estimate of 20 cars accessing and egressing the site during peak hours is low but even this number will have a notable impact given the prevailing issues with parking in the vicinity of the school and safety concerns at the A38 crossroads.

- The capacity of the school, the ability of the school to take additional pupils and expand to meet such need and the calculations of the County Council in arriving at the number of potential additional pupils were all questioned.
- Overlooking issues were raised as was the fact that the application was in outline form and hence the design and positioning of any residential units could change significantly at the detailed stage. Particularly if taken forward by an alternative developer.
- SDC by its own assessment considers Whitminster to be an unsustainable location.

In addition to the above points that had been discussed previously the following policy references (arising from the expired local plan) were considered appropriate to site in future objections:

- G1 – Loss of light, privacy and intrusion into the countryside – in connection with the impact on existing dwellings and the amenity the site currently offers.
- G5 – Detrimental to highway safety – in connection with existing safety issues pertaining to School Lane and the A38 junction.
- HN16 – Protection of open spaces – the area being a valuable open space and providing a vista from the village.
- HN10 – Development outside of settlement boundary – this would be development outside of the village’s defined and tested settlement boundary.
- GE12 – Development affecting listed buildings – the proposed development would impact on the setting of the listed building as well as the view to and from the Industrial Heritage Corridor surrounding the canal. It was also noted that no detailed proposals had been made to bring the listed building back into good order and use.
- CP3 & CP14 – Sustainability issues – in relation to other larger settlements that could accommodate additional housing and the relevant tier 3 village status.

Again, as per when this issue was last discussed, Clerk went on to reappraise Council of the various issues that had been previously considered and asked that, for the sake of consistency, consideration should be given to the fact that Council had previously considered accepting additional development and therefore full consideration should be given as to why this particular location is unacceptable. This was reconciled through a discussion of developments in recent years and the overall picture of sustainability when compared with other settlements where additional housing could be built and was considered in conjunction with the various points listed above that were discussed during an open period during the meeting. It was noted that additional information was being awaited by the LPA and once this had been submitted the Clerk would liaise with Council’s planning consultants to prepare a final detailed response setting out Council’s objections to the LPA.

Local Plan

There were no further updates to give following the last meeting in relation to the evolving Local Plan.

Village Design Statement

Copies of the Village Design Statement were circulated and further comments requested. Those that had assisted with its production were thanked and congratulated.

Other Planning Matters

Cllr Peters commented that the Parish Council’s adoption of the Pre-Application Development Consultation Protocol had not been listed on the SDC website. It was noted that Council did not subscribe in the first wave and the details of Councils signing up was being collated by GRCC. It was agreed that this would be monitored and queried if Council was not listed when next updated.

The Clerk confirmed that he had submitted comments in relation to the proposed development of Land West of Stonehouse. Cllr Jones advised that he had made contact with the Conversation Officer regarding the condition of the curtilage listed Coach House at Uptons Garden, who had

advised that as work had commenced on the site, there was little that could be done to enforce completion of the restoration works.

07/07

Highways & Byways

A38 Works

Various correspondence was received and reviewed regarding the proposed and ongoing A38 works. It was noted that the dates of the various closures had changed with some periods no longer being required. A scheme for lining works was considered and Council was pleased to note cycle lanes had been included.

Signage

Cllr Peters suggested that it would be appropriate for the sign at the access to The Close and Henry Withers Place, leading on to Vaisey Field and Paynes Meadow, to be renewed and it was agreed that a request should be submitted to the Street Naming and Numbering Dept at SDC.

County Councillor's Highway Budget

Cllr Blackburn had written advising that he would soon have a further budget for highway repairs and asking for proposals for consideration. It was agreed that the completion of Hyde Lane, leading towards Jaxons farm, together with footpaths repairs leading into The Close should be put forward.

Verge Adjacent to Little Holbury

Cllr Jones appraised Council of his various dealings with local residents and the County Council Highways Dept regarding the maintenance of the verge that had been previously undertaken by contractors working for Persimmon. Copy correspondence had been circulated. It was determined that there was no bar on the part of the Highways Dept preventing Council from maintaining the land should it wish to do so but the Clerk urged caution in relation to potential public liability issues and the need to determine a clear justification for maintaining this land and not other parcels within the village. It was decided that the matter would be considered further once a quote for the suggested work had been obtained and Cllr Jones agreed to investigate this.

Other Highway Matters

Cllrs Peters and Paynter raised concerns regarding overgrown hedges at Kidnams Walk and backing onto the A38 respectively. No action was proposed.

08/07

Accounts

Accounts for Payment

The following payments were considered, agreed and cheques drawn during the meeting:

T W Hawkins & Sons	£776.94	Grass Cutting
Cllr Peters	£85.00	Course Attendance – Cllr Peters circulated copies of the course notes to Council.

General Overview

The Clerk reported a balance at the bank of £8,425.95 as per the last statement received. The Clerk also reported that the Audit forms had been completed and submitted to Grant Thornton but that further information was required as the Council had been selected, at random, for a more in depth audit. This would require copies of the Minutes approved at the meeting to be provided together with an analysis of various sections of the accounts and copy bank statements that would be sent as soon as practicable.

09/07

Correspondence

The following items of correspondence were received:

Website statistics for the previous month.

Neil Carmichael MP news sheet and contact details.
Details of the Stroud Youth Grant Funding Programme 2014/2015.
Letter of introduction to Ubico Ltd.
GAPTC updates and event invitations.
Details of charity supporting ex-service families.

10/07

Chairman's Items & District Councillor's Report

Cllr Jones gave an overview of how matters were likely to progress in respect of the ongoing Boundary Commission Review being carried out on the District. There was little else to report in respect of the District Council. He updated Council on the site visit that had taken place at Schoolfield Close and was pleased that the Housing Association had managed to complete the majority of the list of outstanding work ahead of the visit, hence it had performed a worthwhile function.

11/07

Other Business

Bus Service to Stonehouse & Stroud

A letter was received from a group of local residents complaining that the vehicle running the existing service was of an insufficient size and did not have capacity to take those wishing to join the service at Whitminster. Cllr Jones had raised the matter with Cllr Blackburn who was investigating through the County Council. Meanwhile an opportunity had arisen to invite a representative of the service provider to attend the next meeting.

Identification and promotion of Potential Village Green

This matter was placed on the agenda by Cllr Hay. Following a brief discussion it was agreed that the matter would be considered further at a future meeting.

Empowering Parish Councils to Sell Electricity

A request was received from Local Works to support their campaign to make it easier for Parish Councils to become involved in community energy generation schemes. This was supported.

12/07

Future Agenda Items

It was agreed that the attendance of Bev Hemming from Third Sector Services would be invited to attend the August meeting with the meeting to start at 7pm.

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There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10:15pm.

CHAIRMAN – Wednesday 6th August, 2014.