

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF WHITMINSTER PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE WHITMINSTER VILLAGE HALL, WHITMINSTER AT 7.30 PM ON WEDNESDAY 4th JUNE, 2014.

00/06

Present

Cllrs Jones (Chairman), Mrs Gilmore (Vice Chair), Douglas, Hughes, Paynter and Peters. The Clerk was also present together with 10 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.

01/06

Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Hay and County Councillor Blackburn.

Before the meeting proceeded Cllr Jones advised Council of the sad death of Basil Booth who had been the County Councillor for the ward for a number of years. Cllr Jones confirmed that he would be attending the funeral and would represent Councillors and the Clerk. A formal farewell was also recorded in respect of Mrs Wendy Coleman who stood down at the recent elections and a welcome to new Cllr Nick Peters. Council noted the contribution made by Mrs Coleman and it was agreed a letter of thanks should be sent and an appropriate gift purchased.

Acceptance of Office forms were also completed at this stage and returned to the Clerk. He advised that expense forms relating to election to the Parish Council should be sent back to Electoral Department at Stroud District Council direct. Declaration of Interest forms would be circulated in due course.

02/06

Election of Chairman

Cllr Mrs Gilmore nominated Cllr Jones and this proposal was seconded by Cllr Douglas and approved by all present.

03/06

Appointment of Vice Chairman

Cllr Jones enquired if Cllr Mrs Gilmore would be prepared to fulfil the responsibility for a further year and on her agreement she was duly appointed.

04/06

Appointment of Responsible Financial Officer

The Clerk was appointed in this role.

05/06

Appointment of Parish Representatives

The following appointments were made:

Footpaths Officer – Cllr Paynter.

Watercourse Wardens – Cllrs Hughes and Paynter.

Snow Warden – Cllr Jones.

Whitminster Village Hall & Playing Field Management Committee Representative – Cllr Mrs Gilmore.

06/06

Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Jones, Douglas and Peters declared an interest in relation to Agenda Item 8 (ii) concerning the Village Hall & Playing Field. It was noted that Cllr Mrs Gilmore is the Parish Council representative on the Management Committee.

07/06

Minutes

The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 4th June 2014 were signed as a true record subject to two minor amendments within 07/04 and 11/04.

08/06

Matters Arising

First World War Centenary

The Clerk reminded all present that the year was passing by and no progress had been made in preparing a formal application for grant aid in respect of the proposed commemoration project. It was agreed that it would not be a joint scheme with other Parishes. The school had shown interest but would not know how this could fit in until the curriculum is set later in the year. The Clerk reviewed the criteria and it was noted that a clear educational link must be shown to qualify for grant support. The clerk suggested perhaps some research could be undertaken into the background of a few of the people named on the war memorial, in conjunction with the County Archivist, to highlight the fact that these were normal people who gave up their day to day lives to fight for their country and the impact this had on the village. Case study illustrations could then be shown on a new notice board to provide the educational link explaining the background of the memorial and the area could be improved, to include the paving, to improve access. This was considered a good idea and Cllr Peters agreed to investigate further the potential involvement of the school before the matter was to be discussed again in July.

Village Hall & Playing Field

The Clerk reported that he had received a final note from Roger James Clements & Partners summarising the situation regarding the Charity Commission Scheme, Fields In Trust and other issues before closing their file. The proposed lease of land at the School / Playing Field to facilitate the widening of the access road had come before Council for signature on behalf of the Management Committee as Custodian Trustees. A letter was presented from WSP solicitors explaining why this would not convey any obligations on the Parish Council and as a result it was duly approved and signed. Cllr Hughes expressed concern at the removal of the hedge and the fact it was not being replaced by hedging but Cllr Jones explained that this would not be practical.

09/06

Police & Community Safety Matters

There were no crime figures available for the previous month. Cllr Jones advised that following the multi-agency liaison regarding various issues in The Close whilst no direct action had yet come from the ongoing discussions the problems had abated. The situation would continue to be monitored. Cllr Hughes brought to Council's attention issues relating to what would seem to be the actions of children building dens around the edge of the Playing Field. An email was also read out from PCSO Mark Lifton stating that he would be monitoring the area of skate ramp as much as he is able. Cllr Jones reported on the Joint Cluster Group Meeting that he had attended. The main matter of the meeting had been to advise that PC Nadia Shute would be replaced as the local police officer by PC Melanie Campbell.

10/06

Planning

Decisions to Note

S.14/0629/HHOLD Orchard View, School Lane, Whitminster.

Two storey extension to side of property.

Permission granted.

S.13/0636/OUT 1 Police Houses, School Lane, Whitminster.

Outline application for the erection of a detached dwelling.

Awarded consent at appeal for non-determination.

Applications to Consider

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

Proposed ground floor and first floor extension.

Council considered this proposed extension to be in keeping and of no detriment to the locality and therefore resolved to give it support.

2014/0708/EIAS Land at School Lane, Whitminster

A response had previously been given to this request for a screening opinion by Cllr Jones and the Clerk read out the letter sent on behalf of the PC deferring to the greater knowledge of the SDC Planning Officers whilst reaffirming Council's opposition to any development outside of the settlement boundary. Cllr Blackburn provided details of the input given by GC Highways, being a standard reply they issue, and stating that GCC would not be seeking a full environment report. He advised that he could press for a more rigorous approach but would require detailed 'ammunition' from the Parish in order to do so.

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.

The Clerk went on to reappraise Council of the various issues that had been previously discussed 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. 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

It was reported that the Inspections initial view of the proposed Local Plan was that it is unsound in not allowing for sufficient growth in the economy and underestimating the necessary housing numbers. A crucial issuing concerning liaison with neighbouring local authorities was not raised as an issue. Cllr Jones stated that SDC would be reconsidering its position and would most likely revise the housing numbers through including additional sites before resubmitting the plan for detailed consideration.

Village Design Statement

It was reported that refinement of the VDS was ongoing following the initial feedback of Conrad Moore at SDC but the process was proving to be a bureaucratic challenge.

Other Planning Matters

Within this item Cllr Jones reported on his continued ongoing efforts to secure the proper completion of the Schoolfield Close affordable housing site and he hoped that all issues had either been attended to or would soon be in hand but it had been a particularly arduous task dealing with the relevant housing association. An invitation had been received to the forthcoming DCC meeting. The Clerk had liaised with Jackie Haines at SDC and it was confirmed that this was a general invitation issued to all Councils and there were no issues particular to Whitminster due for discussion. An errant planning alert was received in respect of a previous application S.12/2001FUL – Ivydene, School Lane, Whitminster. It would appear to have been generated by a glitch on the SDC system. Correspondence was received from Rachel Brown, Planning Officer, asking Council to consider specific projects requiring funds for off-site recreation contributions in respect of forthcoming application outline application S.14/1079/OUT concerning 1 Paynes Meadow. 2 no. 3 bed properties were likely to be considered and this could generate a contribution of £2,600 or thereabouts. It was agreed that this would be given further consideration. The application had not yet been registered as further information was being awaited.

11/06

Highways & Byways

Cllr Paynter reported that he had been inspecting the Parish footpath network. Some stiles required clearing routes through crops required spraying off and this he would monitor.

Various emails had been received and circulated from Cllr Blackburn regarding the proposed resurfacing and safety works planned for the A38. Confirmation was also received of the various traffic orders and the commencement of work and timings. Details were received of the Highways Information Evening taking place on 21st July as well as the Local Transport Plan Review Event of 3rd July. Cllr Jones reported on correspondence he had been having with Persimmon Homes, local residents and others relating to the maintenance of the grass verge outside Little Holbury that had been maintained previously by Persimmon. The developer had recently claimed it was not within its ownership and had ceased maintenance. Local residents had undertaken it but a ruling was being sought from Highways as to the ownership and responsibilities and whether residents and or the Parish Council would be authorised to take care of it if they wished to do so. The Clerk expressed concern at the possibility of the Council taking this on as what criteria would then be used to judge future requests from other residents wanting to see their adjoining verges maintained to a greater standard than that undertaken by the County Council Highways Dept.

An offer had been received from SDC for the use of a Leyhill Prison working party. Cllr Jones had requested litter picking on the A38 but due to the nature of the road this could only be carried out by a professional team. However, a litter pick was arranged through the contractors, Veolia, as a result.

12/06

Accounts

Accounts for Payment

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

SDC	£300.00	Warden Scheme
CPRE	£36.00	Membership
RJC & Partners	£972.00	Fees
GAPTC	£175.16	Membership
Cllr Peters	£72.89	VDS Expenses
Cllr Jones	£169.94	VDS Expenses
Clerk	£22.21	VDS Expenses
Mrs L Ireland	£25.00	Severn Voice Fee
Humberts Ltd	£480.00	Fees
D Lord	£58.67	Administration expenses.
Broker Network	£691.97	Insurance
Play Inspection Company	£71.94	Fee – cheque to be held until receipt of report.

General Overview

The Clerk reported a balance at the bank as at 1st May 2014 of £8,549.25 and no cheques had been drawn in the intervening period as there had been no Parish Council meeting during the election period of May. The bank statement sheet number 52 was reviewed and reconciled.

The Clerk also confirmed that the Community Planning Grant had been claimed and received in the sum of £500.00 and the first instalment of Precept and LCTS Grant in the sum of £6,250.00

A quote was received, reviewed and accepted from SGMS for grass cutting for the coming season. This being notable cheaper than the proposals may be by Greenfields as previously considered. It was noted that all of Council's charitable donations had been issued together with covering letters.

Requests for support were received from Victim Support, St John Ambulance and the Cobalt appeal all to be considered at the relevant future meeting. Financial updates were received from GAPTC.

13/06

Correspondence

The following items of correspondence were received:

Website statistics for the previous month.

CPRE newsletter and magazine.

Clerks & Councils Direct.

Invitation to join a Rural Sounding Board – Cllr Jones agreed to take this forward.

GAPTC course information – Cllr Peters voiced his interest in attending the course on 'Being a Better Councillor' to be held at Whitminster on 24th June. It was agreed his expenses would be reimbursed if he chose to sign up.

Copies of correspondence arising from the Severn Voice meeting.

Home Start Stroud AGM information.

Request for feedback in respect of SDC /GAPTC Working Together initiative.

Press release on GCC Active Together scheme.

Consultation document on Sheltered Housing.

GAPTC AGM and other information.

SDC update on dispensations.

TROW magazine.

Western Power Distribution power cut or emergency preparation leaflet.

Request to support a campaign for a proportion of business rates to be transferred to local councils.

Stroud Farmers' Market survey.

Chartered Parish meeting notes.

Request to attend a meeting and promote the services of Third Sector Services – to be arranged for August meeting.
Playground equipment brochures.

14/06

Chairman's Items & District Councillor's Report

Cllr Jones reported that following the local elections there had been no change to the control of Stroud District Council. The main issue to face the council, other than the Local Plan, would be the boundary review looking at the various wards and number of councillors. He had nothing more to report that had not been covered elsewhere during the meeting.

15/06

Other Business

None not covered elsewhere during the meeting.

16/06

Future Agenda Items

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

It was noted that Cllr Paynter gave his apologies and left the meeting at 10:10 pm due to a work commitment.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10:50pm.

CHAIRMAN – Wednesday 2nd July, 2014.