

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WHITMINSTER PARISH COUNCIL HELD BY VIDEO CONFERENCE ON THURSDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2021.**

## **Public Forum**

The Chairman welcomed everyone joining the on-line meeting. There was one member of the public participating, Mr Nick Peters. He raised concerns relating to the proposed development of up to 100 dwellings off of School Lane. He felt it would be a very high density scheme and thought that, given the site size, high rise properties could be proposed. It was felt that this would be unlikely but noted that Council would be discussing the application formally later during the meeting.

## **00/02**

### **Present**

There were 7 Parish Councillors present for the meeting including Councillors Jones (Chairman), Hay (Vice-Chairman), Braidford, Douglas, Mrs Gilmore, Paynter and Younger. One member of the public was in attendance.

## **01/02**

### **Apologies**

Apologies were received and accepted from District & County Cllr Stephen Davies who was unavailable due a need to attend a Stroud District Council meeting.

An apology was also made by Cllr Jones because the meeting had been postponed as a result of his recent hospital admission. The meeting could not have proceeded under the chairmanship of the Vice Chair as he had already given his apologies for the usual Wednesday meeting and in any case it would not have been quorate. Therefore, the meeting had been rescheduled on a date that allowed for sufficient public notice to be given and all Councillors could be in attendance. This was important due to the consideration of the budget and precept. All present acknowledged the apology from Cllr Jones but were simply pleased that he was home and well enough to resume the Chair.

## **02/02**

### **Declarations of Interest**

None were raised relating to known agenda items.

## **03/02**

### **Minutes**

The Minutes of the January, 2021, meeting were agreed as a true record and would be signed at the next in person meeting. A draft had been circulated before the meeting and no amendments made but Cllr Douglas raised in person a mistake as detailed below:

- 02/01 First paragraph, fourth line – the word ‘in’ to be inserted.

## **04/02**

### **Police & Community Safety Issues**

There were no formal matters to consider and no reports received from the Police or Neighbourhood Warden. Cllr Jones advised that he had been informed that during January there had been 8 crimes reported within the Severnside area

and they were varied in nature. This was fewer than had been reported during the same period in 2020.

A discussion was had over the playing field gym equipment and whether physical efforts should be applied to prevent its use (such as locks and chains securing moving parts), signage applied, or the public should be left to follow their own awareness of the rules concerning outdoor activity during the prevailing lockdown. Barrier tape fencing off the equipment had been removed on an almost daily basis. It was agreed that further efforts with signage would be considered and the matter kept under review.

## **05/02**

### **Planning**

#### **Decisions to Note**

No formal notifications had been received although it was noted that the following application had been withdrawn:

S.20/2380/FUL                      The Chalet, Whitminster Inn, Bristol Road, Whitminster, Glos.

Construction of single storey 2 bedroom chalet.

#### **Applications to Consider**

S.21/0118/LBC                      Parklands Farm, School Lane, Whitminster, Glos.

Listed Building Consent sought for refurbishment of farmhouse and outbuilding into ancillary accommodation. Erection of two single storey extensions. Demolition of single outbuilding.

& S.21/0117/HHOLD                      Parklands Farm, School Lane, Whitminster, Glos.

Refurbishment of farmhouse and outbuilding into ancillary accommodation. Erection of two single storey extensions. Demolition of single outbuilding.

Council resolved to support these linked applications on the basis that the proposals, when set against previous applications, had minimal impact on the façade and fabric of the building and would bring it back into use as a family home and practical modern accommodation.

S.21/0236/OUT                      Land Off, School Lane, Whitminster, Glos.

Residential development (up to 100 dwellings), associated infrastructure, ancillary facilities, open space and landscaping. Construction of a new vehicular access off School Lane.

Council considered this proposal in detail and resolved to object. It was noted that there were a number of inaccuracies within the submission including, but not an exhaustive list, reference to the A38 being a dual carriageway; reference to a non-existent Post Office; noting a bus stop that does not exist and bus services that no longer operate; analysis of matters undertaken prior to the development of Great Oldbury and the Newlands development within the village at Parklands Farm and overlooking the presence of existing bus shelters. Notably, what up to date work had been done concerning the application and its impact appeared to have been conducted during the ongoing pandemic with traffic levels and local activity very skewed from what would be typical. The proposal does not pay consideration to the national planning policy nor the requirement to address the development of brownfield sites first. There had been no active engagement with the Parish Council to undertake local consultation and no notable changes from the previous application that was refused that should lead to this application being considered any differently. The development, if permitted, would remove a valuable green buffer to the edge of the village causing ribbon development to extend towards the periphery hamlet; it would create more traffic in the vicinity of the school without proposals to mitigate this nor how the likely increase in school age children would be addressed. It would also impact on the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area,

Public Rights of Way and the wider landscape. For these reasons and the reasons set out previously in relation to the site, Council would wish to see this application refused.

#### Local Plan & Other Planning Matters

Cllr Jones advised that the Local Plan proposals would be considered by the full District Council in March prior to a further consultation after which there would be result consideration and the matter would then be referred to the Planning Inspectorate for their approval or otherwise.

A planning notification had been received and circulated by email relating to a site in Eastington Parish for the removal of trees from land at M5 J13 West of Stonehouse. Cllr Jones believed it related to works associated with the canal and Council had no comments to make.

### **06/02**

#### **Highways & Byways**

##### Footpaths

Cllr Paynter updated Council on footpath issues and confirmed that he had still heard nothing further from the County Council Public Rights of Way Officer. He had agreed to chase her but had not done so as nothing appeared to be happening during the ongoing lockdown. However, he would pick the matter up again and pursue, in particular the blocked footpath adjacent to Whitminster Court, very shortly.

##### School Lane

It was understood that the new signage had been installed in School Lane very recently and this would be checked. The Area Highways Manager, Harriett Osburn, had been invited to attend a future meeting of the Parish Council either virtually or in person as appropriate.

##### Other Matters

A response was still awaited from the project manager for Gigaclear who had been tasked with the remaining reinstatement of the areas where the company had been laying cable within the village. Cllr Jones was pursuing the matter with the help of Cllr Stephen Davies and the particular concern was the area at the junction of School Lane and Hyde Lane.

Cllr Jones had raised the matter of overgrown hedges in Hyde Lane with the local Highways Supervisor who in turn had arranged for the relevant safety team to inspect and they had found no issues with the hedges nor the surface. However, he did still agree to write to certain householders and landowners to request that hedges be cut back.

The ditch adjacent to School Lane was also discussed and it was agreed that issues would be raised with the Area Highways Manager in due course.

Also, under this item, the matter of litter picking came up and it was noted that litter pickers could most likely be sourced from the Neighbourhood Warden.

### **07/02**

#### **Skate Ramp**

Once again, nothing more had been received in regard to proposals for the skate ramp despite a reply from the company's representative apologising and promising a detailed response. Details were also still awaited from the Public Works Loan Board. It was agreed that alternative suppliers would be approached in an effort to move this matter one during the coming financial year.

### **08/02**

## **Accounts**

### **Accounts for Payment**

Consideration was given as to the merits of renewing the Council's membership of the Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association at a cost of £50 and whether this gave rise to unnecessary duplication if the Management Committee were already members. Cllr Jones advised that membership would give rise to an ability to access potential avenues of funding for the new skate ramp and further renewal was agreed on this basis. A cheque would be drawn and circulated for signature.

Payments made for matters previously approved and settled by way of cheques circulated between meetings included:

ROC Projects	Installation of gym equipment signage	£150.00
T W Hawkins (S.G.M.S)	Grass cutting	
£856.68		
The Play Inspection Company	Safety inspection	£123.00
Fresh Air Fitness	Gym equipment (included reimbursement of	
£5,489.99		
	other admin expenses)	
MSP	Local Plan planning objection	
£2,640.00		
MBC Ltd	Local Plan highways objection	
£3,594.00		
Zoom	Video conferencing (paid by card)	£173.37

Under this item consideration of Council's insurance was also discussed. A revised reduced premium had been received from BHIB for a policy with Aviva at £560.00 pa if committing to a 3 year agreement. It was resolved to proceed on this basis.

### **Budget & Precept**

Notes were circulated setting out the proposed closing balance at the end of the financial year assuming anticipated expenditure and income. With a VAT reclaim expected and £5,000 forthcoming from the Urbaser Community Fund it was expected that Council would close the year or attain early in the new financial year a reserve balance (towards the skate ramp fund) of £25,165 but it was noted that unexpected items could arise such as the need to incur further expenditure on planning related issues.

A budget had been drafted and circulated proposing expenditure of £18,390 during 2021/22 to include a payment of £5,000 on reserve for the skate ramp fund taking the anticipated fund to £30,165 at the close of the forthcoming financial year. After discussion over the potential for unexpected costs and taking into account the recent development within the village and the expanded tax base it was agreed to increase the precept to £17,775 on the basis of calculations that this would actually result in not nett increase for the Parish Council element of the Council Tax due in respect of an average Band D property.

### **Other Financial Matters**

The balance at the bank had been confirmed as £22,877 as at 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021.

Financial matters concerning the gym equipment costs were discussed, including the contribution pledged by the Whitminster Village Hall & Playing Field Management Committee. A request for reimbursement had been submitted and was now gratefully received.

A quotation for grass cutting works for the coming season was received from Sports Ground Maintenance & Supplies. Being a marginal increase per operation and having received significantly varied quotations in the past it was not

considered of merit to seek alternative proposals and the contract would be renewed for a further year.

**09/02**

**Correspondence**

The following items of correspondence were received:

Invitation from Siobhan Baillie MP to participate in a taskforce to secure inward investment into the District.

Update on Planning & Developing Youth Work in Communities.

CPRE magazines.

Cotswold Canals Trust update.

Clerks & Councils Direct Magazine.

All other correspondence had been received and circulated by email.

**10/02**

**Chairman's Items & District Councillor's Report**

Most relevant matters were covered elsewhere during the meeting but Cllr Jones gave a brief report on the activities of the District Council including the ongoing response to Covid-19 and the fact that most staff continued to work from home. This had given rise to some delays, especially in regard to planning applications. Cllr Jones also informed the meeting that he had asked for the planning application relating to the infilling of gravel workings at Claypits to be called in to be considered by the Development Control Committee.

**11/02**

**Other Business**

Javelin Park Community Liaison Group Update - Cllr Mrs Gilmore advised that there was nothing to report of relevance. The request for the draw down of the Council's grant aid toward the outdoor gym equipment was pending.

**Other Issues**

None.

**12/02**

**Future Agenda Items**

It was understood that the village news sheet was unlikely to operate again following the lifting of Covid-19 restriction and Cllr Jones proposed that an alternative means of communication be considered to raise awareness and key issues with parishioners.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9:54 pm.

**CHAIRMAN - Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2021.**