

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WHITMINSTER PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT WHITMINSTER VILLAGE HALL AT 7:30PM ON WEDNESDAY 1st MARCH, 2023.

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting including the three members of the public in attendance as well as three representatives from the Cotswold Canals Trust.

00/03

Public Forum

Prior to the commencement of the formal meeting a presentation was received concerning the planned works by the Cotswold Canals Trust within the parish over the coming years. This was explained in some detail and would include the need to divert some footpaths for safety reasons. There was an opportunity afterwards for questions to be raised and there was a general discussion concerning the proposals that was largely supportive.

A request was made that the draft Minutes of meetings should appear on the Council's website and it was agreed that this would be done when possible.

01/03

Present

There were 7 Parish Councillors present for the formal meeting including Councillors Jones (Chairman), Hay (Vice Chair), Paynter, Braidford, Douglas, Mrs Gilmore & Mrs Younger. Three members of the public were in attendance.

02/03

Apologies

There were no apologies received from Council members as all were present but it was noted that County & District Councillor Stephen Davies had sent an apology for being unable to attend as he was away on holiday but he had submitted a written report.

03/03

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest relating to known agenda items.

Under this item the proposed new Gloucestershire Unified Code of Conduct to cover Parishes, Districts and the County Council was discussed and it was agreed that it should be adopted.

04/03

Minutes

The Minutes of the February 2023 meeting were signed as a true record of the proceedings subject to the following amendments:

04/02 Minutes – 5th line – 'change' changed to read 'changed'.

07/02 Planning – Decisions to Note – 2nd line – '/' inserted after 'conditions'.

05/03

Matters Arising

To date there was nothing further to report on any proposed Coronation event that Council had committed to funding of up to £500:00 if required.

Cllr Braidford had taken forward the planting of the Jubilee trees and was thanked.

On Jubilee mugs, Cllrs Paynter and Hay had dropped off those requested as agreed but there had been no further applications.

Following on from 08/02 and the 'footpath crossing' signs suggested for Whitminster Lane, Cllr Jones stated that on a recent trip to the Doctors' Surgery he had seen that there were already two signs in place. However, it was thought that the original comment related to a different location.

It was reaffirmed that the grass cutting contract would be renewed for a further year with SGMS/T W Hawkins & Sons.

Further consideration was given to the Parish and Town Council Charter, as proposed by Stroud District Council. Whilst there remained feeling that in practice it could quite possibly be meaningless, it was agreed that there was no harm in subscribing to it and hence Council resolved to sign up.

06/03

Police & Community Safety Issues

After initially postponing, the Play Inspection Company safety inspection of the Playing Field play and gym equipment had gone ahead and the report had been received along with a valuation stock take. There were no risks of concern identified.

PCSO Trebble was not in attendance and no crime figures had been received, neither had there been any reports from the Neighbourhood Warden.

On the matter of the Playing Field Pavilion break in, further developments were awaited once the Police Scenes of Crime Department had concluded processing the available evidence. However, Cllr Jones went on to inform the meeting that it looked likely that the Pavilion would shortly be deemed unsafe and unfit for purpose and would have to be demolished. More details would follow.

Cllr Jones advised the meeting that the play areas within the Parish under the control of Persimmon Homes, that had been cleared and made safe prior to the last meeting, had been fitted with new equipment and were being transferred to management companies. Photos of the equipment were circulated.

Following the circulation of the Emergency Plan and the contact that had been made with SDC, a response was still awaited from Gabrielle Webb who had made contact to say she would be in touch once she had picked up the brief and was familiar with matters. This would be followed up.

Turning to road safety matters, the Council's application to the Community Speedwatch Fund was now being processed and a site meeting would need to be arranged in due course.

07/03

Planning

Decisions to Note

S.21/1125/HHOLD Packthorne Farm, Whitminster Lane, Whitminster, Gloucestershire.

New gated entrance.

Permission granted.

Applications to Consider

S.23/0180/VAR Whitminster Park, Bristol Road, Whitminster, Gloucestershire GL2 7NY

Section 73 application to remove conditions 6 (cabin use) and 7 (occupancy and register) and a variation to condition 1 (approved plans), 2 (materials), and condition 4 (Landscaping) of planning permission reference S.13/1508/FUL Construction of an ancillary outbuilding, provision of 16 log cabins for tourist accommodation, and retention of marquee (as amended by S.19/1439/VAR)

Council resolved to oppose this application for the reasons as set out in response to an earlier application, recently withdrawn, and concerning the lack of car parking, impact on highways safety, lack of detail in regard to ancillary buildings, the conflict with other uses within the Whitminster Inn site and other issues.

Local Plan & Other Planning Matters

It was noted that there was still no update received from planning enforcement concerning the Whitminster Inn and Old Stables at Kidnams Farm. However, it was understood that additional resource was being provided to planning enforcement.

On the Local Plan, the Clerk had received further notification in regard to the Examination in Public that would commence on Tuesday 7th March. Meanwhile, a discussion had been had with Mark Russell of Planning Strategy at Stroud District Council. He had advised that, as anticipated, the Inspectors would be examining the soundness of the proposed plan details and not considering sites and their merits. Therefore, there was no real benefit in seeking any advice on potential changes that could impact the Parish at this stage. If the plan were to be found unsound and therefore new sites would have to be considered, then there would be a further round of consultation in regard to those alternative sites and an opportunity to then put forward arguments through the representation process of the subsequent examination. Mr Russell did suggest that many of the issues that could potentially impact on the Slimbridge site might also impact on Whitminster and therefore those seeking to promote Whitminster might concentrate effort on defeating Sharpness instead. However, for now it was resolved that no further action would be required beyond a watching brief and to have the matter in mind when other funding decisions are considered.

08/03

Highways & Byways

Contact had been received from Gary Wilson who had taken over the role of Highways Area Supervisor. Dates had been proposed for a site meeting and these would be confirmed and circulated if agreement could be reached.

Concern was raised relating to the edge of a concrete forming at Packthorne Corner that was protruding slightly from the verge. This was added to the list of matters to be raised.

On footpath matters, it was noted that issues relating to Whitminster House and its land should now be addressed to John Goldingham. The matter of the fallen over fence in the A38 Northbound lay-by was to be followed up with Nigel Attwooll.

Cllr Paynter gave a general update on other footpath matters.

On the Highways Act 1980, Section 130A(1) notice requesting action, details on when the obstruction was first identified and complained about were needed and Cllr Paynter was reviewing initial and early emails.

09/03

Skate Ramp

The Clerk had submitted an application to the Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association for grant aid and Council was pleased to note that an award had been made in the sum of £2,000:00 towards the replacement ramp.

10/03

Solar Farm

A request had been made for the planning application concerning the connection masts to be called in for consideration by the Development Control Committee. Meanwhile, there was nothing further to report on the matter of any community fund contribution.

11/03

Accounts

Accounts for Payment

There were no cheques for payment drawn during the meeting.

Other Financial Matters

Confirmation had been received from GAPTC that the Section 137 expenditure limit for 2023-2024 had been set at £9.93 after indexing.

The balance at the bank remained unchanged since the last meeting.

At the end of the meeting all Councillors were invited to input details on-line in order to be able to set up on-line banking with Lloyd banks. This was with the exception of Cllr Douglas who does not have internet access.

12/03

Correspondence

The following items of correspondence were received:

Clerks & Councils Direct Magazine.

Trow Magazine.

Councils Connected newsletter.

Stroud District Council eNews – January.

Notification was received from the District Council that spam email was being issued as from the email account of various District Council and was being looked into,

Other electronic correspondence had been circulated between meetings.

13/03

Chairman's Items & District Councillor's Report and County Councillor's Report

Cllr Davies had submitted a written report that outlined the following:

- The equivalent of nineteen Olympic sized swimming pools of tarmac had been used to fill potholes carried out by 36 teams.
- Householders are being encouraged to register second hand domestic appliances in order to be notified of recalls.
- A County Council update on climate change had been published that includes plans to plant 66,000 trees.
- £500,000 had been allocated to support walking and cyclin.
- The 2023/24 budget had been passed that sought to tackle inflation without reducing services.

On the District Council, Cllrs Jones informed the meeting that:

- Full Council had met a couple of weeks prior and agreed the budget and Council Tax rate and thanks to generous Central Government support there were few surprises and hence the matters were voted through with little discussion.
- Council owned car parks would not be subject to any increased in charges.
- SDC element of the Council Tax to increase by the maximum allowed, 2.9%, with the average Band D property in the Parish paying £2,096:84 of which £48:81 is formed by the Parish Precept.
- Council House rents to increase by 7%.
- A new Code of Conduct was adopted.

All Parish related Chairman's matters had been considered during the meeting.

14/03

Other Business

Annual Parish Meeting – there was some discussion had as to potential guest speakers and the format of the Annual Parish Meeting. Combining the meeting with the May Parish Council Meeting was favoured and would be considered further.

15/03

Future Agenda Items

None that were not previously noted.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.42pm.

CHAIRMAN – Wednesday 5th April, 2023.