

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WHITMINSTER PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN WHITMINSTER VILLAGE HALL AT 7:30PM ON WEDNESDAY 5th JULY, 2023.

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting including the five members of the public in attendance (one present to make a presentation concerning a proposed development site) as well as two Police Community Support Officers present for part of the meeting.

Public Forum

The members of the public present raised concerns over the lack of publicity concerning the planning applications for large scale residential development on land East of the A38 and on either side of Grove Lane. This matter was discussed in general along with the dates by when public comments should ideally be submitted to the District Council. However, it was noted that comments will still be considered through until the Planning Officer's report is prepared and that is likely to be some way off due to the various requests for supplementary information from the applicant.

Before the commencement of the formal meeting, a brief outline and presentation was made by Mr Owen Thomas of Thomas Dean Architects concerning a proposal for land he owns adjacent to Rhyne Cottage and outside of the defined Settlement Boundary. He was seeking to gauge the views of the Parish Council on the proposed development of 4no. 2 bedroom dwellings. It was proposed that 2 of the 4 dwellings be 'affordable' and 'price capped'. Council raised concerns over the quality of the design, although Mr Thomas advised that the scheme was very indicative, the parking provision, amount of amenity space and creation of a new potentially heavily used means of access and egress onto the A38. However, the main concerns related to the proposed provision of affordable housing so remote from the village amenities; the inclusion of market value housing within what would be an exception site and the 'affordable' housing being of minimal volume; a lack of clarity on the application, regulation and policing of the proposed price cap and the fact that no social housing provider was involved. Taking these factors into account and based on the view Council had formed previously on ribbon development outside of the settlement boundary and along the A38, Council formed the view that it would be very unlikely that it would be supportive of such an application. This matter was discussed later in the meeting under 'Planning' and after Mr Thomas had left the meeting. Councillor Jones, who had received the initial contact from Mr Thomas, agreed that he would make contact with him to advise that Council was sceptical of the proposal and unlikely to support its progression as an Exception Site.

00/07

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. Five members of the public were in attendance with this number reducing as the meeting progressed. PCSO Trebble and his colleague were also present for the relevant Police and Community Safety agenda item.

01/07

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 as he was unable to attend.

02/07

Declarations of Interest

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

03/07

Minutes

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

07/06 Other Financial Matters – 3rd line – ‘bene’ changed to read ‘been’.

08/06 Highways & Byways – 4th line – ‘bene’ changed to read ‘been’.

08/06 Highways & Byways – 6th line – ‘vis9bility’ changed to read ‘visibility’.

04/07

Matters Arising

Cllr Jones raised again the question as to whether Council thought some tree protectors/strimmer guards should be purchased to prevent damage to the new trees planted at the entrance to The Close/Henry Withers’ Place. All were in agreement and Cllr Braidford agreed to take the matter forward. It was also noted that the newly planted trees required continued watering.

Cllr Paynter advised that he planned to attend to the damaged Perspex panel in the A38 North bound bus shelter the following day. Cllr Jones also asked Cllrs Paynter and Hay if they might be able to take forward the installation of the two new notice boards in the near future, as the existing notice board to the end of the Playing Field access road, in particular, was falling apart.

Cllr Douglas was asked for an update in respect of the required repairs to the Church heating boiler and he advised that he would come to the matter later in the meeting.

05/07

Police & Community Safety Issues

PCSO Trebble was in attendance with his supervising colleague and presented comparable crime figures year on year. For the first 6 months of 2023 there has been 19 crimes recorded compared with 27 in the same period during 2022. There had been 23no. 999 emergency calls requesting service in the Parish. Those incidents ranged from antisocial behaviour to several assaults and one domestic burglary. However, PCSO Trebble informed the meeting that the level of more serious crime was much lower than the average for similar size villages in the locality.

On the matter of the Playing Field Pavilion break in, it was still the case that further developments were awaited once the Police Scenes of Crime Department had concluded processing the available evidence, there was no further update on this but obviously matters had moved on concerning the pavilion in general. PCSO Trebble was unable to provide any further update.

A response had been received from Gabrielle Webb of Stroud District Council on the matter of updating the Village Emergency Plan. She was still becoming familiar with the community safety/emergency plan side of the role but would receive and review a copy of the current plan and provide advice in due course.

Correspondence was received from the Department for Health & Social Care explaining the concept of ‘The Circuit’ for the registration of community defibrillators on a national database. It was confirmed that the three items of equipment within the village had already been registered.

It was noted that a number of further emails had been received purporting to be from Cllr Jones seeking assistance from the Clerk and other members of the Parish Council. This was clearly an ongoing issue.

Cllr Jones has once again chased Daniel Bentley of Persimmons for an update on the proposed appointment of a management company to administer the play areas located within the Parish in Permimmons’ ownership. He had also raised the issue of the grass needing cutting and brambles & branches cutting back. Once again this had been met with silence and no response was forthcoming. A consultation document had been circulated and reviewed on the review of the SDC Dog Control

Public Spaces Protection Order. Council was concerned the proposed changes to PSPO4 removing the need for dogs to be kept on a lead in designated areas such as allotments, cemeteries, car parks, canal towpaths and cycle tracks. Council's view was that this change was driven more by an inability to enforce rather than the belief that uncontrolled dogs do not cause issues in these specific areas. Therefore, Council resolved to object to this particular amendment.

06/07

Planning

Decisions to Note

S.23/0816/FUL Whitminster Hotel, Bristol Road, Whitminster, Gloucestershire.

8 no storage containers to be used as retail units (Class Ea) plus 20no storage containers to be used as office units (Class Egi) and toilets, plus associated car parking. Resubmission of S.22.2286/FUL.

It was noted that this application had been refused.

S.23/0945/TPO 54 Uptons Garden, Whitminster, Gloucestershire.

T2 – Lim tree – reduction of 4m.

It was noted that permission had been granted.

In regard to application - S.23/0723/FUL Packthorne Farm, Whitminster Lane, Whitminster, Gloucestershire.

Renovation of an existing listed farmhouse with some minor demolition of unsympathetic 20thC additions.

No decision had yet been reached and there were no other decisions on which Council had been notified.

Applications to Consider

There were no new applications to consider.

Council was notified of an appeal being considered by the Planning Inspectorate -APP/C1625/W/22/3313131 relating to planning reference S.22/1348/FUL - concerning the erection of a new three bedroom dwelling with ancillary site improvements at 1 Manor Farm House, School Lane, Whitminster. Council resolved to leave only its comments relating to the original planning application to be carried forward for consideration through the process of written representations.

Concerning the applications relating to large scale development North and South of Grove Lane, Council's objections had been submitted and could be added to as further information emerges throughout the process. It was noted that the original Planning Officer who had been dealing with the matter and who had met with Council on-line, Cris Lancaster, had since left the employment of the District Council. Council was pleased to note the evolution of a community group promoting wider comment and opposition in respect of these applications and would provide all support available.

Local Plan & Other Planning Matters

There was still no update received from planning enforcement concerning sites within the village.

In regard to the Stroud Local Plan examination in public, this was in recess and would reconvene in September. Representations had been submitted both for and against the proposed large-scale sites at Wisloe and Sharpness. There were indications that the emerging plan was likely to be considered not sound and hence would not receive the approval of the appointed Inspectors in its current form. Detail on the work required to address any failings would not be provided yet but it looked close to certain that the Plan would not be adopted prior to the forthcoming District Council meetings due for May 2024.

The proposals put forward by Mr Thomas, as discussed under the Public Forum above, were considered again briefly and Council resolved that it could not be supportive of the site as an Rural Needs Exception Site as matters stood.

07/07

Accounts

Accounts for Payment

The following accounts were ratified for payment with cheques drawn during the meeting:

TW Hawkins & Sons (SGMS)	Contract mowing	£1,281.44
Haden-Browne Plastics (reimbursing Cllr Paynter)	Materials for bus shelter repair	£96.29
Home Bargains & Aldi (reimbursing Cllr Mrs Younger)	Coronation commemoration items	£52.64

Audit

The approved accounts had been submitted but no acknowledgement nor receipt for any further information had been received as yet.

Other Financial Matters

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

Following the input of details on-line, at the end of the March meeting, in order to be able to set up on-line banking with Lloyd bank, it transpired that no further contact had been received from the bank. As the Clerk is not a signatory on the account he was unable to access the necessary information to report on how matters were proceeding and hence Cllr Jones and the Clerk would pursue the matter through a joint call the following week when convening to discuss Highways and other matters.

08/07

Highways & Byways

Following further chasing contact had been received from Gary Wilson, who had taken over the role of Highways Area Supervisor, and a date for a site meeting had been fixed for the following week. The Clerk along with Cllrs Jones and Douglas would be present along with anyone else who could make it on the day. The list of matters to discuss was duly updated.

On footpath matters Cllr Paynter gave a brief update but there was nothing new to report other than a potentially hazardous hole that had opened up in the surfacing of The Lagger.

It was noted that the pavement outside of 43 Paynes Meadow had been repaired.

09/07

Skate Ramp

It was formally agreed, through a unanimous vote of Council, that a Public Works Loan Board Loan be sought for the full necessary amount to progress the skate ramp. A formal application would be submitted. This would enable the project to proceed and adjustments to the loan amount or early repayment of part or all could then take place if subsequently further grant aid was forthcoming or if a surplus were to arise. The reserve element of the annual precept would adequately address repayment and interest whilst reserves currently held on account could then be available for any planning assistance that may be required, subject to Council's approval, if matters progressed in an unsatisfactory way in regard to the emerging Local Plan or the pending planning applications on land either side of Grove Lane.

10/07

Solar Farm

Cllr Jones provided an update on the discussions he had with Mr Baker of JBM Solar following their chance encounter at a recent Development Control Committee meeting. Whilst Mr Baker had cancelled attending the June meeting, at short notice, he had reverted to Cllr Jones on the proposed Deed of Gift and it was felt there was little further improvement that could be achieved. A draft

Agreement was reviewed during the meeting and the Clerk agreed to consider it further and to update with tracked changes following the meeting, with the intention of agreeing signature during August or September.

11/07

Correspondence

The following items of correspondence were received:

Clerks & Councils Direct Magazine.

Trow Magazine.

Councils Connected newsletter.

Stroud District Council eNews.

Notification the GAPTC would be seeing a new CEO following the departure of Alison Robinson.

A survey on 'Civility and respect at work' from Newland Parish Council.

Other electronic correspondence had been circulated between meetings.

12/07

Chairman's Items & District Councillor's Report.

All Parish related Chairman's matters had been considered during the meeting other than in regard to the Playing Field Pavilion. Cllr Jones provided a short update particularly focusing on issues concerning the disconnection and temporary relocation of services. This was followed by a brief summary of District Council matters including the constituency changes arising from the Boundary Commission.

A written report from District & County Cllr Stephen Davies had been submitted relating to County Council matters and this covered:

- A new scheme being launched through libraries to help over 60s called 'Ageing With Creativity'.
- A focus on work done to highways by utility companies, amounting to over 80% or roadworks, resulting in over £400,000 of fines being levied.
- £8m secured from Central Government to support Active Travel including a cycle spine to run from Gloucester to Cheltenham and hopefully to be extended to Stroud.
- A Holiday Activity Fund launched by Children Services to provide activities and meals.
- An agreement reached by Full Council to treat Care Leavers as having a protected characteristic.
- A debate had on Highways concerning the 38 pothole gangs and the introduction of 'Find and Fix' teams that tackle not only safety defects but other issues in the locality. Cllr Davie encourage the continued reporting of potholes.

13/07

Other Business

Severn Voice – The agenda for the meeting to be hosted by the Council in the Village Hall on Wednesday 19th July at 7pm was circulated. The Minutes would follow. One item of particular note was the suggestion that verge cutting contracts could be taken into account in line with 'No Mow Way' to protect wildlife. Invoices for the hall hire and Severn Voice Clerk fee would follow and would be Council's responsibility as host Council.

14/07

Future Agenda Items

Future of the Parish Church.

Potential upgrading of A38 bus shelters.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.53pm.

CHAIRMAN – Wednesday 6th September, 2023.