

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WHITMINSTER PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN WHITMINSTER VILLAGE HALL AT 7:30PM ON WEDNESDAY 4th OCTOBER, 2023.

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting including the two members of the public in attendance.

Public Forum

The members of the public present were afforded the opportunity to raise any matters or concerns but chose not to do so.

00/10

Present

There were 5 Parish Councillors present for the start of the formal meeting including Councillors Jones (Chairman), Paynter (Vice Chair), Hay, Mrs Gilmore & Mrs Younger. Cllr Braidford joined the meeting at 8:05pm. Two members of the public were in attendance for the main duration of the meeting.

01/10

Apologies

There was an apology received from Cllr Braidford as he would be late due to a clashing meeting at the Village School. Cllr Douglas had apologised as he would be away on holiday to commemorate a wedding anniversary. Both apologies were accepted and noted.

02/10

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Jones & Cllr Mrs Gilmore advised a non-pecuniary interest in regard to agenda item 13 (i) Playing Field Pavilion – to consider support for planning application, due to their involvement with the Whitminster Village Hall & Playing Field Management Committee.

03/10

Minutes

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

Opening remarks – 2nd line – ‘Davied’ changed to read ‘Davies.

04/09 Matters Arising – 3rd line – ‘planned to attend’ changed to read ‘had attended’.

12/09 Chairman’s Items & District Councillor’s Report – 8th line – ‘£250,00’ changed to read ‘£250,000’.

13/09 Other Business – 6th^d line – ‘speed’ and ‘and’ removed.

04/10

Matters Arising

Cllr Jones thanked Cllrs Paynter and Hay for installing the new noticeboard at the end of the Playing Field drive. They advised that as it could only be locked/closed by key they had secured the key in the locking mechanism and hoped that it would remain there. They would look to install the second noticeboard, agreed to be placed in The Close, as soon as they could.

Cllr Jones had previously circulated email communications he had pursued with Daniel Bentley of Persimmons concerning the play areas still owned by the company in the village. However, he was no longer ‘in post’ and despite promises that he would pass on details to the new person

responsible, as well as previous responses advising a management company was being set up to facilitate ongoing management, nothing more had been heard. The Clerk had followed up asking for new contact details or a response from the regional office, but no reply had been forthcoming.

There was further discussion on the matter of the A38/Grove Lane junction and its monitoring and enforcement by the Police. In the light of difficulties in defining an appropriate Freedom of Information Act request it was agreed that clarification on the criteria for officer monitoring and a request for attention to be given to the junction would be addressed to Chris Nelson the Police & Crime Commissioner for the County as well as the Chief Constable.

Cllr Jones had circulated his response to the Local Highway Manager on the matter of a delivery of salt for the village with the proposal being that, as has happened in the past, it be delivered to the Village Hall for distribution. The Clerk advised that he might be able to supply two further grit bins rather than the Council needing to purchase them.

05/10

Police & Community Safety Issues

On the matter of the Playing Field Pavilion break-in, as reported by Cllr Jones at the September meeting, the perpetrator had been identified through DNA left at the scene and linked to another incident. It was understood the case had been passed to the CPS but no further update had been received.

Gabrielle Webb of Stroud District Council had been provided with a copy of the Village Emergency Plan for her to review, advise and to provide templates for possible approaches to updating. Dates were discussed to arrange a meeting, likely to be online, at some point during November.

There was no Police presence at the meeting and no reports had been received from the local PCSO or Neighbourhood Warden.

Cllr Braidford advised he would be addressing the necessary defibrillator signage at the Playing Field.

06/10

Planning

Decisions to Note

APP/C1625/W/22/3313131 1 Manor Farm House, School Lane, Whitminster, Gloucestershire.

Erection of a three-bedroom dwelling with ancillary site improvements.

Permission granted by the Planning Inspectorate at appeal.

Cllr Jones advised that the discharge of conditions relating to the solar farm had been addressed but as Council had not been notified or consulted then it was not identified to be informed on the conclusion of the matter.

Applications to Consider

S.23/1787/HHOLD 6 Little Holbury, Whitminster, Gloucestershire.

Replacement of conservatory with single storey extension.

Council considered the proposal to be of no detrimental impact to either the street scene or neighbouring properties and therefore resolved to support the application.

Local Plan & Other Planning Matters

Confirmation was received that there had been no Community Infrastructure Levy payments relating to development within the village for the period 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023.

There was still no update received from planning enforcement concerning sites within the village. It had been over two years since the matters were first reported. Cllr Jones stated that the Senior Enforcement Officer had left so the department was short staffed again and finding it difficult to recruit.

There was no update on major sites but the possibility of seeking the application of Tree Preservation Orders in respect of trees located on the Grove End Farm site was discussed.

In regard to the Stroud Local Plan examination in public, following concerns raised by the Inspectors the District Council had requested a pause in the process to look to address the issues raised. A press release had been received from the District Council setting out the view adopted by the Council.

07/10

Accounts

Accounts for Payment

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

TW Hawkins & Sons (SGMS)	Contract mowing	£971.02
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(This related to an invoice queried at the December 2022 meeting when an extra cut had been charged in error. A credit note had then been issued in the sum of £75.78 reducing the balance due from £1,046.60 to the £971.02 now paid but previous enquiries had shown there as being nothing overdue. Therefore, payment was not made while awaiting clarification. The contractor recently reconciled invoices and payments correctly identifying the payment due which is being settled now but relates to work undertaken during the 2022/2023 financial year)

David J Davies	Verge cutting	£250.02
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WVH&PMC	Hall hire	£30.00
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Audit

The approved accounts had been submitted and now acknowledged. A response was awaited as to whether any further information would be required.

Other Financial Matters

A remittance advice was received confirming payment of the second instalment of the annual precept in the sum of £9,100:00 from Stroud District Council.

The balance at the bank was confirmed as £63,839:02 with all cheques presented.

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 reported previously, Cllr Jones and the Clerk had made contact, jointly, once again and the forms necessary to collect new signatures were to be issued to Cllr Jones by post and email. Cllr Jones confirmed that, yet again, he had received no contact from Lloyds Bank. It was therefore resolved that renewed efforts would be made to move the account elsewhere with Starling Bank of Natwest being the preferred options.

Requests for donations were received from Janet Maidment of the Guideposts Connect Group and also Longfield Community Hospice. These requests would be considered along with any others at either the December meeting or when the setting of the precept for 2024/2025 is undertaken.

08/10

Highways & Byways

Copy correspondence was received from Minsterworth and other councils concerning the difficulties encountered and time being taken to progress Community Speedwatch funding applications for vehicle activated speed devices. It was noted that Council had still received no further contact despite a new officer being in place.

On footpath matters Cllr Paynter gave a brief overview there were no new issues to address. The Clerk was to pursue Gary Wilson concerning the obstructed footpath at Whitminster Court as well as the faded road markings of the School Lane roundabout and nearby overgrown hedge.

It was agreed that the adopted verge cutting frequency and timings would be retained.

09/10

Skate Ramp

It was noted that the application for PWLB funding was edging forward but a new bank account capable of electronic payments and the setting up of a direct debit for loan repayments was necessary and this was addressed under Accounts.

10/10

Solar Farm

The Deed of Gift Agreement detailing a single payment from JBM Solar in the sum of £40,000:00 on the commencement of work on the solar farm was agreed and signed by both parties. An acknowledgement from JBM Solar was awaited along with a response as to the likely timelines to apply from this stage onwards.

11/10

Correspondence

The following items of correspondence were received:

Clerks & Councils Direct Magazine.

Trow Magazine.

Councils Connected newsletter.

Further information on the Interim Review of Polling Districts and Places 2023.

Stroud District Council eNews.

Invitation to various training courses being hosted by GAPTC.

Communication from Fields In Trust advising of the new fee structure for requesting changes to a protected area.

Agenda for Severn Voice meeting to be hosted by Longney and Epney Parish Council at 7:00pm on Wednesday 15th November at Longney Church.

Notice of appointment of a new CEO at GAPTC.

Other electronic correspondence had been circulated between meetings.

12/10

Chairman's Items & District Councillor's Report.

Most Parish related Chairman's matters had been considered during the meeting, other than in regard to the Playing Field Pavilion that Cllr Jones planned to raise under other business. However, Cllr Jones did suggest that perhaps the area at the entrance to The Close, where two replacement trees had been planted alongside the Queen's Jubilee Commemorative Bench, could be enhanced by the planning of some bulbs ready for next Spring, namely daffodil and crocuses. Cllr Braidford agreed to look to take this forward. With regard to District Council matters, Cllr Jones gave a brief overview on various issues including the ongoing residential conversion works relating to Tricorn House in Stroud.

There was no report from County & District Councillor Stephen Davies.

13/10

Other Business

Cllr Jones set out the proposals for a new pavilion on the playing field and asked if Council, as Custodian Trustees, would support the plans by submitting the necessary planning application on behalf of the Management Committee. This would be a financial contribution towards the project and would be beneficial to all as the Parish Council would benefit from a 50% reduction on the relevant fee. This was agreed by all present.

14/10

Future Agenda Items

Future of the Parish Church – to first liaise with Cllr Douglas.

Potential upgrading of A38 bus shelters.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:59pm.

CHAIRMAN – Wednesday 1st November, 2023.