

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WHITMINSTER PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN WHITMINSTER VILLAGE HALL AT 7:30PM ON WEDNESDAY
3rd January, 2024.**

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting including the one member of the public in attendance.

Public Forum

The member of the public present was afforded the opportunity to raise any matters or concerns. Mrs Honor Jones commented on the superb effort made by householders around the village in putting on a good display of Christmas lights. She also raised concerns relating to dark coloured vehicles parking on School Lane at night.

00/01

Present

There were 5 Parish Councillors present including Councillors Jones (Chairman), Paynter (Vice-Chair), Braidford, Hay & Mrs Younger. The Clerk and one member of the public were also in attendance.

01/01

Apologies

There was an apology received and accepted on behalf of Cllr Douglas who had recently been injured in a fall. Cllr Mrs Gilmore was not present and no apology had been received but it was understood that she had also been unwell and hence her absence was accepted.

02/01

Declarations of Interest

None relating to agenda items.

03/01

Minutes

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

05/12 Police & Community Safety Issues – 7th line – ‘thar’ changed to read ‘that’.

04/01

Matters Arising

Cllr Jones asked Cllrs Paynter & Hay if they had an idea of the timescale during which they would look to install the remaining replacement noticeboard. They confirmed they were awaiting a period of improved weather and would address the matter shortly.

It was noted that the new grit bin had been delivered and was in place in the Village Hall Car Park. Thanks were voiced to Frampton Country Fair for funding this.

Cllr Jones advised that, together with District & County Councillor Davies, he had met with Severn Trent and their representative confirmed an objection was being made to the proposed developments off of Grove Lane due to inadequate local infrastructure and that situation would be unlikely to change within a 6 year period. There was some further discussion on Local Plan matters and Cllr Paynter stated that he still proposed to walk around the Grove Lane sites paying particular attention to trees that might be worthy of protection.

Cllr Mrs Younger shared with Council her view on the Carol Service at the Parish Church which she thought had been particularly enjoyable.

The Clerk reminded Council that agreement had been reached for the Council to fund the ongoing cost of electricity/standing charge for the defibrillator in its temporary position at the Playing Field until the new pavilion is constructed. This was running at approximately £20 per month. Mrs Honor Jones, in her capacity as Secretary of the Whitminster Village Hall & Playing Field Management Committee, was invited to speak and advised that an invoice would be raised to recharge the cost to Council after a meeting that was taking place the following Friday.

05/01

Police & Community Safety Issues

Once again, on the matter of the Playing Field Pavilion break-in, as reported by Cllr Jones at numerous previous meetings, it was advised that 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 it remained that still no further update had been received.

There had been nothing further received from the Area Highways Manager, Gary Wilson, concerning amendments to and potential adoption of the alterations to the A38/Grove Lane junction. A response to a request for a site meeting was awaited.

There was no Police presence at the meeting and no reports had been received from the local PCSO or Neighbourhood Warden but a request had been received to confirm dates for meetings during 2024 in the hope that attendance could be arranged from time to time. This had been addressed.

Cllr Jones commented on the trees that had come down in The Close following the recent strong winds. Praise was given concerning the swift response after the matter had been reported and Stroud District Council would be arranging for the remaining trees to be inspected.

06/01

Planning

Decisions to Note

There were no formal decisions to note. However, Cllr Jones informed the meeting that a minor amendment application had been approved concerning Manor Farm. Council had not been consulted on this application.

Applications to Consider

None.

Local Plan & Other Planning Matters

On the Local Plan there had been no new developments although an Extraordinary Meeting of the District Council was being arranged for 25th January, called for by the Conservative Group, to seek accountability on the current process.

A letter had been received, via Severn Voice, from Siobhan Bailie MP to the Chief Executive of Stroud District Council expressing disappointment at the Council's response to the Inspectors' comments on the Local Plan. It was noted that she appeared to be speaking on behalf of Severn Voice when setting out objections to the current proposals and it was noted that, of course, it is not the view of all member councils that alternative sites should be considered.

There was nothing further received from Planning Enforcement following on from the most recent communication prompted by Cllr Jones.

07/01

Highways & Byways

Correspondence had finally been received on the matter of the Community Speedwatch Fund with further details requested on suitable sites for the equipment to be located. A minimum of three was requested and these would be verified to ensure suitability before the matter could proceed. The Clerk was to submit appropriate sites with an adequate number proposed to ensure that three viable sites would remain in the case that any were deemed unsuitable.

Details of a road closure on School Lane were received covering a period to be determined from 8th January 2024 to 31st October 2024 and from Hyde Lane to the B4071. This was for surface dressing but no further details were provided.

On the subject of a new salt bin for the Village Hall, this had been covered under 'Matters Arising' above.

Cllr Paynter advised that he would get in touch with Water resources Engineer at Stroud District Council, Tom Barrett to discuss the various issues that had been raised recently concerning flooding. Localised flooding continued to be an issue, especially at Packthorne Corner and Whitminster Lane from Sandfurlong. It was agreed that this should also be raised with the Area Highways Manager and a meeting date had been requested.

Cllr Paynter had nothing further to report on footpath matters although there was some discussion concerning the use of bridlepaths and also horse riders using routes that were not suited.

08/01

Skate Ramp

To progress matters a new bank account was needed that could be easily accessed to set up Direct Debits to repay loans and receive funds. This was being progressed with the initial application submitted to Natwest.

09/01

Solar Farm

There was nothing further to report for the time being. A watching brief to be maintained.

10/01

Accounts

Accounts for Payment

None.

Other Financial Matters

The balance at the bank was remained as £62,737:98 with cheques pending clearance.

The opening of a new bank account with Natwest was proceeding. The number of signatories would have to be limited to 4 and it was reaffirmed that these should be Cllrs Jones, Hay, Mrs Younger and the Clerk.

Nothing more had been heard in regard to Audit.

11/01

Correspondence

The following items of correspondence were received:

Severn Voice meeting details.

Clerks & Councils Direct Magazine.

Trow Magazine.

Councils Connected newsletter.

Stroud District Council eNews.

Other electronic correspondence had been circulated between meetings.

12/01

Chairman's Items & District Councillor's Report.

Most Parish related Chairman's matters had been considered during the meeting and Cllr Jones had nothing to add relating to District Council matters as Ebley Mill had essentially been closed for two weeks over the Christmas period.

13/01

Other Business

Matters relating to the Playing Field Pavilion had been covered under planning above.

A discussion was had concerning a potential replacement North Bound A38 bus shelter and it was agreed that a formal quotation should be obtained but Cllr Paynter would also look at more local options rather than focusing solely on nation specialist suppliers.

Cllr Douglas was absent and hence there was nothing further reported in regard to Church matters.

14/01

Future Agenda Items

Parish Elections

Future Projects – these could potentially include bus shelters; War Memorial work; railings in the close; village gateway and works to the Parish rights of way.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:9pm.

CHAIRMAN – Wednesday 7th February, 2024.