

BROAD HINTON AND WINTERBOURNE BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

By Zoom Teleconferencing Facility, Tuesday 5 January 2021, 7.30pm

MINUTES

Councillors: Cllr Alex LaRoche (AL) (Chairman)
Present: Cllr Adrian Smith (AS) (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Jim Gunter (JG)
Cllr Candace Gaisford (CG)
Cllr Damian Le Gresley (DL)
Cllr Adam Gilmore (AG)

Cllr Jane Davies (JD) (Wiltshire Council)
Cllr Allison Bucknall (AB) (Wiltshire Council)
Peter Barry (PB) (Clerk)

1. Introduction, Quorum & Declaration of Interests

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and the meeting was declared quorate. The Chairman particularly welcomed Cllr Adam Gilmore who had recently been co-opted as a member of the Council by unanimous agreement. Cllr Smith declared an interest in respect of the planning application 20/07702/FUL and the associated constituent complaint.

2. Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 3 and 25 November 2020.

The Minutes of the 3 and 25 November 2020 meetings were approved and will be subsequently signed as a true copy by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising.

The following matter was raised from the last meeting:

DL suggested that from now on the Microsoft Teams system should be used in place of Zoom. This would allow the ending of the Zoom contract and so save the monthly subscription. Councillors agreed to this.

4. Finance Update

PC Bank Account Balances - as of 1 January 2021:

Current Account: £563.73

Deposit Account (Total): £10,061.26 made up of

Deposit Account (General): £6,728.20

Deposit Account (Allotments): £1,993.06

Deposit Account (Defibrillators): £1,340.00

Payments over £100 since last meeting:

R Horton Annual Allotment Rent - £200.00

Donation to Broad Hinton Church - £200.00

Donation to Winterbourne Bassett Church - £200.00

P Barry - £700.00 (connect with credit from HMRC for £700.00)

Clerk's November Salary + Expenses - £324.39

Clerk's December Salary + Expenses - £355.08

HMRC November - £140.00

HMRC December - £70.00

The Clerk gave an explanation of the payment of £700.00 which was all due to an error associated with HMRC. AS stated that he and CG as Bank Signatories had been kept in the full picture and both were content with the financial reconciliation.

Precept 2021/22. The Chairman gave an overview of the work that had occurred to arrive at the figure for the 2021/22 Precept. The Parish Council met on 1st December to consider our projected budget for the forthcoming year. We discussed our requirements and compared our precept receipts to other Parish Councils the same size and discovered that our receipts were way below that of other Parish Councils due to the fact that our precept receipts had not been increased many of the previous ten years. The cumulative affect has put us in a very difficult financial position where we would not be able to service our community unless we raised the precept substantially and we will also have to fund raise to meet demands, something a Parish Council shouldn't need to do. Around half of the need was down to an increase in the Clerk's salary and this had been brought about by the need to increase his working hours, particularly in recent months and in connection with increased work on the constituent compliant detailed below (item 10).

After careful consideration of the minimum requirements needed, we agreed to raise the precept by 49% as per our agreed forecasted budget, which averages at £8.31 per household for the forthcoming year.

The Chairman thanked DL for putting together the budget so efficiently.

JD stated that the way in which Wiltshire Council was handing more of the day to day running of business to Parish Councils would continue and so this increase should be seen as acceptable.

The Chairman agreed to make these points in her statement following the meeting and the Clerk has given the authority to submit the agreed calculation to Wiltshire Council...**Action: AL & PB**

Scribe Accounting System. DL introduced the new Scribe Accounting system, which had been demonstrated to the Clerk and himself in November. The package suggested was specifically designed for Parish and Town Councils and offered the following advantages:

- Simple user-friendly interface
- Full accounting support included (not specifically just on their software)
- Automatic generation of VAT126 claim form
- Flexible and simple month end report generation to present to Councillors
- Full financial year end handling and reporting
- Multiple user access so Finance Lead and Auditor can access it as well as Clerk. Can also add other Councillors with read only access if necessary.
- Ability to split accounts into cost centres and assign budgets to each cost centre to track project spend.
- Migration of existing Excel based accounts as part of setup fee. We got a discount as we are a small council.

The quote submitted by Scribe, which was for a total of £445.00 per annum was valid until 10 Jan 2021.

DL went on to offer three possible ways forward. These were:

- Adopt this system immediately and run in parallel with the current Spreadsheet.

- Adopt this new system as from 1 April 2021 – the start of the new financial year. No change

After discussion, Councillors agreed to proceed with the second option – start the new system at the start of the new FY. DL was requested to liaise with Scribe to see if the currently offered discount could be extended and with the Clerk to arrange for the system to be installed.

.....**Action: DL**

5. Planning

The Chairman gave an overview of the planning applications that had been received and the decisions made since the last meeting. These are given below:

20/05958/FUL Bridleways, Winterbourne Bassett.

Full Planning Application proposed is for outbuildings a log and bicycle store, 2 x pergolas and a balcony as part of the main house.

The applicant has since resubmitted a revision to this application including demolition of the conservatory and extending to the rear to include a kitchen/ dining room. The first floor primarily reverts back to the existing with a few alterations. No objections. Agreed by Wilts.

20/07523/FUL 19 Pitchens End, Broad Hinton.

Full Planning Application proposed is for a loft conversion, new porch and changes to external finishes. No objections. Agreed by Wilts.

20/07702/FUL St. Katherines, 6 Winterbourne Bassett.

Full Planning Application proposed is for demolition of existing garage and rebuilding to incorporate a new garage, workshop, workspace including a cantilever balcony to the rear. Demolition of the conservatory to the main house and construction of a garden room. A glazed walkway connecting the main house to the garage. Objections. The applicant resubmitted a revised application, Wilts extended the reply time, and we raised no further objections with conditions. Agreed by Wilts with conditions.

20/08922/FUL 12 Pitchens End, Broad Hinton.

Full Planning Application proposed is for construction of an orangery as a rear single storey extension. No objection. Agreed by Wilts.

20/09237/FUL Kennet House, Broad Town Hill Road, Broad Hinton.

Full Planning Application proposed for a single storey kitchen extension, infill between main house and annexe to for workshop and construction of new single garage. No objection. Agreed with conditions.

20/09899/TPO Broad Hinton House, Broad Hinton

Full Planning Application ref. a Beech tree in question is located in the southern corner of the woodland belt covered by TPO E/395 The proposal is to fell this tree due to pre-existing damage and the potential safety hazard it represents to the adjacent footpath. The tree is covered by a Tree Preservation Order and is also in a conservation area. Objection. Awaiting Wilts.

6. Highways & Maintenance

A4361. The Chairman stated that once again she had received nothing from Cllr Wayman. The Meeting where action had been promised had taken place in the Summer of 2020 – we were now

in January 2021 and the lack of any form of response was wholly unacceptable. It was clear that this was never going to provide a solution and so we would need to look to other means. AS asked that we put on record our continued disappointment that it had now been 6 months since we met with Cllr Wayman and nothing has moved forward.

CATG Meeting. JG stated that it was becoming clear that CATG in its present form was not fit for purpose. It had never been envisaged that CATG should take on these large all-embracing projects. He suggested that a better way forward would be to put forward the three smaller projects which we needed in regard to the signage and road markings in our area and he agreed to undertake this.....**Action: JG**

AB went on to explain how the system was to work for the new build areas and which hopefully would also apply to the country areas such as our Parishes. Each Parish would be entitled to 2 priority schemes and we would need to agree ours by May 2021, when we were due to move over to the Lyneham area.

AB asked for reassurance that we had received the programme of remote meetings for all of the Wiltshire areas to consider the Planning framework associated with the revision of the Local Plan from now until 2036. PB assured her that nothing had been received and AB agreed to re-send.....**Action: AB**

JD stated that our Parish Council would be under Rural Events and the consultation affecting us would take place on 1 and 2 February 2021. The Clerk agreed to forward on the message once it had been received from Wiltshire Council.....**Action: PB**

Uffcott and Earthline. AG stated that he had started getting to grips with all of the ongoing Earthline business and had made contact with James Keith (JK) to get fully up to speed. JD stated that Richard Broadhead (RB) who was operating from the Wiltshire end was still awaiting a letter from the Council setting out exactly what was needed and that as a result no action had been taken.

It was clear JK thought he had furnished with all that he needed to take action and there was a disconnect. The Chairman asked AG to speak to JK as a matter of urgency to get things moving again and AG agreed.....**Action: AG**
The Chairman agreed to take this forward with RB if necessary, but currently the action remained with AG and JK.

Maintenance. CG pointed out that the two areas where Wiltshire Council were responsible were still outstanding and that one in particular now needed urgent action. These were:

- The tree that had fallen on the Bus Shelter at the end of Post Office Lane.
- The broken fence at Pitchens End.

Both JD and AB reported that there was a complete log jam in Wiltshire over these sorts of events at the moment and that if action was needed, the Council should take its own action. AS agreed, to speak to Steve Windell about the fallen tree.....**Action: AS**

7. Footpaths and Maintenance

Road Signs. The following matters were discussed:

Summers Lane. AB reported that Martin Cook (Wiltshire Council) had been operating on the Summers Road sign as he had found a photo of the previous sign in situ which read Summers Road not Summers Lane. This sign was now in manufacture and should be completed in the near future.

Black and White Sign at Clyffe Pypard. PB reported that Robert Fitzpatrick was progressing and that he hoped to have the sign in placed by the end of January 2021.

Vize Lane. CG reported that the 4 x 4 drivers were once again turning Vize Lane into a no-go area. With the roadway now being hard core, they had taken to the verges which were now a complete mess. This detracted from other users such as walkers, horse riders and bike riders, who needed this facility in this period of lockdown. The question remained as to who actually owns the verges. The Meeting considered that it was most likely to be the farmers who owned the fields adjacent to the roadway.

The Chairman agreed to speak to James Horton and see if it would be possible to use large branches to block the verges but leave the roadway open.....**Action: AL**

AS also agreed to speak to Deborah Young of Whyr Farm to see if her team could assist with the placing of large tree trunks using mechanical equipment.....**Action: AS**

Finally, CG and the Clerk agreed to try and discover who exactly owns the fields either side of the area where the maximum mess has been caused.....**Action: CG & PB**

8. Emergency Planning

Covid-19. The Chairman stated, as we are entering a complete lockdown, she was glad to see that the Covid Support Group had swung into immediate action with AG leading.

AG stated that so far 12 helpers had offered to take part, with only two saying that they could no longer assist. But this time it had been decided to run the system more centrally and PB had agreed to be the central point of contact, and he would then arrange assistance as necessary after receiving a call.

AS stated that although this was a good intention, he was concerned that PB as the central point of contact might be seen as the '4th Emergency Service' which he is not equipped to be. The Council wants to play a full role, but must be clear on its limitations. In discussion it was agreed to see how things worked out. AG who was coordinating the publicity with Kate Marshal would ensure it was made clear that PB was simply a central post box.

JD stated that there were two publications from Wiltshire that could help. The first was the Wiltshire Well Being Hub and the second was the NHS responder organisation, where it would be possible to register as an assistant. She would pass these on to PB and he in turn would inform AG and Kate Marshal in case these would be useful in the publicity.....**Action: JD & PB**

Drains and Flooding. JG informed the Meeting that the flooding possibility in the Manor Lane/ Yew Tree Lane area was now working well and that James Horton had completed the work there. In regard to the drains in the High Street, JG had received no response from Toby Sturgis for his offer to take part in the Flooding Working Group. JD and AB asked JG to forward his letter to them and they would try to fix.....**Action: JG**

The Chairman reported that she had held an excellent meeting with James Horton and that he had agreed to resolve many of the points which she raised. In particular the broken stiles had been removed and as reported above the Manor Lane drains had been cleared. James Horton explained that the footpath problem was more difficult as there had been several instances of walkers leaving gates open and cattle escaping.

In regard to the Allotments, he agreed to fix the fence, but was unwilling to reduce the rent. Nevertheless, it was felt that he would be open to suggestions of a reduced figure and the Chairman asked JG to draft a letter to James suggesting a more amenable figure, with comparables, for the annual rent.....**Action: JG**

Emergency Equipment. AS reported that he had previously contacted George Horton and that he had all of the necessary Emergency Equipment stored on his premises and that he was happy to continue to hold it.

9. Issues and Action Log

The Chairman went through the list of outstanding actions, and it was agreed that some progress had been made. Nevertheless, there were a number of old ones that needed clearing away and the Chairman asked that effort should be made to remedy these. PB would be sending out an amended Action list once the Minutes had been agreed.....**Action: PB**

10. Constituent Complaint

Councillors discussed a Constituent Complaint about the planning process followed by Parish Council in regard to a planning application in Winterbourne Bassett with there being a number of activities that had occurred since the last scheduled council meeting on the 3rd November. DL outlined the background to the complaint, which included considerable correspondence with the complainant, including a full report responding to the complaint, and also the resulting resignation of ex-Councillor James Keith. DL had chaired a complaint review panel to consider whether in light of all that had occurred, the complainant could be deemed Persistent & Vexatious in nature. Of the ten possible criteria for a complainant to be considered Persistent & Vexatious (as set out in the approved policy), this complaint met seven of the required criteria, whereas only one is strictly necessary to trigger the policy. A recommendation to treat the complaint as persistent and vexatious was subsequently put to a closed session in the Special Council Meeting on 1 December 2020 and following unanimous agreement, a letter was sent to the complainant informing her that her complaint was now considered as Persistent & Vexatious and no further correspondence would be entered into on this matter for the next 6 months until reviewed. Since that time no further messages had been received from the complainant.

It was also pointed out that this activity had taken an enormous amount of time and work, particularly of the Clerk, and had necessitated an increase in his working hours with the accompanying increase in salary. This will translate to a direct increase in Council Tax precept for the whole parish next year.

On 20 December 2020 a further request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) was received from the co-applicant to the planning application requesting further information regarding the handling of their application. Councillors discussed how to respond to this, and differing views were expressed on how to respond, with JD in particular recommending a more conciliatory approach. Councillors also considered whether this should be treated as a refusal of a FOI request or ignored as it related to the complaint that we have already stated we will not enter into further correspondence about for 6 months until reviewed. Councillors decided by majority to write back and refuse the FOI request under section 14(1) of the FOIA as the request

related to a matter that has already been determined as Vexatious and providing the information requested is likely to cause further disruption or distress. DL and AG offered to furnish the Clerk with the necessary form of words to be sent in response to the co-applicant.

.....**Action: DL & AG**

11. Policy Documents

The Chairman stated that two further documents had been drafted and she asked that Councillors approve these so that they could become part of the Council policy. The papers offered were:

a. Code of Conduct. It was agreed that this was entirely suitable and was unanimously approved.

b. Risk Assessment. This had taken considerable work and the Chairman thanked DL and AG for their assistance in putting this document together. AS felt that as any Risk Assessment is time limited this document should be dated and also a statement about a date for review be inserted. PB was asked to add these.....**Action: PB**

The Council was happy to approve this document once these additions had been made.

12. Councillors Roles and Responsibilities

At the last Council Meeting the new set of Roles and Responsibilities for Councillors had been agreed. However, with the addition of AG, further responsibilities could be set out. The Chairman suggested and AG agreed to the following responsibilities be allocated to him:

Adam Gilmore

Uffcott rep

Uffcott Byways and Footpaths

Emergency Plan (with JG)

Fund Raising

Communications (with DL & AS)

PB stated that he had received a message from Kate Marshall (KM) concerning the need for all of the personal details of councillors to be made public. Members of the BH Village Hall committee had all received scamming messages over the holiday period, and the decision had been made to remove personal details from the public pages.

The Chairman thought this was a sensible approach and the Clerk was asked to re-cast the public list of Councillors Roles and Responsibilities to show email addresses only. Only the Clerk would have all his details public, so that it was always possible to contact members of the Council if this became necessary. The Chairman also asked the Clerk to thank KM very much for her thoughtful suggestion.....**Action: PB**

13. Communications

AG had put together a presentation on the communication possibilities within the villages, all of which seem uncoordinated. He felt that by pulling together such things as the BH Village Hall web site, the two Facebook pages for BH and WB as well as the Village News magazine into one all-embracing system, a much better way of communicating with the public could be created. He recommended a Working Group be set up consisting of himself, DL, Kate Marshall and Liz Moakes to look into ways of pulling all of these systems together and he asked the Council for agreement to this idea.

AS responded by stating that although he could quite see the sense and logic behind the idea, he was nervous of having to rely on others to get over the Council messages. He also felt that we would not be able to fairly apportion costs. He suggested the Parish Council should have its own web site and he reminded the meeting of the idea that had been helpfully first considered by Ray Smyth some years ago. He also felt that the BH Village Hall had different objectives and that there was a danger of the new site being too 'BH centric'.

There was general agreement that the Parish Council should have its own site, but that a link to the current web site and other systems would be a definite advantage. AB mentioned that within Wiltshire most Parish Councils have their own web sites, which are used for the passage of information. In conclusion AG agreed that a new PC website should be introduced with a link to the BH Village Hall web site and communications between PC, Village Hall and Local news should be achieved. The aim must be to improve communication and engage more fully with residents.

14. Parish Councillor Recruitment

The Chairman felt that no further recruiting should take place until after the Council elections later in the year. PB stated that he had received a message from Katie Fielding of Wiltshire Council offering places on a meeting to discuss ways of improving the recruitment of Councillors which was seen as a difficult area all across the County. The cost would be £30.

The Chairman felt that there was little to be gained by such an exercise and that to spend £30 being told what we already knew was a waste. Nevertheless, she suggested PB ask for the Terms of Reference of the Meeting to see if there was any possible value.....**Action: PB**

15. Any Other Business

a. CG reported that there had been a large amount of dog fouling on the path between Post Office Lane and Fortunes Field. The Clerk was asked to put a notice onto the next Village News.....**Action: PB**

b. A parishioner had suggested the Council place dog waste bins on the path between BH and WB. CG stated that this had been considered before, but the problem was finding someone to empty them. The Meeting agreed that it was dog owner's responsibility to clear up after their dogs.

c. JG mentioned that this summer the streetlights in Pitchens End were to be replaced. The occupants had the opportunity to decide the lighting up and turning off times and so a survey was needed to find out what the majority would like. JG and PB agreed to look into this and get a survey underway.....**Action: JG & PB**

In conclusion the Chairman thanked particularly JD and AB for their forbearance with such a long meeting. The next Meeting would be held on 1 March 2021, starting at 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 9.25pm