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Berwick Bassett and Winterbourne Monkton Parish Council

Minutes

Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 13th April 2016 at 7.30pm at Winterbourne Monkton Church

Cllr Bill Buxton (chair), Cllr Stephen Fulford
Cllr Nick Burnet, Cllr Tony Iles,
Miss P. Gold, Mr D Mace, Mrs S Hall, Mr S. Petchey,
Mr B. Jago, Mr Nigel Fielder, Mr A Blow, Mrs S. Blow,
Mrs S. Buxton, Mr P. Robinson, Mrs L. Robinson

1. Introduction and Welcome

Cllr Buxton welcomed residents of the villages and introduced the new Councillors co-opted since the last meeting. He also introduced Sarah Simmonds from the World Heritage Site

2. Apologies

Cllr Jill Petchey, Cllr Simon Mellor, Cllr Lyn Bennett-Nutt, Mr and Mrs B Pawsey, Mrs C Powell

3. Presentation - Avebury World Heritage Site, Sarah Simmonds

This year is the 30th anniversary of Avebury being listed as a World Heritage Site. Events are planned including presentations at Open Farm Sunday and other events. Avebury World Heritage Site is now linked with that of Stonehenge and much work is shared. There is a large area of 25 square km around each site classified in the heritage site containing additional monuments. Unlike Stonehenge, many of these in the Avebury Area are visible and well documented. There are plans to increase visitors and in particular those with a link to educational visits such as school parties. Listeners were reminded of the destruction of 6 World Heritage Sites in Syria including the Umayyad Mosque in Aleppo and the Arch of Triumph in Palmyra.

The main priority for Avebury World Heritage Site is the preservation of the site. There are concerns about underground damage from badgers and ploughing and also erosion of verges from traffic. There are proposals to close the road through 'The Avenue' to prevent undermining any as yet undiscovered remains. The World Heritage Site seeks to reach a balance between site preservation and needs of farmers and local residents.

Comments were received from the floor, mostly regarding the proposed closure of the Avenue. It was suggested that the enforcement of illegal parking would reduce narrowing of the road. The road is unsuitable for the passing of wide vehicles and it was suggested that wide and heavy vehicles be prohibited. Coaches, tankers, tractors regularly use the road and an army convoy has even been experienced. Ms Simmonds replied that only complete closure would prevent erosion. An interim measure was not acceptable because it would be difficult to police and because it would involve increased signage which was contrary to World Heritage Site Policies.

Ms Simmonds was asked why the Avebury Section of the Ridgeway was one of the only sections of the Ridgeway open to all traffic and therefore subject to 4x4 erosions.

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She advised the meeting that here are significant objections to any proposed closure from 4x4 hobby clubs.

4. Minutes of Previous Annual Parish Meeting held on 15th April 2015

The minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting

5. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

Any matters arising will be covered elsewhere in the minutes

6. Chairman's Report – Cllr Bill Buxton

A report had been circulated to those present outlining the work of the council in the past year. Cllr Buxton added that councillors had been pursuing faster Broadband speeds for both villages. Speeds in Winterbourne Monkton appears to have increased although the fiberoptic cabling from Avebury has not yet been installed. There is no indication of any increase in speeds in Berwick Bassett and this may be the case for some years. The Parish Council is currently investigating the erosion of the Byway between Berwick Bassett and Winterbourne Monkton caused by 4x4 drivers which are legally allowed to use the Byway but not the Bridleway they are also damaging.

6. Financial Summary – clerk

The clerk reported that the council began this last financial year with £2199.

£2281 was received in Precept, giving the council a total of £4480

A budget had previously been set allowing for £2281 expenditure.

Expenditure this last year has actually been £2068 so the council has come in under budget by approximately £213. Money was set aside in the budget for expenses of councillors and stationery which were not taken up The year will end with a balance of £2412

Councillors agreed to donate £200 of the excess to an event to celebrate the 90th birthday of HRH Queen Elizabeth

The Precept for this coming year has been set at £3366 a 30% increase This is a large increase but makes allowance for 2 significant items of expenditure. The first is an amount of money of £1000 earmarked for special projects particular to the parish area. Suggestions have been made at previous Annual Parish Meetings as to what these might be. Match funding may be available from the Area Board but Wiltshire Council will no longer be providing direct funds for items such as signage, traffic calming or public defibrillators – all of which have been previously requested. The other significant change this year is that the Parish Council must comply with a new Transparency Code for Parish Councils set by the government. The main cost of this is the provision of a website on which Parish Council Information such as minutes, accounts and meeting notices will be displayed. Some government funding for this has now been received but the Parish Council is required to finance the long term hosting and maintenance of the website. The website itself can encompass greater information than the legal requirements and it is proposed that the website become a general source of information for residents and visitors to the area. The website is bbwmpc.org.uk

In response to a question the clerk confirmed that a minimum sum of £1000 is required to be kept in reserves in case of the calling of an election, the costs of which the Parish Council will be liable for. This leaves an excess of around £1000 that may be utilised with residents approval.

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7. County Councillor Jemima Milton to talk about Wiltshire Council Issues

Cllr Milton was unable to attend the meeting and did not submit a report

No representative from the Police was available to attend although a report was submitted and included here as an Appendix

8. Update on new Community Facilities and Parish Projects

Cllr Buxton reported that the planning application for the proposed development at Manor Farm Dairy had been approved including plans for a new Community Building under a Section 106 agreement. A new plan has been submitted which is very similar but with the addition of 2 more houses. Wiltshire Council expects to make a decision by the end of April. There is no indication of commencement of the work. It is not required to construct the Community Building until 70% of the houses are sold.

The clerk introduced a discussion about projects that had been suggested at previous Annual Meetings and for which there was now funding available, from the Parish Council and Marlborough Area Board or Wiltshire Council.

A community defibrillator was the first of these projects. The provision would cost approximately £1,000. It was considered by councillors and residents that it would be difficult to place a defibrillator where it could be accessed promptly. Mr George Dellar carries a defibrillator as part of his First Responder role although this would not be available if he were at work or during most school holidays. There is also a defibrillator at Tonic Construction but only available during working hours. It was agreed by the meeting not to proceed further with this.

The purchase of a mobile speedchecker device had been suggested. This too would cost in the region of £1000. It was considered that this would not be worthwhile as it could not be used on the A4361. Residents agreed that there were some speeding issues within both villages but that the speedchecker would not improve matters.

Extending the number of kissing gates on the public footpaths, aiding accessibility by the less mobile, was considered worthwhile pursuing. There were two suggested locations – replacing stiles at Christmas House and the 3 stiles between Winterbourne Lodge and the main Berwick Avebury footpath. Currently, however, the directions of the footpaths at Christmas House are being looked into by the Rights of Way Officer and the path beside Winterbourne Lodge may be affected by works to the Soakaway there. Each Kissing gate would cost approximately £500 plus installation. The Parish Council already has 1 Kissing Gate and can be installed when practical.

Mr Fielder suggested that a footpath be created across the piece of land between the Winterbourne Monkton layby and Church Lane. It was thought that this piece of land belonged to Middle Farm. It is a regularly used route between the top of the village road and Church Lane including bus users from Church Lane and the A4361. Pedestrians must walk on the A4361 in wet weather. Residents were in agreement that this was a good idea and requested that the Parish Council look into this further as a potential use for the ‘Parish Project’ funding. This was the most popular of the proposals identified at the meeting

The previous suggested Cycleway/Footpath to Avebury had been investigated. There are several landowners who would be required to be in agreement and the costs would exceed any funding the Parish Council could materialise.

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9. Arrangements for summer solstice

The National Trust had requested the closure of the Ridgeway for the period of the Solstice. This could result in the 200 campers who stayed on the Ridgeway last year being dispersed around local communities. The National Trust has now withdrawn this request but will still dissuade campers from staying on The Ridgeway. It is considered that not all those who attend the solstice celebrations are there to celebrate the solstice for its own sake and possibly for the alleged drug scene. There were some issues with campers in Church Lane last year. Councillors agreed to work with the National Trust and the Police to find best solutions for residents

10. Informal discussion

Mrs Robinson reported an increase in dog fouling particularly in Church Lane. Other residents reported an increase in deposits found on grass verges and other locations around the villages. The clerk agreed to talk to particular dog owning residents and also to include in Press Release and village email a request that dog owners pick up after their dogs.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm