

Berwick Bassett and Winterbourne Monkton Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the council held on Wednesday 11th January 2023 at 7.30pm.at Winterbourne Monkton Community Hall

Present: Cllr Mark Saunders (chair),
Cllr Colin Pattison, Cllr Helen Ramsay,
Mrs Janice Pattison (clerk)
2 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Neil Kirk, Cllr Ben Woodward, County Cllr Jane Davies

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest

3. Questions from the public

There were no questions from members of the public present

4. Minutes of Meeting of November 16th 2022

The minutes were accepted as reflective of the meetings and signed by the chairman of the meeting.

5. Matters Arising from meeting of November 16th not covered elsewhere

Individual email addresses have been allocated with the suffix bbwmpc.org to be used for council business and for contact from the website. The clerk will confirm with councillors that they are all working correctly. The emails translate to the councillors' own email address so no further information is required. Mr George-Perutz will be asked to send information to councillors how to use their email accounts direct

6. Reports

a. Finance

There has been no expenditure since the last meeting

Cheques were signed for rental for the Community hall for the meetings in November and January and for the Clerks laptop and agreed expenses.

The rental slightly exceeds budgeted amount as the rental for the hall is more than the church. The clerk's laptop was an unbudgeted item but there is underspend on Stationary budget

Budget 2023/24

The budget proposal has been adjusted to produce a zero increase in the Parish rate retaining the fundamentals agreed at the last meeting. The precept must be applied for imminently

The precept of £5357.00 will be confirmed to Wiltshire Council .

Proposed Cllr Ramsay, Seconded Cllr Saunders

Internal Audit

The internal audit for 2020/21 and 2021/22 has been completed by Mrs Jane Parker. Invoices are required to the Parish Hall for the chairs and Village Hall Association membership. These have been prepared (total £345 for 21/22 and £45 for 22/23) and a cheque received

Donations

A letter of thanks has been received from Air Ambulance, The cheque for LINK has been returned as the contact we had there is no longer connected to Link. Another contact will be sought

Mr Tim Pearce was asked to confirm how residents could borrow the gazebo for which the Parish Council donated a sum of money earlier in the year. The gazebo is now considered the property of the Winterbourne Monkton Village Club and charges are higher for non-members of this club than members. This differs from the request for the donation and the clerk has raised a concern as the donation was made expecting equal access to all residents. The Village Club will discuss this at an upcoming AGM

It is possible that the Parish Council may receive more requests for donations for example from voluntary groups using the Community Hall (youth group, toddlers). These groups can also request funding from Marlborough Area Board and some match funding from the Parish Council may help. Councillors may consider implementing a more formal process to facilitate this

Banking

Cllr Ramsay will investigate alternative bank accounts for the Parish Council following up on research from the clerk. This is to avoid bank charges

Other Finance

A number of complaints had been received about fireworks over the period of November 5th and again on New Years Eve. Cllr Woodward had investigated the cost of a silent firework display with music. Costs vary between £6,000 and £18,000

The Parish Council has enjoyed using the Community Hall. Currently the Hall Committee are reluctant to book out the hall more than one meeting in advance in case they receive a block booking request for Wednesday evenings and then may cancel if that happens. The hall is costing £20 per meeting (plus £1 cheque per meeting as bookings must be paid for per meeting and cheques cost £1). The church would cost £10 per meeting without heating and £15 with heating and payment is made once a year. The hall will be booked for the next Parish Council Meeting but councillors will consider the value for money and risk of moving meeting venue at short notice.

There has been no further communication from Wiltshire Highways regarding the relocation of misleading road signs. No invoice has yet been received for the final works

b. Planning

Cllr Pattison reported that there had been no new planning applications since the last meeting.

c. Emergency and Flooding.

Cllr Woodward has obtained costing for sand and a large bin in which to store the sand to protect it. The clerk will contact the Flood Warden to ask if there may be any assistance towards the cost.

The grit bins in the villages remain full. There is no grit bin on Old Dairy Lane. This is a private road. Cllr Ramsay will contact the estate managers to enquire if a grit bin could be installed by them

d. Footpaths....

Residents have received notice that the footpath between the church and the bridge over the bourne at the bottom of School Lane Footpath beside The Manor will be resurfaced commencing January 20th. The Parish Council has not received notification of this, and it is unclear as to the extent of the resurfacing. Atkins are supervising the works for Wiltshire Council.

Cllr George-Perutz has walked the footpath between Winterbourne Monkton and Berwick Bassett and confirmed that the path was passable.

Cllr Saunders will continue follow up with Mr Stephen Leonard of Wiltshire Council about the proposed scalplings and improvements by the kissing gates and improvements to the footpath by Christmas House/Tonic Construction

A stone has been identified as the second large stone at the end of the footpath beside the Community Hall to help prevent vehicle parking which in turn was blocking access by pedestrians with wheelchairs or pushchairs. This has not yet been installed. Action Cllr Saunders

e. Roads

The pothole in School Lane at the end of the private road opposite No. 186. This has been reported on the My Wilts app by Cllr Woodward and on the Parish Stewards' priority sheet by Cllr Ramsay . The My Wilts app is now the primary reporting tool for residents for road issues with all repairs and maintenance carried out by The Parish Steward or Northern Highways maintenance crew depending on the severity of the repair. There are a number of new and worsening potholes on the A4361 which will continue to be reported. Action Cllr Ramsay

Letters had been written to Companies whose vehicles were perceived to regularly exceed speed limits along the A4361

An HGV driving school that was written to wrote back to inform us that the A4361 is not a route they use for their driver training, so speeding along there would not apply to their vehicles. Although no response has been received from DPD a driver has advised that DPD had brought in regulations whereby they were given route destination times to try to stop speeding within the company and they were not allowed to be early anywhere. Whether or not this new policy and practical schedules were brought in as a direct result of the letter of complaint or whether it is a coincidence is unknown. A letter was also received from Earthline They assured the council that they take speeding extremely seriously and all their vehicles have GPS

tracking and so are able to investigate any of their vehicles that is accused of speeding. They have also requested that residents monitor registration numbers of speeding vehicles with date and time. This applies to all speeding vehicles and can be reported to Cllr Ramsay or the clerk

It had previously been agreed to purchase and erect 'No Parking' signs at the end of the footpath between Church Lane and Old Dairy Lane. and by the treatment plant for the Old Dairy Lane houses. This action continues. Cllr Kirk agreed to source the signs

Cllr Woodward had attended the meeting of Avebury Transport Group on the 5th of December 2022. He reported that they proposed extending 50mph limit along A4 between Fyfield and Beckhampton. To do this they need to make the road narrower which they are unable to do because of the ghost island to turn right up Kennet Avenue. A trial closure of the Avenue is proposed to see how it may affect road users. It would remain open to emergency/farm vehicles. A Second Speed Information Device has been installed. The highest speed recorded is 72mph on the approach to Avebury traveling South. Green Street is suffering from flooding. There is a Potential bid for 20mph at Avebury Trusloe where play area is.

f Community Building

Cllr Saunders reported that there has been a flood in the Community Hall but this was fixed and the water cleared in time for the opening gathering. The finance had not yet been transferred but was expected imminently. The amount owed to the Parish Council for the chairs and membership of Village Hall Association has been repaid. A grant for £2,700 has been received from Marlborough Area Board towards the installation of blinds

7. Other Reports

The clerk reported that Cllr George-Perutz had resigned from the council. Thanks were expressed for his contribution. The notices had been erected advertising the vacancy. Cllr George-Perutz represented the Council on many external bodies as well as representing Berwick Bassett. Initially Cllr Saunders will attend Marlborough Area Board Meetings and Cllr Woodward will attend Avebury Transport Group and World Heritage Site Meetings. Other roles such as CATG and social website co-ordinator will be addressed at the next meeting

8. Appointment of Vice Chair

Andrew George-Perutz had been the vice-chair of the council. It was decided to defer the appointment of a vice-chair until more councillors were present. This may be deferred until the Annual Meeting of the Council

9. Advertising councillor vacancies and councillor co-option

The councillor vacancy created by the resignation of Mr Petchey is now available for co-option. The vacancy has been advertised and no election called by residents. Mr Scott has applied for the vacancy. Councillors had the meeting had no objection to his appointment. It was decided to confirm the appointment with the absent councillors and, if no objections were received, formally appoint Mr Scott at the next meeting. The clerk will forward information to Mr Scott.

10. Speed Reduction on All Village Roads to 20mph

The clerk will identify the timescales for applying for the metrocount for both villages. Action clerk

11. Public Open Space Contribution – Section 106 Agreement

Cllrs Saunders and Woodward attended a teams meeting with Sarah Holloway, Mary Noyce and Lewis Bomber of Wiltshire Council Section 106 on 3rd December to discuss a way forward with the Open Space Contribution. It was confirmed that the definition of ‘vicinity’ applied to the land within the Parish Council boundaries and the fund had risen to around £30,000. The money can be used to buy land on which to establish an open space. It can also be used to improve access to any open space from other parts of the village. The proposal from Cllr Woodward would be that play equipment be erected in the grounds of The New Inn with the New Inn providing insurance and repair arrangements after completion. Access would be provided to any member within the community not just pub customers and the footpath be improved between the New Inn and Old Dairy Lane from the bourne.

Councillors agreed that a side agreement would be contracted with Wiltshire Council to enable the finance to be transferred to the Parish Council who could then allocate the finance in the form of grants. Wiltshire Council will need to approve each project that the money will be spent on. The Parish Council has 10 years to spend the money or it be returned to Wiltshire Council.

12. Lighting of Lower Church Lane Footpath

Cllr Saunders has reservations about the Parish Council funding an installation on a footpath which crosses private land. It is also uncertain whether lighting in a rural situation is appropriate. Further consideration will be made for the next Parish Council Meeting. This may include low level lighting. Action Cllr Saunders. Cllr Ramsay agreed to investigate solar installers. Action Cllr Ramsay

13. Employee Contracts and salary payment

The clerk is currently self employed and pays tax through Self-Assessment. Cllr Saunders reported that the clerk should be a direct employee of the council and pay tax direct through PAYE. As the amounts are so small, previous approaches to HMRC to register the council as a PAYE employer, by the clerk and councillors, have been unsuccessful. Cllr Saunders has approached an accountancy company who will handle the salary and tax for a sum of £18 per month. A new employee contract will need to be written and agreed and terms of employment be confirmed. Currently the clerk uses her own home and equipment (apart from a council provided laptop) and does not take holiday and sick leave. These will need to be formalised as a responsible employer and would be applied to other persons the council may employ in this or other roles in the future. A meeting will be held outside council meeting to discuss the councils role and responsibilities as an employer. Action Cllr Ramsay

14. Confirmation of items for press release

It was agreed that Cllr Saunders would compose an item for the Upper Kennet News to publicise the zero increase in Parish Council Precept.

The Clerk had investigated becoming a member of Visit Wiltshire which will raise the profile of the area to visitors. Silver level membership was thought to be free of charge. Prior to taking this further, Councillors will consider what areas of the community should be promoted

15. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on March 1st, 2023, in the Community Hall if available.

The Annual Parish Meeting would be held on Wednesday April 5th

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm