

WILCOT and HUIISH (with OARE) PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council
Wilcot Village Hall, Tuesday 19 November 2013, at 19.30.

Present:

Councillors: Dr J C Bouch, Mr C Bartlett, Mr L Giddings, Mrs D Nix (Chair), Mrs N Fleet, Mr R Fleet, Mrs A May (Clerk), Mrs P Smith and Ms D Wilson.

In attendance:

Actions

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Paul Oatway, Wiltshire Council

2. Declarations of Interest on any agenda item to be discussed

Cllrs C Bouch and C Bartlett re agenda item 13 – Kennet and Avon Canal.

Cllr D Nix re agenda item 16 – Planning application.

Every Councillor has a declaration of interest in the precept.

3. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman attended a Remembrance Service at Pewsey Vale School and was impressed by the students, who were polite with visitors and respectful at the service.

Members of the Parish Council and members of the public joined in a walk around Oare, following some of the public footpaths. The Council plan to walk all the footpaths in the parish in the next year as both an enjoyable exercise and a method of identifying potential issues before they escalate to Rights of Way. The next walk will be in Wilcot in January (weather permitting). Cllr Wilson would like to arrange a Christmas walk.

4. Co-option of Councillor to fill the current vacancy

Mrs Belinda Lawson has expressed an interest in the Council vacancy but was unable to attend this meeting. Item deferred to next meeting.

5. Public question time

A member of the public commented that issues surrounding the Kennet and Avon Canal and the camping at Wilcot were permanently on the agenda demonstrating that these are key areas of concern to the residents. The floor was reminded that the Parish Council have no enforcement rights but were willing to listen to residents and endorse any complaints to the authorities if necessary. The Council await reports from monitoring officers and will report findings at the next meeting.

6. Minutes of the meetings of 17 September 2013, and matters arising

Point of order; the term 'matters arising' will be replaced by 'action report' in future minutes.

Matters arising from the meeting of 17 September:

- 6.1 The Council noted that an enforcement has now taken place and acknowledged that residents worked hard to be taken seriously. In this and similar situations it is up to residents to approach enforcement agencies but if they also advise the Parish Council they can facilitate contact with the right agency and add support if necessary. Cllr Paul Oatway supports Parish Councils and is in a position to escalate actions.

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The Chairman reminded the meeting of the police 101 service.

- 6.2 The Chairman has received advice from WALC and Wiltshire Council legal department regarding the deletion of electronic records by the previous Clerk. Although it would be possible to pursue this legally it would be potentially expensive for the Council and would not resolve the situation. The Chairman deeply regretted the position the new Clerk inherited and commended Cllr N Fleet and the new Clerk for working to rebuild missing Council data, including financial information. Council believe that they could have acted upon some requests, including outstanding FOI requests, had they known about them and that by not acting upon them the reputation of the Council was jeopardised. Resolution - that no further action would be taken against the previous Clerk with the proviso that the Chairman write to the previous Clerk advising that Council does not accept his statement and that a separate file be kept by the Clerk of any information that subsequently comes to light that was not handed over by the previous Clerk. The Chairman would write to those who had outstanding FOI requests to explain the situation to them and apologise that their requests could not be met.
- Proposed** Cllr D Wilson, **Seconded** Cllr R Fleet, all in favour.

Chair
Clerk

Apart from the updates given, the minutes were adopted as a true record of the meeting without amendment.

Proposed: Cllr Wilson **Seconded:** Cllr R Fleet

7. Budget and Monitoring

- 7.1 Cllr N Fleet distributed copies of the financial status up to 15 October. The Council were happy with the current situation. Cllr Fleet will hand over to the new Clerk following this meeting.
- 7.2 The precept does not have to be returned to Wiltshire until 21 January 2014 and, following discussion regarding the budget, the Council resolved that an additional meeting would be held in December to discuss the precept and the budget.
- 7.3 As above.
- 7.4 Clerk to search for any previous agreement with the PCC's. There is considerable disparity between the awards given to Wilcot and those to Oare and Huish. The Council are prepared to honour the arrangement this year, as it has been precepted and budgeted but will give consideration to reducing the amount to Wilcot in the next budget. Clerk to write to PCC's informing them. To be discussed at the additional budget meeting in December.

Clerk

Clerk to investigate whether the burial ground is owned by the village or by the church.

Clerk

- 7.5 The Council considered that preventative maintenance on the war memorial in Wilcot may be good use of the project fund. Item to go on the agenda for the next meeting. Clerk to organise an objective survey and get quotes for the work.

Clerk

- 7.6 The Council proposed that training costs for new Clerk and Councillors be taken from the reserve as a one off payment.

- 7.7 Resolution – that a fireproof box be purchased to hold vital documents, and also that an external hard drive be purchased for the Clerk to store all Council documents and correspondence.

Proposed: Cllr Wilson, **Seconded:** Cllr N Fleet

Clerk

Cllr Bartlett reminded the Council of the importance of backing up electronic data. Councillors may store paper copies of key documents in the new fireproof box if necessary.

Cllrs

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8. Training for Councillors and new Parish Clerk

- 8.1 Financial costs of training were discussed under 7.3 (budget).
- 8.2 Thanks were given to Cllr Wilson for her presentation to the Council from her training for New Councillors. Council found it extremely beneficial and the exercise will be repeated as and when required.
- 8.3 The Chairman volunteered to be the WALC representative as she has found previous meetings informative. She felt there was merit in meeting members of local Councils and in supporting WALC.

9. Parish Council Standing Orders (carried forward from September meeting)

One correction noted to Section 5. The updated Standing Orders, in conjunction with the Complaints Policy, should provide an efficient vehicle for controlling meetings. The Chairman reminded Council that it was a good toolkit and Councillors should make themselves familiar with the contents. The Chairman would like to append a Scheme of Delegation to the Standing Orders. Resolution - that the Standing Orders be adopted.

Clerk

Proposed: Cllr Bouch, **Seconded:** Cllr Wilson. All in favour.

10. Chair Code of Conduct (carried forward from September meeting)

The Chairman's Code of Conduct has been incorporated into the Standing Orders.

11. Policies for Adoption

11.1 **Sickness and Absence Policy.** The sickness reporting time was increased from 1 hour to 1 day and the policy amended. Resolution - that the Sickness and Absence Policy be adopted.

Proposed: Cllr Wilson, **Seconded:** Cllr Bartlett. All in favour.

11.2 **Grievance Policy.** Resolution - that the Grievance Policy be adopted.

Proposed: Cllr Wilson, **Seconded:** Cllr R Fleet. All in favour.

11.3 **Equal Opportunities Policy.** Resolution - that the Equal Opportunities Policy be adopted.

Proposed: Cllr R Fleet, **Seconded:** Cllr Bouch. All in favour.

11.4 **Expenses Policy.** The figure of £52 was added to point 2.1 and the policy amended. Resolution - that the Expenses Policy be adopted.

Proposed: Cllr R Fleet. **Seconded:** Cllr Bouch. All in favour.

11.5 **Disciplinary Policy.** This policy refers to a Staffing Committee and the Council recommended that this be the Councillors who conducted the Clerk's appointment, although it could comprise any 3 Councillors. Resolution - that the Disciplinary Policy be adopted.

Proposed: Cllr R Fleet. **Seconded:** Cllr Bouch. All in favour.

The Clerk will continue to review policies and will present more for adoption at the next meeting.

12. Rights of Way – issues and updates

12.1 Cllr Giddings had a successful meeting with Gavin Davies, Stowell Farm Manager, who has invited Council to visit the new dairy at Sharcott Pennings – date to be arranged. The rights of way over Stowell land will be discussed then.

Cllr LG

12.2 In response to a question from the floor the Chairman advised that Council does not have any authority over Rights of Way however, by walking the footpaths Council can keep an eye on issues. Anyone may make a complaint to the Rights of Way Officer but Council would prefer that they are the first point of contact in order to maintain, or try to

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establish, good relationships with all landowners in the parish. Rights of Way Officer at county is the first enforcing authority, with Defra as the final authority, as they have the ability to withhold funding from landowners in extreme cases.

- 12.3 The Chairman and Clerk have a meeting with Mr Hiscox of Rainscombe Park on 26 November. A number of complaints have been made regarding the footpaths and it is hoped to resolve some of the issues. Chair Clerk
- 12.4 Any aggressive or intimidating behaviour towards walkers by landowners or their staff should be reported using the police 101 system. Police are obliged to act after three reports about the same issue. If residents also inform Council, issues may be taken to Neighbourhood Police Meetings, and Cllr Paul Oatway can also provide assistance in escalating serious complaints.

13. Kennet and Avon Canal – issues and updates

- 13.1 The Chairman has had emails about narrowboat dwellers outstaying their two week limit and blocking footpaths.
- 13.2 Cllr N Fleet made contact with someone from the Canal Trust who has since sadly died. The Canal Trust are in the process of sourcing a replacement. Cllr N Fleet was asked to continue pursuing this. (Cllr Oatway previously asked to be invited to that meeting.) Cllr NF
- 13.3 Wilcot has a specific problem with cars that park alongside the canal. This encompasses three agencies: the Canal Trust for the canal and towpath, Highways for the road and the landowner, Stowell, for the verge. Council will talk to Gavin Davies about the verge.
- 13.4 There have been recent reports of cars parking on the bridge at Wilcot. Vehicles that are causing an obstruction should be reported to the police.
- 13.5 It was noted that Honeystreet have notices up advising boat owners of the permitted length of stay and asking them not to leave rubbish.
- 13.6 Council were advised that there has been consultation with boat owners about the need for additional permanent moorings, but this hasn't extended to residents along the canal or to Council. Cllr N Fleet was asked to mention this when she contacts Canal Trust and ask what the next stage will be. Cllr NF

14. Highways

- 14.1 Cllr Wilson advised that another engineer has visited the Cross Hayes crossroads and options are still being investigated. The Area Board website has updated the record to say that rumble strips will be considered.
- 14.2 There were no suggestions for sign de-cluttering.
- 14.3 Council have received notification from the Pewsey Community Area Manager that Highways propose introducing 50mph speed limits on the sections of the C8 road not currently covered by 30mph restrictions. A percentage of the cost of implementation will be passed on to Parish Councils. Following discussion Council object to the proposal on the grounds that 50mph is too high and requested that Clerk respond accordingly. Clerk
- 14.4 A member of the public commented that the junction of C8, Hare Street and Church Lane, outside the Golden Swan, is a dangerous junction and priorities are not observed.
- 14.5 Cllr Wilson offered to go to the CATG meeting where the Wilcot road issues may be raised. Cllr DW

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15. Emergency Planning

- 15.1 Cllrs Wilson and Giddings continue to make progress on Emergency Planning. Open forums were held at the White Hart in Oare, and prior to the Parish Council meeting. They are collecting details, skills and resources of residents who could help in the event of an emergency that would effectively close each village for 48 hours. Cllr Wilson is planning to approach some useful businesses and also the school. As well as being a worthwhile exercise it is also proving a good tool to building relationships in the community. Once the plan has been created they will take it back to County. Cllr DW
Cllr LG

16. Planning applications from Wiltshire Council

- 16.1 **13/04666/FUL**
The School, Cold Blow, Oare
Extension to form staff room and music room. New external canopy.
No objections. Clerk

17. Exchange of Information

- 17.1 Councillors have received comments about farm vehicles through Wilcot; that they drive too fast and lack consideration to residents, they are noisy, they leave mud on the road and that they damage the verges. The meeting felt that mud on the road wasn't an issue as it was usually cleared up reasonably quickly. In his presentation to the Council regarding the new dairy at Sharcott Pennings, Gavin Davies said that a one way system for full, and empty vehicles would be used and Council will seek confirmation that it is happening when they visit the dairy. Cllr R Fleet offered to talk to Tom Maidment regarding Manor Farm. Council advised that within a farming area both farmers and residents must demonstrate respect for each other's community. Council considered that damage to the verges was an issue and wondered if passing places could be implemented. Cllr RF

18. Proposed items for next agenda

- 18.1 Letter from AES Europe Ltd re village ponds. Chairman to talk to Bob King. Chair
18.2 Parking on Wilcot bridge. Cllr Wilson to attend CATG for information. Cllr DW
18.3 A request from the floor to put camping and boating in Wilcot on the agenda, particularly in light of Wilcot being a conservation area. Clerk
18.4 Council considered that it was worth reviewing the Conservation Statement for each area. Clerk

19. Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 18 February 2014 at 19.30, Oare village hall.

The meeting ended at 22.20.

Additional diary dates:

Additional budget/precept meeting. Date 11/12/13

Possible Christmas walk

Wilcot walk in January

Visit to Sharcott Pennings Dairy Date 09/12/13

Chairman:

Date: