

WILCOT, HUISH and OARE PARISH COUNCIL

Local Government Act 1972

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Wilcot Village Hall
on Tuesday 25th March 2025 at 7.00 pm

Present: Parish Councillors Dee Nix, Richard Fleet, Nicky Fleet, Prue Smith, Richard Lewis, Jamie Ede, Dawn Wilson, Neil Ridgway, and Kathryn Richardson from item 17 onwards.

Unitary Councillor Paul Oatway

Clerk Ruth Kinderman

Resident Nicky Sexton

25/11	<p>To receive apologies for absence None.</p>	
25/12	<p>To receive declarations of interest Cllrs RF and NF - item 18.3</p>	
25/13	<p>To agree the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 14th January 2025 Cllr RF proposed that these be accepted as an accurate record, subject to the manual amendment of the item numbers implemented by the Clerk at the meeting; seconded by Cllr DW with all in favour and signed accordingly by Cllr DN.</p>	
25/14	<p>Public question time It was noted that the gullies through Oare have not yet been cleaned; Clerk to chase. It was noted that the A345 does not qualify for the discretionary gully service, due to the requirement for traffic control. It was noted that the scheduled gully service is only visiting parishes once this year, rather than twice as last year. It was noted that the recently published schedule caters for every parish in Wiltshire over a period of 59 weeks, rather than 52, in alphabetical order, meaning parishes beginning with W will have to wait for more than a year for a scheduled visit. Clerk to follow up with Highways Engineers Andy Cadwallader and Dave Arnup, copying in Cllr PO.</p>	RK
25/15	<p>Update from Unitary Councillor Paul Oatway Cllr Oatway reported that Wiltshire Council has received £3million from central government for the next round of Household Support Funding (HSF), to be distributed to those identified by Wiltshire Council as in need. 77% of the 38,000 applications to the HSF so far have been from households with children; Cllr Oatway reported that Wiltshire Council is working to increase uptake of the HSF by pensioners, who constitute only 4.2% of applicants to date. Cllr Oatway reported that 13,500 Wiltshire residents have benefited this winter from the Warm Homes local grant scheme, funded by £13million obtained by Wiltshire Council from central government. Cllr Oatway reported that Wiltshire Council has approved its budget of £527million for 2025/2026, a 4.5% increase from 2024/2025, representing an additional £1.56 per week per band D household; Wiltshire Council had voted against implementing the maximum permitted increase of 5%. The increase consists of 2.5% to council tax and 2% to the adult social care levy. The main areas of expenditure during 2025/2026 will be £194million on adult social services; £75million on children’s services; £43million on Highways; £50million on environmental services including waste; and £38million on education and skills. Cllr Oatway noted that Wiltshire Council has increased the Highways budget by £22million. Cllr Oatway reported that Wiltshire Council will receive £7million less funding from central government now that the Rural Services Grant (RSG) has been discontinued.</p>	

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	<p>As Vice-Chairman of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service (DWFRS), Cllr Oatway reported that DWFRS will lose £4million as a result of the discontinuation of the RSG. Initially, DWFRS is reducing costs by removing the second-away fire appliances from stations; closure of fire stations may have to be considered in 2026/2027. DWFRS is lobbying MP's to gain support for fire services, who do not have the same precept-raising powers as Police Commissioners.</p> <p>Cllr Oatway reported that Wiltshire Council will allocate an additional £10million for pot hole repairs, and an additional £2million for bus services during 2025/2026, with the Connect2 service planned to expand to include Tidworth and Hungerford, widening the choice of shops and supermarkets for residents of the Pewsey Vale.</p> <p>Cllr Oatway reported that capital expenditure by Wiltshire Council in 2025/2026 will include £41million on construction of council houses; £15million on refurbishing current housing stock; £28million on Special Educational Needs provision; £16million on structural maintenance and bridges; £10million on Highways; and £1million on improving broadband provision.</p> <p>Cllr Oatway reported that Wiltshire Council has agreed to fund litter picking on primary routes; during the last three months, 15,000 kilograms (15 tonnes) of rubbish has been cleared from verges of A, B and C roads by Wiltshire Council employees.</p> <p>Cllr Oatway reported that the proposals submitted by Wiltshire, Dorset, and Somerset, for a new mayoral strategic authority to be known as The Heart of Wessex have been rejected by central government for inclusion in the first tranche of devolution settlements. Wiltshire Council awaits to be told the reason for the rejection. Wiltshire Council had originally proposed a strategic authority without the additional layer of expense entailed by a mayoral office; this was opposed by central government who advised that Wiltshire Council would lose £22million central funding if a mayoral model was not adopted.</p> <p>Cllr Oatway noted that central government considers communication with a few mayors to be more efficient than communicating with several council leaders. In discussion, it was noted that geographical challenges further west may be holding back The Heart of Wessex proposal. It was noted that Cornwall is in financial difficulties, and currently unsuccessful in agreeing a devolution proposal with Devon. It was noted that Swindon hopes to combine with other counties along the M4 corridor rather than join The Heart of Wessex. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Town Council have agreed to join The Heart of Wessex when it proceeds.</p> <p>In response to questions, Cllr Oatway said that Wiltshire Council is financially stable, with substantial reserves, which will not be affected by the proposals to work with Somerset and Dorset, both of whom are in receipt of central government bail-out funds.</p>	
25/16	<p>Planning Applications and Enforcement</p> <p>To note progress of planning applications previously considered:</p> <p>16.1 PL/2024/09344 - Huish Down Farm, Oare - Demolition of existing buildings; erection of replacement dwelling etc; change of use of land from agricultural to residential. The parish council had submitted a response to the revised proposals, reiterating comments made in the previous objection. Wiltshire Council was due to publish a decision on 18th March.</p> <p>16.2 PL/2024/11418 - DOUBLE COTTAGE, 23, WILCOT - reduce trees by 2m and cut back overhanging branches to boundary</p> <p>16.3 PL/2025/01185 - THE OLD POST OFFICE, WILCOT - Prunus - Pollard to 6-8ft at union.</p> <p>16.4 PL/2025/01339 - COLD BLOW COTTAGE, OARE - Lime tree - crown reduction and crown lift;</p>	

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	<p>Apple tree - remove one limb; 5 x Scots Pine trees – fell; Beech tree – fell The parish council had submitted no objection to the three notices of tree works; all had been approved by Wiltshire Council.</p> <p>To review and provide feedback on new planning applications from Wiltshire Council (Town and Country Planning Act 1980, schedule 1, para 8)</p> <p>Application PL/2025/02662 for The Old Rectory, Huish, had been received since publication of the agenda. On request, Planning Officers had granted an extension to the consultation period; Clerk to circulate plans for discussion at the next parish council meeting on 29th April.</p>	<i>RK/all</i>
<p>25/17</p>	<p>Project updates</p> <p>17.1 SIDs The new pole has been installed on the verge by Oare church; Colin Gale of Rushall PC, leader of the SID cooperative, has liaised with Oare Village Hall Committee (OVHC) members about: managing the new SID location; retaining the old SID location; and how to download data from SIDs if OVHC members wish to do so. The SID co-op now has three SIDs operating between five parishes in rotation, with each parish having more than one location.</p> <p>17.2 A345 safety It was agreed to thank Highways for the new signage which has now been installed. It was agreed to follow up the incorrect location on the pavement of the new Huish/School sign at the A345/Huish Lane junction; the sign should have been on the eastern side of the A345 where it would be visible from both north and south approaches to the junction. It was noted that the correct location may require further cutting back to the hedge prior to installation. A resident had shared dash-cam footage of a southbound vehicle taking the Prospect bend at great speed and approaching the resident’s northbound vehicle head-on; a collision was averted as the resident had been obliged to slow down behind a vehicle turning into a driveway and had not yet accelerated to normal speed. It was agreed to pass the footage to LHFIG for consideration when next reviewing the request to lower the speed limit between Oare and Prospect from 50mph to 40mph.</p> <p>17.3 Bus stop at Sunnyhill Lane – LHFIG – Substantive Highways Scheme Fund (SHSF) The results of the SHSF bidding were published today; the Sunnyhill bus stop was the top-scoring project and an allocation of £16,000 from the SHSF has been proposed. Cllr DN thanked all involved with supporting the project; it was noted that the large parish financial contribution had greatly contributed to the successful outcome.</p> <p>17.4 Alton Road, Wilcot – drainage, speed survey Cllr PO reported that he had met Highways officers on site to discuss the continued flooding near Oak Cottages. In addition to the blocked pipe beneath the road, which requires jetting out, officers had realised that the drain in the layby on the north side of the road is at a higher level than the road surface and therefore ineffective. The soakaway ditch on the south side, to which the pipe leads, also requires digging out. Clerk reported that the speed survey strips have been ordered and should be installed shortly, probably attached to the ‘Wilcot’ sign at the western entrance to the village.</p> <p>17.5 Greensward update It was agreed that Clerk should obtain some new quotes for dredging the pond.</p> <p>17.6 Footpath audit</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>RK</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>RK</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>RK</i></p>

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	<p>It was agreed that Clerk should refer ALTO1 (the continuation of WILC41) to Stephen Leonard, Senior Rights of Way Officer, for determination of land ownership and responsibility for maintenance.</p> <p>It was noted that Wiltshire Highways will be replacing the footbridge on WILC31 near Ladybird Cottage.</p> <p>17.7 Defibrillators</p> <p>All defibrillators have been checked within the last fortnight and The Circuit updated accordingly.</p> <p>Clerk to order a new battery for the Stowell defibrillator before the due date of 13th July.</p>	<p>RK</p> <p>RK</p>
<p>25/18</p>	<p>Finance</p> <p>18.1 To Receive the Budget and monitoring report</p> <p>Cllr NF had circulated the report and bank statements to all councillors prior to the meeting; there were no questions and the report is attached as an appendix to these minutes.</p> <p>18.2 To approve invoices due</p> <p>Wiltshire Highways - £370.00 – parish contribution to asbestos survey for northbound bus stop at Sunnyhill Lane.</p> <p>Wessex Print - £50.00 – spring newsletter</p> <p>Mr Harriman – it was agreed to suggest a parish contribution of £50.00 for hosting the defibrillator at Hillview Park.</p> <p>18.3 To receive grant application from Wilcot Village Hall committee</p> <p>The application form and supporting documents had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr DN proposed that £1000 be granted towards the kitchen refurbishment; seconded by Cllr KR with no objections.</p> <p>18.4 To agree new bank signatories</p> <p>It was agreed that Cllr NF should commence arrangements for Cllrs JE, NR and RL to be added as bank signatories to ensure a smooth handover of responsibilities after the May elections.</p> <p>It was agreed that Doug Bradshaw should be reappointed as internal auditor for 2024/2025 if he is willing.</p>	<p>RK</p> <p>RK/NF</p> <p>NF</p> <p>NF</p>
<p>25/19</p>	<p>Clerk's Report</p> <p>19.1 Parish Steward</p> <p>It was noted that the steward had reinstated the bendy verge reflectors in Huish; Clerk to check whether the Bristow Bridge reflectors have also been reinstated.</p> <p>The steward will be asked to focus on the potholes in Church Lane, Wilcot, this Thursday.</p> <p>19.2 Police Matters</p> <p>PC Steele had acknowledged the reports of night time prowlers (Item 25/09.2) as possible linked to other incidents of which the police were aware.</p> <p>The quarterly report is awaited.</p> <p>Clerk to invite the police to attend the Annual Parish Meeting on 29th April.</p> <p>Speed Enforcement Officers continue to conduct regular sessions along the A345 in Oare.</p> <p>19.3 Post box at Sunnyhill Lane</p> <p>Residents had contacted Danny Kruger, MP, who had attended a site meeting with residents of Sunnyhill Lane, Cllr DN and the Clerk. An article, video and photographs had been published on the MP's website, and residents had written to the Gazette & Herald who had published the letter with a large photograph of the site meeting. Danny Kruger</p>	<p>RK</p> <p>RK</p>

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	<p>had pursued the matter with Royal Mail, who had responded with an offer to arrange for postal collections to be made directly from residents. It was agreed that it would be more convenient for residents and postal workers for a post box to be installed at the entrance to Hillview Park. Clerk to respond to Danny Kruger accordingly.</p> <p>19.4 Local Elections Information about the elections to Wiltshire Council and parish councils on Thursday 1st May had been publicised in the parish newsletter, on the Oare Facebook page and through various WhatsApp groups in the parish. Cllr Nix had advised the parish of her intention to stand down in May, after chairing the annual parish meeting on 29th April, having served for many years. As previously publicised, Clerk is willing to take any nomination papers to Wiltshire Council offices in Salisbury on Wednesday 26th March.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">RK</p> <p style="text-align: right;">RK</p>
25/20	<p>Exchange of information Cllr NR volunteered to attend the PCAP environmental special meeting on Thursday 24th April. The Impact report shared by Great Green Bedwyn has been circulated to all councillors. Cllrs NR and DW had attended the Meet the Leader session with Cllr Clewer, leader of Wiltshire Council, in the Bouverie Hall; they reported a low turn-out. On behalf of Wiltshire Council, Cllr PO thanked the parish councillors for their service and all that they do for the parish, and that it had been a pleasure to work with them during the last four years. On behalf of the parish council, Cllr DN thanked Cllr PO for all his support during his term of office.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">NR</p>

Planning Committee meetings will be held as required. All meetings will start at 19.00hrs unless otherwise advertised. Provisional dates and times of next meetings 2024/2025/2026:

Tuesday 29 th April 2025 – Annual Parish Meeting to be followed by a short pc meeting	Wilcot (<u>not</u> at Oare)
Wednesday 14 th May 2025 – Annual Meeting of the Parish Council	Oare (<u>not</u> at Wilcot)

Meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____