

Winterbourne Stoke Parish Council

Meeting of the Winterbourne Stoke Parish Council held in The Village Hub, Winterbourne Stoke, on Tuesday 2nd April 2024 at 7.30 pm

In Attendance: Parish Councillors: P Smith, T Pywell, T Ewart, A Parkin, A Shuttleworth,
Apologies: T Pywell
Parishioners: Nil
Others: Nil
Pro tem Clerk: A Shuttleworth

1	Opening Statement from the Chairman	
	The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting and indicated key parts of the Agenda that would require attention.	
2	Apologies Received	
	Cllr Pywell offered his apologies, which were accepted	
3	To confirm the minutes from the previous Parish Council meeting	
	The minutes from the meetings held on 4th December 2023 were accepted and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.	
4	To report, for information only, any matters arising from the minutes	
	Action: AP-(12/23-03) Cllr Pywell had determined the information required by the bank for new account signatories and the three non-signatory Cllrs were asked to provide it asap.	Action: PS, TE & AP (04/24-01)
5	Motions for Approval	
	Motion 1 - To review Social Media policy and agree the use of WhatsApp and other social media, by the PC, as and when required. The WSPC Social Media Policy was reviewed and it was agreed the council would adopt the use of WhatsApp in addition to Facebook going forward. The Social Media Policy will be amended to reflect the change.	Action: AS (04/24-02) Action: AS (04/24-03)

	<p>Motion 2 - To discuss and agree the next steps relating to appointment of a new Parish Clerk.</p> <p>Cllrs heard that no interest had yet been shown in the position of Parish Clerk, despite it being advertised in a number of ways. Cllrs agreed that re advertisement would be attempted and pay scales reviewed.</p> <p>Cllrs Shuttleworth and Pywell had agreed to continue as pro tempore Clerk and RFO until the next meeting of the PC, when this would be reviewed</p> <p>Motion 3 - To discuss and agree the way ahead on the continuation of the playpark maintenance contract at the 2024 rates.</p> <p>Cllrs discussed the playpark maintenance contract and the Chair advised that cost for FY 24/25 had risen by a shade over 5% and in line with other inflationary costs. It was agreed that the contract would be accepted and the contractor advised accordingly.</p> <p>The contract will be reviewed and possibly re-tendered in autumn 2024, in sufficient time to select an appropriate contractor prior to the start of the maintenance season in April of the following year.</p> <p>Motion 4 - To review the Financial Regulations, revise the discretionary spending limits and remove an anomalous sentence.</p> <p>Cllrs discussed and agreed some minor changes to the Financial Regulations to reflect inflationary changes and some minor anomalies in the original document that had not been noticed previously. The key changes were that maximum spending limit before a decision of the PC was required was reduced from £5,000 to £3,000. The spending authority of the Clerk (or RFO if the function of Clerk and RFO were separated) would be increased from £1,000 to £1,500. A duly delegated sub-committee of the council could authorise expenditure between £1,500 and £3,000. However, if there was no sub-committee, the full PC would authorise all spending over £1,500. These changes would be reflected elsewhere in the Policy and specifically in relation to explaining material variances. The policy document will be amended as appropriate.</p> <p>Motion 5 - To note the intention of the RFO, as in previous years, to certify the Parish Council exempt from a limited assurance review by completing AGAR Part 2.</p> <p>The Clerk explained the RFOs request, in absentia, to continue the policy of seeking an exemption from a limited assurance review by completing the AGAR Part 2 form, as in previous years. This was agreed unanimously.</p> <p>The RFO will complete the AGAR Part 2 Form and table it as an agenda item for discussion and agreement at the next PC meeting and not later than 1st June 2024.</p>	<p>Action: All (04/24-04)</p> <p>Action: AS (04/24-05)</p> <p>Action: AS (04/24-05)</p> <p>Action: TP (04/24-06)</p>
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	<p>Motion 6 - To review, by exception, remaining Parish Council policies.</p> <p>After a brief discussion it was agreed to defer this item until the following meeting. The Chair agreed to act a filter to read through the existing policies and identify any that might require further consideration</p>	<p>Action: PS (04/24-07)</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Correspondence Received</p> <p>At the request of the Clerk, the Chair allowed Correspondence Received to be dealt with prior to verbal reports as a letter pertinent to the Verbal Report on the A303 to Berwick Down Scheme had been received from the secretary of the Village Preservation Society.</p> <p>Revamp Your Tank Scheme: Cllrs were advised that the PC had now received formal notification of the Revamp Your Tank scheme being run in conjunction between Wiltshire Council and the Wessex Rivers Trust - https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/8913/Revamp-Your-Tank-Septic-Tank-Upgrade-Initiative</p> <p>Villagers had been advised of the scheme and an associated public meeting at 7:00pm on Wednesday 17th April at the Shrewton Rec Ground Hall by an article on the PC website (https://winterbournestokepc.org.uk/notices/revamp-your-tank/), echoed on social media.</p> <p>VPS Query Regarding legacy funding resulting from the A303 Stonehenge to Berwick Down Scheme: The secretary of the VPS had asked that legacy funding be included as a formal agenda item for the PC meeting and specifically that <i>“the VPS committee are keen to know if any of these funds, if available, would be used towards a village venue suitable for events”</i>. The Secretary of the VPS was advised in writing, and verbally, that: <i>“the issue of the A303 Stonehenge to Berwick Down Scheme is a standing agenda item at all Parish Council meetings, as it has been since the latest scheme was announced in 2018. There will be a verbal report at the next PC meeting on 2nd April which will include the legacy funding issue. To manage your expectations, there have been few developments in respect of this element of the scheme since 2018; largely due to the ongoing legal issues.</i></p> <p><i>As all the funding that might arise from the scheme is matched funding, perhaps you or another member of the VPS might attend the meeting to give the Parish Council an idea of how much money the VPS could raise over the next few years to help co-fund such a venture. You might also wish to send a representative to future meetings of National Highways' A303 Stonehenge Community Forum.</i> The VPS were given contact details for the Forum secretary.</p> <p>The secretary of the VPS was further advised that suggestions for legacy funding ideas were solicited from the village by a variety of means and presented to a well-attended public meeting in the church. The secretary of the VPS was advised that historic links to the proposals from the village for legacy funding would be made more clearly available following the PC meeting.</p> <p>Verbal Reports</p> <p>A303 Stonehenge to Berwick Down Scheme: The Chair had attended the most recent A303 Community Forum on 5th March 2024 and reported on the current situation regarding the Development Consent Order (DCO). Basically, those challenging the DCO failed at the first hurdle in the rolled up hearing, and all bar one of their grounds for requesting a judicial re-</p>	

view were deemed ‘unarguable’ by Mr Justice Holgate. The one outstanding issue failed in another court, meaning that National Highways were free to proceed. However, the challengers have sought leave to appeal this decision and that challenge has not yet been decided.

Cllr Shuttleworth added that even if an appeal at this level was rejected, there might still be a number of legal avenues those against the scheme might try and exploit, if they could raise funding to do so.

Cllr Shuttleworth had also attended this meeting, but co-representing the PC and the Stonehenge Traffic Action Group. He had reminded the forum members about the legacy funding issue and had asked National Highways, formally, that it be re-activated at the next meeting. This was agreed to.

Cllrs were also advised that the funding for legacy projects was matched funding and that expectations needed to be managed. A considerable amount of effort had been put into costing proposals from the village and in one case, identifying a co-funding source for a major project. Sadly, the funding stream for this had since been spent elsewhere and was no longer available.

Cllr were further advised that that National Highways have a number of different fora (community, farming, business, etc.) all with an opportunity to bid for funding for projects they had identified. Equally, every community directly, or indirectly, affected by the scheme could bid for legacy funding. Just because we were the community most directly affected by the scheme did not mean we would necessarily be the ones to benefit. The best ideas, that impacted the most people locally and regionally, would be the most likely ones to benefit from any available funding. So, compromise and collaboration with others would be the key.

Cllr Shuttleworth observed that there had been a high turnover of staff at National Highways involved in the project since 2018 and he would not be surprised if the legacy issue were not re-visited with a clean sheet of paper given that 5 years had elapsed.

The PC proposals for legacy funding have been made more readily available here: <https://winterbournestokepc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/A303-Legacy-Proposals-2019.pdf>

The broader spectrum of applications is highlighted here: <https://winterbournestokepc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/CForum-June18-write-up-legacy-ideas.pdf>

The PC agreed that these links should be passed to the VPS.

Action: AS
(04/24-08)

Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG): B3083 Berwick Road Speed Limit Review- The review of the process by which Wiltshire Council evaluates speed limit changes is still being tested as part of an experiment in Netheravon. We may have more news in the next few months. Cllrs expressed concerns about the likely increase in hazard to walkers on the B3083 over the next few months, due to the A360 closure.

Signage to replace damaged/incorrect street signs and to remove misleading signage, first requested several years ago by the PC from the CATG group, the predecessor of LHFIG, have arrived in the last few weeks.

7	<p>Adjournment for Parishioners Questions/Comments:</p> <p>VPS Village Survey: Although no Parishioners and no members of the VPS committee were present, Cllr Ewart provided an overview of the village survey conducted by and on behalf of the VPS.</p> <p>The VPS believe that the results will help inform them of the type of events the village wishes to have and the ways in which they wish to be communicated with in respect of these. It didn't seem to be clear whether the 30 responses received to the survey reflect 30 households from the 88 receiving the Parish magazine, the approximately 190 over 16 year-olds living in the village (and all VPS members in their own right), or some mix of the two. Consequently, it's difficult to get a feel for what the responses mean. The Chair commented that the survey was a good start.</p> <p>The Clerk advised that in the past, the VPS and its predecessor had a standing invitation to report back to the PC under the Verbal Reports banner, but this had lapsed since lockdown, but could be re-instated if the VPS were interested. (NB. If the VPS wanted to get the PC to discuss and take action on something specific (eg. requesting financial support for an event), it should be raised informally with the Chair and the Chair will formally request the inclusion of an appropriately worded agenda item for the next PC meeting.). Cllr Ewart undertook to bring this to the attention of the VPS Committee.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: TE (04/24-09)</p> <p>Dog Mess & Littering: Cllrs, as parishioners and dog walkers, expressed their collective disgust at the level of dog fouling and littering on footpaths around the village. The footpath across the meadow is particularly bad, but all footpaths south of the A303 are affected and getting worse. Some owners are not picking up after their dogs and others are hanging plastic bags containing dog mess on fences, which is even more irresponsible. Dumping of empty beer cans and McDonalds packaging at the Berwick end of several footpaths and bridleways is a particular trend.</p> <p>The Wiltshire Dog Warden has previously advised that evidence is needed to bring a successful prosecution and a fine up to to £1,000 for those responsible. They will be asked if DNA evidence could be used to do this.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: AS/PS (04/24-10)</p>
8	<p>The Next Meeting</p>

	The date of the the next meeting to be confirmed, but it and the Annual Meeting of the Parish will be held pror to 1 st June 2024.	
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A Shuttleworth
Clerk (pro tempore) of the Council

P Smith
Chairman of the Council