

Winterbourne Stoke Parish Council

**Meeting of the Winterbourne Stoke Parish Council
held in The Village Hub, Winterbourne Stoke, on
Tuesday 19th November at 7 pm**

In Attendance:

Parish Councillors: P Smith, T Pywell, T Ewart, A Shuttleworth
Apologies: A Parkin, K Daley
Parishioners: 2
Others: Nil
Clerk: S Bailey

1	Chairman's opening statement
	The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting and went through the agenda.
2	To receive, consider and accept apologies for absence.
	<p>Cllr Parkin offered her apologies, which were accepted.</p> <p>Cllr Kevin Daley, of Wiltshire Council, was invited to attend but chose not to as he felt he had nothing currently to contribute. However, he is meeting with Grish Lohani, Highways Engineer at Wiltshire Council, and Danny Kruger MP soon, so would like to be invited to the next Parish Council meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Clerk (11/24-01)</p>
3	To confirm the Minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on 10th September 2024.
	The minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on the 10 th September 2024 were accepted and signed by the Chairman, P Smith and Clerk, S Bailey.
4	To report, for information only, any matters arising from the minutes (by exception)
	<p>Action: PS - (04/24-07) Clerk to review existing PC policies.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Clerk (11/24-02)</p> <p>All other Actions completed.</p>

5	Motion 1: Contracts
	<p>The Clerk explained that the only contract to discuss is that with Bawden Landscaping. The quote for the year 25/26 is £1692.</p> <p>The chairman felt this was a fair price and that they have always done good work for the village, so would like to accept this quote.</p> <p>Cllr Shuttleworth, Cllr Pywell, and Cllr Ewart all agreed.</p> <p>Clerk will email Bawden Landscaping and accept the quote.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Clerk (11/24-03)</p>
6	Motion 2: Next year's precept
	<p>Cllr Shuttleworth was concerned that the 25/26 expected expenditure will consume almost all of the £9090 precept, and thus leave no money for unexpected expenses. He suggested that the precept would need to be raised by £4000 to maintain 24/25 spending power.</p> <p>The Chairman then went through the precept decision for 25/26.</p> <p>All budgeted items were discussed and agreed as necessary expenditure. If CiLCA training exceeds £500, the cost will be revisited.</p> <p>The Events Committee is not asking for any financial aid.</p> <p>The Chairman wanted to know if the church should close would the Parish Council be responsible for the grounds.</p> <p>Cllr Shuttleworth explained that currently the Parochial Church Council are legally responsible for maintaining the graveyard, but if the church should close the Parish Council would take on responsibility for the active graveyard.</p> <p>Cllr Ewart asked if the villagers could upkeep the graveyard as there had been a plan to do this previously.</p> <p>Cllr Shuttleworth noted that the Church of England has a re-wilding policy for its Churchyards. He was aware that a number of villagers had expressed concern that the plan to clear-up the churchyard sounded to be something of a "scorched earth" policy, with the entire churchyard cut-back to very low level. The Rector does not want everything cleared, but is open to villagers' help. The Rector had obtained a quote for a one-off grass-cutting and clean-up exercise that was at comparable pro-rata cost to our Bawden's contract. The Rector and the villagers interested in looking after the graveyard will need to come to an agreement on how to proceed. The Rector is taking advice from a lady from English Nature as to the best way of keeping the churchyard tidy and re-wilded.</p>

The Chairman asked if a contingency provision might be needed should the Church close. It was felt that closure would not happen quickly and that no budgetary provision was needed for the coming financial year. If the worst happened, Bawden's could be asked to quote for maintenance of the active area of the graveyard.

The Chairman noted that 2025 is an election year for the Parish Council and asked if this would incur any cost.

Cllr Pywell explained that because it is not an emergency election or by-election, it should not cost the Parish Council anything.

(Afternote: On the 27th November the Parish Council learnt from WALC that fees for the election will range from £300-£1100, although as we are a small Parish the fees should be on the lower-end of this range).

The playpark was discussed. It is likely that some minor repairs to damaged equipment and possibly the signage might be required over the coming year. However, we had to consider the longer term and replacement of all the equipment in the future. Charity funding could not be guaranteed, so we needed to save for the replacement, and this would have an impact on the precept. Cllr Ewart asked if the park was well-used, and Cllr Shuttleworth said it was.

The Chairman observed that any increase in the precept would need to be palatable.

The Clerk ran through the figures which showed that to maintain spending power at 24/25 levels would require a precept of £13,000 – representing a £45.84 per annum increase for Band D properties.

The Parish Council all felt that this was too much of an increase in an already tough financial climate.

Cllr Pywell suggested that the precept should be increased incrementally, start by increasing it to £11000 this year with the view to increase again next year.

The Clerk noted that precept increase to £11000 the cost for a Band D property would be £131.59 a year; a £21.91 increase from last year.

The Chairman noted that this would leave the Parish Council £2000 to use on unexpected costs, and doesn't financially impact the villagers as dramatically as would a rise to maintain spending power.

Cllr Ewart asked if that left anything for the playpark refurbishments.

Cllr Pywell wanted to know if we could close the park if the Parish Council couldn't afford to replace the equipment.

	<p>Cllr Shuttleworth said we could close the park, but the land would need to be used for something and noted that it was a registered Field in Trust.</p> <p>The Chairman asked if the events committee could do a fundraiser for the playpark.</p> <p>Cllr Shuttleworth thought we should look into getting grants for the playpark.</p> <p>The Clerk will look into what grants are available for playpark refurbishments.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Clerk (11/24-04)</p> <p><u>The Parish Council agreed to raise the precept to £11000</u></p> <p>The Clerk will advise Wiltshire Council of this.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Clerk (11/24-05)</p>
7	Motion 3: Finance signatories
	<p>The Clerk has been successfully added as a signatory to the Parish Councils bank account after last meetings board resolution, she has also set up online banking.</p> <p>The financial subcommittee made up of P Smith, T Pywell, T Ewart and A Shuttleworth decided that they would like all signatories who are not currently on the Parish Council to be removed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Clerk (11/24-06)</p> <p>Additionally, the financial subcommittee would also like to add P Smith, T Ewart and A Parkin as signatories to the Parish Councils bank account.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Clerk (11/24-07)</p>
8	Update 1: Chairman's update
	<p>The Chairman stated that he is currently engaging with National Highways with regards to the A303 issues, and will discuss this more in the A303 update.</p> <p>The Chairman wished to thank everyone involved with the successful Halloween the village had.</p> <p>The Chairman noted that The Bell has now sadly closed, and we'll have to wait and see what happens with that in the future.</p> <p>Cllr Ewart explained that the pub wasn't going up for sale and that the current owners may look to have someone run it. Additionally, the owners of the pub have said the events committee may be able to use the building.</p> <p>The Chairman discussed how the Revamp your Tank scheme is currently in the village upgrading drainage systems, and recommended that anyone who could benefit looks into this</p>

scheme as it could cost between £10000-£15000 to upgrade without this scheme's grant.

Lastly, the Chairman explain that Wessex Internet are currently in Stapleford putting in fibre broadband, with them next going to Berwick.

Cllr Shuttleworth thought that they should be installing it in Winterbourne Stoke next summer.

Cllr Pywell wanted to know whether Wessex Internet would have a monopoly on this.

Cllr Shuttleworth explained that as far as he knew Wessex Internet can put fibre cables up to your door now whilst they are covered by grants if you agree to sign up with them once your current contract ends.

9 Update 2: A303

The Chairman detailed how Cllr Shuttleworth and himself had a meeting with Chris Hilldrup, Route Manager Wiltshire at National Highways, on the 29th October 2024. Paul McKernan of Shrewton Parish Council was also in attendance as their village is also heavily impacted by the A303. This meeting was a direct result of the letter the Chairman sent to the Chief Executive of National Highways on 24th September 2024.

The Chairman explained that they walked Chris Hilldrup through Winterbourne Stoke and went over all of the points raised at the extraordinary meeting of the Parish. The Chairman stated that Chris Hilldrup is very keen to help the village, but they are currently waiting for their budget from the Government before they can really start doing anything. Chris Hilldrup is responsible for the M4, A303 and A36 so any business cases he raises have to compete against all business cases from these roads, the only way to bump a case up the list is to have high fatality and serious injury rates, which is obviously not ideal.

The Chairman went on to say that Chris Hilldrup told them about a survey National Highways are planning, however it is only for people between Countess roundabout and Longbarrow roundabout. Chris Hilldrup feels that this survey should also include Winterbourne Stoke and is fighting for us to be included.

The Chairman will write to Chris Hilldrup to see if there is any qualitative data we as a village can provide to help our case, as National Highways should already have quantitative data.

Action: PS (11/24-08)

Next the Chairman discussed how himself, Cllr Shuttleworth and the Clerk went to the A303 Stonehenge Community Forum on the 12th November 2024. This meeting was to explain how the project was closing down, and at the meeting the Chairman asked how much work can be banked. The Project Director, David Bullock, explained that there is still a development

consent order on the land and the tunnel plan remains there for future use. The Chairman discussed how this is good for a future bypass but bad for local landowners as they cannot get grants for fertilizer or planning permission on their properties while this development consent order is in place.

Cllr Shuttleworth discussed how there is still one more legal challenge happening with regards to the bypass, which is going to the Supreme Court, thus we will have to wait and see what becomes of that.

Cllr Shuttleworth reported on the FOIA/EIRs he had submitted regarding the condition of the A303 bridge over the River Till and the width of the A303 through Winterbourne Stoke. On the first, National Highways had provided information that suggested a safety inspection should have been conducted due to concrete spalling. A follow-up EIR has asked if and when such an inspection took place.

In the second EIR, National Highways has claimed the width of the A303 in the village is appropriate, as this is a built-up, urban area, not a rural area. This has been challenged in a subsequent EIR. If the village is a built-up area, then the speed-limit should be 30mph, not 40 mph. If it's a rural road, not an urban one, then the A303 is too narrow for purpose – it can't be both. The Chairman observed that closing the road to rebuild the bridge would have a huge impact on traffic and local communities. The bridge should be repaired before a full rebuild is needed.

The Chairman hoped that a 30MPH speed limit through the whole village, at very least from the bus stop to the west of the village.

Cllr Pywell wanted to know if the problems with the bus stop had been raised with anyone. The Chairman stated that this was brought up to Chris Hilldrup and he agrees that something needs to be done and is looking into it.

10 Update 3: B3083 and footpaths

The Chairman explained that Cllr Shuttleworth and himself met with Grish Lohani, Highways Engineer at Wiltshire Council, on the 9th October 2024. She is responsible for all roads in the village except the A303. The Chairman and Cllr Shuttleworth explained to her all of the issues raised in the extraordinary meeting of the Parish, as well as issues raised by Scotland Lodge and The Manor.

Grish Lohani had looked at the road surface of St Peter's Close and found it to be substandard. She advised that core sampling work in Meadow View was to check if what is

now regarded as toxic waste had been used in its construction.

She agreed to discuss the need for 7.5 tonne weight warning signs on the A303 with her National Highways colleagues, to reduce the number of HGV's using the B3083.

She was shown how the hedgerow on the west side of the B3083 near the camp site entrance had poor sight lines; putting pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders at risk. The hedge is on private land so is a matter for Wiltshire Council to take up with the landowner.

The Parish Council then discussed the Berwick footpath (WST01/BSJA6).

The Chairman explained that Berwick want to take the diagonal part of the footpath BSJA6 away and replace it with a path that follows the road and cuts back to join WST01 at the kissing gate.

Cllr Shuttleworth noted that a proposal to do this in the 1970s was ultimately rejected at Secretary of State level, as it was felt unacceptable to make people walk next to a road instead of through a field. This earlier decision would have to be considered in any future proposal, as should the existence of 'higher rights' (i.e. is the footpath actually a bridlepath or a road as indicated on the Andrews' and Dury's Map of Wiltshire 1773 and 1810, which Wiltshire Council often use as evidence of higher rights). The current proposal was only for a footpath and not a bridlepath.

Cllr Pywell asked what villagers would prefer. The discussion noted that some might prefer such a diversion, others might object to it because of the route and also because it would make no provision of equestrians and cyclists. The proposed route crosses water run-off from the B3083; so, it could become marshy; although, as a parishioner observed, this could be addressed by the landowner.

Cllr Ewart would like the new route, and felt that if it is muddy, people can dress accordingly. The Chairman stated that it is up to Berwick to make the decision as the diversion is within their Parish.

11 Correspondence received

The Chairman has written to National Highways regarding rainwater run off onto a business property and the need to drain a sump that is at the A303 end of Frog Alley.

The Clerk advised the Parish Council that NALC had released the 24/25 SCP pay rates, and her pay increased from £12.84 to £13.47 and is owed £76.44 in back pay. The Parish Council all accepted this change.

12 Adjournment for Parishioner's questions / comments

A parishioner wanted to know if we should be working more closely with Berwick to find a solution to the footpath problem.

Cllr Shuttleworth stated that it is hard because not everyone agrees on what is best to do.

The Chairman reiterated that it is Berwick land, so we don't have much of a say.

Cllr Shuttleworth explained that Shrewton are currently trying to reduce the speed limit on the Shrewton road, and Wiltshire Council are looking to reassess the speed limit on the Berwick Road.

The parishioner didn't feel like this was enough, they explained that they are worried that people are in danger. They have personally had a few close calls with cars whilst walking along that road, and felt pedestrians need to be protected and not have their safety disregarded because bikes and horses can't also use the path.

Cllr Shuttleworth felt that if the path is ever going to be approved it would have to be a bridleway.

The Chairman also felt that something should be done as it is dangerous, he would have also preferred a bridleway but would agree to a footpath if that was all that was allowed.

Cllr Ewart wanted to know what the villagers want.

A parishioner agreed that the village needs to be heard on this matter, the Parish Council should not just assume how everyone feels.

The Chairman agreed this is important. He also explained that Cllr Shuttleworth has been trying to make this road safer for pedestrians for years, it just unfortunately takes a lot of time and money.

Cllr Shuttleworth pointed out that Berwick has a very low precept, and thus have been reluctant to share costs on traffic surveys and signage improvements.

A parishioner wanted to know if the Parish Council could do anything about the concrete bollards the petrol station has built as it is impossible to see when pulling out.

The Chairman stated that it is difficult because they are on private land.

Cllr Shuttleworth said that we could write to National Highways about it.

The Chairman will write to National Highways regarding the concrete bollards.

Action: PS (11/24-09)

A parishioner wanted to know whether a village hall could be built on the playpark if the church and pub are both closed.

Whilst some villagers may want to build a village hall, the playpark is a designated Field in Trust and restrictive covenants are in place.

A parishioner queried why the Parish Council, and the Rector thought that the villagers wanted to completely clear the churchyard. They were one of the volunteers that was going to help with this, and they never had any intention of going 'scorched earth' on the grounds. They felt that the churchyard was not re-wilded, stating: "it is just a mess and needs a bit of a tidy up".

It was pointed out that it was villagers (not the PC) who had expressed concerns about plans to clean-up the churchyard and feared it sounded like a scorched earth policy, with all the grassed areas cut down to a single level, log-piles removed, etc, etc., to the detriment of all the wild planting and over-wintering insects and animals. The Parish Council has no role in how the churchyard is currently managed.

The Chairman stated that he only brought up maintaining the Churchyard in case the Parish Council needed to put in a contingency to next year's budget. We will be able to explore this issue further when we know what is going to happen to the Church.

Cllr Ewart discussed how the events committee would like the Parish Council to hand over the Telephone box to them so they can move it further into the village and refurbish it.

The Clerk will put this as a motion in the next meeting's agenda and also look into how the Parish Council would transfer ownership to the events committee.

Action: Clerk (11/24-10)

A parishioner asked if it would be possible to have the bin by the bus shelter re-instated. Also, the bin by the lay-by is an old-style bin and the door is hanging open, so wanted to know if this could be replaced by a new style bin.

The Chairman noted that Wiltshire Council is normally responsible for public bins, but those on the A303 may be the responsibility of National Highways.

The Clerk will establish ownership and seek to get them replaced and regularly emptied.

Action: Clerk (11/24-11)

Cllr Pywell brought up that the Parish Council elections are next year and felt that the Parish Council should start advertising now so enough interest can be generated to fill any vacancies that might arise.

The Clerk will put the Parish election on the next Parish Council meeting's agenda.

Action: Clerk (11/24-12)

	Meeting closed at 8:52pm.
13	The Next Meeting
	Tuesday 17 th December 2024 at 7:30pm in the Village Hub, Winterbourne Stoke.

S Bailey
Clerk of the Parish Council

P Smith
Chairman of the Parish Council