

PRESENT – Councillors Geraldine Shepherd, Chair, (GS), Annabella Scott (AS), Colin Baber (CB), John Hatherell (JH), Simon Wilson (SW) and Acting Parish Clerk John Shepherd (JS)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Carolyn Nicolle (CN)

MINUTES (19th November 2014 Meeting) – Read and APPROVED

Proposed: AS, Seconded: JH – Agreed unanimously.

MATTERS ARISING

Parking. The continuing problem of parking in Westonbirt Village Street and one-way system was again discussed. GS reported that she had had a site meeting with our GCC Councillor, Anthony Hicks (AH), who was also on the Highways Committee. AH had explained that to enact a parking restriction with Double Yellow Lines was very expensive. Tetbury Town Council were in the process of doing so at the moment and it was costing about £6,000, that was to be funded by the Town Council as GCC were not prepared to do so. He felt that implementing the bund had been a mistake as verges were intended to allow parking off the road to avoid causing an obstruction. He suggested that the bund should be removed and the soil offered for sale. Hopefully this might provide the funds to purchase scalping that could be laid in place of the bund to provide a firm surface that would not become unsightly if cars parked on it. After general discussion all agreed that this was the preferred solution. However, before action was taken, it was agreed that notices detailing the proposal should be put on the Parish Notice Boards and in addition leaflets should be posted through letterboxes in The Street.

GS had also taken AH to see the planting of the verge adjacent to Park End and he had agreed to raise this with Highways. JS had emailed Highways requesting an update on this in time for the PC meeting, which had been read, but no update had been provided. JS drew attention to an invitation from the Cotswold Conservation Board on “The Importance and Management of Roadside Verges – a seminar for Parish Councils”, to be held on Thursday 26th March 2015 at Doynton Village Hall from 2pm to 4pm.

AS reported that the road from the A46 down to Lasborough had deteriorated and was in a bad state with many pot-holes. No salt or gravel had been delivered this year for gritting the road and no one had come to dig out the drainage sump. Indeed, this had had to be done by a local resident. She asked that this be raised with Highways. **GS agreed to do so.**

Precept for 2015/2016. JS reported that the application for the Budget Requirement of £1,220 agreed by the Parish Council at the previous meeting had been submitted to CDC by the due date.

Review of Draft Risk Management Policy and Discussion of Other Documents Required. As tasked at the previous meeting, JS had prepared a draft Freedom of Information (Fol) Policy and had circulated it to Councillors prior to the meeting. He drew particular attention to Appendix B Class 5 which lists the Council’s Policies and Procedures. As yet, not all of those listed in the draft were available and it had not yet been decided which of those that were unavailable should be drafted.

There was a brief discussion of the various documents listed. In response to a query from AS in relation to Data Protection, JS confirmed that the parish laptop computer was backed up every month. It was agreed that a second copy should be made for storage off the premises.

Action: JS to implement enhanced back-up policy.

After further discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Clerk should produce a report listing which of the documents already existed and in what form, together with recommendations as to which other documents were required and which of those listed were felt unnecessary.

Action: Parish Clerk to prepare above report and circulate to Councillors

Proposal to Archive Documents at Gloucestershire Archive. JS reported that he had started going through the Parish Council documents in accordance with the national protocol but had not yet sent any to the Archives.

BANK RECONCILIATION

A bank reconciliation was carried out by the Chair and Councillors No discrepancies were identified.

SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF PARISH CLERK

The Chairman and Parish Clerk withdrew from the meeting and the remaining members considered the applications for the post from Lieutenant-Colonel John Shepherd and Mr. Malcolm Potter.

After considering and discussing both applications, the PC members decided to appoint Lieutenant-Colonel Shepherd to the position of Parish Clerk to Westonbirt with Lasborough Parish Council for the following reasons:

1. John Shepherd has held the position of Parish Clerk for some 17 months. During this time, he has demonstrated that he is well able to do the job and has all the relevant skills. Members noted that he identifies and takes suitable action on the various requirements which are brought to the Parish Council's attention by bodies such as Cotswold District Council.
2. Members accept that Malcolm Potter has suitable experience and skills, but are concerned that it might take some time for him get up to speed with an area of work which is unfamiliar to him. They note that he has expressed a desire to undertake training, but were concerned that this might cause a problem for the Parish Council as it does not have funds available for this.

Agreed unanimously by AS, CB, JH and SW.

The Chairman and Parish Clerk re-joined the meeting.

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2015

JS had circulated to Councillors copies of the email sent out by CDC regarding the Elections to be held on 7 May 2015. Nomination packs will be available from 23 February 2015 and paper copies will be sent to clerks for distribution to interested parties. All nomination papers must be HAND DELIVERED to the Returning Officer at CDC offices in Cirencester between Monday 23rd March and 4pm on Thursday 9th April 2015. It was agreed that JS would coordinate the delivery of nomination papers for existing Councillors. JS also agreed to send copies of Councillors' latest Declarations of Interest (DoI) to them in case these needed to be updated or re-submitted as part of the nomination process.

Action: JS to send copies of DoI forms to Councillors

PLANNING

There had been no new applications since the last meeting. However, GS stated that she was now unlikely to submit the minor variation to her existing approved application that she had referred to at the last meeting.

AOB

Village Cleanup

It was agreed that the date of the Village Cleanup would be Sunday 22nd March 2015. GS would arrange reflective tabards, picking sticks, bags, etc., from CDC and the rendezvous would as usual be Woodlands House at 1100 hrs. Notices would be put on the Parish Notice Boards and if possible in the Parish Newsletter.

Drains

It was noted that the drains on the A433 opposite Morley House and at the Hare & Hounds cross-roads were badly blocked and the road flooded dangerously at both places when it rained. Both problems had been reported to Highways but no satisfactory action had been taken. **GS agreed to contact Highways about this matter too.**

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was AGREED that the next meeting which would be the Annual General Meeting would be held at Woodlands House at the usual time of 7pm, on Wednesday, 13th May 2015.