

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

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – None

ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Prior to the commencement of the business of the meeting, Councillor Simon Wilson signed his Acceptance of Office Declaration.

1. MINUTES (11th February 2015 Meeting) – Read and APPROVED

Proposed: CB, Seconded: AS – Agreed unanimously.

2. MATTERS ARISING

Parking. The continuing problem of parking in Westonbirt Village Street and one-way system was again discussed. The possible removal of the bund as suggested by our GCC Councillor, Anthony Hicks (AH) had been put to Highways who would not agree to this.

It was understood that Highways had held a meeting with the owners of Park End regarding the planting of the verge, but none of the planting appears to have been removed'

On behalf of GS, JS had contacted Highways about the non-delivery of salt for the Lasborough road and digging out the sump. He had been assured that both would be actioned prior to the onset of winter.

Review of Draft Risk Management Policy and Discussion of Other Documents Required. JS confirmed that the enhanced back-up policy for the parish council laptop had been implemented and that the back-up disc was now stored off site on CB's house.

JS had incorporated a listing which of the documents already existed and in what form into an updated FOI Publication Scheme that had been circulated to councillors for discussion under Agenda Item 6.

Parish Council Elections 2015

JS had sent copies of Councillors' latest Declarations of Interest (DoI) to them in case they were needed as part of the nomination process. However, they were not required.

Drains

On behalf of GS, JS had again reported the blocked drains on the A433 opposite Morley House and at the Hare & Hounds cross-roads to Highways.

3. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

JS reported that he had reviewed Financial Regulations and he had not identified any need for change. No other changes were proposed.

4. BANK RECONCILIATION

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

JP queried the size of the precept and the lack of reserves. He felt that the precept was very small and considered that it ought to be increased to enable the PC to build up adequate reserves.

5. UPDATE ON PC WEBSITE

JS reported that he had developed a minimalist website using the name "wwl-pc.org.uk" that he had registered in his own name at a cost of £9.99 for a period of two years. The site was hosted by his existing ISP on his own Internet account at no cost to the council. The website had been populated with the necessary information to meet the governments mandated Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities and information was being added in support of the draft FOI Publication Scheme that was to be discussed under the next agenda item. Councillors noted the progress being made.

6. REVIEW OF UPDATED FOI PUBLICATION SCHEME

JS explained that the only significant change being proposed from the first version of the scheme was in Appendix B Class 5 “Our Policies and Procedures”. Rather than providing a list of those policies and procedures that we might or might not develop, it now listed only those that actually had been developed. To cater for those that might be developed in the future, it includes the generic description “Any other Policies and Procedures that are adopted by the Council”.

After discussion Councillors unanimously RESOLVED to adopt the FOI Publication Scheme version 2, as presented.

7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

GS had agreed that the PC could receive a presentation from a parishioner, Mrs Sophy Fitzpatrick (SF), on a development that she and her husband wished to undertake at Elmleaze Farm, but pointed out that councillors could make no comment until a formal application had been submitted.

SF explained that they were in the process of receiving pre-application advice from CDC and had therefore not yet submitted a formal application. She then briefed councillors on what they wished to do. At the conclusion of her presentation, she invited councillors to come and visit the site.

Councillors noted the presentation with interest. However, it would be inappropriate for them to visit the site in advance of the planning application being submitted. Only once the PC had been notified of the planning application by CDC and invited to comment, could they become involved.

SF then left the meeting.

Application 15/02369/FUL – Conversion of lean-to store to provide additional domestic accommodation at The Wood Shed Lasborough Manor Lasborough Tetbury Gloucestershire GL8 8UF

AS declared an interest in this agenda item, as she was the applicant, and left the meeting.

Councillors discussed the application and confirmed that the PC had no objection to the application.

8. POTENTIAL CHANGES TO ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONCERTS AT WESTONBIRT ARBORETUM IN 2016

A few days before the meeting, GS had received a letter dated 2 September 2015 from Simon Hough (SH) the Recreation Manager at Westonbirt Arboretum, notifying the PC that they were considering applying to CDC for a variation to their entertainment license for summer events and asked for the views of the PC. They are considering holding four events over one weekend instead of six events over two weekends, for a capacity of up to 9,999 instead of 7,000. To do so, they would need more parking and are proposing to use Park Field, between the eastern boundary of the arboretum and The Hare & Hounds Hotel. The traffic from the Tetbury direction would be routed off the A433 at the crossroads onto the Bowdown Road and would meet the traffic coming down the Bowdown Road in the opposite direction from the A46. Both streams of traffic would then be routed down the east side of Park Field and in through a new entrance that would be created through the wall of the field.

Councillors expressed surprise that the traffic from the Tetbury direction was being routed onto the Bowdown road to meet the oncoming traffic stream from the A46 at an extremely awkward “hairpin “ bend, rather than going on to the next turning and then up into the field. CB also pointed out that there was a ha-ha running almost the entire length of the eastern boundary of Park Field (except at the extreme northern end) and that cars would not be able to drive over it. Councillors also noted that it was a very long way from the music venue and they doubted that people would be willing to walk that distance. It was too far and would be dangerous late at night in the dark. JP said he would enquire about the entertainment license and inform the PC accordingly.

GS said that she would contact SH and pass on to him councillors concerns about the traffic plan and the difficulty of concert-goers getting back to their cars in the dark.

9. AOB

PROPOSAL FOR ADOPTION OF THE BT TELEPHONE BOX IN THE STREET, WESTONBIRT

GS had received a proposal from Andrew & Kathy Clarke for the PC to adopt the BT Telephone Box in The Street, Westonbirt. The telephone box was now in an extremely dilapidated state and there was support amongst residents of The Street to adopt and refurbish the phone box and to use it for a practical purpose. It was stated that the application for the adoption of the phone box needed to be done by the PC, but local residents had volunteered to refurbish the telephone box and keep it maintained, so this would not be a burden on the PC. It was further suggested that its most beneficial use to the local community would be the installation of a defibrillator. The cost of the defibrillator would be approximately £2,000 and this cost is normally met by the local community/Parish Council. However, in the case of Westonbirt, as this facility would benefit the whole community, funding might be available from the Village Hall Fund.

JP said that Avening PC had already adopted one telephone box for this purpose and was in the process of adopting a second one.

GS gave an update on the Village Hall Fund and thought that the fund might well be able to support the purchase of the defibrillator if the telephone box were adopted. However, she felt that it was important that the residents of The Street were canvassed to confirm that there was proper support for the adoption of the telephone box.

After further discussion Councillors RESOLVED to adopt the BT Telephone Box, subject to the support of the residents of The Street, Westonbirt, being confirmed: the purchase of the defibrillator would be investigated further after the telephone box had been adopted.

Proposed: JH, Seconded: SW – Agreed unanimously.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was AGREED that the next meeting would be held at Woodlands House at the usual time of 7pm, on Wednesday, 25th November 2015.