

PRESENT – Parish Councillors Geraldine Shepherd, Chair, (GS), Annabella Scott (AS), Colin Baber (CB) and Parish Clerk John Shepherd (JS)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – District Councillor Jim Parsons (JP)
2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST IN CONNECTION WITH AGENDA ITEMS AS SHOWN AND NOT ALREADY STATED ON REGISTER OF INTERESTS – None.
3. TO ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 17TH February 2016 – Read and APPROVED.

Proposed: AS, Seconded: CB – Agreed unanimously.

4. MATTERS ARISING

a. BT Telephone Box in The Street, Westonbirt

GS had contacted the school and established the location of the defibrillators in Westonbirt, in the school, at the golf course and in the leisure centre. Details had been published on the website.

b. Update on funding for replacement laptop & professionally developed PC Website

JS advised that the funding for £350 for a new computer, £500 for the web site set-up and first year's running cost, and £758 staffing set-up costs, a total of £1,608, had been received in the Council's building society account. Suitable replacement computers had been identified and quotes were being obtained prior to procuring one. Potential replacement websites were still under review.

c. Membership of GAPTC

JS confirmed that membership of GAPTC had now been activated and was proving useful.

d. Funding of Membership of SLCC

JS confirmed that the membership fee for 2016/2017 which he had paid had been refunded.

e. External Audit Arrangements

These had been implemented and we were to be audited by the same external auditor as last year. The audit would be carried out free of charge.

f. Resignation Procedure for Councillors

This had been notified to former Cllr Wilson.

g. Potholes in Road to Lasborough

GS advised that she was in contact with Highways but no meeting had yet taken place. AS reported that, in the meantime, Amey, Highways' contractor had arrived and done some work filling in the potholes. She doubted that this would be very effective or long-lasting and she felt that what was required was proper resurfacing of the most damaged parts of the road. When the latter had been done on a number of other parts of the road, the results had been much more successful.

5. TO REVIEW RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR CURRENT YEAR TO DATE

Councillors reviewed the receipts and payments for the current year to date, as published on the Parish Council website under Accounts 2016/2017. This is the first review of the new financial year. There were no comments.

N.B. The closing accounts for 2015/2016 will be reviewed at the AGM on 4th May 2016.

6. TO CARRY OUT BANK RECONCILIATION

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

7. TO CO-OPT COUNCILLORS TO FILL TWO VACANCIES

JS, as Proper Officer, summarised the procedure that should be followed for co-option of casual vacancies, as given in the Governance Toolkit for Parish and Town Councils¹.

GS advised that three candidates had expressed an interest in being co-opted onto the parish council. They were John Hatherell, Mark Winston-Davis and Andrew Clarke.

¹ Governance Toolkit for Parish and Town Councils, jointly developed by and on behalf of Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS), Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), Standards Board of England, National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Local Government Association (LGA)

John Hatherell had been a member of the Parish Council until 9th March this year when he automatically ceased to be a Councillor as he had been unable to attend the meetings on 25 November 2016 and 17th February 2016. This was most uncharacteristic of him as he had an excellent attendance record, having missed only one other meeting in the past five years. GS added that he consistently made valuable input at council meetings and was a real asset to the council.

GS then proposed John Hatherell for co-option. This was seconded by AS.

It was noted that Mark Winston-Davis had already expressed an interest on being co-opted onto the parish council when a previous vacancy had occurred. However, he had been unsuccessful on that occasion. It was also noted that Andrew Clarke was already a member of two other parish committees.

There was a general feeling that the opportunities of involvement in how the parish was run should be offered to as wide and diverse a group as possible within the parish. AS noted that Mark Winston-Davis was younger than Andrew Clarke who was retired and that his views could increase the diversity of input to the Council.

GS then proposed Mark Winston-Davis for co-option and this was seconded by CB.

There were no other proposals.

Both John Hatherell and Mark Winston-Davis were elected unanimously.

8. TO REVIEW AND AGREE THE AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Councillors reviewed the agenda that had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Parish Party, Agenda item 5., is being held at Lasborough on Saturday, 2nd July 2016, by kind permission of Ajax Scott and family.

The Agenda was agreed unchanged.

9. TO REVIEW AND AGREE THE AGENDA FOR THE AGM

JS said that one additional item needed to be added to the agenda that had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. This was to agree the purchase business software for the replacement computer. This would be added as:

“13. To agree the purchase of Microsoft Office 365 for the new parish laptop computer.”

The existing item 13 would be re-numbered as 14.

Apart from the usual items on the AGM Agenda, it proposes establishing a programme for reviewing governance documents and increasing the number of ordinary parish council meetings from the minimum of three to four, at approximately 10 or 11 week intervals. This will ensure that no gap between non-adjacent meetings exceeds six months.

After discussion this increase was agreed, but AS wanted to be sure that we didn't have meetings for meetings sake and that substantive items would be on the agenda of each meeting. JS was sure that this would be the case, particularly with the need to review and update governance documents.

Subject to the above changes, the draft agenda for the AGM was agreed and JS was tasked with producing proposed dates for the four ordinary council meetings for the next year.

10. TO CONSIDER ANY PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

GS referred to planning applications 16/01142/FUL and 16/01143/LBC relating to Elmleaze Farm House. She had visited the site with CB, as AS was away, and had drafted a letter strongly supporting the application and urging CDC to permit the project. She had already sent the letter to CDC, as the closing date for comments was the following day. She read the letter to the meeting during which the various points made were discussed and reference was made to the relevant drawings, downloaded from the CDC website. CB confirmed that the letter accorded with his views resulting from the site visit and AS was in agreement with the conclusions.

Two further applications had been observed on the CDC planning website but as yet no invitation to comment had been received from CDC and there had not been time to study either of them.

One was for erection of ancillary outbuilding at Reservoir Farm and the other was changes to internal access arrangements and road surfacing at Westonbirt Arboretum.

CB observed that Reservoir Farm is about 250 metres away from the Bowldown road, is surrounded by trees and is unlikely to be seen. He wondered if the change in surfacing in the overflow car park from compacted stone to blacktop was to reduce the problems of mud on the road.

GS mentioned that about 2 years ago planning permission had been granted to permit the insertion of two windows and a door in the north wall of a pair of Cotswold stone garages at Parkend and for a change of use to domestic accommodation. However, a few weeks ago, the garages had been demolished, new foundations excavated that were much larger than the footprint of the original garages and a completely new house with a chimney is being built that will be much taller than the original garages. She had reported the matter to CDC and an enforcement officer had just visited the site. As yet, no feedback from CDC had been received.

GS reported that she had received an email from Simon Hough, the Recreation Manager at Westonbirt Arboretum regarding the traffic arrangements for their major concert weekend from Thursday 16th to Sunday 19th June 2016. These include parking restrictions along the A433 and in all the roads in Westonbirt Village and up to Primrose Hill. These will apply on all these days from 5pm until midnight. They are making provision to allow genuine residents and their guests to be able to park and will endeavour to inconvenience them as little as possible.

11. TO DECIDE THE DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

It was AGREED that the date of the next meeting would be decided at the AGM on Wednesday, 4th May 2016.

(Approved and signed by Geraldine Shepherd, Chair, on 13th July 2016)