

Winterbourne Stoke Parish Council

Meeting of the Winterbourne Stoke Parish Council held in The Village Hub, Winterbourne Stoke, on Monday 11th September 2023 at 7.00 pm

In Attendance: Parish Councillors: Dr A Shuttleworth, P Smith, T Pywell
Apologies: Nil
Parishioners: 10 parishioners
Others: 3 other attendees
Clerk: J Carr

1	Opening Statement from the Chair
	<p>The Chair welcomed Parishioners to the meeting. In doing so, and since this was the first meeting of the Parish Council, real or virtual, for several years that parishioners had attended, sought to explain that Parish Council meetings were the first tier of representative democracy in UK government and that they were not an example of absolute democracy. (The Clerk further clarified that PC meetings were meetings held in public and which parishioners could attend, but they were not public meetings). The Chair further explained that to allow Parishioners to contribute to a Parish Council meeting by invitation, a procedural motion would be needed to reinstitute full Standing Orders, which had been partially suspended on the advice of Wiltshire Council in 2019.</p>
2	Apologies Received
	<p>No apologies received.</p>
3	To confirm the minutes from the previous Parish Council meeting
	<p>The minutes from the meetings held on 31st May 2023 were accepted and signed by the Chair and Clerk.</p>
4	To report, for information only, any matters arising from the minutes
	<p>The following actions were outstanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. (12/22-01) Both swing sets need to be serviced and refurbished. A contract has been let with Redlynch Leisure. This action has been completed. <u>Action Closed.</u>b. (12/22-02) The ground maintenance contractors should clear the vegetation at the vehicle gate. Bawdens have cleared the vegetation. <u>Action Closed.</u>c. (04/23-01) A bench should be bought to replace the current Church Street bench, located at the start of Price's Path; it should be hardwood and have a plaque commemorating the coronation of HM King Charles III. This action has been completed. <u>Action Closed.</u>f. Cllr Smith will investigate a contractor to replace the plinth. A new plinth has been installed. <u>Action Closed.</u>g. (04/23-03) Permission to replace the bench will have to be sought from Wiltshire council as they own the land. This action has been completed, although it was noted that the tract of land involved was not owned by Wiltshire Council as had been believed. . <u>Action Closed.</u>

5	Motions for Approval	
	<p>Motion 1 - To reinstate Standing Orders.</p> <p>It was unanimously agreed that Standing Orders (https://winterbournestokepc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Standing-Orders-2020.pdf) should be re-adopted in full and with immediate effect.</p> <p>Motion 2 - To discuss and agree a position on the Scotland Lodge Farm planning application.</p> <p>The Scotland Lodge planning application had been rejected because of concerns regarding bats. The Applicant had reached out to the Parish Council for support with their appeal because they believed the Environmental Report had been interpreted incorrectly. Cllrs have read the Environmental Report and concur with the Applicant's interpretation. The Clerk will write to Wiltshire Council's Planning Department informing them of the Parish Council's support to the appeal and informing them of the basis for this support.</p> <p>PMN: The Clerk has written to Wiltshire Council's Planning Department informing them of the Parish Council's support to the appeal and of the basis for this support. Action Closed.</p> <p>Motion 3 - To discuss and agree a position on the Church Cottage planning application.</p> <p>The application is to replace rotten windows in the 1970s extension of a listed building; externally there will be minimal visual change. The Parish Council supported the application. Cllr Smith took an action to identify a statutory basis for this support. The Clerk will write to Wiltshire Council's Planning Department informing them of the Parish Council's support.</p> <p>PMN: The Clerk has written to Wiltshire Council's Planning Department informing them of the Parish Council's support. Action Closed.</p> <p>Motion 4 - To discuss and agree a position regarding the fencing-in of the meadow footpath to Berwick St James.</p> <p>The Chair (Cllr Dr A Shuttleworth) temporarily suspended the meeting so that he could address the meeting as a parishioner and without him at the table the meeting would not be quorate.</p> <p><i>Dr A Shuttleworth gave the meeting details of the events in the meadow in April [this year] when he and his dog encountered three heifers.</i></p> <p>Cllr Shuttleworth re-joined the two other Cllrs at the table, thereby re-establishing the quorum. Cllr Pywell, taking the Chair, unsuspending the meeting and the parishioners were invited to comment on the issue at hand.</p> <p>Those attending the meeting were informed that the Parish Council did not discuss the issue of the cattle in the meadow during the Parish Council meeting held on 31st May 2023 as it was not an agenda item. Cllrs had been informed, informally at the end of the meeting, that there had been issues with cattle in the meadow, that there had been a meeting between Druid's</p>	<p>Action: Clerk (09/23-01)</p> <p>Action: Clerk (09/23-02)</p>

	<p>Dairy staff, the HSE and the Wiltshire Council’s Countryside Access Officer and a parishioner and that HSE had gone away to think about their recommendation going forward.</p> <p>The Parish Council were not informed by anyone prior to the work on the fence commencing. As far as Cllrs were aware, HSE had not been in touch with anyone in the village after 31st May and until the work on the fence began.</p> <p>It was at this point, the Clerk and the Chair had contacted Wiltshire Council for assistance and advice, as soon as it became clear that the fence would be a permanent structure.</p> <p>Those attending the meeting were informed that there seemed little that can be done by the Parish Council as the erection of a fence on farmland was solely a matter for the landowner; provided the footpath remained on the line of the Definitive Map and that all statutory requirements for the footpath were met. Wiltshire Council was asked to check if that was indeed the case, which they subsequently did. HSE was approached for clarification of its position on the incident and had stated that Druid’s Lodge Dairy were written to: <i>“on the 1st June 2023 and part of the content of that email, stated ‘that whilst at this stage we are not asking you to fence the footpath off’, they were also asked to read and consider the guidance laid out in HSE’s information sheet – cattle and public access in England and Wales (hse.gov.uk)”</i>.</p> <p>Various options were aired regarding a way forward. Whilst no single way forward was agreed, Cllr Smith undertook to speak with the Chair of Berwick St James Parish Meeting and Druid’s Estate Manager.</p>	
6	Open Session for Parishioners Questions and Comments	
	<p>A number of parishioners complained that communication between the Parish Council and parishioners was from ideal, Cllrs and the Clerk pointed out that all Parish Council documents (calling notices for meetings, agendas, minutes, financial documents) were freely available on the Parish Council website (and that parishioners can subscribe to this for notifications of updates, etc by email) and also on the Parish Council noticeboard. The Clerk advised that we did not often make use of the benefice magazine as the timescales of publication and distribution did not fit with the flexibility required. It was suggested that more use could be made of social media, which has been done in the past. This is an issue that would bear re-examination.</p> <p>Following a number of exchanges, the Clerk announced his intention to resign with immediate effect and left the room. The meeting immediately ended as a result of <i>force majeure</i>.</p>	
7	The Next Meeting	
	No date or time was set for the next meeting.	