

Winterbourne Stoke Parish Council

Meeting of the Winterbourne Stoke Parish Council held in The Village Hub, Winterbourne Stoke, on Monday 4th December 2023 at 7.00 pm

In Attendance: Parish Councillors: Dr A Shuttleworth, P Smith, T Pywell, T Ewart (part)
Apologies: Nil
Parishioners: T Ewart (part)
Others: Nil
Pro team Clerk: T Pywell (part), A Shuttleworth (part)

1	Opening Statement from the Chairman
	<p>Cllr Dr Shuttleworth opened the meeting and noted that the village had lost two individuals who had played important parts in the life of the village. Robert Turner of Manor Farm who was well-known to many in the village and who had been a Parish Councillor and Chair of the Parish Council. John Singleton who had lived at Scotland Lodge and played a significant role in the life of St Peter's Church. The heartfelt condolences of the Parish Council were expressed to the families.</p>
2	Apologies Received
	<p>Alannah Parkin was unavailable to participate.</p>
3	To confirm the minutes from the previous Parish Council meeting
	<p>The minutes from the meetings held on 11th September 2023 were accepted and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.</p>
4	To report, for information only, any matters arising from the minutes
	<p>No matters arising.</p>
5	Suspension/Reinstatement of Standing Orders
	<p>The Chairman suspended Standing Orders and stood down from his role as chairman. Councillors discussed who would take on the role and Cllr Smith was duly selected. The meeting was re-opened and Standing Orders reinstated with Cllr Smith chairing.</p>
6	Motions for Approval

Motion 1 - To confirm the co-option of two parishioners as new Parish Councillors.

The current councillors agreed, unanimously, to co-opt Tracy Ewart and Allanah (Lannie) Parkin as new Parish Councillors. The Chairman and councillors welcomed both new members (LP in absentia) and wished them well in their new roles. Cllr Ewart joined the other councillors at the council table. The new councillors are to provide photos and brief bios for the website and to make the requisite declaration of interests within 28 days.

Action: TE & LP (12/23-01)

Motion 2 - To discuss and agree a way forward regarding the position of Parish Clerk.

Cllrs heard that no interest had yet been shown in the position of Parish Clerk, despite it being advertised on the Parish Council website, the Wiltshire Area of Local Council's (WALC) website and in the Parish magazine. WALC had advised that many local parish councils had been trying to fill similar positions for long periods without success.

The appointment of a locum had been looked at as a possibility, however the costs seemed prohibitive at almost £10,000 pa. This would necessitate increasing the precept by over 100%. It was agreed that this was a last resort.

WALC had advised that a temporary solution would be for a councillor to stand in for the Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). The two roles could be vested in a single individual or split, but both must be unpaid. Following discussion it was agreed that Cllr Shuttleworth would take on the role of pro tem Clerk and Cllr Pywell that of pro tem RFO whilst attempts to find a permanent clerk continue. It was agreed to review these arrangements at subsequent meetings.

Action: All – (12/23-02)

Cllr Pywell will initiate the process of adding counter signatories to the Parish Council bank account.

Action: AP- (12/23-03)

Motion 3 - To discuss and agree the precept for the coming financial year.

Cllrs agreed that, whilst a locum Parish Clerk was not going to be appointed in the short term, the Parish Council might have to adopt such an approach if the agreed voluntary approach proved untenable. It was agreed that the costs of this could be met from within existing funds as a short-term expedient. It was further noted that this would reduce the contingency set aside for future purchases (eg. New equipment for the play park) and that this would need to be replaced, if used to fund a locum.

As a consequence, **Cllrs considered that there would be no need to increase the precept for FY2024-2025.** Cllr Pywell, as the RFO, would make the precept return to Wiltshire Council.

Action: AP (12/23-04)

<p>6</p>	<p>Verbal Reports</p> <p>A303 Stonehenge to Berwick Down Scheme: The Development Consent Order for the A303 Stonehenge to Berwick Down Scheme is to be taken to the High Court for 3 days commencing 12th December for a “Rolled-Up Hearing”. This means that opponents of the scheme must first show that they have reasonable grounds to ask for a judicial review. If they are successful, the judicial review follows immediately. Results of a judicial review would likely be made public in February-March 2024.</p> <p>B3083 Berwick Road Speed Limit Review: The review of the process by which Wiltshire Council evaluates speed limit changes is still being tested as part of an experiment in Netheravon. Once this is completed, the B3083 and other proposed speed limit changes in the Amesbury Area Board area and elsewhere in the county would be re-examined.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Adjournment for Parishioners Questions/Comments:</p> <p>Although no Parishioners were present, Cllrs made a number of interventions on behalf of Parishioners. First, Mr Ian Rennie had very kindly volunteered to conduct monthly checks on the defibrillator. Clerk to provide Mr Rennie with background information to make checks and returns.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: AS - (12/23-05)</p> <p>A parishioner had asked whether the Parish Council might fund the renovation of the Telephone Box, if volunteers could be found to do the work. Cllrs noted that the box had been maintained in this way in the past. The Parishioner/VPS were to be asked to provide a costed list of materials and an assurance that volunteers would undertake the work and the Parish Council would consider funding this at a future meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: AP - (12/23-06)</p> <p>A parishioner had asked whether the Parish Steward might clear the ditch in Frog Alley. The parishioner will be advised that primary role of the Parish Steward, a member of the Highways Department, is to undertake tasking associated with highways and a few discretionary tasks agreed by Wiltshire Council. It seems that the ditch in Frog Alley isn't covered by this remit and is the responsibility of the landowner, as it is not directly associated with any highway; unlike the ditch running down Church Street.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: AP - (12/23-07)</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>The Next Meeting</p>
	<p>The meeting closed at 8:15pm. The next meeting is likely to be in March 2024 unless circumstances dictate otherwise.</p>

A Shuttleworth
Clerk (pro tempore) of the Council

P Smith
Chairman of the Council