

Woodchester Parish Council

Clerk: Simon Peirce

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Minutes of the meeting of Woodchester Parish Council held on May 7th 2009 in the Village Hall, North Woodchester at 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs Wigzell, Bastin, Brown, Hamilton, Lead, Swait

In attendance: Simon Peirce (Clerk to the Council)

AGENDA

1. **To elect a chairman and sign acceptance of office**
The clerk opened the meeting whilst Cllr Wigzell stood down as chairman and sat with the council members. Cllr Bastin proposed Cllr Wigzell as Chairman for the forthcoming year. This was seconded by Cllr Brown and agreed unanimously, whereupon Cllr Wigzell took over as Chairman to the Parish Council and Chair of the meeting. Acceptance of office was signed and witnessed by the clerk as Proper Officer
2. **To receive apologies for absence**
Cllr Syrett was unable to attend due to illness and sent his apologies
3. **To receive declarations of interest in items on the Agenda and to sign declarations of interest**
No declarations of interest in items on the agenda. The clerk took the opportunity to remind Councillors of the need to ensure that their Registrations of Members Personal Interest forms were updated as and when their circumstances changed (or upon re-election), in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
4. **To receive questions from members of the public and those attending in an official capacity**
No members of the public in attendance
5. **To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting March 5th 2009**
The minutes were confirmed and signed off by Cllr Wigzell. Cllr Hamilton gave a brief update on item 14 of those minutes, the Emergency Plan, which had been issued to the authorities in question and posted on the website. He had made progress on assembling the contents of 'The Battle Box' and would complete this shortly and present a receipt to the clerk for any cost involved, believed to be around £30.00. This was agreed
6. **To elect a vice chairman and sign acceptance of office**
Cllr Hamilton was proposed for re-election by Cllr Swait which was seconded Cllr Lead and unanimously agreed. Acceptance of office was signed and witnessed by the clerk as Proper Officer
7. **To review membership of committees and advisory groups**
Cllr Wigzell led the review. Membership of committees and groups was reviewed and councillors without exception stood again as follows:
Planning – Cllr Lead (Chairman), Cllrs Brown, Hamilton, Syrett and Swait
Finance – Cllr Bastin (Chairman), Cllrs Swait and Wigzell
Recruitment – Cllrs Bastin, Brown, Hamilton and Wigzell
Cllrs agreed to maintain their current responsibilities for advisory groups:
Cllr Brown – Events and Environment (including footpaths)
Cllr Bastin – Parish Plan and Website
Cllr Hamilton – Emergency Plan, Parish Plan, responsibility for review of organisational matters outside of the parish council, such as changes in local government, health issues, community safety and policing; he also agreed to help with footpaths
Cllr Lead – Village Design Statement
Cllr Syrett – Environment (including footpaths), Youth, Water Warden and Website (Whilst not present, Cllr Syrett had expressed his readiness to continue via an email to the council prior to the meeting and had nominated Cllr Wigzell to speak on his behalf). This was agreed at the meeting.
Cllr Swait – Traffic, Snow Warden and Village Hall representative
Cllr Wigzell – Events, Parish Plan and Website.

During the review process, several areas that would be focused upon particularly in the coming year were highlighted. The Parish Plan was subject of ongoing review and would develop and overlap as the Village Design Statement progressed. The need was expressed to develop further the village website, to manage it more formally and to generate greater involvement and use by the community. Whilst basic updates of council minutes and events were the responsibility of the clerk, it was felt that the possibility of engaging a paid 'web manager' should be investigated. Cllrs Wigzell, Bastin, Swait and Syrett undertook to meet and report back to the next meeting. The possibilities of doing more for Youth was also mentioned and would be an agenda item at the next council meeting.

8. To receive the Clerk's Report

The written report was presented. Of particular note was the proposed changes to planning laws and the possibility of views of parish councils not being heard – a view shared by many other councils and organisations in correspondence with the clerk. It was suggested that an ongoing database of planning applications and decisions should be kept. Also discussed was the opportunity for funding available for resurfacing of footpaths – the clerk had applied for funding for footpath MW07 between Selsley Road and Church Road. Also possible improvements to the cycle track at North Woodchester and the path between North and South Woodchester were discussed and would be taken up by Cllr Brown who has responsibility for rights of way. There was a question as to whether another council meeting was required to approve the year end accounts before submission to the internal auditor and the clerk undertook to check this.

9. To note latest financial statements

Written Financial report received and reviewed. An under spend of over £2,000 was noted, and this appeared mostly due to not having to pay a salary for a clerk during the interim period between Barbara Lewis and Simon Peirce, a significant saving on election expenses and under spend on the Parish Plan. The £100.00 chairman allowance had not been taken up.

10. To approve expenditure and approve cheques

Clerk listed cheques that had been signed / to be signed since last PC meeting March 2009 and these were approved. Cheque no 434 for £15.00 for carol service expenses remained uncashed – clerk to follow up with Richard Latham.

11. To note planning applications and decisions from SDC

Cllr Lead went through the planning applications and decisions received. It was noted that S.09/0320/FUL D Brown and Son was not within our parish so was not considered. It had been pointed out that some neighbours of Tower House were unaware of the planning application there for a wind turbine – the need for consistency from SDC in writing to neighbours and posting of planning signs was remarked upon. Cllr Lead noted that work was due to begin shortly on the Cottage in South Woodchester and the contractors sought to remove and replace on a daily basis the kissing gate and metal gate at the end of the lane adjoining Tower House drive. They undertook then to reset the gates on completion of the work, which are in need of realigning anyway. The ownership of the gates was unclear so it was suggested that the contractors should write to the near neighbours who are key holders for the gates to outline their proposal.

12. To note correspondence received

Correspondence was reviewed. It was noted that we were in receipt of promotional material regarding notice boards and that two of our notice boards (Rooksmoor and Convent Lane) were in need of an upgrade. It was suggested that the clerk look into availability and costs of commercially available notice boards and the possibility of getting some made locally and to present findings at the next council meeting. It was suggested that some sort of consistent theme / brand be adopted throughout the parish (notice boards, website, publications and correspondence)

13. To review list of assets for insurance

The asset register was reviewed. The council discussed whether the level of insurance was appropriate and agreed that it was. It was pointed out that the council only owned two wooden seats, as the ownership of the one on Atcombe Road was claimed by a resident and should therefore be removed from the register.

14. To authorise the clerk to renew the council's insurance policy

The clerk presented the renewal quotes from current insurer Allianz and competitive comparison from previous insurer Community First Zurich. The council authorised the clerk to renew the policy by 1st June with the best value provider

15. To discuss spring clean and agree a date

Whilst the SDC spring clean was due to run April to June, it was felt that with undergrowth growing at a prodigious rate it would make sense to delay a litter pick until the autumn and to tie it in with some kind of small event to encourage greater involvement. Cllr Swait confirmed that previous Clerk Duncan Hayes had passed over to him the fluorescent vests and litter pickers for safe keeping.

16. To receive an update on Village Design Statement meeting

Cllr Lead gave an overview of the April meeting where in excess of 50 people had attended. He presented the work achieved thus far by volunteers covering areas of communication, natural environment, schools, agriculture and commerce, residential, transport and sustainability and undertook to present a progress report at the annual parish meeting on 9th May.

17. To receive an update on village fete

Cllr Brown presented an update and explained that the Fete committee had met twice since last council meeting. They had elected Dawn Lead as Secretary, Malcolm Swait as Treasurer and Rob Thomas with responsibility for Sponsorship. The Street Party committee had agreed that the money they have on account would be transferred to a new 'Woodchester Events Fund' (Independent of the parish council). Cllr Brown explained that there had been promises of sufficient stalls to make the event viable but had only received two cheques. It was said that there would be a fun 'low key' flower, produce and handicraft exhibition / competition. There was still work to do on publicity and insurance.

18. To review the council's progress in the past year

Cllrs Wigzell thanked everyone for their continued hard work, commitment and support in what had been to some extent a challenging year with coming and going of clerks. Even so, good progress had been maintained with a successful carol singing event and the profile of the parish council being raised. Particular targets for the coming year were the website and parish plan / village design statement. Cllr Bastin led the thanks for Cllr Wigzell for her excellent chairmanship.

19. To receive comments from members of the public on items discussed at this meeting

No members of public present

Meeting closed at 8.49pm

Chair

Date