

Clerk's report for period until March 4th, 2010

The Spring Litter Pick will be held on Sunday 11th April 2010.

Following the recent snow the clerk has obtained the following guidance from the Parish Council's insurers regarding cover for councillors/the Parish Council undertaking snow clearance or gritting of roads.

"This policy will only cover the legal liabilities for the parish council if they decide to salt/grit any areas they are responsible for. We must stress that if you introduce this salting/gritting, you must maintain this procedure and have a system of checks in place to ensure that it is done so that you minimise the risk of being negligent for omitting to salt/grit. These checks must be logged and recorded.

Cover is in respect of the legal liabilities only and subject to the terms conditions and exclusions of the policy and the limit of indemnity of £5,000,000. It would be necessary for a claimant to prove negligence against the Council for a claim to succeed".

The clerk interprets 'areas the Parish Council are responsible for' as being the Council's assets (war memorial, bus shelters, seats, notice boards, bins etc) :

This needs to be balanced against the information and advice provided to snow wardens by Gloucestershire County Council:

The snow warden's principal duties are to:

- *Provide information on local conditions to GH's Area Offices during periods of adverse weather*
- *Consult with GH's Area Offices on local needs and jointly identify local actions that can be taken to supplement GH operations*
- *Organise local actions using local resources where these are available*

Local self-help plays an important role in helping to deal with snowfall particularly when Gloucestershire Highways resources are prioritised in maintaining the strategic road network.

The aim is to foster and encourage the voluntary spirit that is so apparent in emergencies to organise and direct local resources to best effect. The public is to be encouraged to contact the local Snow Warden (rather than the Area Office) with any request for assistance so that the warden can assess the overall situation in the locality and determine the relative priorities for operations in association with Gloucestershire Highway's Area Office

The recent freezing weather combined with last year's heavy winter and the floods of 2007 have caused serious damage to Gloucestershire's 3,300 miles of road. Repairing the damage is a mammoth task, one that will cost up to £5million. The Gloucestershire Road Rescue campaign officially started on 1st February. This is a three step approach to road repairs:

1. **Worst First:** Fixing the worst potholes with the highest risk to safety first
2. **Patch:** Using bigger teams with more machinery and material for larger areas of damage
3. **Resurface:** Reviewing the resurfacing programme so damaged roads are resurfaced first

From January 25th to February 26th 12,500 potholes were filled.

During the last heavy snow an elderly man fell and broke his hip on the cycle track. Woodchester residents phoned for an ambulance but the paramedics encountered problems carrying the gentleman by stretcher back to the ambulance due to the snow and ice and the ambulance could not get onto the cycle track. This has raised an important issue about where keys for the gates are held and how they can be obtained should such a situation occur again. The clerk has raised this with Adrian Boyce at Highways. Adrian has never known the keys to be needed prior to this but confirmed that the 08000 514 514 number should be used. There is an out of hours service when the office is closed. If absolutely necessary the fire brigade would go down and cut the locks off if there was no other means available. It may be possible to get a set of keys cut. The clerk agreed to discuss with the Parish Council.

The clerk has contacted the warden of the Undercroft regarding the hourly rate for hire. This will be discussed at the next Church Council meeting due to be held on Monday 8th March 2010. The clerk will update councillors of the outcome accordingly.

Following advice from a local resident regarding a crossing at Frogmarsh, the clerk suggests contacting Highways again regarding the underpass concept for an indicative costing. If the Parish Council were to consider putting some money towards it or look into securing a grant from somewhere Highways may view it is a more viable option.

The new website has been updated and is now live. To date £174.26 has been spent. This covers 1 ½ hours work by Epicado and the new domain registration and clerk's email. The website address is now www.woodchesterparish.org.uk and the clerk's email address is clerk@woodchesterparish.org.uk.

Both the clerk and the Chairman have been reviewing the necessary documents for the model publication scheme and hope to be in a position to present these for approval at the next Parish Council meeting.

Consultations

Cllr Hamilton responded to Nailsworth Town Council requesting an appropriate consultation policy that entrenches good practice on consulting with towns and parishes on any significant decision or change affecting the area they cover.

Cllrs Brown & Swait responded to a consultation on Post Office Banking.

Events

Cllr Lead attended the Town & Parish Forum on February 4th 2010. The forum included a sheltered housing review, joint use centres, waste and recycling, adaptation to climate change – a brief summary of the council's service and potential effect on parishes, street cleansing, water course wardens, wood chipping service, a garden assistance scheme, car parks and proposed changes in planning delegations – the impact on Parish and Town Councils. It has been agreed to invite the Chief Executive to attend a future Parish Council meeting.

Cllr Hamilton attended a presentation 4th February about the dangers posed by waste incineration & the safer alternatives held at King's Stanley Village Hall.

Cllr Swait attended a Talking Transport workshop on 13th January 2010, part of a consultation process seeking views on what future transport goals are for Gloucestershire, how these goals should be met and what transport issues need to be improved as the county starts to develop its next Local Transport plan (LTP3). LTP3 outlines everything that needs to be delivered in Gloucestershire between April 2011 and 2026 to improve Gloucestershire's roads, trains, buses, parking, cycling and walking. It also needs to help Gloucestershire meet national priorities linked to:

- The economy, growth and traffic congestion
- Tackling climate change
- Health and road safety
- Quality of life
- Equality of opportunity and accessibility

The Clerk attended a training course on 9th February 2010 entitled "Clerks – The Knowledge". A number of issues were raised which require the council's attention, as follows:

Twice a year a Councillor should check the council's finances and produce an audit trail. An Employment or staff committee needs to be set up to manage the management of the clerk

The National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services was updated in September 2009. As a result of revised pay scales the clerk is currently being paid less than the agreed minimum (she is on £8.26, the agreed minimum is £8.34)

The clerk will be attending the SLCC branch AGM on Thursday 11th March 2010.

The training course "Preparation for Audit" that the clerk was due to attend on Thursday 25th February was cancelled due to insufficient numbers.

For health reasons Stephen Glanfield has cancelled all engagements for the immediate future.

The Parish Council were contacted by an individual seeking to launch a new initiative to help the socially and economically excluded in the Parish called Bus-Com. The initiative is a social enterprise designed around a mobile shop with the added benefit of on board lap top pc's and internet access. The Parish Council were asked to answer some questions and in response the clerk wrote back advising that it was difficult for us to respond as we are not aware of the specific details of deprived, socially isolated families in our parish. These are probably known only to health and social services and perhaps some voluntary agencies. As far as we are aware most elderly or disabled people in Woodchester falling into these categories either rely on lifts from relatives/friends use 'dial a ride' or already have the free (national) bus passes issued by SDC. In conclusion we do not feel there is much need for the service suggested locally.

The possibility of a local parish initiative was raised by Cllr Brown to help those from outlying areas get to the North Woodchester Post Office.

Resident's Correspondence

A resident of Headlands contacted the clerk about footpath MWO/7 which runs in front of the Headlands down some steps and past a house called Homeground following an incident where the resident's husband fell over carrying a 2 year old child.

Whilst the path in front of the Headlands was fine the steps were not at all safe (wobbly and tilting forward). The path past Homeground was also pretty slippery.

The path is used as a main route into the village because there is no footpath on Selsley Road. It is used as a route to school, church and the village shop.

Sarah Ellis at GCC has organised for the steps to be replaced and also for a new handrail.

Further to requests from 2 Bear Hill residents where freezing surface water due to inadequate and blocked drainage had caused 2 accidents, Adrian Boyes visited the site and organised the clearing of gulleys and unblocking of a drain. The clerk contacted both residents on Bear Hill to find out if work carried out by Highways has improved the problem with surface water. One resident confirmed it had completely resolved the problem but the other advised when there is very bad weather there is some surface water still. The clerk asked them to let her know if the situation deteriorates.

The clerk has had several enquiries from residents about whether Open Gardens will be held this year. She has agreed to raise this with the Parish Council.

Cheques signed/to be signed since last meeting January 7th, 2010

Cheque Number	Description	Amount
478	To Epicado Ltd for domain registration for www.woodchesterparish.org.uk and clerk's email clerk@woodchesterparish.org.uk .	£17.63
479	Clerk's wages	£297.36
480	School hall hire for Parish Council meeting on Thursday 6 th May 2010	£20
481	Deposit for school hall hire for Parish Council meeting on Thursday 6 th May 2010	£50
482	Village hall hire for 2010	£99
483	To Epicado Ltd for work to website	£158.63
484	Expenses for Cllr Swait	£4.50
485	Annual membership of GAPTC	£226.50

Councillors are asked to note and approve the attached financial summary.

Planning Update

The public consultation on the “Alternative Strategies” stage of Stroud District Council’s Core Strategy commenced on Monday 8th February and will run until Monday 22nd March 2010

The consultation looks at seven potential strategies for accommodating around 2000 new homes and 4000 new jobs over this period – ranging from very concentrated approaches (large developments of 1000 or 2000 homes) to dispersal of small clusters of 10 to 50 new homes, scattered around the district’s towns and villages with a range of options in between.

Cllr Lead attended the Parish Cluster seminar in Stroud on 23rd February which summarised the background Papers, the proposed Alternative Strategies and the proposed policies and gave an opportunity for councillors to clarify any matters and to informally comment on the proposed Alternative Strategies. A number of councillors were also due to attend the exhibition in Nailsworth on 2nd March.

At the Planning meeting held on 25th February it was agreed that Councillors would respond individually and encourage parishioners to partake.

Planning Applications Received

S.10/0020/HHOLD St Gerard, Blacklow Close – Conversion of an existing garage to provide a utility and w/c

S.10/0220/DISCON - EMS House, Q Park, Bath Road - Discharge of conditions
2,3,5,6,7,8,9,11

S.10/0235/OUT Applegarth, Church Road - Outline application for the erection of 2 detached dwellings including garages and new access

Proposed works to trees in a conservation area

S.09/2274/TCA Rosare, Lagger Lane – Fell Cypress and removal works to Western Red Cedar – Approved

S.10.0202/TPO Chester Hill Stables, Convent Lane – Removal of one Ash tree

Appeals lodged with the Planning Inspectorate

Parkhill Cottage, Cow Lane, Inchbrook 2121541 & 2121543

Little Britain Farm Woodchester APP/C1625/A/10/2120265/NWF

The Planning Committee also reviewed a proposal to divert the public footpath MWO/10 at The Lagger.

Correspondence Received

Fitzpatrick Woolmer – Public Space Signage brochure

Wickstead Playscapes – advertising flier

Clerks & Councils Direct – January 2010 Issue 67

NSPCC – Awareness raising material

Marshalls – advertising flier

GAPTC – Details of training courses

- Working with your Council
- Staff Appraisals/Grievance Procedures
- Minute Writing
- Chairmanship – The Development of Chairmanship Skills
- CiLCA Mentoring Days
- Being a Good Councillor – The Nuts & Bolts

SLCC – Details of training courses

- The Essential Guide to Project Management
- Granting, Exercising and Transferring Rights of Burial

GAPTC Update – January 2010

Gloucestershire Rural Renaissance Review 2009/10

The Clerk – January 2010

Clerks & Councils Direct 2010 – Councils Suppliers Guide & Yearbook

Winter Edition of Gloucestershire Playfields Association

e-gloucestershire – February 2010

Digital Switchover News – January/February 2010

Cotswold Conservation Board – February/March update

SDC e News 100 – March 2010