

# Woodchester Parish Council

Clerk: Ann Bijkerk

6 Beech Grove, North Woodchester, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 5NL

Telephone: 01453 873456

E-mail: clerk@woodchesterparish.org.uk

Website: www.woodchesterparish.org.uk

---

## **Minutes of the Meeting of Woodchester Parish Council held on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2017 in the Village Hall, North Woodchester at 7pm**

Present: Cllrs. Hamilton, Lead, Warnes, McNealey, Baynham-Honri and Baldauf

In attendance: Rural Sustainable Drainage Project Officer at Stroud District Council (SDC) Chris Uttley, National Trust Ranger Max Dancer, County Councillor Dorcas Binns, District Councillor Phillip McAsey, Nailsworth Town Councillor Steve Robinson, Councillor Emma Simms, the clerk and two members of the public

**2017/1 To receive apologies for absence.**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2017/2 To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.**

There were no declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

**2017/3 To receive questions from members of the public and those attending in an official capacity.**

Cllr. Binns was provided with an update on the mountain bike trails. Since receiving a favourable quote from Trailcraft, clarification had been sought on a few points. It is hoped that councillors will receive a response shortly. Cllr. Binns raised concern that if a quote was not agreed by the end of the financial year, the Parish Council might risk losing the Active Together grant from Gloucestershire County Council which forms the majority of the funding for the project.

Cllr. Binns made councillors aware of funding available through the Children and Young Person's Grant of up to £1,000. Applications need to be made by the end of the financial year by an established group.

**2017/4 To confirm the minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2016.**

These were confirmed and signed as a true record by Cllr. Hamilton.

**2017/5 To receive a report from Chris Uttley, Rural Sustainable Drainage Project Officer at Stroud District Council on their proposed work at Boundary Court.**

Chris Uttley introduced himself and Max Dancer, National Trust Ranger for Woodchester Park and Boundary Court.

Information was given about a project funded by the Regional Flood Defence Committee for the Rivers Severn and Wye aiming to reduce flooding of the Stroud Valleys and District by the use of natural flood management.

Flood events in the Stroud District rather than affecting large communities, tend to affect isolated houses or small groups of dwellings. Therefore it is difficult to find a solution where cost balances the benefit.

The project uses a large number of low cost, small interventions on river catchments using local labour and expertise.

These interventions such as coppicing trees to create 'leaky dams' slow the flow of the stream at times of peak rainfall.

Initials.....

Rapid run-off from the B4066 causes rain to reach the spring head at Boundary Court, adding to the surge. At the crook of the valley, a series of small bumps have been built up to create pools, slowing the flow.

Soil erosion adds to the problem of flooding and adversely affects wildlife.

In Boundary Court, sections of stream have been fenced to prevent cattle from drinking for most of the year to help prevent soil erosion. Alternative sources of drinking water have been provided, in some cases troughs fed through springs. Cattle are given access to the stream should water supplies run low.

At Woodchester Park, pools of sand have been created along the steep section of track from the car park down through the park to deal with surges of water following heavy rainfall. This allows water to drain from the track, reducing maintenance costs, but also slows the rate of run-off.

There are currently more than 250 interventions in place which as well as reducing the risk of flooding downstream, also provide greater habitat diversity in the tributaries.

More information and videos are available on Stroud District Council's website and those present were asked to contact Chris should they know of any local landowners who might consider working with them as part of the scheme.

Chris kindly agreed to provide a short summary of their work in Woodchester Park and Boundary Court for publication in the Woodchester Word.

Chris and Max were thanked very much for their time and very interesting presentation on a project which mitigates damage from floodwater and provides value for money.

**2017/6 To receive the clerk's report.**

This was received.

The bus shelter at Frogmarsh has been re-built following an arson attack. The bus stop sign has not yet been replaced. The clerk will follow this up. A question was raised as to whether the glass in the shelter was toughened. Cllr. Lead agreed to clarify this with Liam McLoughlin. Councillors agreed that Ian Smith be asked to replace the seat in the bus shelter on the western side of the A46 at Frogmarsh.

Road safety and possible work for 'lengthsmen' were discussed as separate agenda items.

**2017/7 To note the latest financial statements.**

These were noted.

A deposit of £270 had been paid to T.R.King for two kissing gates. This will be re-claimed from SDC as the project will be funded through a s.106 payment.

**2017/8 To approve expenditure and approve cheques as per annex.**

These were approved.

**2017/9 To note planning applications, decisions and appeals from SDC as per annex.**

These were noted.

Although planning permission for development at Rooksmoor Mills was granted permission earlier in the year, a high court ruling challenged the action of SDC. They were found not to have paid enough attention to conservation and listed buildings and the application was refused permission. The applicant may decide to re-apply with the same or an alternative scheme.

The application for the Convent is in the hands of the Enforcement Team at SDC. An enforcement notice served earlier in the year will expire in February.

**2017/10 To approve a quote for village maintenance 2017/18.**

A quote of £1920 was put forward by Ian Smith and councillors resolved to accept this quote.

**2017/11 To note and agree the recommendations of the Finance Committee for the budget and precept requirement for 2017/18.**

Initials.....

The Finance Committee met prior to the full council meeting. A Parish Council budget of £12,250 for 2017/18 was agreed by the Finance Committee. Their recommendation was for a precept of £10,750, the same level as 2016/17. Any shortfall would be met from Parish Council reserves. Councillors resolved to accept the recommendations of the Finance Committee.

**2017/12 To discuss and agree changes to the signatories for the Parish Council Lloyds Bank accounts.**

Councillors resolved to remove Cllrs. Swait and Bastin as signatories and add Cllr. Warnes.

**2017/13 To discuss and agree possible adoption of phone boxes in both North and South Woodchester.**

Cllr. McNealey advertised information about the telephone boxes in the Woodchester Word, Facebook and noticeboards, explaining to residents that both were available for adoption, asking for opinion and suggestions.

The response was mainly very positive in favour of adopting both telephone boxes from BT. There were several suggestions for their potential use. Councillors resolved to make an application to adopt the box in South Woodchester and complete the application for North Woodchester. Councillors agreed they could be kept simply as characteristic features of the village or alternative uses could be decided on at a later date.

**2017/14 To discuss potential for land at Frogmarsh following a site visit and agree any further course of action.**

Councillors carried out a site visit and agreed the land was unsuitable for housing. Use for access to the rear of houses on the High Street was not considered to be viable partly due to land levels and partly the visual aspect from across the valley at Amberley. Councillors agreed that although the land slopes it would be worth pursuing to purchase as community land. Potential uses might include a nature playground, orchard and bee hives. The possibility of widening Frogmarsh Lane by half a metre for parked cars was considered.

An informal approach will be made to try to determine the value of the land.

A letter with map and photos will be sent to the owners expressing interest in the land, outlining proposals, together with a valuation of the land to ask if selling the land to the Parish Council or a group of villagers (similar to the SWALT set-up) might be considered.

**2017/15 To discuss and agree work to highways in the village which could be considered for work by lengthsman.**

Cllr. Binns agreed with Andrew Middlecote that lengthsman carry out a day's work in Woodchester. Suggestions had been made by councillors via email which were read out. Some jobs were not within the remit of lengthsman and therefore Cllr. Binns suggested that she be sent a list of work councillors would like to see carried out; advice would then be given on who to approach for the jobs not possible by lengthsman.

**2017/16 To discuss a response from Andrew Middlecote, Local Highways Manager to questions of improved road safety in Woodchester and to agree any further course of action.**

The response from Andrew Middlecote was outlined in the clerk's report. Councillors agreed the response was disappointing in terms of what improvements might be achievable in the village. Cllr. Binns outlined the efforts being made to reduce speed limits on the A46, but as the stretch of road through Woodchester is straight, lowering the speed limit will be very difficult to achieve. Councillors resolved to take no further action at the current time.

**2017/17 To discuss and agree a response to a consultation from Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) on their budget for 2017/18.**

Initials.....

Councillors' response to the questionnaire itself was a negative one. They agreed the questions were closed, leading to a predictable response and should have been worded in a much more positive way, giving the respondent opportunity for more analysis and comment.

However the majority of councillors agreed to send a response and were in support of the budget proposals as they wish to see GCC maximise services provided to the most vulnerable at local level and to source best value for money for such provision.

The clerk will send a copy of the agreed response to GCC.

**2017/18 To receive an update on the process of co-option for a Parish Councillor and to agree a course of action.**

The Parish Council were approached by a couple who wished to share the role of Parish Councillor. All advice was not to accept two candidates for co-option, as this would not be possible if it were an election situation. Councillors resolved not to accept a shared role and the candidates expressed no further interest.

An approach will be made to one resident to gauge interest and Cllr. McNealey agreed to write a piece on the role of a councillor for the Woodchester Word.

**2017/19 To agree a date for the Litter Pick.**

A date of the 19<sup>th</sup> March was agreed.

**2017/20 To receive an update from the Rights of Way Committee.**

There were no updates to report.

**2017/21 To receive an update from the Events Committee.**

Carols in the village saw a very good turnout and was a success.

**2017/22 To receive comments from members of the public on items discussed at this meeting.**

There were no comments from members of the public.

The meeting closed at 8.52pm.

Chair..... Date.....

Initials.....