

Woodchester Parish Council

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Minutes of the Meeting of Woodchester Parish Council held on 8th September, 2016 in the Village Hall, North Woodchester at 7pm

Present: Cllrs. Hamilton, Lead, Warnes, McNealey, Swait and Baldauf

In attendance: Cllr. Emma Simms, the clerk and four members of the public

Cllr. Simms was welcomed to the meeting. She will be standing as candidate for the Conservative Party in the County Council elections in May, 2017. Cllr. Simms had until recently held the position of District Councillor for Nailsworth and now sits on Horsley Parish Council and is the Chair of Horsley Village Shop.

2016/99 To receive apologies for absence.

An apology was received from Cllr. Baynham-Honri.

2016/100 To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

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

2016/101 To receive questions from members of the public and those attending in an official capacity.

A request was made for the Parish Council to take further action regarding a lack of toilet facilities in the layby on the A46. A member of the public raised concern that the edge of the cycle path is being used as a toilet which is unpleasant for others walking the track. Discussions took place last year with the snack van owner regarding the possible provision of a portable toilet, reaching no conclusion. The clerk will contact Environmental Health and explain the background to the problem.

A member of the public asked whether councillors were aware of Ecotricity's plans for the area recently converted to hardstanding at Q Park. Councillors agreed they would welcome an update from Ecotricity. The clerk will draft a letter.

Members of the public present at the meeting and regular users of the buses were concerned the bus shelter at Frogmarsh has not yet been replaced, particularly as we move into the autumn. Cllr. Lead explained the delay in obtaining a quote, but had prepared figures for a design which instead of angling the new shelter towards oncoming buses, was open on the northern side allowing users to see a bus from the shelter. It was also noted that as the bus stop is on a blind corner, residents waiting at Frogmarsh are not always spotted by the bus driver who then fails to stop. The bus shelter was further discussed under agenda item 2016/113.

2016/102 To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 7th July, 2016.

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

2016/103 To receive the clerk's report.

This was received.

Gloucestershire Highways were contacted a second time regarding overgrown vegetation opposite the Old Fleece and the danger this creates as traffic signs are obscured.

Ian Smith had removed the structure around the lime tree on the Church Green which was causing potential damage.

2016/104 To note the latest financial statements and approve cheques as per annex.

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These were noted.

2016/105 To note the financial check carried out by Cllr. Swait on the 7th July, 2016.

This was noted. The check on the 7th July found records to be in order.

2016/106 To note the approval of the external audit.

This had not yet been received and therefore could not be discussed. The item will be moved to the agenda for the meeting on 3rd November.

2016/107 To note planning applications, decisions and appeals from Stroud District Council.

These were noted. Regarding the current use of part of the Rooksmoor Mills development site as a scrap yard, the clerk will contact Stroud District Council Enforcement Team to enquire whether this is permissible.

2016/108 To agree the dates for next year's Parish Council meetings.

It was agreed that meetings in 2017 would be held on 5th January, 2nd March, 11th May at 6pm, 1st June, 6th July, 7th September and 2nd November. The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on the 11th May at 7pm.

2016/109 To note the likely resignation of Cllr. Swait, to discuss co-option of a new councillor and agree a course of action and to discuss and agree changes to membership of committees.

After eleven years on the Parish Council, Cllr. Malcolm Swait will resign as Parish Councillor. He and his wife have lived in the village for the past 36 years, but are now moving to Selsley. He was thanked by Cllr. Hamilton on behalf of the Parish Council for all the work he's done during that time.

The clerk will display notices advertising a casual vacancy. If a request for an election is made by 10 electors, an election will be held. Otherwise the post will be filled by co-option.

Notices will be placed on boards, on the website and Facebook advertising the vacancy.

2016/110 To discuss and agree a response to a request from Citizens Advice for a voluntary contribution.

Councillors agreed that while the Citizens Advice provide a valuable service for many including the very vulnerable, there are many worthy charities. The Parish Council have very little slack in the budget, therefore councillors resolved not to offer support at this time. The clerk will draft a response.

2016/111 To discuss and agree a response to a request from Stroud District Council for a contribution towards the cost of the Neighbourhood Warden Service.

Councillors discussed the request. Despite the valuable work of Neighbourhood Wardens, the Parish Council have very little slack in their budget and councillors agreed that any spending should not be used to prop up gaps in District Council funding. Councillors agreed that SDC should raise the shortfall through an increase in Council Tax if necessary and therefore resolved to offer no contribution towards the cost of Neighbourhood Wardens. The clerk will draft a response.

2016/112 To discuss a draft letter from the GAPTC to Leadership Gloucestershire concerning greater engagement with the 'devolution' proposals. To agree a response.

Cllr. Hamilton read through the key points of the letter to Leadership Gloucestershire. Councillors were unable to respond in detail as the information received by Parish Councils has been very limited and vague. Much more detail about how the combined authority will work are required. With Brexit now taking place and a change in Government, leadership priorities and focus may also have changed. The clerk will draft a response to the GAPTC.

2016/113 To discuss a quote for a new bus shelter at Frogmarsh and agree further action.

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Cllr. Lead proposed a design built from concrete blocks along the back and southern side with a wooden post supporting the northern corner. With a tin roof this would create a structure less prone to vandalism. The estimated cost was £2,500 + VAT. This would be covered by insurance. The clerk will find out how many quotes are required for insurance purposes.

It was also resolved for the clerk to contact Stagecoach concerning the speed with which some bus drivers approach the Frogmarsh bus stop, not always spotting customers in time to stop safely.

- 2016/114 To receive an update on the gate post between Tower House Drive and Bospin. To agree any further action.**
Councillors resolved to take no action. A resident has recently wedged the post securely in place which has currently rectified the problem.
- 2016/115 To discuss and agree the content for submission for the next edition of the Woodchester Word.**
The clerk prepared a report previously distributed to councillors. Councillors made a couple of amendments before agreeing submission to the editor.
- 2016/116 To agree an amendment to Section 15 of the Standing Orders relating to minor planning applications proposed by the Planning Committee at their meeting on 7th July, 2016.**
This was agreed and an amended copy of the Standing Orders was signed by Cllr. Hamilton.
- 2016/117 To receive an update on adoption of the telephone box in Selsley Road.**
The consultation process between BT and Stroud District Council is underway. The clerk will prepare a display for the Produce Show to inform residents and ask for volunteers to help in the setting-up and running of the book exchange.
- 2016/118 To receive an update on footpaths and rights of way.**
The situation with the electric fence on footpath MWO10 has been resolved. However the bridge in the valley has rotted. The landowner has used red and white tape to warn the public.
This path remains slippery in wet conditions on the slope leading to Laggar Lane. The landowner was approached by the Cotswold Wardens last year regarding permission to install wooden steps, but was not in favour.
- 2016/119 To receive an update from the Events Committee.**
The Produce and Dog Show are due to take place on the 10th September. An evening of carols will take place in the week before Christmas.
- 2016/120 To receive feedback from the latest meeting of residents looking into the possibility of finding suitable land in the village for a play area.**
Results from the questionnaire distributed through the Woodchester Word and online were very positive. These have been collated and hope to prove useful in discussion with landowners and potential grant providers. The group continue to investigate any potential opportunity for land in the village and are due to meet again later in September.
- 2016/121 To receive comments from members of the public on items discussed at this meeting.**
A comment was made that the Enforcement Notice for the Convent has been issued and six months have been given to comply with planning conditions. Councillors agreed this is a long time frame given the time the owners have already been given to rectify the issue of a driveway, but councillors pointed out that the Parish Council have no means to speed up that process.

The meeting closed at 8.17pm.

Initials.....

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

Initials.....