

# Woodchester Parish Council

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## **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on May 23rd, 2013 in the Village Hall, North Woodchester at 7pm**

### **Present**

Cllr. Hamilton (Chair)

Cllrs. Lead, Baldauf, Bastin, Swait and Warnes

Ann Bijkerk (clerk)

13 representatives of local organisations and the public.

### **Welcome**

Cllr. Hamilton welcomed everyone and asked that questions be raised by the public throughout the meeting.

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from:

Cllr. Dunbar

Jackie Hayes (Woodchester Brownies and Guides)

Kath Gay (Village Hall Committee)

Margaret Smith (Head of St. Dominic's School)

Penny Brown

Dorcas Binns (County Councillor)

### **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

The Council approved the minutes of last year's meeting as a true record. These were proposed by Cllr. Bastin and seconded by Cllr. Swait.

### **To receive questions from the public and those attending in an official capacity**

There were no questions from members of the public at this stage in the meeting.

### **Report on Parish Council Business over Past Year**

Cllr. Hamilton began by emphasising the many changes in the law this year, which has made it difficult for the Parish Council to keep up with them all, despite advice being available from the GAPTC and other bodies.

Changes have been made to the way the precept is calculated, with a system that has been made more complicated. Eric Pickles initially looked as though he was listening to

consultation feedback, but unfortunately changed his mind. There was a second proposal which meant if the increase in precept exceeded 2% a referendum would automatically be triggered. This bill has not yet been passed in parliament and it seems unlikely it will now go through.

An estimate was given by one councillor that 75% of the money spent by Woodchester PC meets government legislation and the other 25% is used for village good.

In terms of planning, there have been several applications in the recent past which have led to concerns from the Parish Council and neighbours. Mr. Skill (Head of Planning at SDC) was invited to a meeting to address these concerns and talked about the planning process being a 'game'. Councillors have come to the conclusion that it is very important we actively take part in decisions in order to make SDC sit up and take notice.

SDC have published a draft of a new Local Plan which has been open for consultation. The boundaries for North and South Woodchester have been redrawn. Woodchester has also been divided in terms of the 'settlement hierarchy' into tiers 3 and 4 relative to the level of services and employment.

Cllr. Wigzell clarified that the full council will then consider this draft in July, which will then be followed by a further period of consultation. A government inspector will then pass the document.

Cllr. Hamilton thanked Cllrs. Lead and Bastin for their work on the Village Design Statement and revised Parish Plan in the past couple of years. Neighbourhood Planning has now been introduced and we have consulted with neighbouring parish councils who are generally undecided about whether to embark on the process. Woodchester have decided to do nothing further at present.

Developers of the Rooksmoor Mills site have not yet submitted any final plans to SDC. One resident asked whether development was planned on the opposite side of the stream and Cllr. Lead confirmed that in the plans which had been on public display, development was planned on the other side of the pond, but not the stream.

The Convent has a new owner who has not yet put in any plans to SDC.

In terms of highways, more radical improvement is needed, particularly on Cow Lane. The PC carried out speed checks on the A46 in the past year and approached Gloucestershire Highways to reduce the speed limit to 30mph. We were told that not all criteria in terms of accidents, speeds, numbers of pedestrians etc. could be met.

The clerk had attended a meeting to discuss 'Safezone' which is the use of small and relatively inexpensive speed cameras. The proposal from Rodborough PC is that funding for this initiative would be through Speed Awareness courses.

One member of the public remarked that the white gates on verges similar to those in place at Standish are very effective. Several members of the public agreed, but it would be difficult to find a place to locate them on verges on the A46.

One resident asked if anything could be done to slow cars down on Selsley Road as there is no pavement in places and a number of children walking to and from school. A sign warning of children in the road, similar to that in South Woodchester High Street was suggested, but it was questioned whether people pay attention to signs of that kind. It was also suggested that white gates would maybe have an impact on Selsley Road.

The Parish Council tried to get the speed limit on Selsley Road reduced to 20mph a couple of years ago, but legislation would not allow it. Cllr. Hamilton asked if residents thought villagers would be willing for PC funds to be used towards '20 is plenty' signs. Several residents thought they would.

One resident asked why there is only a single white line on Selsley Road at the junction with Church Lane and the road is not wide enough at the point for double white lines.

### **Planning – Cllr. Lead**

Following our meeting with Phil Skill it is clear we need to force our hand more vociferously and don't assume that they will take notice. We need to ring them and talk through our concerns. If necessary we need to go through Cllr. Wigzell to ask that an application is decided by a sub-committee rather than by one officer.

New legislation means that householders can build an extension up to 8m from their house, but must have agreement from neighbours that they are happy with the proposals.

Cllr. Wigzell mentioned that she has many more emails from Amberley residents that from Woodchester and that a variety of factors could be responsible for this.

One resident asked what the views of the Parish Council were regarding massive development at the Convent. It was made clear that any access would be made through a new road directly onto the A46 and not along Convent Lane. One councillor mentioned that the owner is aware of the constraints.

### **Organisations making Verbal Presentation**

#### **Priory Church – Jenny Bailey**

A fund-raising weekend will take place between 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> June to raise funds for repairs to the Wayside Cross on the A46. The programme is now on the church website and the clerk will check whether there is a link from the Parish website. Tickets are available from Knickerbox in Nailsworth and posters are being produced. Jenny asked that residents support the event.

The church are looking for an outlet to sell the Priory Church magazine and it was suggested that Terry be approached in the Post Office.

#### **SBKA – Peter Lead**

It has been a bad year for bees and lots of colonies have been lost. There is lots of blossom this year so hopefully survival rates will be much higher.

SBKA now run a Buzz Cub for children and give talks on beekeeping. They also have a demonstration hive which can be taken to events.

#### **Football Club**

The Football Club is planning a summer school and the Events Committee will support a trophy. They have also challenged the village to a match in September and the Events Committee would like to know of anyone willing to form part of a team.

#### **Events Committee – Cllr. Wigzell, Peter Lead and Malcolm Swait**

Cllr. Wigzell suggested that there should be a report from the Events Committee in the Village Report each year as they are now a stand-alone committee. They are organising the Flower and Produce Show for the 14<sup>th</sup> September where there will be an art exhibition in the church. Previous exhibitions have been given by the Historical Society and Photography Club. Cllr. Wigzell asked for suggestions for an exhibition for next year.

The Big Lunch was held last year. Unfortunately no-one has come forward and offered to organise it this year, but funds are available if residents have ideas of events they would like to organise.

Carol singing will take place in December. Jenny Bailey asked if the Events Committee would be happy for the Priory Church choir to be involved and Cllr. Wigzell agreed that they would be very welcome.

**SWALT – Malcolm Swait**

The orchard is coming into its third year and should be starting to bear fruit. They had some bad news when some of the chickens were killed by a fox. They are now looking at possibly keeping geese as well as chickens.

**St. Loes Trust - George Bastin and Seys and Bridges – Diana Fowler**

Funds are tight as investments are producing very little income. Applicants are also falling. Both keep in touch with the two head teachers to identify those families most in need of financial assistance.

**St. Mary's Church – Diana Fowler**

On the 28<sup>th</sup> September the church will celebrate 150 years since the building of the church. There will be events such as a concert on the Saturday evening and an exhibition. Members of their link church from Sweden will also be visiting.

**Woodchester Mansion Trust**

It was clear from their report that a great deal of events and activities now take place at the Mansion. One resident said it was a shame that their events were not publicised more widely, but notices have been placed on notice boards and some events have been published on the website.

**Neighbourhood Warden – Peter Wilson**

Pete Wilson was attending the meeting mainly to hear what was going on in the village and to hear the views of residents. He briefly outlined his role as being involved in a local food bank scheme with food deliveries, work in schools, graffiti, dog fouling and many other issues. His role involves working closely with P.C.S.O.s Steve Wadley and Steve Phillipson. He is in the process of placing fliers around the village giving more information and contact details.

One resident asked if there was anything which could be done about dogs not being kept on leads along the cycle path. This was a particular hazard for cyclists. It was felt that little could be done except to talk to the dog owners and express their concerns.

The meeting was closed at 8.25pm followed by refreshments.

Chair .....

Date .....