

Woodchester Parish Council

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on May 22nd, 2014 in the Endowed School, North Woodchester at 7pm

Present

Cllr. Hamilton (Chair)

Cllrs. Lead, Baldauf, Swait, Warnes and Dunbar.

Ann Bijkerk (clerk)

District Councillor, Rhiannon Wigzell

County Council, Dorcas Binns

13 representatives of local organisations and the public.

Welcome

Cllr. Hamilton welcomed everyone present and asked that questions be raised by the public throughout the meeting and that this was a meeting for residents, simply facilitated by the Parish Council.

Apologies for Absence

Cllr. George Bastin

Jackie Hayes, Girlguiding

Diana Fowler, Seys and Bridges,

Gordon Soutar, Endowed School

Peter Wilson, Neighbourhood Warden

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting May 23rd, 2013

The Council approved the minutes of last year's meeting as a true record. This was proposed by Cllr. Lead 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 the past year

Cllr. Hamilton summarised the work of the Parish Council over the past year. It has been easy to become concerned with small issues and lots of extra time has been spent keeping up with national documents.

In terms of the amount of funding Woodchester receives through the precept and grants, the amount of grant has been reduced this year. The Government have decided at present not to impose an automatic referendum on councils increasing their precept above two percent. Despite this, the Parish Council will always aim to keep the increase to a minimum.

Cllr. Hamilton thanked our District and County Councillors for their involvement in the re-surfacing of Convent Lane which was in a poor state due to damage from harsh winters.

The signs for the '20 is plenty' scheme have now been erected. Residents were asked to let the clerk know if there are persistent offenders who drive too fast through the village. One resident felt that the signs could have been made more visible by increasing their size and felt that they looked 'temporary'. He described signs the French use, particularly near to schools to try to slow drivers down. The Council's understanding is that the size and location of the signs is dictated by County Council and Road Safety Partnership guidelines.

Residents have been concerned in the past with dog mess in the village. Two new dog bins have been installed this year and three grit bins have been purchased to replace those which have gone missing.

Stroud District Council have produced a local plan which has gone to the Government Inspector. He is due to respond to Phase One by the end of May. There are two major new developments within the village and it continues to be important to keep a close eye on planning applications.

Planning – Cllr. Lead

An application has been made for The Convent, to convert the building to a hotel and add an access drive from the A46. The exact path of the track has not yet been finalised. An initial study of the plans looks like the owners are respecting the building. It will of course provide employment.

There has been no more information from SDC regarding the Rooksmoor application. There is also planning permission for development on the Piano Works site.

Footpaths – Cllr. Warnes

Cllr. Warnes asked that any problems with footpaths be passed to the clerk so that we are aware of issues which have arisen and which have been reported. Unless we notify Gloucestershire Highways of issues, they will be unaware that a problem exists. Vegetation has now started to become an issue. The clerk had contacted Highways about the vegetation at the bottom of Selsley Road following concern from the primary school about poor visibility onto the A46.

Proposed Mountain Bike Track

The Parish Council have looked to provide a play facility in the village for several years and have up until now, drawn a blank. Thanks to GCC, SDC and Mr. and Mrs. Hill a solution has been found.

Cllr. Dunbar presented information on the proposals.

A piece of land has now been identified belonging to GCC adjacent to the cycle path and they have agreed to lease the land to the Parish Council. This would promote safe play and a healthy lifestyle and would be appropriate for children aged four to early teens.

Back on Track, a company from the Forest of Dean have made an initial plan. The cost is expected to be approximately £20,000 which would include signage and fencing.

Those residents living closest to the site have been consulted and there are plans to talk to the children in the Endowed School and St. Dominic's in the next few weeks.

The Parish Council have had some very good news in the past week. County Councillor, Dorcas Binns has agreed to fund about £16,000 from the Active Together Grant as the proposals fit most of the criteria. We are now looking to find the remaining £4,000.

Back on Track are excited about this project as it can be accessed without the need to use a car and will hopefully attract children from surrounding villages.

Maintenance costs are expected to be minimal in the first five years, but funds will need to be raised to provide for this in the future.

One resident was concerned that litter could be an issue and this will need to be monitored and a solution found if necessary.

A question was raised about the surface material which will be a form of gravel which provides traction but is not too rough to cause injury from a fall.

Mr. and Mrs. Hill were thanked for their permission to use their private driveway as an access route for construction vehicles. Without this, it is unlikely the scheme could go ahead.

Organisations making Verbal Presentation

Events Committee – Penny Brown

Thanks were given to all those who work hard to contribute to events and all residents are very welcome to join the events committee or provide new ideas.

The football match, Woodchester Football Club v The Village was a great success and will hopefully take off and become a regular event.

Selsley Cricket Club have challenged the village to a cricket match on their pitch, but a date has not yet been set. If anyone wishes to play, please contact Rhiannon Wigzell.

Football Club

The Football Camps organised for children in the holidays have been very successful. The last one saw over 100 children take part in the Easter Holidays. During half term they are running a four-day camp and are expecting even more children.

There continues to be an issue with people walking their dog on the football field. Please report any persistent offenders as dog mess is very unpleasant for those playing on the pitch.

SBKA – Peter Lead

Buzzclub is doing very well and has about 27 members. It has been a good year so far for the bees. The mild winter has meant they have got off to a good start.

Village Hall – Malcolm Swait

Bob Ludlow has been chair of the Village Hall Committee for 16 years and has been looking for some time to step down. Bob would be grateful for anyone who would be willing to take over the position to come forward. The Village Hall is running well and there are no major issues to be dealt with.

St. Loe's Trust

Both the St. Loe's Trust and Seys and Bridges Foundation support children's education. St. Loe's currently funds six youngsters at university.

Woodchester Mansion Trust – Rhiannon Wigzell

Lots of events have taken place this year including children's activities, plays and concerts. It was suggested that future events are advertised in the Woodchester Word.

Neighbourhood Warden – Peter Wilson

Peter Wilson had sent his apologies, but asked that the issue of mopeds on the cycle path be mentioned. If residents see a moped on the cycle path, please would they report the number plate to the Police or Neighbourhood Warden.

There was concern from a resident that, at some time in the future when Terry and Linda retire from the Post Office, the village could be left without a Post Office and stores. Cllrs. Hamilton and Wigzell attended a meeting several years ago to find out how locals could be involved in their own shop and post-office which would require a great deal of commitment and volunteer input if it was to prove successful.

Parking and access have been an issue for the owners as they gain a great deal from passing trade, but if there is no-where to park, drivers won't stop.

The shop is so important to many residents in the village and it would be a very great shame if it closed.

The meeting was closed at 8.15pm followed by refreshments.

Chair

Date