

# Woodchester Parish Council

Clerk: Ann Bijkerk

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

Telephone: 01453 873456

E-mail: [clerk@woodchesterparish.org.uk](mailto:clerk@woodchesterparish.org.uk)

Website: [www.woodchesterparish.org.uk](http://www.woodchesterparish.org.uk)

---

## **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 in the Village Hall, North Woodchester at 7pm**

### **Present**

Cllr. Hamilton (Chair)

Cllrs. Baldauf, Lead, McNealey, Warnes

County Councillor Dorcas Binns

Dominic Everiss, Neighbourhood Warden

Ann Bijkerk (clerk)

6 members of the public

### **Welcome**

Cllr. Hamilton welcomed all to the meeting and explained that the meeting is not a Parish Council meeting, but a more informal opportunity for residents to find out about village organisations.

### **Apologies for Absence**

An apology was received from Cllrs. Swait and Warnes, Rhiannon Wigzell from the Woodchester Mansion Trust, Diana Fowler from Seys and Bridges, George Bastin from St. Loes and Rod Harris.

### **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015**

These were agreed and signed as a true record by Cllr. Hamilton, proposed by Cllr. McNealey and seconded by Cllr. Warnes.

### **Cllr. Gervase Hamilton - Report on Parish Council business over the past year**

Cllr. Hamilton summarised the Parish Council report.

The year has been an exciting one, although keeping up with new Government legislation has been a challenge. Woodchester is lucky in that we have had a great deal of support from both County and District Councillors.

The Local Plan has identified a need for an additional 11,400 houses over the next 15 years within the District, but no major housing developments are expected in Woodchester.

The Affordable Housing Survey in May 2015 saw a 30% response rate and demonstrated limited demand for affordable housing, although there was some interest shown for affordable rented accommodation.

There have recently been several planning applications in the village for which developers have been charged a s.106 payment for off-site recreation. In order that this money benefits the village, eligible schemes need to be identified and costed. Recently money has been allocated to the mountain bike trails and for kissing gates (to replace stiles) through the village.

The Neighbourhood Warden recently visited a Parish Council meeting to talk about his role and the valuable service they provide.

Speeding through the village continues to be an issue. The '20 is plenty' scheme appears to have gone some way to improving the situation, but there are still drivers who use Selsley Road in particular as a 'rat run'.

### **Planning – Cllr. Peter Lead**

Cllr. Lead thanked Cllr. Binns for her support in several recent planning applications, particularly at Rooksmoor Mills, the Piano Works and for the car wash on the A46.

Unfortunately the Parish Council and residents were still not successful in making a sufficient case for the decision to be overturned for Rooksmoor Mills and the Piano Works, but were successful for the car wash which was turned down at the appeal stage.

The owners of The Convent have been invited by Stroud District Council (SDC) to make another application for a driveway as they have not completed an access road by the original deadline of the end of May this year. This does not appear to have been submitted and therefore SDC Enforcement Team are about to take action. Concern was expressed by a resident that the owners were given an opportunity to re-submit a planning application and that the Enforcement Team haven't acted sooner. It was suggested that residents as well as the Parish Council need to keep up pressure on SDC for action.

Recently there have been more s.106 charges for developers for off-site recreation. The Parish Council have been looking into schemes to attract funding. Local residents are actively seeking a site for a play area which if successful could possibly attract future funding. If the Community Infrastructure Levy is introduced by SDC later in the year as planned, this will mean the Parish Council will gain 15% of charges to developers and will not be required to submit a viable scheme in advance of receiving payment.

A question was raised as to the status of the 'car wash site' on the A46. This land is privately owned, but is not attached to Woodchester Garage. Cars have been seen for sale recently on that plot of land. The clerk will report the situation to SDC's Enforcement Team if the land is being illegally used.

### **Footpaths – Cllr. Barbara Warnes**

There are currently few issues to report with regard to footpaths through the village.

The footpath from Bear Hill through the woods to St. Chloe has a proposal for a bridleway. This will hopefully in turn mean better signage.

### **Village Shop**

Cllr. Hamilton commented on the success of the Village Shop which is so vital for the village. With 50 volunteers and Pauline Woollam being such a capable post mistress, the level of support is tremendous.

### **Woodchester Mansion**

Concern was raised that visitors to Woodchester Mansion are regularly parking in the Catholic Church car park causing problems on occasions. This has been partly caused by a sign at the top of St. Mary's Hill directing people to the car park.

Cllr. McNealey made it clear that the only access to the Mansion by car is from the B4066, but satellite navigation systems often direct drivers to the Park Lane end of the site.

Improved signage has been discussed in the past by all parties concerned and a suggestion was put forward for brown signs combining the Mansion and Woodchester Park.

It was suggested that much more needs to be done by the National Trust and Mansion Trust to direct drivers to access from the B4066.

Cllr. Hamilton will make enquiries about how best to approach the National Trust and it was suggested that the Catholic Church put up their own sign at the car park entrance.

Councillors agreed to discuss the issue at their meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June to raise the issue of illegal parking in the Church car park and the difficulty for drivers of finding the Mansion.

### **Village Hall – Kath Gay**

Kath Gay expressed the need for more volunteers for the Village Hall Committee. Despite advertising in the Woodchester Word and with notices on the boards, there has unfortunately been little response.

### **Visual presentation by Buzz Club’s Peter Lead on their link with Ghana**

Peter Lead gave a very interesting presentation on Buzz Club Ghana; a scheme initiated by a visit from Dr. Adhu who works with local farmers in Ghana.

Education is free in Ghana up to Year 9 and costs £300 per year thereafter.

The scheme is working with two schools, funding 10 selected children from each school with bee-keeping equipment. The cost and therefore the amount of funding required for each child is £160.

Money is gained and invested from the sale of honey and wax. As well as this, local cashew nut and mango farmers benefit from increased yields due to higher levels of pollination.

This initial phase requires total funding of £8,000 which is close to being met. With careful management, support and structure, the scheme will then be evaluated after two years and a second cohort of children will be selected. It is hoped that following that success the scheme can be rolled out on a much larger scale.

Children at the Buzz Club in Woodchester benefit from the links Buzz Club Ghana provides through diaries written both in England and Ghana. This will enable the children to gain a real insight into the lives of the children involved.

### **Thanks and Close**

Cllr. Hamilton thanked Cllr. Lead for his interesting presentation and thanked all for attending the meeting.

The meeting was closed at 8.15pm.

Chair .....

Date .....