

Minutes of Worton Parish Council held on Monday 4th December in Worton Village Hall at 6:00pm.

Present: Cllr Barry Devine (BD / Chair), Cllr Richard Slack (RS / Vice Chair); Cllr Malcolm Powell (MP), Cllr Nick Stokes (NS)

Also present: David Johnson, Pam Woods, Mary xxx, Alan Newman,

Apologies: Patricia Goodenough, Robert Goss, Chris Collins, Dickie Parsons, Tamara Reay

75/23/24	Apologies for absence: The Chairman received apologies for absence from Patricia Goodenough, Robert Goss, Chris Collins and Dicky Parsons						
76/23/24	Declaration of members interests:						
77/23/24	Minutes of meeting held on 6th November was proposed by MP, seconded by RS and agreed by all that the minutes were an accurate record. The minutes were signed.						
	<p>The Chairman declared that the meeting was temporarily suspended to allow for an open session for 15 minutes where members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of the business on the agenda.</p> <p>Mary Chivers - read statement regarding Mill Stream situation and asked for her points to recorded. Copy of statement to be forwarded to Parish Clerk.</p> <p>Copper wires update / mobile signal in Rowde - TR to update</p>						
78/23/24	Worton Crimes and Incidents Report – Jenny Groome unable to attend.						
79/23/24	Wiltshire Councillor’s Report - TR unable to attend. Report attached.						
80/23/24	<p>Transport and Road Safety (RS/DP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reported that Dominic Muns from LHFIFG was consulting on a temporary closure of sliproad by A360 junction following a recent accident. Further updates to be provided. Suggestion to make it a left turn only (NS) - To note the Parish Steward has been working hard and making progress on keeping the pavements clear. 						
81/23/24	<p>Leisure Facilities, Appearance and Environment (MP/NS/RG/CC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jubilee Walkway – BD provided update and reinforced message that no road name changes will be made. See update attached. - 						
82/23/24	<p>Planning (DP/NS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) WCC Local Planning Update (NS/RS) – gone in b) To consider the following applications: <table border="1" data-bbox="359 1915 1452 2038"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="359 1915 694 2004">App number</th> <th data-bbox="694 1915 1029 2004">Address</th> <th data-bbox="1029 1915 1452 2004">Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="359 2004 694 2038">N/A</td> <td data-bbox="694 2004 1029 2038"></td> <td data-bbox="1029 2004 1452 2038"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	App number	Address	Description	N/A		
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N/A							

Signed:

Date:

	Decisions:																										
	N/A																										
83/23/24	Community and Learning Nothing to report.																										
84/23/24	Communications - Larry Parker to be given allotment at Sandlease. Clerk to draw up contract.																										
85/23/23	Review of Parish Council Policies (RS/MP) MP – Financial regulations, Reserves Policy and Internet Banking policies all reviewed and approved as at December 2023. RS – Risk management policy. Risk rating for routine tax and audit action to be raised to Medium; risks for Council Conduct and Elections to be reduced to Low. RS recommended that changes should be accepted and policies agreed as up to date. BD - Standing orders – Chair to make a couple of proposals relating to formatting and duration of meetings (target from 2 hours to 1.5 hours). MP Proposed and BD seconded																										
86/23/24	Finance: Clerk salary increase agreed. Proposed by MP and seconded by BD. Resolved: The following payments to be authorised. Proposed by MP and seconded by BD. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>Payable to</i></th> <th><i>Net</i></th> <th><i>VAT</i></th> <th><i>Gross</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Admin J Slack</td> <td></td> <td>0.00</td> <td>£397.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>£195.12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>J Slack – WFM allowance</td> <td></td> <td>0.00</td> <td>£26.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HMRC – PAYE</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>£99.25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>£717.37</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			<i>Payable to</i>	<i>Net</i>	<i>VAT</i>	<i>Gross</i>	Admin J Slack		0.00	£397.00				£195.12	J Slack – WFM allowance		0.00	£26.00	HMRC – PAYE			£99.25	Total			£717.37
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87/23/24	Items to be considered for the agenda for the next meeting and questions to the Council (a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given) Clerk to arrange meeting to set precept for Wiltshire Council before 8 th January.																										
88/23/24	Key messages:																										
	Date of next meeting: Date of next meeting: Monday 8 th January 2024. This will be held at 7:30pm in Worton Village Hall.																										

Signed:

Date:

**Update from Tamara Reay
Wiltshire Council Finances**

Wiltshire Council has provided its second formal financial update reports for the 2023/24 financial year, and is continuing to manage its budgets responsibly amid the continuing unpredictability of the national economy and the ongoing pressures faced by all councils. At the end of the second quarter there is a small, forecasted underspend for the year of around £0.4m, which has changed from the £0.3m annual overspend which was forecasted at the end of quarter one.

This is a positive position to be in, and reflects the council's careful financial planning, and this position will continue to be carefully monitored as there are a number of risks that could affect the council. This includes sustained higher inflation than was budgeted for, increased demand and higher package costs in the council's people services, SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) transport and less income received so far across some of the council's place services, such as parking and planning.

More than £26m of savings were identified to be made during 2023/24 and, at the end of the second quarter, more than £7m has already been achieved (around 27%) with a further £17m on track to be delivered (around 64%). The council will continue to robustly monitor its finances and focus on the delivery of savings. The council has taken a long-term strategic approach to its budget, which included effectively setting the next three years' budgets in February, and this means it is in a stronger position to respond positively to any unexpected issues.

Semington Brook

Further to my update in the Bridge I can confirm that I am continuing to work with Worton and Marston Parish Councils to press the Environment Agency to agree plans to make suitable repairs to the banks where there have been breaches, and to find a sustainable longer term solution which works for local residents.

Potterne and Worton Mobile Phone Signal

I know that many local people and businesses have been hugely affected by the mobile phone issues in Potterne, Worton and the surrounding areas which have been ongoing since early September. I have been working hard on your behalf over the last few months to establish what the issue is, and bring forward a solution. I'm pleased to update you that after many emails to the mobile companies, National Grid and SSE, that I had a productive meeting with Cellnex UK which owns and operates a great deal of the telecommunications infrastructure across the UK.

To cut a long story short, the mast at the Fire HQ in Potterne relies on equipment installed on a pylon in Rowde, on which Vodafone has equipment which supports mobile service for Vodafone and O2 (and subsidiary brands such as Tesco and Giffgaff). That equipment has been out of service since early September and has therefore affected these services from the mast at the Fire HQ. During this time, National Grid (which owns the pylon in Rowde) has had significant safety concerns and so has restricted access to the pylon in Rowde, whilst control measures were agreed and put in place.

The good news is that at my meeting earlier this week - I had confirmation that the safety plan is now in place and that work is scheduled for Tuesday 12 December. All being well (and barring any adverse weather) this will mean that things finally get fixed. Please be assured that I will continue to follow this matter very closely. I very much hope that matters are resolved on Tuesday 12th. As always, please do email me with any further concerns and I will do my very best to help.

Black Dog and other Highways Matters

Together with Dominic Muns (Wiltshire Councillor for the Lavingtons) I am continuing to press Wiltshire Council Highways to make progress at Black Dog. We understand that contact has now been established with the landowners who own the land which is required to make the changes to the junction and we have asked for a detailed plan to take this forward. Additionally, I am looking forward to the meeting which Worton Parish Council is arranging with Gareth Rogers at Wiltshire Highways to review the options for further interventions to improve road safety on the High Street. A reminder that the next Devises Area Board on Monday 26 February will have a session dedicated to "Highways Matters" and Wiltshire Council Cabinet Members and Senior Highways Officers will be present. All are welcome to attend.

Signed:

Date:

Jubilee Walkway Update

- We have recently reached an impasse caused by the preferred choice of a plaque location by the Village Hall being rejected by the Village Hall Trustees.
- The reason I have been given is concerns from residents on Church Lane about the impacts that could occur which were shared with the Village Hall trustees.
- I have explained in detail why these concerns were unfounded, but have been unable to influence their decision.
- I am also concerned about the source of funding for the project and want this to be totally open and able to access The Community Fund which could potentially improve the final outcome.
- So, in order for things to progress, our discussions have led to the proposal of a new Working Group, under the auspices of the Parish Council, with an Environmental brief, to include the Walkway.

Possible involvement in the group?

- Respondents to the Bridge article and word of mouth invitation.
- Interested parties in the previously mooted village history signs - this can be developed and could provide opportunity to create something more akin to the major Royal Walkways that already exist.
- Representative (s) of the Village Hall. We may need to remove the Church Lane section from the designated Walkway, and thus the Village Hall, but this seems a shame to me. Looking into the Hall's history, its origin as a Carnegie library facility and the aims of the Carnegie Trust seem aligned with much of the Walkway ethos. The development could be mutually beneficial.
- Representative (s) of the school . The ethos of the Walkway project has young people at its heart.
- Newlands Homes. The siting of one of the plaques near the development has already been discussed. Perhaps a representative could be found from the company to play a role (accessing funding?). There is considerable prestige value in this project!

Timing

The Christmas period provides an opportunity for us to pause and take stock. It will take time to gauge interest and involvement. Also, the current situation with regard to management and completion of Village Hall projects makes their involvement difficult. Things could change! Once we have agreed access to funding and a working group is established, it should be straightforward to site our plaque and then decide on additional makers etc.

Signed:

Date:

**WRITTEN STATEMENT PROVIDED BY MARY CHIVERS TO
WORTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 4 DECEMBER 2023**

Thank the Chair for allowing me to speak.

It was disappointing to say the least, to read the comments made by Tamara Reay and Melvin Wood, a representative from the Environment Agency (EA) regarding Semington Brook, and more importantly the Mill Leat banks.

I, and my neighbours, the Joyces, would challenge the accuracy of some of the comments, which, as the deadline for content submission to The Bridge is 15th of the month, I assume were made before the meeting we ourselves arranged to meet with the EA, on 24 November.

I'm not an engineer, although as a family member of a former construction and civil engineering company, I do have some knowledge and do not agree that it is NOT due to the operation of the Sluice and Mill - they do play a part.

Matters for consideration:

- I have not been contacted by any member of the parish council so I'm unclear as to how you can represent me personally
- Riparian ownership – responsible for maintenance of the banks – no significant upkeep for over 20 years
- Burrowing crayfish – previous riverbank owner (beyond the Mill) reinforced his bank to prevent crayfish
- Wildlife – wide fluctuations in levels due to use of sluice/mill has resulted nests being swept away
- Evidence of beaver
- Erosion – wide fluctuations in levels resulting in destabilisation of bank/piling - not an inconsiderable cost to my mother
- Mrs Joyce reports on the situation to EA on regular basis
- EA appear to be more concerned with the welfare of the fish
- Even since the bank has blown the Mill has been opening up the sluice, under cover of darkness, to a couple of inches and Mrs Joyce has seen fish floundering – this really is irresponsible

When the situation first arose both myself and Mrs Joyce had sleepless nights.

At our meeting with the EA the said one option would be to let the stream revert to its natural course. And where would that leave us?

Doing nothing is NOT an option. All we want is a return of the water to a reasonable level and be managed in a responsible way, which would still allow its use by the Mill.

Finally I would draw your attention to my email Mr Wood – attached – which gives further detail for information/consideration.

I ask that these comments be formally recorded in the Minutes of this meeting.

Thank you for your time.

Mary Chivers-Newman
04.12.23

Signed:

Date:

DRAFT

Signed:

Date: