

CHUTE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD BY ZOOM ON 09th JULY 2020

Present: Cllr Hughes, Cllr Dawson, Cllr Foxen, Cllr Hopton, Cllr Taylor, Cllr Williams.

In attendance: Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling (WCC)
Anne Rudland (Public)

1) Apologies for Absence

Cllr Parr had sent his apologies. Cllr Hughes explained the circumstances surrounding the Clerk's absence and the Council recorded their condolences and their sympathy for her loss.

2) Public Participation

Anne Rudland addressed the meeting, raising concerns over the condition of rights of way in the Parish and reminding Cllrs of the Paths for All organisation. The discussion broadened into a deeper examination of the subject and, as a result of contributions from Cllrs Hughes, Foxen and Taylor, it was agreed that the Council should appoint a volunteer 'Footpath Warden' to work with Cllr Foxen in ensuring that both the Council, WCC and local landowners were kept aware of the state of rights of way in the Parish and the appropriate action taken. Anne Rudland kindly volunteered to take on this responsibility.

3) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4) Minutes

Cllr Williams proposed the minutes of the meeting held on 8th June were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Taylor.

Matters Arising

1) Re-siting defibrillator

There has been no progress since the last meeting. Cllr Dawson will continue to work with Cllr Parr on the siting problem.

2) Website

Cllr Williams had circulated a note describing his proposals for the functionality of the Parish website. All Cllrs agreed with his comments and he will continue to pursue the topic, with the aim of gaining the support of the other interested parties, in particular Chute Forest Parish Council and the Chute Chronicle editorial team. Key issues include ease of operation and the possibility of using a shared website to generate income. All agreed that it was not in anyone's interest to replicate existing infrastructure or create competition between different parts of the Chutes.

5) Specific Reports

Highways- Cllr Hughes reported on the forthcoming road closure in Lower Chute and Chute Cadley (13-16 July)

Footpaths- See above.

King George Playing Field – Cllr Dawson explained that there was a problem with the mower. Hopefully it will be able to be repaired, but there is a possibility that replacement will be needed. The cost is likely to be substantial and is not currently provided for in KGPF financial plan. He will report in more detail at the next meeting.

Village Hall- Cllr Hopton remind all that use of the Hall was still restricted due to the lockdown, but that repairs were progressing.

Allotments- There was discussion over the Japanese Knotweed present in the area of the pit, the responsibility of WCC. Cllr Hughes had spoken to the responsible department and they had confirmed that a treatment plan is in place and that the annual visit is expected soon. [NB: subsequent to this meeting, Cllr Hughes met a representative of Japanese Knotweed Ltd, a commercial contractor, who was on site to carry out a survey for a prospective purchaser of a nearby property. The contractor pointed out knotweed in various locations across the pit, and this has again been reported to WCC, as their current programme has clearly not been successful in halting the spread.]

Village Design Statement- Cllr Hopton again appealed for photographs of the most/least liked parts of the villages; response has, so far, been disappointing. She also updated the Council on the progress of the questionnaire, which is reaching completion.

6) Payment of grants

This item was held over until the Clerk's return.

7) Posting of Minutes and Notices

Cllr Hughes has agreed to take this responsibility on from Cllr Foxen.

8) Tree on Chute Cadley Green

It was agreed that the tree planting previously agreed should go ahead. No decision was reached as to responsibility for ongoing maintenance to the new tree.

9) Finance

The bank balance was noted as £14418.12

Payments

Resolved: that the following payments be approved and cheques signed:

H Bourner salary	£225.33 by standing order
H Bourner exps	£16.50 by standing order
HMRC	£56.33 by standing order

WALC	£141.29
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10) County Councillors Report.

Wiltshire Councillor Ian Blair-Pilling had sent a comprehensive report which is included in full below.

Police Report

The most recent police report had been circulated. There were no incidents reported in the parish.

11) Planning

The following decisions by Wiltshire Council were noted:

20/03145/VAR- variation of conditions to retail biomass boiler- Chute Manor-approved

12) Correspondence

Emails and telephone calls had been received by Cllrs Hughes and Taylor on the subject of Japanese Knotweed from potential purchasers of two properties in the village. Both parties had been referred to WCC as the responsible authority. See above also.

13) Items for next meeting

No items were raised.

14) Date of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 7.30 pm on Thursday 3rd September.

Cllr Blair-Pilling's report;

Finance – Wiltshire Council has been clear about the financial pressures from the Covid crisis and the press have recently focussed on the possibility of the need for Wiltshire (among many others) to publish a '114 Notice' (effectively bankruptcy). This would be driven by the legal obligations on all Local Authorities to balance their books each year, the constraints on our finance management options and, the loss of income with simultaneous increases in cost from the Covid crisis. A Council communication release this week states: 'Following last week's announcement by Government on additional emergency funding for local authorities, Wiltshire Council's latest projections show that this has significantly reduced the chances of issuing a section 114 notice, but there are still challenges ahead.' ...'Cllr Pauline Church, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement, said: "The additional funding from the government will certainly ease the pressure, but we are still facing significant challenges ahead and more funding will be required. Locally, we are leading on the recovery from COVID-19 so we are working hard to ensure we have the right resources in the right areas to help the county get back strongly on its feet..." Not as drastic as it could have been but still very challenging into the future.

Organisation and Direction – Since March we have been in what is known as ‘Response’ and Wiltshire Council has taken its place in the Local Response Forum (LRF), which covers all Wiltshire (including Swindon) includes all the relevant organisations and has been chaired by the Chief Constable of Wiltshire. We are now preparing for the imminent ‘Recovery’ phase in which Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council each assume the leadership of their separate groups. The ‘Response’ phase will continue in parallel until complete. The principal foci of ‘Recovery’ will be to:

- Overall - Restore community, public health and wellbeing, environmental and economic resilience following the response to COVID 19.
- Economy - Evaluate and understand the impact on Wiltshire’s economy and environment, providing support to secure business recovery, revitalise town centres, reduce carbon emissions and support those impacted. Enabling more walking and cycling and giving space for businesses to use their frontages.
- Community Resilience - Build on the Community Resilience shown in the response enabling Wiltshire’s communities to take responsibility for their wellbeing, build positive local relationships and to get involved and take actions for what is best for their own communities. Our communities have well and truly stepped up in a multitude of different ways and forms and we shall be supporting and developing this to mutual benefit.
- Care, Safeguarding & Education - support the recovery of all age statutory and specialist services and locality based community health & care services and act as the link with the Local Authority command structures.
- Health and Wellbeing - Coordinate the health and wellbeing element of the overarching recovery to COVID-19
- Work Place and Force – Shape our work place, work force and manner and means of function to support the Recovery. This does and will include a considerable proportion of remote working.

Anticipating this our leadership structure has changed and since Mon 4 Jul we have a single CEO (Terence Herbert – formerly CEO People), who is reshaping his leadership team to better manage our recovery. Cabinet has been reduced and refocussed with the loss of one Cabinet member and a number of Portfolio Holders. Leisure and Libraries have been added to my portfolio.

Infection Rates and Control – Statistics and stories abound regarding our infection levels. In Wiltshire, there have now been 1239 people who have tested positive for COVID-19. Our rate of positive cases is 248.8 per 100,000 population which is still lower than that seen in England which is 438.5 per 100,000 population. Up to the 19th June, 357 registered deaths involving Covid-19 in all settings in Wiltshire had occurred. Further information on weekly mortality is available from ONS.

As all Local Authorities Wiltshire Council has to develop plans to ensure effective local outbreak management of COVID-19 – These are in place.

Leisure Centres and Libraries - I mentioned these are now in my portfolio. We have plans for the reopening of our leisure centres, but still need permission and guidance from Government. We are now permitted to open libraries, but as this requires substantial changes to their operation we must first consult. This is underway and already has huge interest. We shall be looking to how best to provide the greatest service within Covid and resource constraints and welcome community involvement and support. Note that that with the range of remote services the library service has provided membership has increased.

HRCs – Booking system is working well and we now permit 2 people to assist with unloading. Some may suggest that the some form of hybrid booking and free access system should continue into the future.

Stay sane – if you can

Ian

Ian Blair-Pilling
Cllr for The Collingbournes and Netheravon Ward
Cabinet Member for IT, Digitalisation, Operational Assets, Leisure and Libraries