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Minutes of the meeting of Woodchester Parish Council on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs. Lead, Hamilton, Dunbar, Noon, McNealey.

In attendance: One member of the public and the Clerk.

**2022/104 To receive apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Baynham-Honri, Hasinski and Noon (delayed), also Cllr Robinson - County Councillor

**2022/105 To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.**

There were no declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

**2022/106 To offer a half hour open forum for discussions and questions.**

**Clerk to chase up SDC regarding the new litter bin opposite the Village Hall.**

**2022/107 To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2022.**

These were confirmed as a true record and signed by Cllr Lead.

**2022/108 To review actions from the Parish Council Meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2022.**

Village Hall bench is in place, installation of the Church Green bench is delayed by repairs to the wall. No update regarding the Frogmarsh notice board. All other actions completed.

**2022/109 To receive County and District Councillor reports**

Cllr Robinson reported by email that there has been no further progress on yellow lines for St Marys Hill over the summer.

**2022/110 To receive the Clerk's report.**

This was received. Items to add:

1/ Blue green algae have spread to further lakes in Woodchester Park. There are signs on site warning the public about this. The National Trust reported the presence of Blue Green Algae to the Environment Agency but there has been no response.

2/SDC has agreed to replace the dog bin on Bospin Lane, however they need the Parish Council to organise moving the grit bin to make space. **Clerk to speak to maintenance contractor.**

3/ vegetation on A46 at corner with Selsley Road is overgrowing again and is blocking the line of sight for vehicles exiting Selsley Rd. The Clerk has asked the contractor to cut it back.

4/ Vandalism on the Selsley Road road signs and damage to the pavement at Church Road have been reported to GCC.

5/ Cllr McNealey has added an addendum to the Clerks report regarding developments with the Produce show scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> September. She thanked Cllr Hasinski for sourcing some very nice raffle prizes. **Clerk to add revised report to website**

Planning for the Christmas Carols is also ongoing. Date to be agreed with Nailsworth

Initials.....

Silver Band.

Cllr Noon arrived at the meeting.

6/ The Parish Council has been contacted by SDC about whether there are any 'warm banks' planned in the Village, organised by the Parish Council or anyone else. Councillors confirmed that they were not aware of anything, and would expect informal support to be offered via existing organisations like the Church or Lunch with Friends. It was noted that the costs of heating the village hall or the church during the winter months would be considerable. **Clerk to contact SDC to let them know.** SDC have asked that we keep them updated with any developments in this area.

7/ Applications have been received for the post of Parish Clerk. **Personnel committee (Cllrs Lead, Hamilton and McNealey) to agree potential dates for interviews and clerk to liaise with applicants to arrange.**

**2022/111 To note the latest financial statements.**

These were noted. The clerk reported that SDC had been in touch that day regarding an outstanding amount of £2290 of s106 money related to the Rooksmoor Development. This is to be spent on maintenance or improvement of the mountain bike track. The officer said it may be acceptable to claim for recent expenditure on the track. **Clerk to contact the officer with a view to claiming the money against the recently installed new fence (cost about £2700).**

**2022/112 To note planning applications, decisions and appeals from SDC as per annex.**

These were noted

**2022/113 To approve expenditure and approve cheques as per annex.**

These were agreed.

**2022/114 To confirm and agree appointment of external auditor for next 5-year period.**

The annual audit of the Parish Council has two elements, an internal audit with an auditor selected by the Parish Council (this has been Ian Selkirk for several years) and an external audit. The clerk reported that every five years the SAAA is responsible for appointing external auditors to all applicable opted-in authorities. This applies to Woodchester Parish Council. The next five year period runs from 2022-23 to 2026-27. Councils are given the option to remain opted-in or to opt out and find their own external auditor, which is a long and costly responsibility. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has advised all Councils to continue as part of the SAAA sector-led auditor appointment regime. Councillors agreed unanimously to accept NALC's recommendation to remain opted-in. No further action required.

**2022/115 To receive an update on the recreation field.**

Cllr Lead has met with John Dansie, leader of Cotswold Footpath Wardens and the landowner. The landowner confirmed it is not possible to put anything into the ground as the site is protected. This includes structures for gates. It has been suggested that instead a concrete pad is constructed and the posts for a new accessible kissing gate go into that. John Dansie has agreed to construct the gate with the Parish Council providing the materials. Cllr Lead estimates the costs of the project to be £500 solicitors fees (to the land owners solicitors for an initial one year lease), £200 concrete and shuttering and a prime cost sum of £300 for timber. Cllr Hamilton pointed out there will be signage needed. Cllr Lead estimates the maximum set up fees to be £1000, with a max loss if the Council doesn't continue beyond the first year of £500 (for solicitor, as the gates would remain). Cllr Lead has consulted with a contractor to cut the grass (leaving wild flower areas) and the cost

would be £60/£70 per cut, so a maximum of £600/year, plus annual rental of the land of £50. So ongoing costs will be less than £1000/year. The current shed/changing rooms are to be dismantled by the owner of that land (it is not within the lease) and that area fenced off. Cllr Lead proposed that the Council agree a budget of £1000 set up and £1000/year ongoing costs for the recreation field. That was unanimously agreed. **Cllr Hamilton to provide further information about legislation regarding the signage.**

**2022/116**

**To receive an update on the play area**

Cllr Dunbar updated the Council that GCC have given verbal assurances that they will take over responsibility for the trees in the new lease they are providing for the play area. That lease will cover both the new play area and the existing mountain bike (MTB) track. Volunteers currently do regular inspections of the MTB track including looking for overhanging or unsafe branches on trees, however the Clerk explained that she has been advised that the Parish Council should also be undertaking regular professional tree inspections. Specifically the insurance company has said, 'it is expected that the council carryings out tree inspections on a cyclical regime at least once a year according to the level of public use in a particular area'. Informally the clerk has been advised by other clerks that, given the type of use encouraged at the MTB track (i.e. people spending time beneath the trees) and the proximity of buildings, that a full tree survey/inspection should be completed, with reports on individual trees. Any works required should be undertaken by a different firm. SDC have a framework agreement for this that Parish Councils can opt into to avoid the need for quotes. This summer the Council have had a 'walkover ash dieback survey' undertaken by Treeaction (cost £72), the report for which is available from the clerk. The inspector concluded that no tree work was required on the Ash trees this year, with a survey recommended for next year. Councillors agreed that no further action was required given that they expect the new lease to be forthcoming within a few weeks. Cllr Lead pointed out that the lease needs to clarify who is responsible for tree inspections as well as tree maintenance costs.

**2022/117**

**To review and agree the Emergency Plan**

Cllr Hamilton reported that the main changes to the Emergency Plan have been on the section regarding the agenda for the initial meeting (page 21) communication (page 22) and places of safety (page 30). The revised emergency plan was agreed and signed by Cllr Lead. **Cllr McNealey to complete a confidential list of useful contacts e.g. paramedics in the village.**

**Cllr Hamilton to draft a covering letter for the website letting residents know who to contact if they feel they have skills to offer in the event of an emergency.**

**Clerk to circulate the plan to local Parishes, SDC, the PCSO and the Neighbourhood warden and post it on the website.**

**2022/118**

**To receive an update on the Village Plan**

Cllr McNealey reported that following the consultation in May and the presentation at the Parish Meeting there are a few additions to the plan still outstanding. These are updates to the highways sections to include the new VAS, updates regarding the organisation of village events and the plan to establish a recreation area. She hopes to have the final draft available for review at the November meeting.

**2022/119**

**To review the Assets Register**

The Clerk has been advised that the Assets Register should include information on the location of the asset (many of which are given on the 'Parish online' map), details of the

supplier and date of acquisition and any significant spending/ improvements. She has also added the upgrade of the MTB track fences, the two new benches and the VAS machine. This was agreed and signed by Cllr Lead. **Clerk to post it to website**

**2022/120 To discuss Remembrance Sunday**

Remembrance Day this year is Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November. The Clerk stated that in previous years the Parish Council have ordered three wreaths (Parish Council, Comrades Club and Church) from the British Legion and donated £150. The Council agreed this again. **Clerk to order the wreaths.** Cllr Hamilton stated that he has laid the wreath on behalf of the Parish Council at previous services however he is not in the position to do that this year and may not in future years. [following the meeting, Cllr McNealey agreed to take on this role for 2022]. Other tasks include distributing the wreaths (which the current clerk will do) ensuring last year's wreaths are disposed of and the memorial cleared of leaves (the contractor does this) and advertising the event on notice boards and website. **Clerk to liaise with new clerk on these tasks.**

**2022/121 To agree dates for Full Council Meetings for 2023**

The following dates were agreed, generally the first Thursday of every other month: January 5<sup>th</sup> (Finance Meeting and Full Council Meeting). March 2<sup>nd</sup>, May 11<sup>th</sup> (Parish Meeting and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council), June 1<sup>st</sup>, July 6<sup>th</sup>, Sept 7<sup>th</sup> and Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Clerk to add these to website and book the Village Hall.**

**2022/122 To receive comments from members of the public on items discussed at this meeting.**

Cllr Dunbar had received an email with some points a resident wanted to raise:

1/ A suggestion to add signage on the 'cycle track' to warn users as they approach the MTB track and play area. **Councillors to consider this at a future meeting.**

2/ A comment on overgrown hedges around the village suggesting the Council take further action. **Clerk to look into this.**

3/ Areas of overgrowth of hedges along the A46 forcing pedestrians onto the road. **Clerk to contact GCC about this.**

**2022/123 To note date of next meeting: Thursday November 3<sup>rd</sup> at Woodchester Village Hall.**

The Meeting Closed at 8.29 pm

Chair..... Date .....

Initials.....