

Woodchester



Parish Council

Woodchester Parish Council

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Minutes of the meeting of Woodchester Parish Council on Thursday 6th January 2022 at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs. Lead, Hamilton, McNealey, Baynham-Honri and Noon, Dunbar and Hasinski
In attendance: Cllr Smith, the Clerk and five members of the public.

- 2022/1 To receive apologies for absence.**
Apologies were received from Cllr Robinson
- 2022/2 To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.**
There were no declarations of interests
- 2022/3 To offer half hour open forum for discussion and questions**
Issued Discussed
1/Branches are still over hanging on A46 between Woodchester and Nailsworth. This has been reported to GCC
2/ On the footpath between Atcombe Road and Convent Lane in the dip the kissing gate has dropped. Cllr Noon reported to Cotswold Warden.
3/ On the footpath between North and South Woodchester leaves are covering the path making it slippery. **Clerk to ask the contractor to tidy up.**
4/ Planning application at Applegarth.
Three members of the public left the meeting.
- 2022/4 To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 4th Nov 2021.**
These were confirmed as a true record and signed by Councillor Lead
- 2022/5 To review actions from the Parish Council Meeting of 4th November, 2021.**
Cllr Robinson has had the direction sign at Frogmarsh replaced.
The vegetation on A46 is still to be cut back. This is due to the inclement weather making it difficult for the contractor to find a safe day to do the work, however it is still planned.
There are reports that HGV's are coming over the weak bridge and then reversing into Beechgrove to turn around. Signage about the bridge needs to be on the A46 before vehicles have entered Selsley Road. **Cllr McNealey to pass details to Clerk who will report to GCC.**
- 2022/6 To receive County and District Councillor reports**
Cllr Robinson had emailed a report as follows: *The Lengthmans have been along the path from Culver Hill to the Shell Garage with a machine taking back the encroachment of grass etc. I will be expecting them to return to finish the job close to walls and the bridge at Frogmarsh. The directional sign has been replaced on the A46 at Frogmarsh. As you are aware fast broadband has still to be installed in both Selsley Road and St Mary's Hill so I*

have not been pushing for the resurfacing working. Selsley Road is a major improvement funded direct from County and St Mary's Hill and Church Road is funded from my Local Highways Budget. No further forward with the double yellow lines.

Cllr Smith reported he will be the Chair of the new Planning Review Panel for SDC at which planning appeals will be reviewed. There was an audit of planning enforcement at SDC prior to Christmas which recommended among other things that a similar review panel should also be set up for enforcement, which hopefully will happen soon. Budgets are currently being agreed and SDC plan is now being implemented.

Cllr McNealey let Councillors know that she is now part of the SDC led 'Working Together Group' which is trying to improve partnership working between Parishes and SDC. The first meeting is scheduled for February.

2022/7

To receive the Clerk's report.

This was received. The clerk also reported that a resident has been in touch regarding a grit bin that is not on the assets register on the bridge on Selsley Road. It has not been filled. **Clerk to ask contractor to clear the bin to make it accessible, and Cllr McNealey to contact resident about his suggestion of moving the bin.**

Road closures are planned for resurfacing at St Marys Hill and Church Road/Southfield Road sometime in February or March.

Cllr Noon asked for an update on the enforcement query raised re Frogmarsh Mill Cottage. Clerk to look into this.

**Cllr Hasinski to send a picture of the broken fence at birds crossing to clerk
Clerk to request a bin with a lid from SDC for the bottom of Station Road.**

2022/8

To note the latest financial statements.

These were noted.

2022/9

To approve expenditure and approve cheques as per annex.

These were approved. Additional cheque of £295 to Leopard Press for printing the Winter Woodchester Word.

2022/10

To note planning applications, decisions and appeals from SDC as per annex.

These were noted

2022/11

To discuss planning application S.21/2972/HHOLD: Applegarth, Park Lane, Woodchester.

Cllr Smith remained in the meeting but made no comment.

For full response see annex.

2022/12

To note and agree the recommendations of the Finance Committee for the budget and precept requirements for 2022/23 (Cllr Baynham-Honri)

Councillors agreed a budget of £20,275 and a precept of £13,300. Councillors agreed the shortfall be taken from reserves. Further details can be found in the minutes of the Finance Committee (6th January, 2022). **The clerk will inform Stroud District Council.**

2022/13

To note and agree recommendations of the Finance Committee for the review of the Financial Regulations (Cllr Baynham-Honri)

These were agreed and signed by Cllr Lead. **Clerk to post on website**

- 2022/14 To note and agree the recommendations of the Finance Committee for the review of the Grant awarding Policy (Cllr Baynham-Honri)**
 These were agreed (including the amendment to change the wording of 1(g) to read 'If no suitable awards are granted in any one financial year, the sum will be allocated to a suitable community project'). An additional amendment was agreed to remove Eligibility 3(ii) 'the Parish Council will not fund activities outside of its powers and functions'. **Cllr Lead to sign once the amendments have been made. Clerk to post on website**
- 2022/15` To agree a date for the litter pick**
 Date of Sunday 3rd April was agreed.
- 2022/16 To agree responsibility for checking grit bins over the winter (Cllr McNealey)**
 Cllr McNealey asked that all Councillors keep an eye on the grit bins near to them, she will also ask some residents to help.
- 2022/17 To discuss a project to decorate bus shelters in Woodchester (Cllr Lead)**
 It was suggested these could be themed (e.g. pianos near Selsley Road and Trains near Station Road). Local organisations, schools, groups and individuals could be approached (through usual communication channels) to submit design ideas and a sum of approx. £250 could be made available for the work. The idea was discussed of the artwork being transferred onto boards and the boards then fixed to the bus shelters. **Cllr Lead to investigate costs.**
- 2022/18 To receive an update on highways and road safety, plans for Woodchester Playground and Woodchester Word (Cllr Dunbar)**
Glos Highways are among the 10 worst counties for road safety figures. There is to be a review of County Road Policy in 2022 and a 'safer roads fund' from central Government will soon be available. County wide 20mph campaign is ongoing and the Parish council are supporting this. A resident has been in touch about cars mounting the pavement between Southfield Road and Selsley Road; Cllr Dunbar has been in touch with Glos Highways.
Play area: Cllr Dunbar has met with members of GCC Assets Management team who are happy to support the proposal to build a new play area in the section of land between Woodchester MTB track and the path up to the Selsley Road. As part of that however they have asked the Parish Council to move the fencing for the MTB track back by a meter so the multi use path fulfils current specifications. Cllr Lead has drawn up an area plan and there will be a new lease offered to cover the changes to the MTB track as well as the new play area. Cllr Dunbar will provide detailed proposals in the next couple of weeks, he is aiming to get it opened by the Jubilee weekend, with a planned construction time of two weeks. Planning consent is the first step. Discovery Play (a local company) is drawing up a proposed plan and cost estimates however two other quotes will also be obtained. A detailed plan will be circulated, advertised and discussed at the next meeting. Cllr Noon commented that it should be suitable for children with additional needs, perhaps include some sensory activities? Cllr McNealey pointed out an Ash tree that looks like it's been marked for removal. Ideally this should be removed at GCC expense. **Cllr Dunbar to discuss with GCC.**

Woodchester Word: This is to be funded by Parish Council going forward but with a section representing local businesses. **Cllr Dunbar/Clerk to contact previous advertisers to let them know.**

2022/19 **To receive an update on community engagement (Cllr Noon)**
Lunch with friends at Christmas involved over 80 people. They are still in need of volunteers to organise events. The Church also needs volunteers to help plan and organise Messy Church activities. Cllr Noon has circulated to Councillors by email the comments from residents at the craft fair to be discussed informally. Cllr Noon is to take on the role of Parish Council Rep on the organising committee for the Jubilee Street Party.

2022/20 **To receive an update from Woodchester Events Committee (Cllr McNealey)**
Village Carol Singing was well attended and very successful with about 100 people attending and about £100 raised (to pay for refreshments). Cllr Baynam-Honri suggested that the contractor be asked to clear the path between North and South Woodchester in the few weeks preceding carols next year. **Clerk to add this to his contract.**

Events for 2022: 1/ Jubilee Street party provisionally weekend June 4/5. The events committee have asked (via Woodchester Word) for people to come forward to help organise this event. Three people have come forward. Woodchester PC has the paperwork to apply to Glos CC for the Street Closure Order and this will be done by the clerk once instructed. 2/ Open Gardens/Craft Trail provisionally the second Sunday July if the street party doesn't go ahead. 3/ Village show 10th September.

2021/21 **To receive comments from members of the public on items discussed.**
There were no comments from members of the public.

2021/22 **To note date of next meeting: March 3rd 7pm at Woodchester Village Hall.**

The Meeting Closed at 9.20pm

Chair..... Date

Initials.....

Annex: S.21/2972/HHOLD Applegarth Park Lane South Woodchester

This application seeks a retrospective consent for a garden room/summer house (**a small building in a garden, used for sitting in during fine weather.**) and raised decking ancillary to the residential use of the main dwelling and it is this alone that we are to comment on.

Cllrs Lead and Baynham-Henri visited the site on the 6th Jan and inspected the properties from the outside.

We found more buildings than were shown on the block plan, being

- a shed housing a sauna, a shed that seemed to house a shower/compost toilet adjacent to the summerhouse/garden room,
- a yurt with fully equipped kitchen annexe on and adjacent to the raised decking,
- and a hot tub sited in the southwest corner of the garden.

All of which gave the appearance of a small exclusive glamping site established for commercial gain by offering overnight accommodation within a retreat. The design of the summer house included a covered kitchen area, mezzanine floor, not shown on the plans but shown on the website as can be seen below; a hot tub and together with the adjacent sauna is much more akin to a holiday chalet than a summer house as defined in the dictionary.

The positioning of the Summer House and adjacent buildings is such that they are intrusive into the privacy and quiet of the adjacent properties being sited very close to the boundary and directly overlooks Lavender House.

The Raised Decking is an unnecessarily large construction and disproportionate with the dwelling. The house has a large patio that commands extensive views over the valley and includes a hot tub. The real reason for the decking would seem to support the yurt that was seen during the site visit. The yurt is fitted out for luxury accommodation with an adjacent covered kitchen. Clearly not for simple recreational family use but for overnight self-catering accommodation.

The drawings submitted do not show the mezzanine floor in the summer house, that is shown advertised with a double bed. Nor do the plans show the additional structures as listed above.

Up to the 6th January there has been no display of the prescribed public notice on or close to the property and therefor insufficient notice has been given for all to consider this application.

We are therefore unable to support this application as it is felt that the development exceeds a need for residential development, that it is designed for commercial letting, and it creates an unacceptable visual intrusion into the AONB and would set a precedent for over development in an AONB and residential area. In the event that Stroud District Council considers approving this application, we ask that strict conditions are imposed that prevent any form of overnight use, either residentially or commercially and for no constructions temporary or permanent be placed on the decking, and restrictions on lighting to prevent interference with the night light and bat activity.

We also request that this application be heard by the full development committee, and that a site visit be carried out prior to any decision being made.

In the past the Parish Council have had concerns about the use of the entire property known as Applegarth.

In July 2019 the Parish Council requested that Stroud District Council investigate the commercial activities occurring at Applegarth. In February 2021 the Parish Council confirmed to Stroud District Council that there was continued commercial activity and the start of unauthorised building work.

Soul Simple, a trading name for the activities carried on at Applegarth, has a current website

showing the main residence and the two structures, both subject to this application, being promoted for commercial gain. https://3aee8a8f-d621-44fb-95a4-3f43daf3c91f.filesusr.com/ugd/f150c6_5513a78fbe724b10b579761ee47a8266.pdf

Extracts from the website are pictured below seen on the 31st December 2021.

The land and all buildings have been and are, still being promoted as a retreat and spa, offering accommodation in the main house, the Magical Nature Gem, (the garden room) and the Enchanting Lotus Belle the yurt sat on the raised decking.

Objection letters from two adjacent property owners provide very detailed information as to the history and current use and promotion of Applegarth and the ancillary buildings.

At the site meeting we have been assured by the applicant that there is no commercial occupation or use of the outbuildings and that they are only used by family and friends.

We would therefore request that further investigation is made immediately into the use of the property as a retreat spa, as if this use is allowed to continue, then a precedent will be set for other properties in the area to develop outbuildings in gardens, for residential use and commercial gain.

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