

WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Meeting held on Monday 14th 2018 at 7 pm in the Village Hall

MINUTES

Present

Cllr A Warner (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. J Thomas
Cllr. L Seymour
Cllr K. Braden
Cllr. S. Gabbatiss
Cllr B Gubbins
Jane Carlin (Clerk)
County Cllr Hudspeth

6 members of the public

The meeting opened at 7.00 pm. Cllr Warner welcomed all present

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Loftus (Chairman)

2. **Approval of Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 8th May 2017**

Agreed by all present and signed as a correct record of the meeting.

3. **Report by Chairman of Wootton Parish Council:** Read by Cllr Warner in Chairman's absence.. Cllr Loftus recorded his thanks to all the councillors, Jane Carlin the retiring Clerk and welcome to Bobby Damerall her replacement. There have been a number of planning applications approved during the year. The annual accounts have been approved and signed off by the Responsible Financial Officer, as has the internal audit report for 2017/18. The balance brought forward to 1st April 2018 is £12,714 – which includes £7,614 in the No. 2 Account. This account specifically holds donations for the Play Corner refurbishment. Fixed Assets held remain at £69,884. Six grants totalling £3,763 (2017/18 - £4,237) were agreed in response to precept applications for 2018/19. This was three fewer than last year.

- These precepts will be paid in two halves to match the precept payments to us from WODC
- I would remind applicants that we would like to see full details of how this year's precepts have been spent and a detailed breakdown of how monies requested will be spent in 2019/20.

Sadly the provision of public transport is far from satisfactory but we are fortunate to have a limited service from Our Bus Bartons for which WPC gladly continues to make financial contributions. I would also like to thank all the organisations whose members do so much for the village, to the RFO (Ric Adams) and the internal auditor (Phil Parker) and of course to our County and District colleagues. Finally, I would like to encourage more members of the Parish to attend our meetings which are open to all. This enables the Council to hear first hand the feelings and thoughts of those we are here to represent.

4. **Community Police Officer Report:** Phil Workman kindly attended and gave out information sheets reporting a total of 24 reported Crime incidents in Wootton Parish. This is an increase of 7 during the last 12 months but this is mainly due to an increase in Crime Related Incidents. This category includes Domestic Incidents, where no criminal offences occurred and Adult/Child Protection incidents whereby the police are informed of vulnerable persons in the community and their details are shared with partner agencies. These were broken down as

Dangerous Dogs, etc	11
Assault with injury	1
Criminal damage	1
Burglary in a dwelling	2

Theft from a vehicle	3
Theft or unauthorised taking of a vehicle	2
Theft attempt	1
Arson	1
Road Traffic Collision	1
Drink/Drive Incident	1

PCSO Phil Workman urged the public to use the **Thames Valley Alert** system which is the best way the police can communicate with the public and receive messages back. This is especially useful with the Neighbourhood Team being now based at Kidlington. The **Thames Valley Alert** enables messages to be sent out relevant only to Wootton and of interest to different community groups. Anyone can sign up for this on www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk. The Neighbourhood Team are now more of a problem solving team, which means they will act on current intelligence, crime trends and issues that affect the community the most and are able to work with other Neighbourhood Teams. The current Local Policing Priorities are Domestic Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation, Dwelling Burglaries and the Exploitation of Persons for the supply of drugs. The police rely on information from a number of sources: schools, parents, Youth Clubs or general information around the parish. If the public notices anything out of the ordinary or of concern about the welfare of a child or adult please call 101 or report anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. Finally, look out for your Woodstock officers during the Royal Wedding on May 19th – all leave and rest days have been cancelled in order that they can assist with the event in London.

Phil mentioned that several local villages are now using **Community Speedwatch** as a means of controlling speed through the community. The monitoring 'gun' can be purchased for approx £100 and the police will give training to volunteers

5. Presentations by Village Organisations;

PCC Revd. Stephen Jones stressed that in villages like ours the Church is very much a focal point for worship, reflection and special events. There is a need to expand the space available within the Church to make it more adaptable for wider use for children to work together for Christian teaching and for special services and concerts as well as providing the 'special place' for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals. The PCC is genuinely grateful that the congregation and other friends give generously but with continually rising costs the necessity of keeping a medieval building in good order is both difficult and ongoing. St Mary's is now preparing for our Open Gardens and Flower Festival and looking forward to another visit from our French friends, whose visit was so moving last year.. Future plans include Harvest Thanksgiving, a Pets Service and the commemoration of the centenary of the end of World War 1 with a Service and tea. We are thankful for the goodwill and support that enables us to journey on in faith.

Village Hall - Marlene reported that refurbishments over the past year have included installation of a new audio visual system and the purchase of twelve lightweight tables to replace the heavy existing ones. New curtains are due to be rehung and the installation of electric hand dryers in the three toilets. Plans are in process for new stage curtains. In October last year the 100th village hall talk was given by Alexandra Shulman, editor of Vogue for 25 years and was an occasion for celebration. Since then Andy Morgan, who was mainly responsible for the talks programme has stepped down from the committee and Mimi Shepherd has moved to Long Hanborough, both of whom were extremely active members and made a huge contribution. Three new members of the committee are welcomed – Terry Hurley as treasurer, Janet Mead for hall bookings and Bernadette O'Brien as talks organiser. The first talk of the new season will be on May 25th and given by Jinny Blom, an esteemed garden designer. The only problem over the past year has been access to the hall – we now require 17 keys for regular users with a spare key in the shop! As a fallback, there is a keypad safe outside Andy Warner's house and the passcode can be obtained by ringing Andy on his mobile. Plans for the future include refurbishment of the kitchen and improved storage facilities

Wootton Conservation Trust - The Trust is delighted that the Wootton Village School has been able to continue to enjoy seasonal visits to the meadows which includes planting snowdrops, wild daffodils and snakes head fratillaries. Maintenance has been greatly helped by the regular visits of the Oxford Conservation Volunteers, who welcome local people, provide instruction as to hand tool use and are fully insured. Their work includes

scrub clearance, gate post and catch replacement and repairs to non slip planks on the main river bridge. Currently work is needed near the ponds in order to completely enclose the water meadows - repairing fences is a continuing task and replacing fence posts by hand a slow job. Contractors are unwilling to bring in heavy equipment for small jobs. In the winter months little egrets have been visiting the water meadows and an otter has been sighted. The agricultural subsidy, which largely pays for maintenance of the site will continue for some years after Brexit and it is hoped that environmental management will continue to be a top priority to enable this County Wildlife Site and its valuable grassland ecology to thrive.

Village Stores – (Read in absence) The £787 granted by the Parish Council is used to fund the Parcel Box and Mon – Fri collection by the Royal Mail, which is used daily for both personal and home-business mail. Wootton Stores continues to thrive and is a central village hub as well as providing a very valuable service to the community. Last November was the 10-year anniversary celebrated by the community with cake and bubbly. Recent refurbishment projects have been carried out and Rachel, the manager, and management committee work hard to maintain the scope, service and benefits the shop brings to the village and wider community. New products and services are introduced, often in response to customer requests, along with staple products whilst prices are kept at a competitive and reasonable level. Supporting local producers is an important aspect along with advertising and promoting village organisations. The shop is a great asset to the village providing a warm and friendly welcome and a focal point for visitors seeking information. We are grateful to all in the community who support the shop on a regular basis and especially for the time and effort put in by our dedicated volunteers. New customers and new volunteers are always welcome and would like to encourage more people from the village to join in supporting their community shop. The AGM will be held in July, date to be confirmed. (Julia Hurley)

Wootton CE Primary School - Chris Elliott, Chair of Governors, was unable to attend but sent a report thanking the Parish Council for its continued support. Last year's precept grant enabled all the children in Key Stage 2 the opportunity to learn an orchestral instrument. This year's precept grant will help develop a new website platform for the school, the current one being very outdated and difficult to use. The school's website is often a prospective parent's first impression of the school and is critical to providing a positive impression. The funding support continues to be most welcome as like many small rural schools the financial position is fragile with costs per pupil exceeding income received.. To this end, Chris Elliott outlined plans that seek to protect the school's viability for the future

- revisiting the feasibility of relocating the school to a new site within the village - although at present, due to a lower pupil intake forecast across the region by OCC and a shortfall in funding needed to invest in the redevelopment, this initiative has been put on hold
- Converting the school into a multi-academy trust (ODST) to give more flexibility on sharing resources and savings on services. Consultations have been completed and the school will be converting to ODST for the new academic year.
- Refocussing in the short term on potential opportunities to share resources with other local schools.

The school has now established a regular update in Outreach and in January 2018 achieved an 'Outstanding' rating in its SIAMS inspection.

Wootton Baby, Toddler and Pre-School Group - Kirstie sent a report, read by her husband Graham, with the good news that for the first time in many years the group is running with regular attenders and provides a social network for Mums in the village and surrounding areas, including external fun events. The concentration this year has been on improving the toddler toys to enable the themes of toys to be changed each week. The Committee has recently expanded to five members and average attendance is nine children a week with a maximum of around thirteen. Currently the group is awaiting a quote to re-organise the internal shed to make the toys more easily accessible and prevent breakages of equipment. The group are especially grateful for the revised cost of hall hire which has made a huge difference to the ability to save and improve the toys and arts and crafts. There are refreshments and home made cake on offer, donated by a couple of the committee members and overall huge satisfaction that so many families are now attending the group.

Wootton Memorial Playing Field: Ann Day, Chair, gave thanks to the Parish Council for the £600 precept grant and to John Benfield for mowing the field. The football season has just finished and Wootton has two mens teams and also boys and girls teams from Kidlington and Stonesfield playing regularly on the small pitch. Grateful thanks to James Parsons for allowing us to put the tractor in his barn over winter. It is hoped this mower will be serviced soon as it needs resetting and sharpening. A quote has been obtained from Meadhams of £1,500 and it

will be helpful if this is done through the Parish Council to reclaim the £300 VAT. The sit on mower has been used this summer but tends to overheat due to the long grass and in addition a petrol mower has been purchased for the outskirts of the field.. Wonderful news that the play corner funding is almost in place with a target due for completion of 1st September. David Ackers has kindly offered to do another firework display and Rospa are due to inspect the play corner in July. A balance sheet was given for records.

Wootton Sports Club – Cllr Thomas read a report from Dave Allen, Secretary. The Club has managed to support two sides, both of which started the season well . The first team finished 6th in a very competitive division and the reserves finished a very creditable 4th. It was a difficult season with the weather causing many postponements but Dave Allen and Jacob Cooke worked hard to get the pitch ready every week. Thanks also to Joan and Ted Thomas for their hard work and commitments and also to Kip Day for his bar work – and for the valuable support of the kit washers Kath Davis and Zoe

Wootton Cricket Club: thanked the Parish Council for their precept grant contribution to the newly founded club. They now have the money to improve the cricket square on the playing field and it is hoped that home games can be played in the very near future.

Wootton Relief in Need: : presented a balance sheet.

6. Any Other Business

- **Update on fund raising for the Playing Field Play Area:** Mr Graham Lawrence, Chairman of the fundraising committee, advised that the estimated total cost of the refurbishment is £49,000 of which £32,000 is already secured (65%) Two further grant applications have been submitted and if successful will be available mid-July to complete the money needed. Very grateful thanks to Graham Lawrence and his team for all their amazing hard work in achieving their goal. The suppliers of equipment have been contacted to finalise their designs and the aim is to book a summer spot for the work to begin.
- **Retiring Clerk:** Cllr Warner gave the Parish Councils thanks and a presentation to the retiring Clerk, Jane Carlin. Mr Bobby Damerell will be taking over as the new Clerk and we welcome him and wish him good luck. His e-mail address is: bobsdamerell@hotmail.com

The Annual Meeting ended at 7.30pm and was immediately followed by the meeting of Wootton Parish Council. The date of the next Annual Parish Meeting is Monday 13th May 2019 at 7pm

Jane Carlin (Clerk)