

## WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at 7.30 pm on Monday 14 March 2022 in Wootton Village Hall

#### Present

Cllrs J Thomas (Chairman), F Bates, M Eccles-Williams, J Harwood, J Hoare, A Molyneux, J Salter.

#### In attendance

Cllr A Graham (OCC)

The meeting opened at 7.30 pm

**1 Election of Chairman** Cllr Hoare nominated, Cllr Salter seconded, Cllr Thomas for the office of Chairman. There being no other candidates Cllr Thomas was duly elected.

**2 By-election to the Parish Council** At the recent by-election the following were elected uncontested: Frances Bates, John Harwood and Andrew Molyneux. The Chairman welcomed them to their first meeting.

**3 Apologies** None

**4 Disclosure of interests** Cllrs Molyneux and Harwood reported that they had submitted their statements to the WODC Monitoring Officer, Cllr Bates handed her form to the Chairman.

**5 Minutes of the meetings on 10 January and 11 February 2022** The council noted with regret that there were no minutes of the meeting held on 10 January. Notes of the meeting on 11 February had been circulated and were accepted as draft minutes. The Council resolved, with Cllrs Bates, Harwood and Molyneux abstaining, to approve them as the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2022

**6 Matters arising from the minutes** The Chairman referred to the absence of any minutes of the meeting held on 10 January. This was the meeting at which it had been decided to request the County Council to implement a 20 mph speed limit in the village. However as the minute of the meeting could not be submitted to OCC it would be necessary to pass a further resolution to that effect.

Cllr Harwood proposed, Cllr Salter seconded,

***The council resolves to apply to Oxfordshire county council for the reduction in the Wootton village speed limit from 30 mph to 20 mph, with the boundaries of the 20 mph zone to be agreed in due course in consultation with County Cllr Andy Graham and the appropriate county officers.***

After discussion the Council agreed and it was resolved accordingly.

**7 Appointment of Parish Clerk** The Chairman reported that she was receiving support from the experienced clerk from another nearby parish in West Oxfordshire, who was being of great assistance in sorting through the papers and files inherited from the previous Chairman. Nevertheless it was agreed that someone fully able to act as clerk for the council was needed as a matter of urgency. The position had been advertised on the website of the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (AOLC) with a closing date for applications of 11 April. Concern was expressed that even in its revised form the advertisement might not attract any suitable candidates. Meanwhile the need for support was becoming increasingly urgent.

Accordingly, Cllr Harwood proposed, Cllr Molyneux seconded,

*The council resolves to appoint a temporary clerk to enable the council to operate effectively in the period before a permanent appointment is made.*

*The council notes that a clerk from another small parish in West Oxfordshire has offered to undertake the role, and resolves to set up a group of three councillors including the Chairman to interview and if satisfactory, to make the appointment.*

*This appointment would be on a strictly temporary basis and without prejudice to the appointment of the permanent clerk.*

After discussion this was agreed and it was resolved accordingly.

**8 County and District Council report** Cllr Graham reported on a number of developments.

(i) The government had extended the period in which it was subsidising rural bus services and this would enable the county council to continue supporting them. However when the subsidy came to an end it would be important for local buses to be used or the services would be forced to close.

(ii) New parking arrangements were being proposed for Woodstock, which attempted to balance the various interests of visitors, shoppers and local businesses. Often these tended to conflict so the development had not been without challenges.

The proposals were on the website: [https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/woodstock\\_parking2022](https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/woodstock_parking2022) and he encouraged all those interested to respond to the consultation.

(iii) New housing developments in Woodstock and other parts of West Oxfordshire, where he had serious concerns about the extent of new building, that not nearly enough houses for local people were being built, and that the increase in traffic would cause increasingly serious congestion problems.

**9 Planning issues** There was nothing to report

**10 Payments and Receipts** The Chairman reported the following payments which had been made:

Date	Recipient	Amount
14/12/2021	NFU Insurance – Burditch Hall	£951.69
14/12/2021	Village Hall – Room Hire	£8.00
28/02/2022	Timpsons – Locks & Keys	£254.15

A question was raised about the Council's budget for the forthcoming financial year. It was not clear whether the draft budget had been finalised or approved by the Council. The Chairman undertook to establish this and if no formal approval had been given then to call an extraordinary meeting to be held before the beginning of the next financial year in order to provide the authority for the Council's spending.

**11 Grass Cutting contract** The Chairman reported that the current contractor was unable to continue and the contract therefore needed to be advertised. Documents containing the schedule of areas to be cut and the required frequencies were available and she requested authority from the Council for a suitable advertisement to be drawn up and placed in appropriate media. This was agreed and the Council resolved accordingly.

**12 Combined litter/dog waste bins** In line with changes in policy, WODC had recently removed the separate bins for dog waste and for litter and replaced them with combined bins, some of which were in different locations. It was felt that not all the new locations were appropriate and that the removal of dog waste bins adjacent to the entrance to the Jubilee meadow and near to the playing field was a retrograde step. With the help from members of the public present at the meeting various moves were proposed. These were (i) bin by the allotments to move to the Jubilee meadow entrance; (ii) bin by school to opposite the well; (iii) litter bin to be provided in Castle Rd near Yew Tree House/Rectory; (iv) bin by seat near the bridge to be moved further away from the seat. Cllr Graham undertook to liaise with the relevant WODC officers and establish the feasibility of these changes. A report back to the Council would follow, together with any financial implications, and the Council would be able to make a firm decision on what changes it required.

**13 Platinum Jubilee** Marlene Fisher was invited to report on preparations being made for the village to celebrate the Jubilee. The Jubilee will be celebrated over the four days, Thursday 2 – Sunday 6 June. The village plans so far being considered envisage a Beacon lighting on the Thursday; a showing in the village hall of a film of the coronation followed in the evening by a party for young people on Friday; on Saturday a grand parade from the Jubilee meadow to the centre of the village for a street party, with a barn dance in the evening; and on the Sunday a special church service followed by a tea in the afternoon. What would be most helpful for the volunteers working on these plans would be to know whether any financial help could be available from the Council. After discussion, it was agreed that the Council would be prepared to make a grant of £250 if this was match-funded by OCC from Cllr Graham's local fund. This was agreed.

**14 Any other business** A question from the public was asked about the Burditch Hall but the Chairman reported that there was no further information available. Cllr Hoare reported that she was aware of another group which might be interested in leasing the building but was not in a position to say anything further at this stage.

**15 Next meeting** If needed, the date of an extraordinary meeting to consider the budget for 2022-23 would be announced.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm