

WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Meeting held on Monday 8th 2017 at 7 pm in the Village Hall

MINUTES

Present

Cllr P Loftus (Chair)
Cllr A Warner
Cllr. J Thomas
Cllr. L Seymour
Cllr K. Braden
Cllr. S. Gabbatiss
Jane Carlin (Clerk)
County Cllr Hudspeth
District Cllr Cotrell-Dormer
8 members of the public



The meeting opened at 7.00 pm. The Chairman welcomed all present

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Gubbins
2. **Approval of Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 9th May 2016**
Agreed by all present and signed as a correct record of the meeting.
3. **Report by Chairman of Wootton Parish Council:** Cllr Loftus thanked all the Councillors and Clerk for the time and effort they put in on behalf of the community.. During the year three objections to planning applications have been raised by the Parish council – Mill Lane, subsequently withdrawn and currently Parrotts staff bungalow and Killingworth Castle cottages, both applications still in progress.. The Annual Accounts have been approved and signed off. The opening balance for 2017/18 is £5,854 which includes £662 in the No 2 Account for Special Projects. The Fixed Assets held remain at £69,884. Nine grants totalling £4,237 (2016/17 £3,987) were agreed in response to precept applications for 2017/18. This was three more than last year. The precepts will be paid in two halves to match the precept payments to us from WODC . Sadly, the provision of public transport is far from satisfactory but at least we have a limited service from Our Bus Bartons which has recently been increased to three days a week. A donation has been made from WPC. I would also like to thank all the organisations whose members do so much for the village, to the Responsible Financial Officer (Ric Adams) and the Internal Auditor (Phil Parker) and of course to our County and District Colleagues.
4. **Community Police Officer Report:** Phil Workman kindly attended and gave out information sheets reporting a total of 17 reported Crime incidents in Wootton Parish. These were broken down as
 - 1 Assault without injury
 - 2 Assault with injury
 - 3 Burglary Non-dwelling
 - 2 Burglary in a dwelling
 - 1 Missing Person
 - 1 Theft or unauthorised taking of a vehicle
 - 1 Road Traffic Offence
 - 2 Theft from Motor Vehicle
 - 1 Vehicle Interference
 - 1 Domestic Incidents
 - 1 Making off without payment
 - 1 Theft or unauthorised taking of Mail

He reiterated crime prevention advice, especially in the summer months and in particular garden sheds and outbuildings where expensive power tools are stored. All crime prevention advice can be found at www.thamesvalley.police.uk or via Thames Valley Alert, which keeps people informed of crime trends in their area www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk. He also asked if the police could be informed when the 'Nottingham Knockers' are in the area selling door to door household goods. As well as being a nuisance these young men are on the lookout for vulnerable households etc with the potential of passing the information on. Please phone 101 to notify.

The PC raised the issue of speeding, in particular along the B4027. PC Workman mentioned that both Cassington and Bladon have now introduced community speed watches, where volunteers operate a speed gun at chosen times. The purpose is to educate rather than prosecute, offenders being sent a warning letter, which after three such letters would be put on the police database. The scheme needs to be operated through the Parish Council for purposes of Public Liability Insurance. PC Workman to send further details. He also agreed to bring the matter to the attention of Road Policing to see if a speed trap could be set up, although this very much depends on resources.

5. Presentations by Village Organisations;

PCC Revd. Stephen Jones reports a good and productive year, with Church members giving generously and taking a full part in the life of the wider community. The churchyard is well maintained thanks to the Contractor and local volunteers and follows the recommendations of the Church's Advisory Group on Churchyards to keep a 'wildlife area' important for the continuation of many threatened species. Likewise the Church Clock is a welcome reminder of a gentler pace of life. It is important that the Church be well kept and open and welcome to parishioners and visitors alike. It is recognised that villages are changing and Sundays are now very different to what they used to be but the Church's role is to continue to be a sign of God's love, a source of strength and reassurance and a place of welcome to all.

Village Hall - Simon Heighes, Chair of the management committee, began by thanking Joy Pomfret, who has resigned because of continuing ill health, for more than 40 years dedication and support. Mimi Shepherd is Treasurer/Administrator and Marlene Fisher continues as Secretary. He reports that the Hall has had a very successful year supporting a wide range of activities as well as being used almost daily by the local school. The high usage enables a low hiring charge to be continued. Health and Safety is of prime importance and the Hall has worked with the school to upgrade the standard conditions of hire and appointed Andy Warner as the new Health and Safety Officer. Under a new insurance cover cooking in the kitchen is now fully covered which means events like the pancake party can go ahead. The monthly Talks continue to be a huge success and all are fully booked until October, when the 100th talk will be celebrated as a very special occasion. The funds have enabled 100 new comfortable chairs and forty light weight ones with trolleys for ease of stacking to be purchased. New lightweight tables are planned to be purchased. The old chairs went to a grateful scout group in Milton Keynes. Last summer the windows were repaired and painted on the inside, the walls given a coat of creosote and the garden redesigned and planted (especial thanks to Marlene Fisher). In process is the installation of a new audio visual system, new curtains for stage and windows and redesign of the washroom. In conclusion grateful thanks to the community for supporting our village hall

Village Stores – Jane Scott, Chair of the Wootton Community Shop Association, thanked the Parish Council for the £787 precept payment which is used to fund the Parcel Box and Daily collection by the Royal Mail. The shop provides this vital service to the village and it is used daily for both personal and home-business mail. Wootton Stores is a community shop and is a non-profit making organisation. Rachel, the manager and the management committee work hard to maintain the scope, service and benefits that the shop brings to the village. The shop stocks both new products in response to requests and staple basics at competitive prices as well as supporting local producers. Other valued services include prescription collection and dry cleaning. The shop is a great asset to the village as well as a focal point for visitors seeking information. The management is grateful for the time and effort of dedicated volunteers who ensure it can open, even on bank holidays. New volunteers are welcomed, as is comment and feedback. The village shop requires the support of the whole community to thrive and encourages more people from the village to become involved and support it. The AGM will be held on 12th July.

Wootton CE Primary School - Chris Elliott, Chair of Governors, thanked the Parish Council for the precept grant which is being used to part fund the First Access music programme, which enables all children in the school, including Special Needs pupils, to experience playing a variety of orchestral instruments. The competent music teacher is able to oversee several children at a time in an informal classroom setting and is much enjoyed by all

participants. The school currently has 57 children enrolled and like many small rural schools the financial position is fragile and with income per pupil frozen in real terms it costs increasingly more per pupil than the income we receive. As an example, the Universal Infant Free School meals government policy does not come free to the school and we have to divert around £10,000 a year of budget to 'balance' the books on this service. In order to secure the long term financial stability of the school we are looking at two significant initiatives - 1) revisiting the feasibility of relocating the school to a new site within the village. With numbers of 100 – 105 enrolled the school would be much more sustainable 2) Conducting a full consultation on converting the school into a multi-academy trust which will give more flexibility on sharing resources and potential efficiency saving. On a positive note, Chris reports a governing body at full strength which is of huge benefit and a thriving after school sports activities programme such as ice skating in winter and tennis club in the summer months.

Wootton Baby, Toddler and Pre-School Group - Kirstie Lawrence sent a report detailing some successful changes with the group running at its best for several years. The time has been extended to two hours on a Friday morning 9am – 11 am to enable mothers who do the school drop to attend with their little ones and the cost has been increased to £1.50 which includes tea and cake. New seating and tables for art and craft activities for the toddlers has been provided through fundraising and a recent drop in hall costs. During the summer season Burditch Hall was used to enjoy the space of the field for older children. The Parish Council precept grant and donations will be put towards improving the baby play area with new and hygienic matting and new shelving for storage of equipment. The group is able to run weekly on the generosity of the three committee members who provide arts, crafts, homemade cake, tea and coffee and snacks for the children. It provides a friendly, supportive group for parents of Wootton and surrounding villages to enable them to create a network of people around them at a time quite often needed. The children are able to build on friendships which encourage them to move confidently on to the village school. The group welcomes any suggestions and offers of future fundraising to promote it further.

Playing Field: Ann Day, Chair, gave thanks to the Parish Council and a special one to John, who mows the big field. The play corner is twenty years old with repairs becoming ever more costly and it has been decided to fund raise for new equipment. The school children with the help of Sarah Brown have had fun working on the project working out costings and voting on choice of equipment. A Fun Day is to be organised in the school holidays to report on progress and it is hoped the whole village will get involved in fund raising. The cricket square has been reseeded and levelled – many thanks to Joe and his team from Wootton Place. In response to queries, the next official Beacon lighting will be November 2018 to commemorate 100 years since the end of the First World War.

Wootton Sports Club – gave a report of mixed fortunes of the two football teams. The first team came a respectable fourth place in division 3 and the reserves found themselves without a manager after just one game. Enormous thanks to Jacob Cooke for stepping in and taking over. It is hoped that all the players will re-sign next season and have more success. Thanks were expressed to Klp Day for his help with the food and drinks after the home games, Joan and Ted Thomas for the effort they put into the club and special thanks to the kit washers, Kath Davis for the first team and Zoe and Ann Day for the reserves.

Cliff Loftus reiterated that future precept requests must be accompanied by a detailed accounting of how the money received in 2017 was spent and how monies requested for 2018 will be spent.

Wootton Relief in Need: : presented a balance sheet.

5. Any Other Business

The Annual Meeting ended at 7.45pm and was immediately followed by the meeting of Wootton Parish Council. The date of the next Annual Parish Meeting is Monday 14th May 2018 at 7pm

Jane Carlin (Clerk)