



WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

Dave Kent
Clerk to the Council

Clive Hooper
Deputy Clerk

Parish Office
West Dean Centre
High Street
Bream
Glos.
GL15 6JW

Tel. Parish Office: 01594 564484 (9.00am – 1.00pm)
Email: admin@westdeanpc.org.uk
Web site: www.westdeanpc.org.uk

COUNCIL MINUTES

PUBLIC FORUM

There was no Public Forum

Present:

WDPC COUNCILLORS: B Freshwater (BF), A Grant (AG), S Crick (SC), J Richmond (JR), A Moore (AM), M Costley (MC), P Dunford (PD), B Evans (BE), S Francis (SF), S Yeates (SY), A Bruce (AB) and J Dale (JD). D Kent (Clerk) was in attendance
R Boyles (GCC and FODDC Councillor)

COUNCIL FORMAL BUSINESS

1.1 Election of Chair for 2020-21.

B Freshwater was elected unanimously as Chair for the forthcoming year

1.2 Election of Deputy Chair for 2020-21

A Grant was elected unanimously as Deputy Clerk for 2020-21

1.3 Apologies were received from: Parish Councillors D Oliver, C Smith and B Gayler

1.4 Chair's Announcement

It was noted that the standing agenda item on the Yorkley Court Farm in respect of S106 moneys and planning enforcement did not appear on the agenda, as there had been no developments. The Clerk to seek an update from the District Council, advising FODDC Deputy Leader P Hiett, and the matter to be restored to the agenda for the next meeting.

It was noted that there were no members of the public present (except R Boyles, who was present as a District and County Councillor). Consideration would be given to giving greater prominence to advice on public attendance at virtual Council meetings.

It was noted that some of the financial items in the agenda would be referred to the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting to be held 11th June 2020.

1.5 Declarations of Interest

None received

1.6 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – The minutes of the meeting on 29th April 2020 were accepted as a true record to be signed by the Chair as soon as is feasible.

1.7 Meeting Protocols

The proposed meeting protocol was considered.

The issue of public participation in on-line Council meetings had been considered in Item 1.4 above, and would be considered at the next Parish Council meeting.

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2. Items for discussion and decision

2.1 Corona Virus Emergency

A report on community and council action was presented by SC.

It was reported that new referrals to support schemes were now minimal, and concerns were now focussed at identifying persons needing long term support, perhaps beyond the period of the current emergency. Such support would be supplied on a 'confidential' basis.

AM advised that District Council funding was required for these activities and for restoring the communities to normality after the crisis was over.

BF invited ideas for the distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Council ex-BT kiosks could be considered by councillors, and BF offered assistance in providing shelving within these structures to contain PPE.

It was agreed that the West Dean Centre would remain closed in line with government advice, and in consultation with the Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils. The decision to re-open the Centre under these circumstances was delegated to Chair and Clerk. Before reopening, a 'deep clean' of the centre would be commissioned.

It was noted that the District Council was holding £77k for retail outlets to fund measures to support the gradual easing of restrictions towards the end of the emergency period. Possible areas to be funded could include the suspension of fees at District Council car parks and signage encouraging shoppers to observe social distancing advice. Councillors were invited to suggest ideas to the Clerk.

Some members commented that our web site was not intuitive enough and some items were difficult to find. The Chair is to review the web site and report back to Council.

2.2 Finance & Staffing

i) Council asserted its right to use the General Power of Competence, as more than 2/3 of councillors are elected members (this includes councillors elected unopposed, but not co-opted councillors), and as the Clerk has a recognised professional Qualification (Certificate in Local Government Administration).

ii) It was noted that the EDGE financial package as in the process of being implemented.

iii) The payment schedule attached was approved.

iv) PD and JR were appointed as electronic signatories for May payments.

v) Financial inspections were suspended until the EDGE system was fully implemented.

vi) It was agreed that Standing Orders should be set up for the salary payments for Clerk and Deputy Clerk and for NI and PAYE contributions to HMRC.

vii) It was agreed that the grant award of £5,000 to Bream Early Learners, which had been withheld pending the start of operations to build the new classroom, could now be released.

2.3 Climate Emergency

A written report was provided.

It was noted that an approach had been made to Forestry England (FE) to lease land at the Rudge, Yorkley, for use as a Village Veg garden. The Village Veg committee was preparing a proposal for FE. It was noted that negotiations for the lease/licence of land at Maypole, Bream, were in progress with the landowner.

It was agreed that the further sum of £500.00 for the development of Village Veg gardens should be released.

2.4 Defibrillators

It was agreed that, following Council policy, a defibrillator would be procured for installation at an ex-BT telephone kiosk in Berry Hill. The local community would provide 50% of the costs.

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It was noted that signage indicating the locations of defibrillators was necessary, and the Clerk would investigate the provision of signage and information leaflets.

2.5 Chair's Report

Covered above.

3. Items to Report

3.1 Forest Edge South Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

It was noted that progress appeared to be slow and that there was a lack of engagement between the project team and the Parish Council. Councillors from the area were requested to get more involved in the project.

3.2 Planning

It was noted that Council was still reviewing planning applications. The Clerk was sending applications received to the relevant ward councillor, who under delegated powers would send observations to the District Council through the Clerk.

The potential decision by the District Council no longer to send out the full portfolio of planning documents for each planning application was reported.

This would have serious implications on the capacity of councillors to evaluate applications.

The Council did not currently have the capacity to produce paper copies larger than size A4.

Three options would be considered:

1 Council to request that the planning applicant should provide documents for all statutory consultees

2 Council to procure a printer capable of providing larger copies

3 Council to outsource the provision of paper copies larger than A4

3.3 Highways Issues

It was noted that there were still issues at Yorkley Court Farm and on the Bream to Pike House Road. The County Council recording system for highways issues was identified as providing insufficient information on the location of incidents.

3.4 Dean Forest Greenway

It was noted that the Chair and Clerk had walked the track the previous week.

The following decisions and observations were made:

1 It was resolved that £3,000.00 should be allocated to cover expenses incurred in creating the exploratory boreholes at the location of the track underpass.

2 However, no further payments would be made until a letter ('comfort letter') had been received confirming that in principle all major landowners on the track had been prepared to support the project. This assurance was not necessarily to be a contract, but a commitment to engage positively on land use issues.

3 Assurances for future cooperation in funding the project would be sought from Lydney Town Council. If necessary, The Chair and Clerk would attend a meeting of LTC if necessary to explain the situation.

4 A Heritage Impact Assessment may be necessary

5 Pedestrian access from the proposed development at the old pin factory at Whitecroft to the village was likely to be important to the project, and should be incorporated in the planning documents for this development. Some early communication with District Council Planning Department would be desirable.

3.5 Clerk's Report - Noted

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3.6 Deputy Clerk's Report

The following decisions were made:

1 A meeting of all kiosk stakeholders would be arranged by the Deputy Clerk to determine actions and priorities.

2 The request for Dean Forest Radio to use the West Dean Centre was approved.

3 It was agreed that the Finance & Staffing Committee at its meeting on 11th June 2020 would consider the various quotations for replacing or repairing the fences at the Crow Ash Play Park in Berry Hill.

It was noted that at the end of the Covid 19 emergency an extraordinary meeting should be held to identify issues arising from the emergency and from the Councils response to it.

The meeting closed at 10.05 pm.

3.1 Forest Edge South NDP

No information available

3.2 Planning Committee

A schedule of responses prepared under delegated powers was received.

The Clerk would pursue matters of planning enforcement at sites in Yorkley and Pillowell, and the Yorkley Court Farm S106 moneys issue, with FODDC.

Council was asked to provide more members of the Planning Committee.

The shortage of staff at the FODDC Planning Department was noted.

3.3 Highways Issues Report

GCC had reported extra capacity to deal with potholes and more routine defects, and had invited the Council to identify highway faults to be fixed. A schedule of Council's response, with any action undertaken by GCC, was presented.

3.4 Clerk's Report

The report was received

3.5 Deputy Clerk's Report

It was agreed that a report on Forest of Dean Radio and the options for the repair of the fence at the Crow Ash Play Park would be presented at the next meeting. It was noted that a deep clean of the West Dean Centre would be required before it was made available to the public again.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.