



WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

Dave Kent
Clerk to the Council

Clive Hooper
Deputy Clerk

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COUNCIL MINUTES

PUBLIC FORUM

There was no Public Forum

Present:

WDPC COUNCILLORS: B Freshwater (BF), S Crick (SC), A Moore (AM), M Costley (MC), P Dunford (PD), B Evans (BE), S Yeates (SY), A Bruce (AB), B Gayler, S Francis (SF) and J Dale (JD). D Kent (Clerk) and C Hooper (Deputy Clerk) were in attendance

COUNCIL FORMAL BUSINESS

1.1 Apologies were received from: Parish Councillors D Oliver, A Grant and J Richmond

1.2 Declarations of Interest

None received

1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – The minutes of the meeting on 24th June 2020 were accepted as a true record to be signed by the Chair as soon as is feasible.

1.4 Co-option of Councillor

It was agreed that in view of there being no demand from ward electors for an election to fill the Bream vacancy, Council would proceed to fill the post by co-option. It was agreed that Council's customary process would be observed, to invite applications from members of the public by submission of a CV followed by a brief personal presentation at the next Council meeting for a decision.

1.5 Meeting Protocols

There was concern that remote access meetings restricted participation by the public and was therefore unsatisfactory, but other views expressing concerns about the dangers of public meetings were also expressed.

The possibility of a hybrid system of meeting protocols was considered. This would enable a conventional live meeting to be held, but would permit remote access from councillors or members of the public who were unable to attend. This process would require technical equipment which would need some investigation.

It was agreed that the Clerk would present a series of options to Council's next meeting.

2. Items for discussion and decision

2.1 Corona Virus Emergency

i) Community Action

It was noted that there was less activity recently as the emergency period progressed.

AB noted the good work carried out by SC and Claire Phillips of St James' Church, Bream.

644

It was agreed that:

A specially designed thank you card would be printed and sent to all volunteers. The Clerk would prepare a draft design for Council consideration.

Consideration would be given to preparing (subject to GDPR) a data base of volunteers to be contacted in the event of a future emergency.

A Christmas event (subject to government restrictions at the time) would be held to celebrate the good work of Councillors and community volunteers during the Covid 19 emergency.

ii) Re-opening of West Dean Centre

It was noted that the maintenance work proposed at the Centre would not prevent a September opening of the Centre. The kitchen refurbishment would be completed during August, the Centre would still be useable if the exterior work had not been completed by the end of August.

The Deputy Clerk had contacted all Centre users in respect of protocols to be observed on return to the Centre, including cleaning and distancing requirements. Users were also requested to advise whether in view of the potential restrictions they were likely to wish to return.

The Deputy Clerk would provide a report at the following meeting.

He had also contacted the Office Cleaner about her availability to work extra hours if necessary.

It was agreed that the target re-opening date would be set for 1st September, but this will be subject to suitable protocols for users to be formulated and accepted, and a sufficient take up of users returning to make the re-opening of the Centre viable.

The Deputy Clerk would provide a report to the next Council meeting.

iii) Re-opening of Council play parks

The opening of Council play parks would be subject to risk assessments.

It was noted that Council could not take responsibility for the cleaning of each item within the park before and after use, and parents would have to take that responsibility. Council staff would not be expected to act as park wardens.

Signage indicating the responsibilities of parents and disclaiming Council responsibilities would be prepared and displayed. The Deputy Clerk would monitor the situation and conduct weekly site inspections.

Subject to the above and compliance with current government and Gloucestershire Community Council advice, the West Dean Centre play park could be opened.

2.2 Finance & Staffing

i) The minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee held on 16th July 2020 were noted.

ii) The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Governance Statement was approved.

iii) The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Accounting Statements were approved.

iv) The electronic payments for July 2020 as presented were approved.

v) The automatic payments for July 2020 (standing orders and direct debits) were noted.

vi) AM and BG were appointed to provide the electronic authorisations for July 2020 bank payments.

vii) It was agreed that SF and BF would conduct the August Financial Inspection.

viii) The recommendations for the acceptance of quotations for the kitchen and exterior refurbishment of the West Dean Centre, as presented by the Deputy Clerk in conformance with the Council's Financial Regulations, were accepted. The Deputy Clerk was commended for his work in presenting this report and the reports on the opening of Council assets considered earlier in the meeting, efficiently and clearly.

ix) The Clerk would arrange for staff appraisals to take place early in September 2020 as agreed at the previous Council meeting

x) In respect of the recruitment of the Deputy Clerk, it was agreed that a timetable would be presented at the next meeting by the Clerk for the process, which would begin in September 2020.

645

xi) The overtime claim submitted by the Clerk for his exceptional hours was approved.

xii) The overtime claim submitted by the Deputy Clerk for his exceptional hours was approved.

2.3 Climate Emergency/Village Veg

The '30 Percy' bid made by the Village Veg group was presented, with the Clerk to distribute the documentation to all Councillors

It was agreed that an allocation of £15,000 would be provided from project budget funds to support this project. Funding for youth activities would not be used for this purpose.

2.4 Planning Enforcement

The following concerns were noted:

On-going issues at Yorkley Court Farm

Issues of alleged breaches of planning permissions at Clements End. The District Council had investigated this and reported that no breaches had occurred. This would be challenged.

Stag Hill concern

Swan Corner – Crossing Cottage issues

The Clerk would take up these issues with District Council Planning Enforcement.

AM would also discuss these matters with District Council Planning Enforcement.

2.5 Yorkley Court Farm

It was noted with satisfaction that all footpaths at the site were now open.

A response on the request to the District Council for the S106 fund distribution for the development at the Solar Farm was expected in a few days.

2.6 Stowe Quarry

The Clerk would advise councillors of the time limit for requests to have the application 'called in' for determination by the Secretary of State to be submitted.

2.7 Chair's Items

It was noted that the Council web site was much improved. A Council Road Safety Group had been constituted, with SF the Chair.

A process for procuring cameras and associated support poles would be developed.

Councillors were requested to advise JR of areas within their wards where the cameras could usefully be sited.

A budget of £10,500 would be made available for the purchase of 3 cameras with associated poles. Following the deployment of this equipment, further action would be taken based on data received and analysed.

Any equipment received would be made available to adjoining parishes and town councils.

Consideration would be given to supporting school education on road safety.

It was reported that a fund for community projects in Bream had been provided by a developer seeking to provide a retail outlet in the village. The Chair had produced a simple constitution for the Fund, and it was agreed that a public meeting be held, when possible, to seek community representation for a trust Fund Committee. AB and BF to be Council's representatives, with the Clerk providing administrative support.

Checks would be carried out on the planning application made by the developer.

9.30pm at this point, Council voted to extend the meeting by half an hour.

3.1 Neighbourhood Development Plan

It was reported that Plan policies were being developed

646

3.2 Planning

JD would become an active member of the Planning Committee.

PD presented a detailed objection to a planning application for the construction of 3 non-affordable houses at the Parkend Club area.

SY presented some observations on the management of planning applications for heritage and other historic buildings, in particular in respect of Pastors House, Bream. He would email concerns the District Council's handling of such applications to AM in his capacity as District Councillor.

3.3 Dean Forest Greenway

BF presented a report.

It was hoped that the planning application would be presented in late August.

To preserve the continuity of the project and to deal with any urgent action, it was decided a committee consisting of BF, PD and AG would be constituted to take any such actions.

The Clerk would seek funding for the project, and consult Lydney Town Council to confirm their continued involvement.

3.4 Clerk's Report

The report was delivered. It was agreed that Council would support the change of Parish/Town boundaries to move the Bale Recreation Ground, Mile End, from the West Dean Parish Council area to the Coleford Town Council area.

The meeting closed at 10.00pm

The next meeting would be conducted by Zoom remote access technology, 7.00 pm, Wednesday 26th August 2020.