



WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

Kim Carpenter

Clerk to the Council

Deputy Clerk

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West Dean Centre
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Number: 696

Meeting Date: 29th September 2021

Location: The West Dean Centre

COUNCIL MINUTES

PUBLIC FORUM – 7.00 pm to 7.30 pm

Presentations were made to the Council by Sharon Freeman (SF), Elaine Highfield (EH) and Bob Freshwater (BF).

Sharon briefly discussed the Yorkley Welcome Back event and thanked both the Parish Council for its support and the Clerk for dealing with the expenses incurred in spending the Welcome Back grant from FODDC.

The Forest Edge South NDP are supportive of the safe walking and cycling route between Parkend and Lydney.

Although the work of the NDP has been held up during the pandemic it has highlighted a key issue about affordable housing provision. They have received additional funding for an up-to-date housing needs survey and would be introducing a affordable housing policy within the NDP.

Elaine briefly discussed the volunteer working party that would be undertaking some of the clearance of scrub from parts of the proposed route and then need for high visibility vests (orange) being required as part of their time would be spent on DFR land. Elaine also detailed several other items, including high vis vests, cones and signs that could become part of a parish loan kit for community groups to utilise.

Bob asked about the enforcement action and the monitoring of this with the access for the new build home near crossing cottage, the clerk was asked to contact planning enforcement about this.

He also raised several further questions about the multi-use track which covered items such as insurance of volunteers, the replacement of a foot bridge near Norchard and the lead body for the project.

He then raised the issue of the clearance of sheep fouling within the villages of the parish, stating he was totally against the parish taking on this responsibility.

There followed some brief discussion about the multi-use track project and the need for openness and transparency. S Freeman added that much of the confusion about the project was caused by the lack of meetings and that all the issues, concerns and questions should be held over until the

next steering group meeting. This would then be discussed, and a full and comprehensive report provided to the next parish council meeting for debate and oversight. EH added that the working party would be covered by the Greenways consultancy insurance for the clearance works.

Cllr B Hoyland presented a brief report about the build back better fund which is offering support to small projects. She also requested that the Parish Council consider and debate which of the streetlights could be effectively turn off, this is due to the effects of the LED lights on moth populations, but the safety of residents is paramount within the discussion. There followed some discussion about this and the potential other options for the control of streetlights i.e. sensors which Cllr Hoyland confirmed were being considered.

1. Council formal business

Present:

WDPC COUNCILLORS: S Crick (SC) S Francis (SF) J Richmond (JR) S Yeates (SY) M Costley (MC) B Garside (BG) B Evans (BE) A Grant (AG) A Bruce (AB) P Dunford (PD) J Dale (JD) and A Moore (via Zoom)

K Carpenter (Clerk) in attendance

COUNTY COUNCILLOR: B Hoyland

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR:

1.1 Apologies: S Dunford, B Gayler, D Oliver, S Hiett and R Leppington

1.2 Chairman's Announcement:

No announcements.

1.3 Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

1.4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

These were agreed once the amendment to add comment from B Freshwater was included.

2. Items for discussion and decision

2.3 Dean Forest Greenway

There was much debate about this, and the questions currently being asked about this flagship project. There was some concern over documents missing from either the parish or project websites and this was making seeking clarity on some questions more difficult, this raised further discussion about the need for a mechanism to capture questions and risks, so they were managed throughout the project process.

BG proposed and was seconded by JR: Due to not documentation being available on the WDPC or the Dean Forest Greenway Portals the Steering Committee are to provide documentation to demonstrate that actions detailed in previous meetings have been completed or detailed timescales when the supporting documentation will be available. It was further agreed that a log in

the format of a balance scored card would be provided with the project overview for the purpose of improving scrutiny at future meetings. The vote was carried.

The consensus was that the work being taken on and done by the project team was impressive and that going forward there was still significant work to be done to see this project through and that by working together the objective to provide a safe walking and cycling route could be achieved.

2.1 Coronavirus Emergency

There was no further update available.

2.2 Finance and Staffing

- i) Payments were authorised
- ii) The electronic payment will be authorised by JR & PD
- iii) SF informed the meeting that the inspection was not completed but was certain that it would be done.

iv) SF requested to undertake the next inspection with BE.

v) AG The Clerk left the room for this item.

A.G. Explained the advice given from GAPTC that the council was able to assimilate KC into the role of Clerk to the Parish on a permanent basis, thus efficiently assisting with the staff shortage. The majority of the council were not in favour of this.

It was proposed by JR/BE and seconded by JD/AB that a transparent recruitment process be carried out to appoint a clerk = majority carried.

vi) The Staffing & Finance Committee have been delegated authority to undertake the process. This was proposed by JR, seconded by BE and carried in the voting.

2.4 Climate Emergency

There was some discussion about the proposed lease with Forestry England for a community growing project and it was agreed in principle that this could be further discussed.

2.5 Highways & Footpaths

JR proposed that the discussions around the footpath near crossing cottage be feedback to the Highways & Footpaths Committee as this would be covered by the works being discussed to identify and collate all public footpaths in the parish prior to 2026. There is currently no process for the adoption of new footpaths onto the definitive map and it would be useful to discuss this process using this path as an example.

There were further issues about this footpath and its access that WDPC had sought a solicitor's advice about, this will also be referred to the Highways & Footpaths Committee for further discussion and reporting. The clerk was requested to write to Forestry England about this footpath highlighting the access issues and the overgrown vegetation.

2.6 Yorkley Court Farm

There were no further updates available but there is a need to liaise with the building conservation consultant regarding the ongoing works.

2.7 Governance

SF expressed her thanks to BG, SD and KC for their input and assistance with the work on preparing and amending policy documents.

SF proposed and was seconded by JD that the Grievance Policy & Procedure be agreed = carried

SF proposed and was seconded by JR that the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure be agreed = carried
SF proposed and was seconded by AG that the Data Protection Policy be agreed = carried
SF proposed and was seconded by BE that the Equalities & Diversity Policy to agreed = carried
SF proposed and was seconded by BE that the Communication Policy be agreed = carried

The next meeting will cover the following the policy documents, Safeguarding, Lone Working, Complaints and Procurement with the Standing Orders being the final policy for review due to the need to ensure all other policies are cross referenced.

2.8 Planning

Nothing contentious was discussed at the meetings, all minutes were passed on block.

2.9 Youth Provision

The clerk reported that following the ROSPA inspections it had proved difficult to gain more than one quotation for the works identified within these individual reports that were needing to be completed at all the play parks maintained by the council. Photos were shared of further damage that had been done to both the tree house and cableway at the Bowson paly area and there was a brief discussion about these items and the need for them to be dealt with as a matter of urgency due to repeated vandalism and concerns over the safety of the structures.

It was proposed by AB and seconded by JD that signage be installed at the Bowson site detailing why items were being removed and that consultation would take place about replacements = carried.

The clerk was asked to arrange the repairs to Crowash, and West Dean play areas and arrange for the removal of the tree house and cable way at Bowson.

2.10 Web Site/Facebook page

There was some further discussion about the lack of minutes from council and its sub-committees being available on the website, SC added that there is a plan for updating the site and we need to acknowledge that some information may be missing during this period.

The clerk was asked to arrange a further meeting with the website provider to progress this project.

2.11 Welcome Back Fund

A brief oral report had been received during the public forum. JD did provide a brief update about the planters for the village halls.

2.12 Marians Walk

JR made a formal request to council for the purchase of address labels for the Berry Hill Ward = carried. The labels would be used to provide residents with questionnaires for several small potential projects in the area including Marians Walk, Kells Meend and Crowash paly area.

JR also briefly discussed The Hut and the structural survey of beneath the floor that has recently been commissioned for this site.

2.13 Training for Councillors and Officers

A request was made for chairmanship training for a number of councillors.

2.14 Newsletter

There was some discussion about the production of the newsletter for November and who could potentially assist in its production.

PD proposed and was seconded by AG that the production of the newsletter be deferred until we can engage a company to undertake the production in the required format for posting = carried

It was also agreed that the Autumn Grant Awards would be announced on the website.

3. Items for information - Councillors to Receive and Note

3.1 Forest Edge South (formerly Pillowell) Neighbourhood Development Plan

A brief update had been provided during the public forum.

3.2 Clerks Report

This report covered the Bowson play area concerns but also the offer of two oak saplings for planting on parish or public land from The Honourable Company of Gloucestershire to celebrate the Queen's platinum jubilee. There was a need to identify potential locations for the planting of the saplings but also who would receive the delivery on behalf of the parish council.

There was also some key decisions needed from the council following the West Dean Centre meeting:

- The equipment football and snooker tables utilised by a number of groups who rent the facility is broken and needs replacing – it was agreed that a budget up to £2200 would be available
- The signage throughout the centre needs to be replaced and updated following the refurbishment – it was agreed to award the works to Sign 4 You, Lydney
- There is also a project exploring the potential for the automation of the gates into the centre – this was proposed by PD and seconded by SF and was carried – further quotations will be sought by the clerk.
- The waste collection service also needed to be discussed with the lowest month cost being agreed (Suez)

4. FORTHCOMING DATES AND MEETINGS October 2021

Tuesday 5th October 2021 at 5pm – Planning Committee

Tuesday 12th October 2021 at 11am -Governance Committee

Thursday 14th October 2021 at 11am – Finance & Staffing Committee

Tuesday 19th October 2021 at 5pm – Planning Committee

Thursday 21st October 2021 at 3pm – Highways & Footpaths Committee

Wednesday 27th October 2021 at 7pm – Full Council

Meeting closed at: 10:00pm

APPENDICES

No 1 – Elaine Highfields report

Community grants

You will have read the report about the Dean Forest Greenway and I hope you have had a chance to look at the Wye Valley Greenway that goes through Tidenham Tunnel. We are so lucky to have John Grimshaw taking on this project as he brings a wealth of knowledge and skill to make these projects happen.

We are just starting the volunteer work parties to clear the vegetation along the route and will need hi-vis vest in orange for workers safety. This is following railway requirements and we would hope to put a community grant application in for the approx. £55 to cover them. However, the deadline is tomorrow and it won't be decided until November which would mean that the volunteer help has to be put off. We are limited by time restraints, nesting season etc. and wondered if there is a way around this.

This made me think that maybe the council could adopt a wider community scheme where things like hi-vis could be bought by WDPC and then hired out rather than each group in turn having to buy them for short term use. A lot of things come to mind, basic signs for village veg projects until a unique sign is designed by each group, cones to marking of areas etc. This would also address the climate emergency by not encouraging sharing of resources around the parish. We already know this happens eg Yorkley borrowed Parkend car boot sale cones for their welcome back event, the gp surgery also borrowed them to cone areas of YCC car park when the flu clinics took place. A plastic lidded crate would allow for easy storage.