



WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

Kim Carpenter

Clerk to the Council

Deputy Clerk

Tel. Parish Office: 01594 564484 (9.00am – 1.00pm)

Email: admin@westdeanpc.org.uk

Web site: www.westdeanpc.org.uk

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

Number: 701

Meeting Date: 27TH October 2021 Location: The West Dean Centre

COUNCIL MINUTES

PUBLIC FORUM – 7.00 pm to 7.30 pm

B Hoyland reported that she had been in contact with the Highways Manager about the installation of the poles for the vehicle activated signs, these are currently with Ringway for installation but there was still some discussion about the third pole and the vegetation needing to be removed. BH also apologised for the late submission of her monthly report.

P Hiatt reported that the FODDC had received information that their grant application to the Levelling Up Fund had been successful, with £20m being awarded. This means that the Five Acres project will receive £9.8m for the development of the cultural, leisure, sporting and community facilities. This grant bid also included funding for Cinderford Town Council for their redevelopment projects and Hartpury College, who are a partner in the Five Acres Project. There was also some additional funding allocated to the district with £85k being set aside for the district council and a further £40k for Active Travel, which has parish council representation.

PD proposed that WDPC write a letter of thanks to the district for their work in securing this funding and also to the member of parliament for his support - Carried by Council.

R Leppington also reported as chair of the Finance Committee at FODDC that a 3-year settlement had also been received, which will make the council sustainable. RL also reported that he had received a complaint about the noise during the evening from the youth shelter at the Centre and asked that this be monitored and addressed by West Dean Centre. He did agree that the location was suitable as there was visibility of the shelter for all sectors including the police and there was Wi-Fi facility at the shelter.

RL also reported that the intention was to pursue the public space protection order to manage the sheep staying within the village although this would not prevent them being herded through the village. He was requesting that WDPC reinstate their previous support, with allocated budget of £10k, of this enforcement action. They are reviewing ways in which the monitoring and enforcement could be done and are looking at new technologies to assist with this.

AM asked about other villages in the area which also suffer with this issue? RL responded that it needed to be enforceable and within a designated village, it couldn't be across Forestry England land. PH added that the district and Commoners Association were very aware of the need for a public space protection order but there were some concerns about this, once a precedent has been

established there were many other areas wanting to set up protection orders including other villages within West Dean.

E Highfield briefly reported on the Dean Forest Greenway steering group meeting, with thanks to the parish for the purchase of high vis vests, and that Forestry England were working with the project on the area of ancient woodland, only those trees marked by FE for felling would be removed. EH then discussed the need for letters of support from businesses, other organisations etc which would be collated into an appendix for the planning application. EH requested the help from the parish and its councillors in identifying and encouraging these support letters and asked that they be emailed to the clerk and herself for collation.

EH then spoke about the work being done to build a playground in Parkend, land had been identified with Forestry England, but she was uncertain about the insurance and maintenance aspects as not all playgrounds were under WDPC. SD added that the playground at Yorkley Community Centre was managed and maintained by the trustees.

JR proposed an order of business, public forum had over run, and that the meeting move onto the main business. This was seconded by BE.

PD spoke on behalf of a resident following the inspectorate's decision about Clearwell Farm, which had been refused by planning and at appeal but was now being allowed by the inspectorate. There followed some discussion about the issues with this farm and also what plans Newland Parish had to continue to fight this decision, they will be forming a group to monitor the farm and ensure that the conditions within the inspectorates' report are adhered too fully. They will not be exploring a judicial review due to the costs of undertaking this and the funds they had already spent in contesting this application. PD added that we should continue to support Newland and that this be an agenda item for the November meeting.

1. Council formal business

Present:

WDPC COUNCILLORS: A Grant (AG) S Francis (SF) J Richmond (JR) S Yeates (SY) B Garside (BG) B Evans (BE) P Dunford (PD) J Dale (JD) B Gayler (BG) J Richmond (JR) S Dunford (SD) and A Moore (AM)

K Carpenter (Clerk) in attendance

COUNTY COUNCILLOR: B Hoyland (BH)

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR: P Hiett (PH) & R Leppington (RL)

1.1 Apologies: S Crick, M Costley, A Bruce

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 and signed. JD added that they were well written.

2. Items for discussion and decision

2.3 Dean Forest Greenway

AG opened the discussion with the information that any letters of support need to be submitted to the parish council admin email address by 10th November 2021 to allow time for collation before the planning application was submitted. He also asked if BG received the answers to his questions, BG responded that they had not answered his questions and was concerned that these had been made internally but had been responded to be external members of the steering group. The requested documentation had not yet been produced! AG responded that the answers were a joint effort with the steering group and the J Grimshaw.

S Freeman was sympathetic to the questions raised as there was very few minutes on the website, SF offered to go through the history of the project as there were emails which would help clarify some of the questions. BG thanked her for the offer, but he was not the only member with questions about the project and the need for an audit or gap analysis of the project plans to date. JD also felt that there was a need for more knowledge as councillors were expected to make informed decisions and all needed to be part of the process.

PD felt that the same things were being discussed each month and that the experience and knowledge within the steering group was immense and thanks SF for the proposed meeting. There then followed a discussion about the quantification of the benefits of the project and the need for these to be demonstrated to the parish council along with a project management plan, SF added that WDPC has financial responsibility for this project and there should be monitoring of this budget and scrutiny of the project to ensure its deliverability.

2.1 Coronavirus Emergency

The district officer has been in contact to arrange a visit to review Covid practices and procedures, PH added that at district meetings all wore a mask unless speaking. There was an action on the clerk to check current guidelines and update due to rising cases in Gloucestershire.

2.7 Youth Provision – brought forward

This item was pulled forward in the schedule due to the question raised during the public forum about play parks.

SD presented a motion to the council about the playground maintenance and inspection following the issues raised at the previous meeting about the damage to Bowson, its expected lifespan and the ongoing costs of maintenance. Playgrounds have a finite life, and they are expensive to replace and install without the ongoing inspection and maintenance required. This motion seeks to employ a contractor to inspect and provide a report about the life expectancy of all playgrounds in the parish with a costed replacement programme being developed so that we can plan and provide a sinking fund for any replacement programme.

EH asked if the current playgrounds were on the asset register and were insured? The clerk confirmed that they were included in the asset register and that each of the three playgrounds managed by WDPC had annual safety inspections which provided a risk-based report and works were undertaken to each site following the reports being available. JR also gave some additional

information about other potential play areas within Berry Hill and the work he was undertaking to seek opinions from residents.

BE moved that this motion be adopted, which was seconded by AG - carried that a working party to be formed for this motion.

2.2 Finance and Staffing

i) BE moved that these be agreed on block, JR seconded this approach - carried.

ii) The electronic payment will be authorised by JR & AG

iii) SF informed the meeting that the inspection would be done by BE and herself on Friday 29th October and a report would be made at the next meeting.

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

v) AG advised that following the councils request the post of clerk was advertised at a cost of £175 and there was only one application within the timeframe. A further letter was received, and AG responded to this applicant. The interview was undertaken by AG and SF. Council was requested to approve the appointment of K Carpenter as clerk – carried.

AG also advised that the process for the employment of a deputy clerk had begun with SF and BG being involved in this process. If there was any further information required by a member please contact one of these councillors.

vi) There were 8 applications to the Autumn Grants, all were worthwhile projects and six were allocated their total funding request amounts. One project would have its allocation of £750 held by WPDC to pay for room hire for their project and Yorkley PTA were awarded £2000 of a requested £2500. SD had some questions about the projects being funded, especially those which were for arts consumables and why the PTA had not been allocated the full amount and suggested that this decision be reversed. AG explained why the arts projects and the training project was supported fully, this was due to the make up of the groups and their income as well as the charitable works and funding from the training group.

Awards through 1 to 6 – carried

Award 7 – carried

Award 8- 4 for this, 2 abstentions - carried

2.4 Yorkley Court Farm

There were no further updates available, and they are still pushing the building conservation consultant to respond.

2.7 Governance

SF expressed her thanks all for their work on these documents.

SF proposed and was seconded by AG that the Safeguarding Policy be agreed = carried

SF proposed and was seconded by JD that the Complaints be agreed = carried

There followed some discussion about complaints from councillors about a councillor and it was felt that further advice be sought from the monitoring officer on this process. There was an action on the clerk to contact the monitoring officer and invite a representative to the next meeting to discuss this type of complaint and the process.

SF added that the Lone Working Policy had been developed but there was a need to develop the risk assessments for the employees that would sit along side this policy - SF & KC would work to develop these assessments.

Sf also informed the meeting that the Procurement Policy and the Financial Regulations were being held until further procurement advice had been sought from district and county council on their processes, policies and documentation requirements.

The next meeting of the Governance Committee would be 16th November at 11am where the advice from GCC and FODDC would be discussed as well as the Whistleblowing Policy.

SF also made a request that all chairs of all committees ensure their terms of reference are reviewed and updated.

2.8 Planning

There were only minutes from 5th October as the committee had devolved responsibility to respond to FODDC whilst the clerk was isolating.

There was a discussion about the outcomes of the planning applications reviewed and why this information was no longer available, as without this the committee were only seeing half the story!

BE added that Newland received this information and there was a obligation to provide this information, AM and PH offered to speak to FOD about this information update.

2.9 Chairs Report

AG gave a brief report about the purchase of poppy wreath for Remembrance Day Parades, this being five from WDPC and one from GCC.

These were to be allocated as follows:

JR or MC - Berry Hill/Christchurch

AG – Parkend

KC – Whitecroft

SD – Yorkley

BG - Bream – details of this parade to be shared with BG.

3. Items for information - Councillors to Receive and Note

3.1 Forest Edge South (formerly Pillowell) Neighbourhood Development Plan

SD advised that the consultants were in the process of procuring a new housing needs survey and that they were looking to adapt and then adopt the design guidance which should be completed shortly.

3.2 Clerks Report

The clerk updated the meeting about a bench identified by Forestry in need of removal or replacement at Ellwood, the bench which was placed by a resident was missing from the site and the decision was to leave any potential discussion about its replacement until the next meeting.

The clerk also informed the meeting that there was a urgent need to begin the budget setting process and that two meetings had been arranged, these being 2nd and 16th November.

JR mentioned the contract with Gloucestershire Highways for the VAS poles, this requires the addition of the pole location map. The copy was handed to the clerk for completion when poles installed.

4. FORTHCOMING DATES AND MEETINGS October 2021

Tuesday 2nd November 5pm - Planning Committee

Tuesday 2nd November 7pm – Budget planning 1

Tuesday 16th November 11am – Governance Committee

Tuesday 16th November 5pm – Planning Committee

Tuesday 16th November 7pm – Budget planning 2

Thursday 18th November 3pm – Highways & Footpaths Committee

Wednesday 24th November 7pm – Council Meeting

Tuesday 30th November 5pm - Climate Change Committee

Meeting closed at: 9:15pm