

## Notes of the Annual Parish Virtual Meeting held via Zoom on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2020 at 3.00 pm

**Present:** Chairman James Stone (JS), Cllr Graeme Cook (GC), Cllr Cath Young (CY), Cllr Katy Wintour (KW), Cllr Lindsay Webster (LW), Cathy Knott (Clerk). Invitees: Buckinghamshire Councillor Charlie Clare and John Heal (WCS)

### 1. Chairman's welcome

Chairman James Stone welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the virtual meeting. He took a moment to thank all our front line and key workers for their amazing work during these unprecedented times. Our thoughts are also with all of those who have been affected by or who have lost love ones though this devastating virus.

### 2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Vicky Webb and Sue Barrett (invitee, WPHC)

### 3. Confirm the minutes of the previous meeting

Notes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019 were agreed and signed.

### 4. To hear the following reports

Because the meeting was held virtually, the clerk circulated the following reports prior to the meeting (on a separate document) which are available to read on the website.

- Buckinghamshire Councillor Charlie Clare
- Buckinghamshire Councillor Patrick Fealey
- Westbury Village Hall Association
- Westbury Community Shop & Café
- Westbury Parish Hall Charity
- St Augustine's Church
- Beachborough School
- Westbury Wilds
- Westbury Cricket Club
- Halse Junior Football Club

Caryl Billingham MBE, Chairman of Brackley Community Hospital 2020 Trust kindly submitted a report and information on the new hospital. This can also be found on the website: <https://westburyvillage.co.uk/annual-parish-meetings/>

### 5. Chairman's report and financial statement

During 2019/20, we've welcomed Katy Wintour and Lindsay Webster to the council and said farewell to Mark Willis (in September 2019). With the process of co-option taking a number of months to perform and the parish elections due in May 2020, the Council took the decision not to fill the vacancy.

I would like to give a very special thank you to Cathy Knott, our Parish Clerk for her continued dedication and support to the Chair, Councillors and parish over the past 12 months.

During 2019/20 we have:

- Reapplied to HS2 Community Fund for:
  - Neighbourhood plan funding
  - Marquees/Gazebo

- Permanent covered Pergola
- Tarmacking to back and side of Village Hall
- Install basketball hoop and markings
- S106 –Match funding for HS2 grant
  - Variation for - £7,700 from former PAF Ltd site
  - Draft deed of Variation for 17/02835/APP Land adjacent to Mill lane (£19,248)
- Applied and own funding to start the Neighbourhood Plan process
- Started the Neighbourhood Plan off
- Applied to LAF for new VOSA sign on A422 Buckingham Road
- Engaged with HS2 and is enablers to ensure we have as much information and support during the building up to and during the construction phased of the project.
- Tackling Dog Poo!
- Completed phase 1 & 2 of the streetlight replacement programme – Main Street & Orchard Place
- Installed a new grit bin near church on Orchard Place
- Installed a new circular bench on Tree Bank (grass triangle near Beachborough School)
- Pushed Bucks Highways to complete key outstanding tasks in and around the village
- Continued open dialogue with the Beachborough and SugaRich throughout the year
- Joined Community Speed Watch and have a team of volunteers, three of which have been trained up and they will train the others

#### Actions for next year

- Streetlights – upgrade Biddlesden Rd, Mill Lane & Fulwell Road– as phase 3 & 4 of our plan – May 2020
- Apply for HS2 Road Safety Funding – VOSA & count down signs for A422
- Continue to engage with Fusion/HS2 and is enablers to ensure we have as much information and support during the building up to and during the construction phase of the project
- Traffic management throughout the village
- Apply for a new grant to continue with Neighbourhood Plan
- Tackling Dog Poo
- Additional works to enhance Tree Bank
- Carry out a tree survey to identify all PC owned trees in the village and carry out safety checks
- Hoping to get the youth club up and running again. Beachborough have offered to hold an activity per term for the youth club at the school

#### Financial Statement

Our financial position is strong, we have money in reserve which is helping us build towards a year's Precept in reserve (in line with BALC best practise). As in previous years we have seen less exceptional costs which has allowed us to operate within our budget and maintain our reserves during the year.

Overall, the 2020/21 Precept will increase by circa 0.31% (£57.32 in value) to (£18,480.99) (from £18,423.67) although the overall Band D cost will stay at the current level of £85.62. This has been possible by reducing cost in certain areas of the budget as well as seeing an additional 0.67 rateable properties for the 20/21 year.

Key changes in the 20/21 budget are:

- Increase in Clerks salary – No increase in over 3 years
- PAYE Payroll Services – Small reduction in annual cost for service by £56
- Audit – Small increase of £90 to cover independent audit
- Election – £250 allowed for possible costs in line recommended best practice
- Insurance – assumed a 4% increase in Premium – Please not this ended up being nearer to 7%. From April 2020 insure changed to RSA with saving of £500 pa for high level of cover
- Electricity – £100 reduction due to phase 1 & 2 to LED lighting – further reductions due this year
- Grass Cutting – reduced budget by £200 less exceptional cost than in previous years
- Website – ongoing cost are less than budgeted reduced by £200
- Dog Bins – a 2.6% increase in costs
- Grass Cutting/Maintenance – Budget remains the same as last year although spend in 18/19 was less due to hot weather and reduced grass growth
- Tree Survey – A new line added to cover tree survey and monies for immediate remedial action. £500
- Village Hall maintenance - cost to be covered by WVHA activities £500 removed from budget
- Streetlight - £182 reduction in ongoing maintenance following part upgrade + additional £500 allocated in budget for completion of phase 3&4 of project

This marks the 4th year of no increase, in real terms, in the Parish Precept for Westbury. Although the local council audit timeframes have been extended due to Coronavirus, we have taken the decision to continue as normal, with the internal audit of the 2019/20 accounts being undertaken by John Marshal of NCalc via Zoom on 11<sup>th</sup> May. Our aim will be to make the accounts available to the public for inspection in July 2020 although we now have until September to complete this by.

**James Stone, Chairman**

## **6. Councillor Reports**

### **Councillor Lindsay Webster**

#### **HS2**

Since being assigned to HS2, the most significant advancement relates to the development of the site along the A422, with a further two sites being located on the A43 by the BP Garage and in Finmere. A meeting was held for Parish Councillors in February of this year to determine the impact HS2 will have on Westbury and the surrounding villages for the foreseeable. The most concerning aspect understood is the considerable increase in traffic it will have on the already busy roads.

Unfortunately, due to the impact of the Coronavirus the residents meeting due to be held in March has been postponed until later in the year.

### **Councillor Katy Wintour**

#### **Playpark, Social Media and Internal controls**

I have taken on the responsibility for both the Playpark and management of the Westbury Village Facebook page since joining as councillor.

The Playpark has been checked once a month to ensure equipment is working and is safe for use. There has been a couple of broken pieces of equipment which have been either removed (wobble board) or have been repaired. In the future we are looking to replace the picnic bench and litter bin as we have seen an increase in the use of the playpark, particularly since it has been revamped. We are also looking to repair and put the notice board back up.

The recent inspection report received shows no amber or red flags for any of the equipment or areas in the playpark and highlights a few areas we are already aware of and want to address e.g. moss/algae growth on some surfaces. Since taking over the management of the village Facebook Page it has seen a large increase in post engagement and reach as well as page followers. It has become a great form of communication to the village in the current situation recently meaning we can provide updates regularly, communicate more easily with our fellow villagers and also help promote the Village Shop.

We have also started creating events on Facebook to attract more attendees such as the televised rugby and the New Year's Eve Party.

I have also taken on the responsibility of internal controls councillor and will be responsible for quarterly financial control checks moving forward.

### **Councillor Cath Young's report**

#### **Neighbourhood Plan Progress Report:**

1. The initiative to generate interest in the Neighbourhood Plan began back in Jan 2019 with entries in the village Link booklet, village emails and Facebook posts inviting villagers to get involved. A postcard was also sent to all villagers in March 2019. Although the response from the village was disappointing overall, two villagers with valuable expertise volunteered to join some members of the Parish Council to participate in the process.
2. In Spring 2019 the Parish Council applied to AVDC to designate Westbury as a neighbourhood area. A public consultation was carried out for 6 weeks from 7<sup>th</sup> June until 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019. On 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019 AVDC confirmed that the area was considered appropriate for designation as a neighbourhood area and formal notice of area designation was subsequently received. This allowed the production of a neighbourhood plan to commence, working towards submission of the Plan to AVDC.
3. A copy of the boundary plan was applied for and received from AVDC.
4. Contact was made with potential external consultants to assist with the Neighbourhood Plan process. O'Neil Homer, who have extensive experience of supporting towns and villages in the Aylesbury Vale area, were invited to attend a WPC meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The company was subsequently invited to submit a project plan and proposal. This was accepted on 8<sup>th</sup> July and O'Neil Homer were appointed as consultants with a view to commencing work in September 2019.
5. In July 2019 an application for a grant via Locality.org.uk was submitted. Groundwork UK confirmed the successful application in achieving £8500 on 27<sup>th</sup> September for the current financial year. £6600 to cover consultancy fees and £1900 for publicity, surveys, mapping, workshops and village breakfasts.

6. An initial meeting with the Steering Group and O'Neil Homer was planned for October 2019. O'Neil Homer provided the Vale of Aylesbury Plan Westbury Fact Pack 2011, meeting briefing notes and examples of neighbourhood plans prior to the meeting.
7. The Steering Group met with Neil Homer and Leani Haim on October 14<sup>th</sup> 2019. A Draft Vision Note was subsequently written by O'Neil Homer. The note explored some of the key issues and possible development scenario's for Westbury. It also identified next steps for the Steering Group including gathering evidence around key aspects of Development & Traffic and Design & Environment. The anticipated time scale from vision, pre-submission and submission was suggested as Sept 2020.
8. Some initial data gathering took place by CK including Bucks Historic Environment Record, Heritage Gateway, Beachborough School future plans and the draft Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.
9. The Steering Group met in early January when areas of responsibility for evidence gathering were identified and it was agreed a call for sites should be actioned. It was acknowledged that if development sites are allocated than an application to AVDC for a Strategic Environment Assessment would be required. Further meeting dates were set and a date for the village breakfast agreed for 29<sup>th</sup> March to have the first conversation with villagers.
10. O'Neil Homer provided advice and a template letters for call for sites and screening opinion request. They also provided information about the mapping licence in preparation for the production of Policies Maps in anticipation of the pre-submission plan.
11. 48 Call for sites letters were sent out by CK at the end of January 2020 with request to return responses by 14<sup>th</sup> Feb. 13 responses were eventually received in total, 7 of which indicated land owned and plans/no plans for development.
12. The Mapping Licence/Map base was purchased on 21.1.20
13. On 19<sup>th</sup> February a Steering Group meeting was held which reviewed the call for sites responses and other possible areas for development, Westbury housing stock, traffic issues, design and environment considerations, particularly in relation to HS2 and the conservation area. Plans for the Village Breakfast were discussed including promotion, objectives, strategies for engagement and session structure.
14. The screening opinion request letter was sent to AVDC on 20.2.20 by CK. This triggers a draft informal opinion to consult the statutory consultees (Natural England, Environment Agency & Historic England) for a minimum of 5 weeks after which AVDC will provide us with a formal screening opinion which can be used to apply for the technical support package from Locality.
15. The Draft Vision Note was revised by CK with input from O'Neil Homer and final version made publicly available and sent to AVDC for information on 4<sup>th</sup> March.
16. Flyers for the Village Breakfast on 29<sup>th</sup> March were designed, 250 printed and delivered around the village and the event publicized on Facebook.
17. A further meeting was planned for 16<sup>th</sup> March to arrange the village breakfast and plan the presentation. O'Neil Homer were invited to attend and they provided guidance on proposed content of the first conversation with the local community together with a template Power Point presentation and questionnaire to elicit the community's opinions.
18. Unfortunately, due to the onset of the national coronavirus outbreak and social restrictions, both the meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> March and the village breakfast were postponed. Community engagement is fundamental at this stage in the process, consequently the Steering Group will reschedule these events once social restrictions are lifted and, in the meantime, consider the merit of using other ways of engaging the community to continue the projects progress.
19. On 31<sup>st</sup> March all remaining unspent grant funds were returned to Groundwork. However, there is the opportunity to apply for further grant funds from Locality to support the ongoing development of the Westbury Neighbourhood Plan. Locality has confirmed that they hope to open their grant system on 20<sup>th</sup> April although applicants are advised to continue to monitor their website. This timescale will hopefully coincide with the lifting of social restrictions so the project can regain momentum.

### **Vice-Chairman Graeme Cook**

#### **Highways & Utilities**

A number of issues have been reported and attended to during the year including:

- Repainted give way road markings and new sign at the bottom of Doctor's Spinney
- A jetting machine came to unblock drains in January but the blocked drain on Main St (nr the old school sign) blocked up again within two weeks so was reported again on 16.03.2020.
- In early February a collision took place on the crossroads leaving a broken road sign and verge damage. This was reported and attended to by TfB in March.
- The flooded subway in Orchard Place (to the front of the Church) was repeatedly reported

- and TfB unblocked it in January. No flooding issues since.
- In November, preparatory patching works on Biddlesden Road followed by new road markings in December.
- In October, the road to the front of Little Thatches, Mill Lane was repaired by removing the block paving and tarmacking.

Graeme and James met with Paul Foot from Transport for Bucks on 11<sup>th</sup> October to discuss various issues in the village including traffic calming measures.

### **Utilities**

At the beginning of the year we engaged Balfour Beatty (BB) to undertake phase 1 & 2 of the street light replacement programme. This was completed in May 2019 with the installation of 14 new LED lights. Covering Main Street, Orchard Place and the top of Mill Lane along with the replacement of one in Mill Lane which got hit by a vehicle. The reason for starting with phase 1 & 2 units was firstly to address a recurring issue with lights out on Main Street due to the age of the lamp fittings which started to become loose when windy, and that a number of units in Mill Lane and Orchard Place didn't have local isolation.

Our move to LED lighting will have a positive impact on the environment too with a projected annual saving of around £1k pa in energy cost. We have also signed a new energy agreement with Opus Energy which will see all our non-metered usage coming from sustainable energy sources for the next 2 years.

Phase 3 & 4 of the street lighting upgrade programme covering Biddlesden Road, Fulwell Road, Mill lane, School Close and one unit on Buckingham Road are due to take place in Q2 of 2020.

### **Footpaths report**

Cllr Vicky Webb has spoken to Alex Humphreys, officer of countryside & highway records at Oxfordshire County Council who has advised that no progress has been made regarding the objections to the order of Mixbury footpaths, no's 30,31 and 32 modification order. By now, the matter should have been referred to the Secretary of State (to consider the next stage – either to address the matter by an exchange of statements or by calling a public inquiry). Footpath information can be found on our village website at: <https://westburyvillage.co.uk/about-the-village/>

### **Planning report**

This year we have seen a number of applications made within the parish most notably of which was for the development of land off Biddlesden Road with three planning application having been made, two of which have been rejected and one remains outstanding at this time.

In addition, we have seen applications for the erection of a new straw, hay and fodder barn and the extension of two additional barns, the conversion of two barns to residential accommodation, the addition of and the demolition and erection of a garage, workshop and home office in the village.

The PC has also applied for a Discharge of Condition relating to 14/03356/APP for lighting to support its grant conditions with HS2.

### **7. Open forum for questions**

Cllr GC asked Cllr Clare if the works on the A422 had been completed (to redress the surface). Cllr Clare advised that he would follow it up and let us know.

Chair JS asked Cllr Clare how he saw the year ahead in his role as Buckinghamshire councillor. Cllr Clare said he would be carrying on as usual, working closely with Cllr Fealey, concentrating on their individual strengths.

John Heal, on behalf of Westbury Community Shop and Café Committee expressed huge thanks to all the volunteers who have supported the village and shop during the crisis and to Jo Lee, the committee and the team for providing such a great facility.

Chair James Stone thanked everyone for attending and for giving their reports.

**The meeting closed at 3.45 pm**