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## Minutes of the meeting of Westbury Parish Council held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022, 7.30pm at Westbury Village Hall

Present: Chairman James Stone (JS), cllr Graeme Cook (GC), cllr Vicky Webb (VW), cllr Katy Wintour (KW), Pierre Jeannes (PJ), cllr Richard Tredwell (RT), Cathy Knott, clerk (CK) and cllr Caroline Cornell, Buckinghamshire Council (for 138/22)

### **138/22 Questions or comments from the public**

Cllr Cornell provided an update from Buckinghamshire Council:

Times are financially tough for everyone, and we are facing difficult decisions on how to prioritise council spending.

You can have your say at: <http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/money-matters-consultation> (closes on 20.11.22).

We are encouraging residents to plan and prepare for the cold season. Information can be found at: [Planning for Emergencies](#). You can check whether you are on a [gritting route](#) (the A422 and Main Street in Westbury are on the route) and report a flooded or icy road via [FixMyStreet](#).

The Helping Hands scheme and sustainable warmth fund (for families with an income of less than £30,000 or who are receiving benefits) can be accessed at: [Home \(buckinghamshire-applications.co.uk\)](http://Home.buckinghamshire-applications.co.uk)

Libraries and some leisure centres are offering welcoming/warm spaces. A list can be found at:

[Find a place to keep warm \(Welcoming Spaces\) | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

The puffin crossing on the A422 has moved to implementation with no amendment to the plans.

Cllr GC expressed the parish council's frustrations after receiving a response from the planning team leader (see 141/22) regarding outstanding planning issues.

### **139/22 To receive apologies for absence and welcome**

All present. Apologies were received from cllr Patrick Fealey, Buckinghamshire Council. The chairman thanked everyone for attending.

### **140/22 To receive and approve for signature the minutes of the annual meeting of the parish council held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022.** The minutes were approved and signed.

### **141/22 To note any matters arising from the minutes not included on this agenda for report only**

69.22 & 76.22 – following our last meeting where planning issues were again raised, cllr Patrick Fealey chased Laura Pearson, Buckinghamshire Council's Planning Team Leader who advised the following:

Regarding application 21/04043/APP, Mill Farm - variation of condition 2 (drawing numbers) attached to planning permission 17/02835/APP – because no conditions were imposed to secure the retention of a 'permissive footpath' which is not a designated public right of way, officers cannot insist on this footpath link being provided. However, Laura has been liaising with the case officer to see what officers can do regarding this concern. There was no mention of the road layout to Plot 3.

Regarding application 20/00496/APP Land Off Biddlesden Road, this application has been reallocated to Carrie Chan who is seeking to compile the officer report and issue the decision notice by the end of November. It was agreed that cllr VW and the clerk should write to the planning department.

**Action: VW/CK**

89.22 – posts/bollards will be replaced to the front of School Close.

**Action: JS**

96.22 – a quote has been received from Scott Rodwell to 'side up' the leylandii trees behind the village hall up to a height of 15 feet for £550. It was agreed to instruct him to carry this work out asap.

### **142/22 To receive declarations of interest related to business on the agenda**

None received.

### **143/22 Vacancy – to discuss applications from interested parties and agree to co-opt**

Two residents submitted questionnaires prior to the meeting which were openly discussed. Because both candidates are strong and have a lot to bring to the council it made it very difficult to decide. Cllr VW advised she was planning to retire from the council next year (after 22 years of service) so another vacancy would become available then. It was therefore agreed to speak to both candidates and ask one to start with immediate effect and the other to wait until next year to join.

**Action: CK/JS**

**144/22 Finance****a. Financial statement** (different from agenda)

Current account: £ 7,640.70

Business account: £31,244.32

**b. To note payments received since the last meeting** £

Bank interest	4.54
WPHC grant for Christmas tree	320.00

**c. to approve invoices submitted:**

C. Knott (November salary & tax)	588.05
Saltway Farmshop (Christmas tree)	320.00
B & M (batteries)	4.17 (VAT 0.83)
OPUS (streetlight electricity)	53.39 (VAT 2.67)
Donation towards Churchyard maintenance	150.00

**d. To discuss the budget and precept for 2023/24**

The chairman circulated the draft budget (V1) prior to the meeting, explaining that due to the current climate, there would be an increase to the precept this year (after five years of remaining unchanged). Increased key areas include the clerk's salary (to bring it in line with NALC grading) and grass cutting (the tender for the next 5 years is due to be let in 2023 and there has been no increase for past 5 years). Once the tax base has been received from Buckinghamshire Council, the chairman will circulate V2 to councillors for comments and the final version will be agreed at the next meeting in January.

**Action: JS**

Further discussion was held around streetlights; three lights on the A422 (40W LED) are ten years old and will need to be replaced soon and four lights at the bottom of Mill Lane (put in by the developer) are 40W LED – it would make sense to install the low power dimming LED's (in line with the rest of the village). Cllr GC has asked Balfour Beatty for a quote. Another large expense will be replacing the fence at the playpark and fixing/replacing the gate.

**145/22 To consider new planning applications (if there are any) and to receive an update on applications outstanding****Applications with updates****22/03263/APP** Yew Tree House Main Street Westbury Buckinghamshire NN13 5JR Householder application for proposed carport with associated works

WPC: no objection. Bucks Council: Approved.

**Outstanding applications/appeals with updates****Planning Appeal Ref: 22/00081/FTHA** The Wilds Brackley Road Westbury. Erection of cabin to provide ancillary annexe accommodation (retrospective). An appeal has been lodged with the Secretary of State against Buckinghamshire Council's decision. Decision: dismissed.**Outstanding applications with no change to information****Application 20/00496/APP:** Land Off Biddlesden Road Westbury. Erection of 7 dwellings and associated works.**Application 17/02835/APP:** Mill Farm, Mill Lane, Westbury. Variation of condition 2 attached to planning permission 17/02835/APP (erection of four dwellings) to allow drawing 1703-03E to be approved.**Application 22/00378/ALB:** Manor Cottage, Mill Lane, Westbury. Listed building application for Re-roofing the main dwelling – 07.10.22 update status decided, decision appeal, non-determination. Status: Appeal lodged.**Other**

Cllr VW asked whether the recently installed hay/straw barns at Red Oak Farm (approved in 2019) are in the correct position. It was agreed check the plans and speak to the farmer.

**Action: JS/VW****146/22 To receive a report from the neighbourhood plan steering group**

The individual working group 'kick off' meetings with O'Neil Homer have all been held. The whole group will now meet to agree a high-level work plan to take them through to the first milestone of engaging with the community. A design support package has been secured with AECOM and Jonathan, Sebastian and the clerk will be meeting with two planners to walk around the village on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November.

**147/22 To provide an update on the HS2 community fund project**

R.S. Haynes will be tarmacking again tomorrow. WVHA and WCSC have agreed to share costs to bring the overspill carpark up to the same level as the tarmacked carpark.

**148/22 To discuss/approve verge wilding plans**

Cllr VW advised there are a small number of areas in the village suitable for wilding which she will add to the grass cutting tender.

**Action: VW**

### **149/22 To approve the grass cutting tender document for 2023-2026**

The chairman circulated the document prior to the meeting and all councillors approved. Once cllr VW has adapted the document to consider areas of verge wilding, it will be circulated again before it goes out to tender next month. The closing date will be 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and awarding date of March 2023.

### **150/22 To report back on the clerk's appraisal**

The chairman and vice chairman met with the clerk on 14<sup>th</sup> November and carried out an appraisal. JS thanked the clerk for supporting councillors and for the work she carries out on behalf of the council. Following an evaluation of the clerks' role, it was agreed CK should be on scale LC2 SCP 24 to bring it in line with NALC grading. This will be implemented from April 2023.

### **151/22 To accept councillors reports on the following areas (if there is anything to report):**

- a. **Play Park** –The soft closing mechanism on the gate needs to be investigated to see if it can be fixed or whether the whole gate needs to be replaced. Cllr KW has asked Kompan for a quote for a new picnic bench. JS will provide a new handle for the zip wire. **Action: JS/KW**
- b. **Highways** – cllr GC noted two of the drain covers on Biddlesden Road are rattling. He will report on <https://www.fixmystreet.com/>
- c. **Utilities** – see item 144/22d.
- d. **WVHA/WCSC updates** – cllr PJ advised WVHA funds are currently healthy but with an expected hike in electricity next year (once the contract has ended) these will deplete. WCSC have applied for a grant to assist with providing a 'warm space' at the hall. Discussions are being held regarding how the two entities should be managed going forward.
- e. **Neighbourhood plan** – see item 146/22.
- f. **Footpaths** – cllr RT has kindly installed a gate to replace the stile on footpath WBB/11/2 (leading into the Red Barn field). The clerk has asked George to unlock the gate leading into the playing field now that the cows are inside for the winter. Cllr GC will remove the stile halfway down the path adjacent to Hollywell House and cllr VW has asked the owners to remove the one further down. JS, VW and the clerk met with Beachborough's Estate Co-ordinator last week to discuss the footpath and bridge relating to the Mixbury public footpaths. The path will lead from the overflow carpark, straight over to the first bridge. Oxfordshire Council's Countryside Access Team will be overseeing the bridge and say engineers will probably install a new footbridge to the side of the existing bridge, rather than repair the existing collapsing concrete bridge.
- g. **HS2** – the clerk will chase Dave Butcher (EKFB) regarding outstanding actions.
- h. **Action plan** – the clerk has updated the plan and will add the following:
  - To upgrade seven streetlights (A422 and Mill Lane).
  - Repair/replace the playpark gate.
  - Replace the playpark fencing.
  - To develop a programme of maintenance for the leylandii trees to the rear of the village hall.
  - To investigate and clarify land ownership.

### **152/22 To note correspondence received that requires discussion**

The chairman is investigating why the broadband at the village hall is so slow. We are currently on 11mb whereas nearby properties can get 40-65mb. Openreach has confirmed the hall is on the fastest speed possible for the exchange cabinet that it is connected to. One reason for other locations having a faster connection is that they could be routing to a different exchange cabinet. This can't be investigated further unless we can provide connection telephone numbers for them to compare and this would also only confirm the theory, there would not be anything they can do to change. This would be the same for other suppliers, as they would all use the same physical connection unless a dedicated FTTP (Fibre to the premises) like Swish or Gigaclear goes in. The chairman is therefore gathering information and we will discuss further next year.

### **153/22 Councillors Open Forum**

Cllr RT has put the rope up on the playing field to stop cars parking on the field now it is so wet.

### **154/22 Public Participation session (*Members of the public are invited to address the council. The session will last for a maximum of 10 minutes with any individual contribution lasting a maximum of 3 minutes. Members of the public should address their representations through the chairman of the meeting*)**

No public present.

### **155/22 Close**

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

**Signed: James Stone**

**Dated: 11.01.2023**