

WASHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday July 19th 2023 in Washfield Memorial Hall at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr Mrs A Taylor-Ross (Chair), M Balment, J Boundy, J Mock, R Webber, W Wood and Mrs A Wych.

In attendance: County Cllr R Chesterton and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

17/07/23. To receive apologies. Apologies were received from District Cllrs C Adcock and Mrs R Gilmour and from Mr and Mrs A Roberts, Footpath Wardens.

It was agreed to move the following item forward on the agenda.

18/07/23. Update on co-opting to fill the vacancy on the Council. An application to be co-opted back onto the Parish Council had been received from Will Wood just prior to the meeting. A previous email had not been received by the Clerk. No other applications had been received. It was unanimously agreed to co-opt Will Wood onto the Parish Council. Proposed by Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross and seconded by Cllr Balment. Cllr Wood signed an Acceptance of Office Form and joined the meeting as a councillor.

19/07/23. Disclosure of interest in item on the agenda. Cllr Boundy declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 28/07/23 as his business had submitted a quote.

20/07/23. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chair.

21/07/23. Matters arising from the minutes. No matters arising.

22/07/23. Public questions. No members of the public present.

23/07/23. Footpaths:

a) P3 update. A written report from Mr and Mrs Roberts was circulated prior to the meeting.

Footpath 1. Haydon to Charterhouse. Mr & Mrs Roberts have walked this path and cleared a bit from the Haydon end but it needs strimming/ trimming between the fence and the hedge all the way along the path as far as the field. The sleepers are doing

a good job. The path across the field is well marked now but impassable until the wheat is harvested. Maize has been planted in the last field towards Charterhouse again. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross has spoken to the farmer about the official line of the footpath being blocked but because of a gate being left open he doesn't want to encourage walkers.

Footpath 2. Mousebeare - New Park - Pitt - Long Lane. They have received comments about the difficulty of walking the top part of the field on the way down to New Park particularly now with the long grass and stinging nettles etc hiding the rabbit holes. They find this very difficult too. Moving the fence helped but did not solve the problem. They have asked if a contractor could come in to grade the path through that bit. They also asked if he could scrape the deep mud from the lane between New Park and the ford. Steps are still needed where this path meets Long Lane. It is difficult to climb up the bank and dangerous to get down it into the lane.

Footpath 3. New Park - Courtenay - Winbow – Ennerleigh. They have asked again about the three gateposts needed in Courtenay farmyard and the fingerpost repair at the far end of the farmyard. A new request has been made for a new two-in-one gate (including a self-closing pedestrian gate) at the top of the first field beyond Courtenay on the boundary with Winbow. A complaint has been received from the farmers involved that the existing gate has been left open on more than one occasion despite it being easy to latch. They have asked for strimming etc between gates on the boundary between Winbow and Ennerleigh. Three gatepost/latch repairs on Winbow land are in hand and will be done soon and the invoice forwarded to the Parish Council.

Footpath 4. Brook Lane - Long Lane - Link Road. They have asked again about non-slip strips to be put on the bridge and for it to be checked for replacement of some of the boards soon.

Footpath 5. Bullfinches - Stanterton - Washfield Lane – Courtenay. They have asked again about a replacement fingerpost pointing from Washfield Lane to Courtenay.

Footpath 6. Slade to Bridleway 7 below Smiths Farm. Changes have been done and it is all official now. They haven't checked it yet.

Bridleway 7. Lane above Smiths to Lane above Ramstorland. Walked it and cut back a few brambles etc. Barley planted in the field towards the Ramstorland end but people have walked through and trodden a bit of a path. Otherwise there are no problems that they are aware of. A couple of regular walkers are keeping an eye on it.

Footpath 8. Nibbs to Lower Washfield. No problems reported.

Footpath 10. Beeches to Lower Washfield. No problems reported.

Mr and Mrs Roberts have been advised not to do the strimming that is required as, if they do it, it will be knocked off the list of strimming that DCC pay a contractor to do.

b) DCC Rights of Way Committee decision on proposal 2 from the Definitive Map Review for Washfield. The committee decided to defer a decision so that more information could be provided. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross will walk Shilhay Green Lane with Cllr Mock to understand the route and issues. Other councillors were invited to join them.

c) Any other footpaths matters. No other footpath matters.

24/07/23. Planning

a) To make a recommendation on any planning applications received before the meeting.

23/00882/Full Erection of a dung store. Location: Ennerleigh Farm, Washfield.
Comment: Washfield Parish Council has no objections.

23/00902/Full Erection of an agricultural livestock and storage building and formation of track. Location: Land and Buildings at NGR 294192 118531. Comment: Washfield Parish Council has no objection in principle subject to DCC Highways visiting the site to check whether there are any safety issues with the access.

b) To note any decisions on planning applications made by MDDC

23/00466/CLU Certificate of lawfulness for the existing use of general industrial building as workshop and premises for the business of Partridge Kitchens for a period in excess of 10 years Location: Partridge Kitchens Workshop, Ennerleigh Farm, Washfield. Decision: certified as lawful.

c) Public consultation on a Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document. MDDC has prepared a new draft planning document about providing suitable and affordable housing through new development. A public consultation will run from Monday 17 July to Friday 25 August 2023

d) Any other planning matters. No other planning matters.

25/07/23. Highways

a) To report on any highways work carried out in the parish and to note any highways work needed. It was reported that South West Water had closed the road to the village at Cotleigh Cross without warning. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross did ring SWW and is still waiting for a case officer to ring her back. This is one of a number of similar road closures by SWW who say they haven't got the money to replace this old water pipe and will keep repairing it. She will write to SWW and DCC to request notice of road closures and for workable diversions to be in place for as short a time as possible. Cllr Chesterton will advise her who to contact at DCC.

Some potholes have been repaired but some potholes reported by Cllr Balment have not. Cllr Chesterton told councillors that he will be meeting Melanie McKenna, Neighbourhood Highways Officer (NHO) later this month and offered to raise any issues that have been reported but not dealt with. He needs the reference numbers to do so. Cllr Mrs Taylor Ross will put a request on Washfield's Facebook page for all villagers to log potholes, as many reports as possible, prior to Cllr Chesterton's meeting with the NHO.

The repairs to the road surface at Badcott are down for this financial year but he doesn't know when. Some work planned for 2022-23 was moved into 2023-24. Cllr Balment raised concerns that even if there is another pothole next to one that the contractor has been sent to repair, they will not repair it. Cllr Chesterton agreed it was concerning but he has raised this and was told it was down to the operational decision of the Officers in charge. Donna Manson, new DCC Chief Executive is looking at how things are done across the county and changes that need to be made will be made. Cllr Wood suggested writing a letter to DCC with the reference numbers for work that was reported but not repaired when the Parish Council felt it should have been done and also references for repairs that were of poor quality

and/or didn't last. Cllr Chesterton said he would report these where he could. The surface of Long Lane is still in a poor condition and the pond is still there.

b) Highways queries. See item 31/07/23.

c) Any other highways matters. No other highways matters.

26/07/23. Reports

a) County Cllr. Cllr Chesterton repeated that changes that need to be made to the way that DCC operates will be addressed by Donna Manson, DCC Chief Executive. He reminded councillors that he does have some money in his Locality Fund budget and can award grants to local organisations for projects that meet the criteria. Although the amount for 2023-24 has been reduced to £5,000 he does also have a little bit held back from 2022-23. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross will publicise this on the Washfield Facebook page and will include a link to the Locality Fund details on the DCC website.

b) District Cllr. No report.

27/07/23. Finance:

a) To approve any payments. It was resolved to make the following payments:

Mrs J Larcombe - £84.48 Clerk's salary (Chq no 563)

HM Revenue & Customs - £21.20 PAYE (Chq no 564)

b) To receive the report from the Internal Auditor. The report was noted.

c) To discuss moving the bank accounts to Unity Trust Bank. Since the discussions on moving the Parish Council's bank account at the last meeting a letter has been received from NatWest Bank saying their Tiverton branch is being closed. It was agreed to open a current account and savings account with Unity Trust Bank and to set this up for online banking. The signatories will be Cllrs Balment and Cllr Webber.

Cllr Chesterton left the meeting during the following item.

28/07/23. Update on replacement of fencing around the village green. Cllr Boundy declared a personal and prejudicial interest and was not involved in the discussion and decision on this item.

The Clerk reported that she had emailed Jo Williams, MDDC S106 Officer, to ask if S106 funding could be used to pay for the replacement fencing. Mrs Williams replied that she had discussed this with a planning officer and they had come up with the following thoughts (whilst studying the area on Google Maps):

- If it is just the metal railings that are being replaced then this potentially falls under maintenance/repairs which would not qualify for S106 funding
- If you are replacing the whole fence for betterment of the area that would potentially qualify for funding but due to the setting you would probably need full planning permission and listed building consent.

As it is just the metal railings that are being replaced it was agreed to use reserves held by the Parish Council to cover the cost of replacing the fencing around the village green.

Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross reported that the family of the late Roger Arnold, former Chairman and Washfield Parish Councillor, are thrilled with the Parish Council's suggestion of dedicating the final bench in his memory and have suggested siting

the bench at the end of the road to their properties in Lower Washfield. Cllr Balment declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a company he is a director of will put in a base and install the bench. This work will be done as soon as it is known exactly where the family want the bench sited. It was agreed that Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross will purchase a suitably engraved plaque for the bench and submit an expense claim.

29/07/23. Finalisation of Community Resilience Plan for Washfield. This was carried forward to the next meeting to give Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross chance to finish this.

30/07/23. New Parish Council email address. One of the updates to the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners Guide for March 2023 is the importance of secure email systems and GOV.UK. The official email address for the Parish Council will change to clerk.washfieldpc@gmail.com

31/07/23. Chairman's Announcements and Correspondence. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross has been contacted about an issue with rain overflow from the main highway at the top of Brook Lane cascading down the lane when the drain on the main highways blocks and affecting Wynefreds and Lower Wynefreds. This drain blocks frequently but also very quickly in times of heavy rain due to leaves and other debris washed down from higher up the village. The issue is not that the drain needs to be unblocked more frequently as it can block in just a few minutes; the issue is believed to be more to do with the design and configuration of the drains. This has already been raised with Highways without a satisfactory outcome. Cllr Mrs Taylor-Ross will email the NHO to raise it and check for road sweeping and options to resolve the issue. It was suggested that drains blocked by debris should be reported online. More people need to be encouraged to report potholes online. There was no further correspondence.

32/07/23. Date of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on 20th September 2023.

Signed:
Chair

Date: