

BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
Held in the Village Hall, Bishopstone
Thursday 14th November 2013 at 7.30 pm.

MINUTES

Present : Parish Councillors : Major JHS Thompson (JHST) Chairman
 G Brutton (GRB)
 N Barter (NTB)
 A Thorne (AJT)
 J Gibbon (JG)
 S Tatner (ST)

Parish Clerk: M R Ash (MRA)

Also present: Mr M Bundy
 Mr J Kington
 Ms T Steel
 Mrs R Dew
 Ms C Penwarden
 Mrs C Ash
 Mr R Stockton
 Mr J Harvey

Cllr Jose Green (Wiltshire Council)
 PC P Jung

1. Declarations of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Tatner signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr A Smith.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations.

4. Approval of Minutes of the Meeting on 12th September 2013.

No matters of accuracy were raised in relation to the minutes of the meeting on 12th September 2013. AJT proposed that they be approved, this was seconded by GRB and agreed.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes, including Action Plan.

All matters arising from the minutes were contained in the Action Plan. Whilst some

items on the Action Plan list remained to be progressed (see AP attached to these minutes) good progress had been made with others. Points to note were:

(i) the future of the White Hart pub.

It was agreed that whilst there is no imminent threat, it would be prudent to make an application to Wiltshire Council for the pub to be included on the list of “assets of community value” under the Localism Act. This would mean that should the owners wish to dispose of the building for a use other than as a pub the community in Bishopstone would have 6 months to mount a bid to buy it. This action was proposed by GRB and seconded by AJT.

(ii) the “garden extensions” in The Styles.

Wiltshire Council had agreed in principle to grant a long lease of this land to the Parish Council so that it can be sub-let as garden plots to villagers. Negotiations would now be undertaken on the terms of any lease. It was agreed that the next step should be the inclusion in STaB of a notice seeking expressions of interest in renting a plot so that likely demand could be assessed.

(iii) the Bishopstone Housing Needs Survey.

The questionnaire forms have now been distributed to every household in the village. The closing date for their return to Wiltshire Council is 22 November. It was expected that a report on the outcome will be produced in January 2014.

(iv) car parking in Whitlock Rise.

There continued to be a problem of residents parking in the turning circle at the end of Whitlock Rise – this obstructs emergency, delivery and waste collection vehicles. A letter will be sent to residents about this. Wiltshire Council had undertaken to surface the lower part of the Whitlock Rise car park and they are being chased for a date for the commencement of these works.

(v) village emergency plan.

It was agreed to now produce an emergency plan to cover flooding, snow and ice, storm damage and major interruptions to power supplies. MRA would produce a draft for consideration. Cllr Barter had volunteered to store sand and sandbags at the Fishing Lodge in Bridge Road.

(vi) other matters

There had been no response to the invitation in STaB to form a working party to undertake a village clean up on “Community Days”. Only one response had been received to the request for information in relation to the Council’s response to the consultation on speed limits on the C12. Wiltshire Council had said that it was not possible to conduct a “metro count” of vehicle speeds in Harvest Lane because such counts were only undertaken within 30mph zones. The new fencing had been erected on the frontage of the Recreation Field.

6. Public Question Time.

Ms Steel raised the problem of the damage that had been caused to the road edge and the verge on the corner of Harvest Lane and Faulston Lane by the lorries of contractors working on the sewage treatment works and the farm and other vehicles accessing Crouchston Farm. MRA said that he had raised the matter with the highway authority and a response was awaited. Ms Steel said that it was desirable for the traffic into Crouchston Farm to use both the entrance from Faulston Lane and that via The Cross, so that the pain was shared. It was pointed out that this was a matter for the occupants/managers of Crouchston Farm and there was little that the Parish Council could do.

Thanks were offered to villagers who had helped clear fallen trees after the recent storm, particularly the one on the amenity land in Faulston Lane which had been caught up in telephone lines. It was agreed to investigate ownership of that land so that future responsibility could be established.

7. Reports from Cllr Jose Green and PC Pete Jung

Cllr Green said that Wiltshire Council's Scrutiny Committee was to conduct an investigation into how the Balfour Beatty contract had been awarded and its operation. This was in response to considerable disquiet about the readiness of Balfour Beatty to take over the contract. An extra £21m had been allocated by Wiltshire Council to the roads programme over the next 6 years. This would be used largely for resurfacing. The next meeting of the South West Wiltshire Area Board would be on 11 December in Bishopstone. The High Speed Broadband programme was on schedule for 2014.

8. Chairman's Items

JHST said that he continued to be concerned about dog owners failing to clear up after their pets. Warning signs were available from the Clerk. A complaint had also been received about dogs off the leash in public places causing annoyance to joggers and walkers. It was agreed to mention this in the STaB report of this meeting.

9. Parish Clerk's Report

MRA said that there were three cheques to be signed:

- the £100 donation previously agreed to be paid to the Chris Brown Day Centre;
- the £496.49 due for the erection of the new fencing at the Recreation Field. This money would hopefully be reclaimed from the R2 donations.
- a sum of £29.70 in Clerk's expenses – to cover costs of printing of covering letters for the Housing Needs Survey questionnaires and for 6 copies of the new edition of the Good Councillor guide.

NTB moved that these payments be made, this was seconded by JG and agreed.

MRA reported that a letter had been received from Wiltshire Council asking parish

councils to remind land owners of their responsibility to help avoid flooding by keeping drainage ditches clear. It was considered that the relevant land owners in Bishopstone were well aware of their responsibility and that a reminder letter was unnecessary.

10. Preliminary discussion of budget and precept for 2014/15

MRA said that in 2013/14 Bishopstone Parish Council's income was made up of a precept of £5200 and a grant from Wiltshire Council (£300.94) which was designed to make good a loss in potential precept income resulting from the Government's reforms of the benefits system.

Wiltshire Council had already indicated that the £300 grant is likely to be cut, either in whole or in part, for 2014/15. Given the levels of the council's balances, and the fact that it rarely spends up to budget, such a reduction could be contained without significantly affecting what the Council does – so long as the budget is similar to that in 2013/14. One option would be to increase the precept to make good any loss of grant. Whether it is possible to do this will depend on whether the Government imposes a "cap" on parish council precepts and at what level.

If there is no cap, then the further issue arises of whether BPC wishes to increase the precept anyway for 2014/15, as it did in 2013/14. The view was taken last year that the Council is underfunded compared to many other councils and that a policy of gradual increases should be adopted. It is clear that the demands on councils at the parish level to "do more" is growing and we have projects under consideration (eg on the recreation field).

MRA pointed out that Councillors would also be aware of the widespread concerns about the cost of living when wages are not increasing. The Council could decide just to "mark time" for the present and keep the budget level, increasing the precept only to replace any cut in grant, or even not replace any cut in grant (ie have a precept of £5200) which would mean slightly less money available next year and no increase at all in the local charge.

MRA indicated that decisions about this would need to be taken at the meeting in January, when the situation will be clearer and it will be possible to present a full set of figures. In the meantime it would be helpful to have any preliminary views Councillors may have.

After a short discussion, Councillors agreed that the aim should be to make no increase in the precept this year, even if this meant a small decrease in funds available after any reduction in the special grant from Wiltshire Council.

11. Planning Applications

MRA reported that the planning application relating to the water meadows at Crouchston Farm had been refused permission by Wiltshire Council's Southern Area Planning Committee at its meeting in October. As yet no appeal appears to have been submitted against that decision.

MRA said that he understood that Wiltshire Council would be writing to the owners of Crouchston Farm about the fence that had been erected without planning permission. GRB suggested the PC should notify Wiltshire Council of any planning infringements that the PC believed had been committed. However, unless there were special circumstances, the PC should raise such matters in the first instance with the resident concerned. This was agreed.

12. Questions or statements from Councillors and any further questions from members of the public.

There were none.

14. Date, location and time of next meeting.

The next meeting is on Thursday 9th January 2014 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Signed as an accurate record:

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Chairman

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Date

**BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday 14th November 2013**

ACTION PLAN

WHAT ACTION	BY WHOM	COMPLETED ✓
Possible data protection issue to be considered before an "e-mail alert system" is proposed in STaB.	MRA	
Wiltshire Council to be requested to add the White Hart pub to the list of assets of community value.	MRA	
Notice to be included in STaB inviting expressions of interest in renting garden plots on land in The Styles.	MRA	
Wiltshire Council to be asked to undertake a Housing Needs Survey	MRA	✓
Letter to be written to residents of Whitlock Rise about not parking in the turn round.	JHST	
Consideration of possible content of an Emergency Plan.	MRA	
Include in STaB item on litter in Children's Play Area.	MRA	✓
Include in STaB item on Community Days.	MRA	✓
Include item in STaB on the C12 Speed review seeking information to support response to consultation.	MRA	✓
Include a request in STaB re collection of information on all accidents along the C12.	MRA	✓
Ask Wiltshire Council whether it would be possible to conduct a metro count in Harvest Lane	MRA	✓
Recreation Field fencing to be provided using R2 money.	MRA	✓
Options for new recreation equipment to be investigated.	MRA	
Survey of toilets to be undertaken and estimate of likely costs to be obtained.	MRA	
Highway damage at the corner of Faulston Lane to be pursued with Wiltshire Council.	MRA	
Ownership of the amenity land in Faulston Lane to be investigated.	MRA	