

**BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL  
MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL  
Held in the Village Hall, Bishopstone  
Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at 7.30pm.**

**MINUTES**

**Present** : Parish Councillors : J Gibbon (JG) Chairman  
N Barter (NTB)  
Mrs A Smith (AS)  
P Edwards (PE)  
Mrs M Tatner (MT)

Parish Clerk: M R Ash (MRA)

**Also present:** Wiltshire Cllr Jose Green  
Mr R Stockton  
Mrs C Ash

**1. Apologies for Absence**

There were apologies for absence from Cllr A Thorne and Cllr G Brutton.

**2. Declarations of interest**

There were none.

**3. Approval of Minutes of the meetings on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019.**

PE proposed that the minutes of the meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019 be approved as a correct record, this was seconded by AS and agreed.

**4. Matters Arising from the Minutes, including Action Plan.**

MRA reported that the new Play Trail in the Children's Play Area was now fully installed. A number of emails had been received indicating that it is a hit with younger members of the community. Wiltshire Council housing officers had been consulted about the possible location of an additional grit bin in Whitlock Rise. A response was awaited. Other Action Points from the meeting in September remained outstanding.

**5. Report from Wiltshire Councillor Jose Green**

Councillor Jose Green referred to matters covered in her written report (attached to these minutes).

**6. Public Forum.**

JG said that Mrs J Goodfellow was unable to attend but would have raised the problem of cars being dumped on the Whitlock Rise residents' car park. MRA said he would let Mrs Goodfellow

know what information was required to be collected so the matter could be reported to Wiltshire Council.

## **7. Chairman's Items**

JG reiterated the position on the ending of Community Speed Watch operations in the village, as set out in November's edition of STaB. He said he personally wanted to record his thanks to all those who had been members of the team, in particular Jan and Rob Goodfellow. Use of the Speed Indicator Device would continue, despite unhelpful proposed changes to the operating arrangements put forward by Wiltshire Council. MRA said that these changes involved a requirement to use contractors to put SIDs in place. He, and other Clerks, had been in discussion with Wiltshire Council about this matter and he was hopeful that Wiltshire Council would now change their proposals. These changes might include a requirement to complete on-line training on safety arrangements.

JG noted the success of the recent International Sheep Dog Trials in the parish which had raised £1500 for charity. He asked that the Parish Council put on record its appreciation of the work done by the new STaB editorial team. There had been a huge improvement in both content and presentation. This was approved by acclamation.

## **8. Financial Update and Precept for 2020/21**

MRA said that he had circulated a report (attached to these minutes) to Councillors. He presented slightly revised tables, taking account of revised tax base figures circulated by Wiltshire Council, showing the current financial position of the Council and options for the Precept for 2020/21. The Council had a total of £19,536 in the bank, with £3,410 available in the s106 funds. The s106 money needed to be spent by March 2021, so consideration needed to be given to appropriate recreational projects.

Consideration was given to the level of increase in the Precept for 2020/21. Councillors felt that, given the size of the reserves, it was not appropriate to impose an increase as high as last year (15%). However, given possible future expenditure requirements, which could include the need to start paying a Clerk when Mike Ash retired from the post, it was still desirable to continue to build the reserves. NTB proposed an increase of 10% in the overall level of the Precept, to £9,746. This will add £2.69 to the annual charge per property at the "Band D" level (an increase of 8.4% because of the larger tax base from additional properties). This was seconded by MT and approved.

## **9. Emergency Planning Update**

Roger Stockton presented a report on the latest position as regards flooding in the village. The main points are contained in the attached copy of a report for STaB. He referred to on-going discussions with Wiltshire Council about the clearance, and proposed extension, of drainage ditches in Faulston Lane. These matters were the subject of discussion in Wiltshire Council's Operational Flood Working Group. Whilst it is helpful to discuss these matters with other parishes in South Wiltshire, Wiltshire Council's management of the group is inadequate, with no proper accountability for progressing any action required. Mike Ash said that there was often a problem as regards the clearance of drainage ditches and gullies in the village, largely because responsibility was continually being shunted between the Parish Steward, the Wiltshire

Council Highways Team and the Land Drainage Team. Cllr Green undertook to pass these messages on.

Mr Stockton suggested that the Parish Council might like to purchase some waterproof, fluorescent, safety jackets and trousers for use by the Emergency Planning Team/Food Wardens. Precise proposals had not yet been drawn up but, to save delay, MT proposed that a budget of up to £200 be approved to enable some initial sets of clothing to be procured. This was seconded by PE and approved.

#### **10. Parish Clerk's Report**

MRA reported that there had been an incidence of fly-tipping by Crouchston Mill. Whilst this was close to the footpath to Stoke Farthing it was actually on land owned by Mole Valley Farmers and he had written to them seeking its removal. At the request of the Parish Council, Wiltshire Council's Rights of Way Team had undertaken repairs to the steps and handrail on the public footpath beside Raglands.

Councillors had previously discussed in correspondence the need to have a sign erected in the Children's Play Area indicating appropriate use of the new play equipment. MRA said that a sign had been ordered from Salisbury Signs which would read: "The Play Trail and Tower are designed to be used by children over the age of three years. It is up to parents/carers to supervise their children when using this equipment. To report any damage to these facilities please see contact numbers on the main notice board". He asked for reimbursement of the £54.00 cost of the sign. This was proposed by PE, seconded by NTB and approved. It was agreed to include a copy of the sign in STaB.

MRA said that James Thompson had requested reimbursement of £10 being 50% of the cost of the village wreath laid on Remembrance Sunday (the other 50% was contributed by the PCC). This expenditure was proposed by NTB, seconded by MT and approved.

MRA reported that the Parish Council had been consulted by BT about the proposed removal of the telephone box opposite the entrance to Pitts Lane. This was part of a much wider programme to remove under-used phone boxes nationally. A total of 2 calls had been made from this box in the last year and, now that full mobile phone coverage had been achieved in the village, it was difficult to make a case for retention of the box. A response to the consultation is required in the new year. It was agreed to draw attention to this matter in STaB to see if anybody wished to make a case for keeping the box.

#### **11. Planning Matters**

MRA reported that the Wiltshire Planning Enforcement Officer had given the owner of Meadow Cottage until the end of the year to remove the walls that were erected without planning permission. In practice this would mean the walls fronting the road would need to be reduced to a maximum of 1m in height. Walls not fronting the road could be retained if they were up to 2m high.

The proposed garden room at Sedge Cottage had been approved by Wiltshire Council. The Parish Council's objection to the proposed out building at the Three Horseshoes had been submitted.



**Jose Green's End of Year Report. Nov/Dec 2019**

For those of you who read my updates or attend a Parish Council meeting you will notice that as I cover 15 villages there is a strong possibility you are already aware of much of what I'm going to tell you. For that I apologise. Either way I intend to circulate this report directly to the Editors of the various Parish Magazines in the Fovant and Chalke Valley Division so that it will appear only the once.

I expect you have noticed the new headed paper of Wiltshire Council ( WC ) has changed, not only the colour, to a bright green that reflects the proactive stance WC is taking on environmental and ecology issues but also the strap line of 'Where Everybody Matters' has been removed. These words were sometimes ridiculed but the intention was sincere.

As we prepare for the winter 24 new gritters are waiting to do their work across the major roads of Wiltshire.....11,000 tonnes of salt is in stock, 726 miles of A and B roads spread 150 tonnes each time they go out. 24 drivers are on standby. I hope all your grit bins have been re-stocked in preparation?

The new **MyWiltshire** App has just been launched. I encourage anyone who is able to download it and report anything you believe is a problem. From fly tipping, abandoned cars, potholes, signage, drainage and flooding, please be assured it is the most effective way of reporting something to which you are then issued a number and able to 'track' it to see what is being done about resolving what you have reported.

I have previously mentioned the successful Government funding Salisbury has received since the novichok incident, Chippenham is to receive £75 million to support various infrastructure improvements including some highway works.

The **Street LED Lighting** programme has begun at a cost of £12,295,000m over 2 years. The intention is that replacement lighting in the Salisbury and Wilton area will commence in February-April 2020.

A newly formed **Global Warming and Climate Emergency Task Group** has been formed. As you know WC is hoping to be carbon neutral by 2030. Can I emphasise that Wiltshire Council does not include Swindon which is a Borough Council. Part of the Task Group's remit is to include renewable energy use and efficiency, particularly in WC's housing stock and buildings; Planning, Transport and Air Quality, Waste..( to improve recycling rates ) Land use, Business and Industry. The SWW Area Board is encouraging the 38 villages within it to create their own environmental/green projects. There are some hugely imaginative groups of volunteers coming up with ideas.

The campaign to reduce **Flytipping** goes on. A great proportion of dumped material is Commercial Waste. Unlimited fines and/or 5 years imprisonment, a £50k fine and/or 12 months imprisonment are all options when a court case is held. Fixed Penalty Notices are £400 and are being served proactively now. Any successful information leading to a prosecution will earn a voucher of £200 to whomever reported it. Never rummage through tipped waste as it could be challenged if disturbed or removed. Always take a photo and report it on the MyWilts App.

**Potholes and the state of our rural roads** remain an issue. Constantly attempting to keep up with the work is not helped by the weather conditions throughout the year. The satisfaction rates have increased though and reflects the national average but there is more to do. HGV lorries who argue they are lost or using mobile phone SATNAV is being stamped on. Weight restrictions on roads are not encouraged as there is an opinion that vehicles should be 'spread' across the network.

There are 4,500 km ( 2,796 miles) of roads across Wiltshire and are WC's largest asset/liability. Social care and vulnerable people, young and older remains the highest financial commitment. I attended the **Operational Flood Working Group** on the 13th November. There is a common thread of concerns regarding ground and surface water, the risks involved and the actions required. Representatives from Ansty, Fovant, Bishopstone, Swallowcliffe and many other villages were able to highlight their main issues. Drains and gully clearance, the river projects, build up of debris and sediment which then blocks the drains and creates standing water above the drains is the main concern. There are 4 gully tankers to service the County.

Marvellous news that the **Cranborne Chase AONB** has been awarded the International Dark Skies Status. This is a highly prestigious award as there are 14 only across the world. Tourism is likely to increase and greater lighting control to decrease light pollution will be conditioned through the planning process.

I constantly press that we in the Fovant and Chalke Valley should have our fair share of the budget spend. Can I emphasise though, that information and support is always appreciated from the Parish Council's (PC's) in helping to highlight specific problems.

As the PC's are currently setting their precept Wiltshire Councils's share of the Council Tax is likely to go up by 2%. Yet again a further 2% will be a levy for social care. This will require ratification at Full Council.

Can I finally wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Healthy New Year.

José Green.

**BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL****Financial Update 2019/20 and Precept 2020/21****Finance Update**

Attached is a table showing expenditure in the current year against budget. The only budgeted expenditure to come is the payment for Village Hall hire. So, subject to any unexpected additional expenditure arising, expenditure this year is likely to be in line with, or just below, the budget.

The current balances on the Council's two bank accounts are as follows:

Current Account:	£7,964
Reserve Account:	£11,571
<b>Total</b>	<b>£19,535</b>

In addition the Council has £3,410 remaining in the s106/R2 fund which is available for expenditure on recreational facilities.

**Precept 2020/21**

The amount of the income the Parish Council receives from the precept on Wiltshire Council's Council Tax is calculated by multiplying the charge on a Band D property (the middle of the Council Tax range) by the number of properties registered in the parish. Wiltshire Council will be circulating the base figures for this calculation on 4th November. The deadline for the submission of proposed precept increases will be 24th January 2020.

I will provide an oral report at the meeting on the figures I receive on 4th November. However, this note sets out the key issues for decision and it should be possible to reach a view on the percentage precept increase for next year at this meeting, rather than waiting until January.

The following table sets out the levels of increase in the precept for Bishopstone in the last few years. The increase last year was 15%. The second part of the table shows illustrative figures for increases of 5%, 10% and 15% for 2020/21.

	<b>Band D Property Annual Charge</b>	<b>Precept Income</b>
2014/15	19.69	
2015/16	20.04	5,368
2016/17	23.05	6,331
2017/18	26.51	7,217
2018/19	27.83	7,705
2019/20	32.02	8,860
+5%	33.62	9,303
+10%	35.22	9,746
+15%	36.82	10,189

I must emphasise that these figures are only illustrative. The information which Wiltshire Council will circulate on 4<sup>th</sup> November may include a revised total for the number of properties to be taken into account, which will affect the figures for the level of income for any particular rise in precept level.

The following table shows the level of Band D charge, Precept and % increase last year for Bishopstone and surrounding parishes. You will note that most parishes made no increase (a negative % change may result from a number of factors, including a reduction in the number of properties charged).

<b>Parish Council (2019/20)</b>	<b>Band D Charge</b>	<b>Precept</b>	<b>% Increase on previous year</b>
Bishopstone	32.02	8,860	15.06
Coombe Bissett	30.25	11,000	0
Broad Chalke	21.57	6,950	1.27
Bowerchalke	30.23	5,400	- 1.79
Ebbesbourne Wake	32.60	3,500	0
Quidhampton	58.99	9,210	0
Burcombe	47.95	3,091	0
Fovant	29.28	9,850	0
Wilton	138.06	217,927	7.62

In deciding the appropriate level of increase in the precept for 2020/21 consideration needs to be given to the mounting level of the Council's reserves. This is an issue which may be of concern to our auditors. The Practitioner's Guide to Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England says:

*"As authorities have no legal powers to hold revenue reserves other than those for reasonable working capital needs, or for specifically earmarked purposes, whenever an authority's year-end general reserve is significantly higher than the annual precept....an explanation should be provided to the auditor."*

Whilst the Council can continue to claim exemption from external audit whilst income and expenditure are less than £25k a year, it is clear that, if we were audited, an explanation for the high level of our reserves would need to be given.

The Council's reserves are now close to £20,000, up from £12,800 last year mostly thanks to the difference between the precept and actual expenditure (£8,860/£4,440) and the £2,500 vat reclaimed from HMRC (and a further reclaim of vat for 2017/18 will be made in due course). Against that background I think it may be difficult to justify a large increase again this year.

### **S106/R2**

As indicated above, some £3,410 remains in the s106/R2 reserve. This needs to be used by March 2021 or it will be lost. This money can only be used for recreational purposes. We could, of course, simply add further elements to our Play Trail but I would be grateful if Councillors

would consider whether there are any other projects which might be undertaken to make use of these resources.

### **Conclusion**

It may be possible to reach a decision on the level of increase, if any, at this meeting – depending on the information provided by Wiltshire Council on 4<sup>th</sup> November. Alternatively Councillors may wish to have a general discussion of the above issues at the November meeting. I will then include formal resolutions for the precept increase on the Agenda for the January meeting.

Mike Ash  
October 2019

## EMERGENCY PLANNING REPORT - DECEMBER 2019

### General Situation.

We are very fortunate in Bishopstone in having three monitoring assets that we have easy access to though the internet. They are:

**Environment Agency (EA) River Monitoring at Ebbesbourne Wake.** (<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/station/3371>)

In effect river level monitoring - the level of groundwater, though this is somewhat upstream.

**EA borehole monitoring at Windwhistle Farm.** (<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/station/9272>)

This gives an indication of water levels in an aquifer - again monitoring linked to groundwater flooding.

**The private Weather Station at Flamstone Farm.** (<https://flamstone.com/wd/ww.php>)

This excellent local weather website is a detailed record and shows daily rainfall levels, monthly rainfall and comparisons with the calculated averages.

At the moment none of these sites show any major reason for concern though Windwhistle borehole is high (as at 15 November), bordering on a local flood warning alert. The Flamstone Farm Weather Station indicates double the monthly rainfall average in September and October. So far in November we have had  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the monthly rainfall in the first 12 days of the month - therefore there is no reason for complacency. The water meadows are slowly taking in water, at Faulston South of the river and in the meadows by Mac's Field.

My personal view, shared by others at the Operational Flood Working Group meeting in Tisbury on 14 November is that we are in advance of where we should be at this time of year on local water levels. That, in turn, makes sensible preparations and precautions a recommended course of action.

Borehole readings indicate rising aquifer levels. We know from past experience in 2013/2014 that groundwater flooding is the aspect that surprises us, in as much as we don't know where or when some springs will appear.

However if the river floods we do have good ideas of where it is likely to breach its banks and which properties may be affected.

In the next couple of weeks we will be testing our pumps and generator, I reiterate that the Emergency Plan is on the village website and I am more than willing to answer queries you may have on our local procedures.

Please be aware that Les Smith is currently standing in for Chris Sexton as Flood Warden (East).

Finally, I would like to explain the Operational Flood Working Group in a little more detail. Every 3-4 months a group of volunteers from local villages and towns in southern Wiltshire meet with representatives of Wiltshire Council, the Environment Agency and Wessex Water amongst others to put forward the problems in our area that could cause or affect flooding. These meetings air issues and can resolve difficulties. However we often are faced with the realities of tight budgets, lack of personnel/resources and legalities. Nevertheless be assured that Bishopstone's issues are forcefully presented and the best case is always made on your behalf.

ROGER STOCKTON