

**BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
Held using Zoom Video Conferencing
Tuesday 21st July 2020 at 5.00pm.**

MINUTES

Present : Parish Councillors : J Gibbon (JG) Chairman
N Barter (NTB)
G Brutton (GRB)
P Edwards (PE)

Parish Clerk: M R Ash (MRA)

Also present: Mr R Stockton
Mrs K Pendlenton

1. Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Cllrs Thorne, Smith and Tatner.

2. Declarations of interest

There were none.

3. Approval of Minutes of the meetings on 28th May 2020.

PE proposed that the minutes of the meeting on 28th May 2020 be approved as a correct record, this was seconded by NTB and agreed.

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

MRA said that the external auditors had confirmed that the AGAR would be exempt from inspection. The electronic payments system had been put in place and a first payment (the annual insurance premium) had been successfully made. He had circulated a note to Councillors on the oversight arrangements required for electronic banking. These would be incorporated into revised Financial Regulations to be considered at the meeting in September.

It had been agreed, in principle, at the last meeting to meet the cost of repair of the fence adjacent to the mill stream at Croucheston Mill. A quote of £284.53 for this work had been submitted by Wessex Contract Services and circulated to Councillors for approval because of the need for urgent action on safety grounds. Formal retrospective approval was now required, this was proposed by GRB, seconded by NTB and approved.

MRA reported that planning approval had now been granted for the replacement house at The Stables, Croucheston.

5. Chairman's Items

No matters were raised.

6. Public Question Time

7. Play Area Re-opening

JG proposed that Agenda Item 6 - Public Question Time and discussion of Agenda Item 7 on Re-opening of the Children's Play Area be taken together. All of those present had seen the paper circulated on this subject by the Clerk and the Risk Assessment put together by Cllr Edwards. The background papers included a note on action by other councils. Copies are attached to these minutes.

JG invited Roger Stockton to set out his advice, as Emergency Planning Officer, to the Council on the issue of re-opening of the children's play area. He said that the village had been relatively successful in avoiding Covid 19 infection, but the risk of infection remained and a "safety first" approach should be followed. The Parish Council could not directly manage the use made of the play area or undertake sanitizing of the equipment. The rest of the Recreation Field remained available for recreational purposes, not to mention the surrounding countryside. Re-opening the play area increased the risk of infections being passed on and Bishopstone had a large number of elderly and vulnerable people. He considered that re-opening should be delayed until at least September to see what happened elsewhere. If the play area was re-opened the Council should agree arrangements for closing it again if necessary without waiting for a meeting.

Kate Pendleton said that she had canvassed the views of a number of mothers of small children in the village and the overwhelming opinion was that the play area should be re-opened. The Government's guidance was that play areas could now re-open and those in Salisbury and other parishes were now available. There was a danger that if our play area is not open children would be taken to those that were, with a wider risk of infection transfer. Outdoor play areas presented a much smaller risk of infection. Many children had been adversely affected by the lock down and it was desirable to re-open the play area if at all possible. The play area is almost exclusively used by children from within the village and parents and carers should be asked to ensure that social distancing and hygiene rules are followed.

PE said that he had tried to be even-handed in preparing the Risk Assessment, but he agreed that such techniques were open to a range of interpretation. In his view the open air nature of the site and the fact that most of the play equipment was quite new, with wooden surfaces less likely to holding contamination, reduced the risk of infection transfer. It should be possible to make the site safe to use with signage to indicate required social distancing and cleansing arrangements. Despite the closure notices there was evidence of the play area being used, it would be better to formalize the position with proper guidance in place. He also considered it would be helpful to put a self closing mechanism on the gate – so that people were confronted by signs about use of the site before they could enter. If the guidance was not followed the site could again be shut.

Following a wide-ranging debate it was unanimously agreed that the play area should re-open subject to the provision, on signs on the site, of guidance as to how it should be used (that guidance to be based on that included in the paper circulated by the Clerk, but subject to final clearance by Councillors in writing). The signs should make it clear that responsibility for maintaining social distancing and hygiene rests with the parents/carers accompanying the children using the site and not the Parish Council. It was agreed to investigate closing

mechanisms for the gate. PE agreed to organize strimming and mowing of the site with a view to the play area re-opening in the week beginning 27th July.

It was agreed that, if there was evidence that the guidelines were not being followed, or if other factors emerged – such as a change in local Covid 19 infection rates, closure of the site can be agreed by email.

8. Parish Clerk’s Report

MRA said that he had been contacted about the ROSPA Play Area Safety Inspection, which was carried out every two years. This was proposed for September. Whilst the considerable recent investment on the play area suggested that there was unlikely to be any safety problems it was desirable to complete these inspections in order to satisfy the Council’s insurers. It was agreed that the inspection should be arranged.

MRA said that he had been contacted by the SWWAB about potential action to secure fibre broadband connectivity. Roger Stockton had undertaken to have a first look at what was proposed. It might then be desirable for a small group to be formed to consider in depth.

9. Questions or statements from Councillors.

There were none.

Date, location and time of next meeting.

MRA said that it was desirable to hold a meeting of the Council in September as there was a need to agree the way forward on capital projects, to authorize the distribution of Council grants and to approve the new Financial Regulations. The normal date would be 10th September. However, it was likely that the Chairman would be away then and it was agreed to hold the meeting, probably still by Zoom Conferencing, on Thursday 3rd September at 6.00pm.

The meeting closed at 6.15pm.

Signed as an accurate record:

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Chairman

Date

BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING****Tuesday 21st July 2020****ACTION PLAN**

WHAT ACTION	BY WHOM	COMPLETED ✓
Campaign to promote greater volunteering in the village.	PE	
Proposals for use of s106 reserves to be brought forward.	MRA	
Revised Financial Regulations to be brought forward for approval.	MRA	
Children's Play Area to be re-opened in w/b 27 th July.	MRA/PE	