

**BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
Held in the Village Hall Bishopstone
Thursday 8th July 2021 at 7.00pm.**

MINUTES

Present : Parish Councillors : J Gibbon (JG) Chairman
A Thorne (AJT) Vice Chairman
N Barter (NTB)
Mrs A Smith (AS)
P Edwards (PE)
S Williams (SW)

Parish Clerk: M R Ash (MRA)

Also present: Wiltshire Councillor Nabil Najjar
Mrs S Cooke
N Legh
Mrs C Ash

1. Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Cllr M Tatner.

2. Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Mr S Williams, co-opted to become a member of the Council at the last meeting, signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. Declarations of interest

There were none.

4. Approval of Minutes of the meeting on 18th May 2021.

PE proposed that the minutes of the meeting on 18th May 2021 be approved as a correct record, this was seconded by AJT and agreed.

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

MRA reported that the external auditors had confirmed the exemption of the Council's accounts from review. All other matters arising were covered by items on the Agenda.

6. Public Question Time

No matters were raised.

7. Wiltshire Councillor Nabil Najjar

The Chairman, Cllr Gibbon, welcomed Wiltshire Councillor Najjar to his first meeting in Bishopstone. Cllr Najjar said he had been delighted to be elected to the Fovant and Chalke Valley Division and to have been made Portfolio Holder for Arts, Heritage and Tourism. He said that he would focus very strongly on representing the Division on Wiltshire Council and was pleased to have already been involved in helping secure a major grant from the South West Area Board for the Chalke Valley Sports Centre. He said that he would try to attend as many parish council meetings as possible, though with some 16 parishes in his Division this might not always be possible. He expressed his appreciation for all the work that his predecessor, Cllr Jose Green, had undertaken over many years.

8. Chairman's Items

Cllr Gibbon expressed the Council's appreciation for the way in which the village had rallied round to help deal with the fire in Stanley Close and its aftermath. This had been outstanding. Special thanks were due to the staff at the White Hart and neighbours for organizing the support they had given to the families. The whole incident had shown the value of the WhatsApp Network in mobilizing assistance.

9. Small Jobs Programme

MRA said that he had circulated a paper (BPC(03)21), copy attached to these minutes, setting out proposed arrangements to enable expenditure to be approved between meetings to meet the costs incurred by volunteers and contractors in undertaking small tasks of repair and maintenance in the village. He recommended that:

- (a) a policy for a Minor Works Programme, as outlined in this paper, be adopted.
- (b) the budget for 2021/22 be amended to include provision of £1,000 for a Small Works Programme, with a limit of £500 per project.
- (c) that the Council's Financial Regulations be amended to include the following words:

"Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- *the council for all items over £500;*
- *but may be determined by the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council, for items below £500.*

Such authority is to be subsequently endorsed by the Council at the first available meeting.

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations."

together with any necessary minor consequential amendments.

PE proposed that the recommendations be accepted, this was seconded by NTB and approved.

10. Speed Indicator Device

Paper BPC(04)21, copy attached to these minutes, had been circulated setting out the need to either repair or replace the Speed Indicator Device. The existing unit had been shared with Broad Chalke Council but they have decided to purchase one for their sole use. The repaired or replaced unit would be for the sole use of Bishopstone, which will enable it to be deployed more frequently. MRA said that, for the reasons set out in the paper, he recommended that a new, slightly smaller, SID be purchased from Pandora Technologies. This would use the existing solar power panel and sole rights to that would require a payment to Broad Chalke Council of £100 as their share of the residual value.

Following discussion AJT proposed that the recommendations in the paper be accepted, this was seconded by AS and approved.

11. Grants for Village Organisations

Paper BPC(04)21 had been circulated, copy attached to these minutes, regarding the annual grants made to village organisations, such as the Parochial Church Council (for churchyard maintenance and to support STaB) and the Village Hall Management Committee. MRA said that the Council's policy on community grants says "The Council may require information on the need for the funding as necessary". The Parish Council has an obligation to ensure that public funding is used effectively and that value for money is achieved. He therefore recommended that he should write to all the organisations in receipt of regular annual funding to ascertain their future needs for support, and to report back in time for the budget for 2022/23 to be set in November. This was agreed.

12. Parish Clerk's Report.

MRA said that efforts to establish the location of fire hydrants in the village had been reported in the July edition of STaB. The request for help in checking locations had, so far, produced no response but he was confident he now knew most of the locations. A map would be included in the Emergency Plan.

Work on installing the new play equipment in the Children's Play Area had been completed and reports from users were positive. All invoices had been paid and the s106 payment of £3,410 received from Wiltshire Council. Having installed new equipment for slightly older children he suggested that consideration should be given to how to make additional provision for the very youngest children. This was agreed. MRA said that he had received a quote for the additional insurance premium required to cover the new equipment, this was £86.36. AS proposed that this expenditure be approved, this was seconded by AJT and agreed.

MRA drew attention to the consultation by Wiltshire Council on possible steps to improve the bus service. A note on this was included on July's STaB.

Following earlier discussion, he had included an article in STaB on how residents can report problems such as potholes or blocked Rights of Way direct to Wiltshire Council.

MRA suggested that further work be undertaken on options for planting trees on the northern edge of the Recreation Field as a contribution to the "Green Canopy" project to mark the

Queen’s Jubilee next year. He also reported that all exiting tenants had paid their £20 a year allotment rent and that there was now a waiting list (of one) for any vacancy that should occur.

13. Planning Matters

Consideration was given to a planning application for the replacement of the garage and car port at Netton Old Farmhouse. It was agreed to make no objection.

14. Questions or statements from Councillors.

AJT said that he would shortly put in hand maintenance on the gang mower. This work had been previously agreed. MRA said that the contractors should send the bill direct to him.

Date, location and time of next meeting.

The next meeting of the Council will be on 9th September 2021 at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm.

Signed as an accurate record:

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Chairman

Date

BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 8th July 2021

ACTION PLAN

WHAT ACTION	BY WHOM	COMPLETED ✓
Campaign to promote greater volunteering in the village.	PE	
Quotes to be obtained for works to the basketball court and swing frames.	MRA	
Report to be produced following metro counts on back lanes.	MRA	
Alternatives to be considered for a replacement Speed Indicator Device.	PE	✓
Proposals for a Small Works Programme to be brought forward for consideration.	MRA	✓
Proposals for further play area equipment to be brought forward.	MRA	
Proposals for tree planting on the Recreation Field to be brought forward.	MRA	
Letters to be sent to village organisations in receipt of grants from the Parish Council to ascertain future need for support.	MRA	

BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL (BPC(03)21)

MINOR WORKS PROGRAMME

1. At the last meeting of the Council it was agreed that proposals should be brought forward to establish a policy on undertaking small ad-hoc tasks by the Parish Council and for establishing a programme to enable payments to be made to meet related costs.
2. As previously noted, there are various circumstances where minor works may need to be undertaken:
 - (a) where the task would seem to be within the remit of Wiltshire Council but they were unwilling to do the work, only did it to a limited extent or where there would be a significant delay;
 - (b) where land ownership was unknown or in dispute and thus responsibility for action was unclear; and
 - (c) in maintaining property in the ownership of the Parish Council.
3. In some cases works might be undertaken by volunteers, in which case costs may arise in relation to the hire of plant and equipment, or it may be a case of paying for someone's time in undertaking the task. Some tasks will be a single event, others may be a regular undertaking for all or part of a year. Examples of the types of works that might be included in this programme are set out in Appendix 1.
4. As things stand at present, each proposal for minor works has to be brought before the Council for approval before it can go ahead. Setting up a programme which would expedite approval, and reduce time at meetings of the Council, raises two separate sets of issues: (1) the need to ensure that the Council has powers to commission the work; and (2) the arrangements for the authorization and payment of expenditure.

Powers

5. The Council has specific powers to, amongst other things, deal with ditches, repair and maintain public footpaths, maintain roadside verges, and manage land in its ownership. These powers will probably cover the majority of the works which may need to be undertaken using this policy. Where a specific power does not exist it will be possible to use those under s137 Local Government Act 1972 (ie for any works that are of general benefit to the community). However, use of the s137 powers requires different arrangements for authorization of payments – see below.

Financial Regulations

6. Existing arrangements in relation to expenditure on goods and services under the Council's existing Financial Regulations provide for:

- (i) inclusion in the Annual Budget of anticipated expenditure in the year;
- (ii) contracts for the execution of works costing more than £500 to require three tenders or one tender if less than £500;
- (iii) individual items of expenditure have to be approved at a meeting of the Council; and
- (iv) payment, by cheque or BACS, has to be authorized by two Councillors plus the Clerk.

No issues arise in relation to (i) and (ii) - for the purposes of a Small Works Programme it is suggested that a separate budget line (say £1,000) be adopted and that a limit of £500 be set for each project (anything above that would then require specific approval). However, it is an important part of these proposals that action can be taken expeditiously, without waiting for a meeting of the Council to approve the expenditure ((iii) above).

7. When Bishopstone Parish Council's Financial Regulations were drawn up they were based on the model provided by NALC. However, in the interests of brevity, they only included those provisions appropriate to the Council's existing mode of operation. For example, the Bishopstone Regulations only provide for authorization of expenditure by the Council itself and exclude any delegation to a Committee (which Bishopstone PC does not have) or to the Clerk (which was thought unnecessary). In fact the NALC model includes provision for authorization by:

“the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items below [£500].”

It is therefore proposed that the Financial Regulations be amended to include this provision. The revised paragraph would read:

“Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- **the council for all items over £500;**
- **but may be determined by the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council, for items below £500.**

Such authority is to be subsequently endorsed by the Council at the first available meeting.

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.”

As regards payments (para 6 (iv)), these would continue to be made by cheque or BACS as now.

8. Unfortunately, these expedited arrangements for the authorization of expenditure cannot be used where the task has to be undertaken using s137 powers. These powers can only be used following formal resolution of the Council and cannot be delegated. Tasks to be undertaken using s137 will therefore have to be approved at meetings of the council, in the usual way. However, there should be relatively few of these.

Existing projects

9. At the last meeting the Council approved provision of up to £110 to re-imburse Michael Pratt for the hire of a digger to be used in removing the mud left from Wiltshire Council ditch clearing operations in Church Lane. The final sum was £105, which is being paid.

Recommendations

10. It is recommended that:

- (d) a policy for a Minor Works Programme, as outlined in this paper, be adopted.
- (e) the budget for 2021/22 be amended to include provision of £1,000 for a Small Works Programme, with a limit of £500 per project.
- (f) that the Council's Financial Regulations be amended to include the words in bold in para 7 above.

Mike Ash
Clerk
June 2021

APPENDIX 1

Examples of work that could be undertaken under a Small Works Programme:

- (i) the work, already completed, to repair and replace fencing near Croucheston Mill and in Faulston Lane.
- (ii) the need to clear mud and debris in Church Lane left behind when Wiltshire Council cleared the drainage ditch outside Manor Farm. Wiltshire deposited this material along the roadside because the contract did not provide for removal and disposal elsewhere. Concern had been expressed about possible damage to the wall of the churchyard and the mud was scattered over the road when vehicles ran over the verge. The Council approved expenditure at the last meeting to meet the cost of hiring a digger and disposal of this material.
- (iii) the need to clear ditches in Faulston Lane. There has been an on-going (7 years) dispute as to responsibility for clearing roadside drainage ditches in Faulston Lane. Wiltshire Council say that this is the responsibility of the adjacent landowner but have been very slow in taking enforcement action. In the meantime flooding frequently occurs in the lane. Efforts to make the landowners take responsibility should continue, but in the short term it would be simpler just to clear the ditches before next Autumn/Winter.
- (iv) there are small parcels of land in the parish where ownership is unknown (eg where the Council's bench is located by Faulston Bridge) and where occasional clearance of grass and undergrowth is required.
- (v) there are small tasks such as mowing the grass in the Children's Play Area. Whilst Cllr Thorne undertakes the mowing of the main field the Play Area needs more frequent attention and takes a disproportionate amount of time. We have a volunteer prepared to mow the area regularly at a cost of £10 per time.

BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL (BPC(04)21)

SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE – REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT

1. Councillors are aware that the Speed Indicator Device is currently non-operational. Repairs are needed, but those responsible for installing it have expressed the wish that consideration should also be given to its replacement by a smaller, less heavy, model that would be easier to move and install. This paper sets out the options, which have also been discussed with Broad Chalke Council.

Background

2. The current SID (PTSC 905) was purchased from a company called Pandora Technologies in September 2017. It cost £2,195 for the sign and £450 for the solar panel system that powers it (both costs net of vat). This cost was shared with Broad Chalke and Bowerchalke Parish Councils (40/40/20 split) on the basis of shared use. Bowerchalke Parish Council ceased using the SID some time ago.

3. The SID has performed well over the last 3+ years but has sustained some damage and is now in need of repair or replacement.

Repair Option

4. The front lens of the SID has been cracked and requires replacement, some of the diodes no longer illuminate (requiring a new circuit board) and the “rain blinker” that protects the lens is broken. Some of this damage may be a result of vandalism (Councillors will recall reports of catapults being fired at the SID). The cost of repair by Pandora, to include a general service and carriage both ways, would be £792.50 + vat.

Replacement Option

5. As indicated above, installation of the SID is not straightforward. Consideration has therefore been given to options for replacement with a smaller unit. Whilst there are many SIDs on the market, the factors that led us to purchase from Pandora Technologies in the first place still pertain (build quality, after sales service etc). What is more, the solar power unit is still perfectly serviceable and can be used to power other units available from Pandora.

6. A possible replacement would be the PTSC 904. This would have exactly the same features as the current SID (showing speed and a slow down/thank you message), would work with our existing solar power unit and would be 25% smaller, though only slightly less heavy. This unit would cost £2,145 (+vat).

Sharing with Broad Chalke

7. As indicated above, the original SID was shared with Broad Chalke. This was a helpful means of reducing the costs to us. There were, however, some down-sides. A sharing rota had to be established, it was not necessarily available when we wanted it and the unit had to

be transported between the two authorities. I have been in discussion with the Clerk of Broad Chalke about options for the future.

8. In discussion at their last meeting Broad Chalke Councillors decided that they would prefer to have full ownership of their own SID in future. The planning application (now approved) for the Queens Head Beer Garden raised much debate on traffic speeds and pedestrian safety in the village. There have also been concerns about increased traffic during the CVHF and Gurston Hill Climbs and discussion of the benefits that could be achieved by a SID controlled and managed solely by Broad Chalke Council without the need to factor in it leaving the village for periods.

9. The Clerk to Broad Chalke and I have agreed a residual value for the solar power unit (the one thing that currently works as intended) of £200. On the basis of a 50/50 split we could buy out Broad Chalke's interest for £100.

Recommendations

10. It is clear that, if we are to continue with having a SID in the village, this will need to be on the basis of a SID owned and operated solely by this Parish Council. The options examined so far are to repair the existing SID for £792.50 (plus vat) or replace it with a smaller, more easily handled, unit costing £2,145 (plus vat). In both cases there would be a need to pay Broad Chalke £100 in relation to the solar unit.

11. As Councillors are aware, the Parish Council currently has a very strong balance in its reserves. It is likely that a new unit would have a longer life and would probably, therefore, represent the best value for money. **I therefore recommend purchase of the PTSC 904 from Pandora Technologies and payment of £100 to Broad Chalke Council in respect of the solar panel unit.**

Mike Ash
Clerk
June 2021

BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL (BPC(05)21)**COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME**

1. The policy on the provision of grants to community organisations, most recently updated in October 2020, sets out arrangements for paying grants both on an annual basis to organisations which provide a continuing service to the community and on an occasional basis in response to specific requests for financial support.
2. Annual grants go to village organisations, such as the Parochial Church Council (for churchyard maintenance and to support STaB) and the Village Hall Management Committee, and are confirmed each year when the budget for the coming year is discussed in November. The policy says “The Council may require information on the need for the funding as necessary”.
3. The Parish Council has an obligation to ensure that public funding is used effectively and that value for money is achieved. From published accounts it would appear that the Village Hall finances are currently robust, and it is understood that STaB is now covering the costs of production from advertising income. It would therefore seem to be an appropriate moment to at least ask the question as to whether the grants from the Parish Council are still needed.
4. Grants for 2021/22 are already in the budget for this year and are due to be paid in September. These will, presumably, have been anticipated in budgeting by the organisations concerned. It is therefore not proposed to change those arrangements for this year. However, it would seem appropriate to carry out a consultation on future requirements for financial support before decisions on the Parish Council’s budget for 2022/23 are taken in November.
5. Agreement is therefore sought to a proposal that the Clerk should write to all the organisations in receipt of regular annual funding to ascertain their future needs for support, and to report back in time for the budget for 2022/23 to be set in November.

Mike Ash
Clerk and RFO