

Burbage Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th December 2009 at 7.30pm in Burbage Church Hall

Present - Councillors

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| Susan Gray, Chairman | Gill Terry |
| John Powell, Vice-Chairman | Nick Venters |
| Kevin Copp | Brian Wheeler |
| Martin Hamer | Chris Wheeler |
| Tony Parmenter | |

In attendance

Elizabeth Ngero, Speedwatch Co-ordinator, Wiltshire Police
11 members of the public

Councillor Gray, Chairman to the Parish Council, opened the meeting and welcomed those attending. Members of the public were reminded that they were only permitted to make representations during the adjournment unless specifically invited to do so.

1. Apologies were received from Parish Councillor John Acheson, Wiltshire Councillor Stewart Wheeler and PC Derek Ford, Community Police Officer.
2. Minutes of previous meetings
 - a. Minutes of the Meeting of 10th November were presented for approval. Cllr. C Wheeler and Cllr. G Terry raised objections to wording under paragraph 7.2. The Clerk read Section 7.34 of the Local Government Act 1972 regarding the nature and content of Parish Council Minutes. Cllr. Hamer queried the validity of the legislation given its age. Following extensive discussion, alternative wording was suggested, which was proposed by the Chairman.

A vote was taken by councillors to approve the amendment which was carried, five votes in favour, one vote against, with two abstentions. The minutes were adjusted accordingly.

Cllr. Powell requested an amendment under paragraph 13.1 which was approved; the minutes were adjusted accordingly and passed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

Proposed: Cllr. C. Wheeler, seconded: Cllr. J Powell
 - b. Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of 2nd December were presented for approval and passed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

Proposed: Cllr. J. Powell, seconded: Cllr. C. Wheeler
3. Matters Arising
 - a. Cllr. Hamer, as outgoing Chairman of the Parish Council, presented a report on matters surrounding his reasons for resigning the position. He noted that whilst the role of Chairman granted no particular privileges to the post-holder it did carry with it the legal obligation to be compliant with the law.

He requested it be noted in the Minutes that he did not feel he had the full support of fellow Councillors in achieving this objective; in particular regarding the presence and availability of

accurate budgetary reporting and financial regulations together with the definition of the role of Responsible Financial Officer.

Cllr. Hamer confirmed his commitment to serving the community of Burbage and looked forward to working with the new Chairman.

- b. The Chairman reported that, following speed surveys in the High Street, Wiltshire Council had enquired if the Council wished to have further surveys carried out at other locations around the village.

It was agreed to request surveys in the following areas:

- Ailesbury Way, approaching the school
- Eastcourt Road
- Marlborough Road, just past the 30mph sign at the Northern entrance to the village approaching the Three Horseshoes public house.

The Chairman agreed to write to Wiltshire Council submitting the request.

- c. It was noted that Burbage News was not a matter arising from the previous minutes but had been requested as an additional agenda item. Cllr. Hamer confirmed that he wished to proceed with the discussion despite the absence of the Editor, Cllr. Acheson.

Cllr. Hamer went on to note that Burbage News was funded by the Parish Council and was a vehicle for disseminating information about the council to residents of the village. Concerns were raised by Cllr. Hamer and Cllr. Copp about the editorial policy and content of the minutes published in the paper. It was agreed to note the concerns and add this as an Agenda item for the January meeting of the council to establish a suitable way forward.

4. Declarations of Interest – Cllr. C. Wheeler declared an interest in a matter under Agenda Item 11 regarding an invoice for payment to a company owned by him.
5. The meeting adjourned and the Chairman welcomed Elizabeth Ngero, Community Speedwatch Co-ordinator. Reports were heard from Ms. Ngero and a member of the public regarding the arbour at Manor Farm. Following other discussion matters the meeting reconvened at 8.46pm.
6. Parish Council Vacancies – the Chairman advised the meeting that Cllr. Jeffreys had tendered his resignation. It was suggested that letters of thanks be written to all recently resigned members of the Parish Council.

Proposed: Cllr. Terry

Seconded: Cllr. Powell

The meeting heard that Wiltshire Council had been notified of the vacancies and, following responses from members of the public to the published notices, an election would be held on 11th February 2010. All nominations for said election to completed and returned to Wiltshire Council by 15th January 2010.

7. Vacancy – Clerk to the Council
 - a. The Chairman advised that a job description and contract of employment for the post of Clerk to the Council had been circulated; however it was noted that some Councillors had not received the documents. Cllr. Copp requested clarification whether the role of Responsible

Financial Officer had been embedded in the position; this it was suggested would necessitate alterations to the nature of all documents pertaining to the vacancy.

Other issues including annual leave, sick pay and pension entitlement were raised by Councillors as being in need of careful consideration by the Council as an employer. The January meeting of the Council would consider a job description, contract and other relevant documentation for a combined post of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

8. The Chairman reported that Councillor Stewart Wheeler, Wiltshire Councillor had represented Burbage CP at the last meeting of the Community Area Partnership; no report had yet been received from the meeting.

Cllr. Gray advised that the Transport Sub-Group report concerning Wiltshire Core Strategy would be circulated to Councillors for consideration.

9. Recreation Ground

- a. The Chairman advised the meeting that the final report and assessment from Wicksteed Leisure regarding the condition and safety of the play area at the recreation ground had been received and some matters had already been addressed.

Items of equipment which had been identified as requiring remedial attention included the seat, see-saw, space-whirl and spring mobile at an estimated cost of £2148 + VAT.

Cllr. Powell reported that a meeting of the Recreation Sub-Committee would be convened after Christmas to consider works to the area, including the installation of picnic facilities. He noted that most works identified as High risk in the Wicksteed report had already been undertaken.

Concerns were noted that Wicksteed Leisure, as a supplier of play equipment, may not a fully independent consultant and an alternative consultative resource might be sought in the future. It was further noted that the Council's Public Liability Insurance would be checked to ensure that any works undertaken by members of the Council were covered by relevant insurances.

10. Planning Matters

- a. In response to a question, the Senior Officer of the Planning Committee advised that due to the short timescale surrounding some planning applications it was not always possible for uncontroversial applications to be considered by meetings of the sub-committee.

The meeting considered applications for works under notices:

E/09/1497/LBC at Conifer Cottage,

E/09/1468/LBC at 117 High Street,

E/09/xxxx/FUL at 12 Westcourt

E/09/xxxx/FUL at 11 Westcourt

No objections were raised to any of the applications and it was agreed unanimously that this be conveyed to the planning authority.

The Chairman advised the Council that a letter had been received from Carter Jonas, agents for a proposed planning application at Southgrove Farm inviting Councillors to a meeting on site. It was noted that the intended works did not alter the footprint of the existing development and that

the facility, rearing chickens for egg production would be fully compliant with the latest regulations. The meeting agreed to await the publication of plans by Wiltshire Council and would consider the application accordingly.

- b. Cllr. Gray reported that application E/09/1353/FUL at Harepath Farm had been granted planning consent.

11. Finance Matters

- a. Payments for approval

Cheques to cover expenditure of £48 for 30mph stickers and £60 for anchor kits for village seating were presented.

Cllr. Hamer, after querying whether these were within budgetary estimates, emphasised the need for accurate budget setting and financial reporting. Concerns were raised regarding whether the currently circulated financial spreadsheets were able to give Councillors an accurate picture of committed and available funds and therefore the financial position of the Council.

The meeting agreed to pay the outstanding invoices.

Proposed: Cllr. B. Wheeler

Seconded: Cllr. C. Wheeler

This agenda item continued after Cllr. C. Wheeler left the meeting as notified under Declarations of Interest following discussion of Item 13 on the Agenda.

- b. Payments received

There were no payments received

- c. Balance of Parish Council Account

The balance of the Parish Council Bank Account stood at £6,266.01.

The Chairman reported on funds committed to the end of the financial year.

- d. Financial Reporting

Cllr. Hamer raised concerns that despite repeated requests he had been unable to obtain a copy of the Financial Regulations operated by the Council whilst again commenting on the validity of 35 year old legislation. The Chairman agreed to investigate and would report back to the January meeting of the Council.

Cllr. Hamer requested that the date for the next meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee be published in advance to allow interested Councillors to attend.

- e. Membership of WALC

The Chairman recommended that the Council become members of the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils in order to be kept abreast of and receive advice upon current legislation. It was agreed to obtain a quotation for membership and, if appropriate, commence membership from April 2010.

Proposed: Cllr. Powell

Seconded: Cllr. B. Wheeler

12. Correspondence

Cllr. Powell suggested that letters of thanks be sent to Messrs J. Tilling and S. Last; the meeting agreed.

Cllr. Gray advised the meeting that Grounds Maintenance Services could now be provided by Wiltshire Council; it was agreed to make enquiries following investigation into the current contract. Cllr. Copp queried which areas of land were owned and managed by Sarsen and which by the Council, it was agreed to investigate areas of land ownership.

It was noted that refuse collection schedules for the Christmas and New Year periods would be published shortly.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 11th January at 7.30pm in the Church Hall.

It was noted that this meeting coincides with the next meeting of the Pewsey Area Board.

11.a contd.

Following the departure of Cllr. C. Wheeler, as declared under item 4, the meeting discussed an invoice outstanding for payment from Wheeler Construction Ltd for the sum of £6,472.12 (inclusive of VAT); circa £1,300 of which was in addition to the originally quoted sum.

Cllr. Gray described the additional works undertaken by the firm at the recreation ground, which was in benefit of National Lottery Grant funding. These had not formed part of the original quotation but were found to be necessary for the effective completion of the scheme. It was noted that the invoice, including the additional works, was still less than the next nearest tender for the original installation.

Cllr. Hamer and Cllr. Copp requested that their concerns about the amount sanctioned without full Council approval be noted. It was agreed to review systems and procedures to ensure that any such amendments are subject to satisfactory Council approval in future.

The meeting agreed to pay the invoice.

Proposed: Cllr. B. Wheeler

Seconded: Cllr. T. Parmenter

The meeting closed at 9.58pm.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____