

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WOLSTON PARISH COUNCIL
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM ON THURSDAY 6TH AUGUST 2020 AT 6.00 PM**

All Parish Council meetings will be held virtually via Zoom until further notice, in accordance with Government Regulations.

PRESENT Cllr T Harvey-Smith (Chair), Cllr Miss T Ball, Cllr D Cross, Cllr G Fewkes, Cllr R Grainger, Cllr J Milne, Cllr A Parker, Cllr L Wright, and Mrs M Meede (Clerk).

Plus: Borough Cllr D Poole, Mr T Willis and 3 members of the public. There is currently one Parish Councillor vacancy.

After members of the public and Councillors had been given the opportunity to raise any issues, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending, and the Parish Council meeting commenced at 6:30pm.

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The apologies of Cllr Mrs M White for ill health reasons were approved. The apologies of Cty Cllr Mrs Timms and Borough Councillors A Bearne and Mrs S Bragg were noted.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (existence and nature) for items on the Agenda

No declarations of interest were made for any item on the agenda. The Chairman advised that Councillors could declare an interest later in the meeting should this become apparent for any agenda item.

49. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

All Councillors had been given the opportunity to review the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2020 prior to the Parish Council meeting. Cllr Wright requested that it be noted that a small amendment had been made under delegates reports in relation to wording (decisions changed to discussion) in the minutes of 4th June 2020. The Chairman confirmed that all Councillors had received an amended copy prior to the meeting, that the error was also discussed in the meeting, and the minutes the Chairman signed had been amended prior to the meeting. The amendment was noted by all Councillors.

Following a brief discussion Cllr Wright proposed approving the minutes of 2nd July and the amendment of 4th June 2020, which was seconded by Cllr Grainger and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd July 2020 having been approved for adoption by those who had been present at the meeting, be signed by the Chairman and the amendment to the minutes dated 4th June 2020 be endorsed.

50. PROGRESS REPORT

The progress report was noted.

It was noted that the Secretary for the Village Hall Committee has resigned, and the Chairman confirmed that a suitable replacement will be sought, and the current Secretary is helping the committee with this process. The Chairman has sent a note of thanks to the Secretary for her hard work on behalf of the Parish Council.

The new replacement streetlights are being installed by E-ON, including the streetlight damaged by a vehicle, and once the invoice is received from E-ON this will be sent to the car owners insurance company.

A discussion took place about the skatepark, and the vegetation by the entrance and along the footpath which Councillors consider to be a risk to children playing as it reduces the visibility to the skatepark. It was suggested that the Wilcox Trust be contacted to see if they would allow the Parish Council to clear away some of the vegetation, and this may also help reduce vandalism at this location. The Lengthsman will be asked to cut and remove some of the vegetation within the skatepark boundary fencing.

The drainage problems on the Priory Manor Estate were discussed, and the fact one of the Directors from Bloor Homes is now in contact with the Clerk to try and resolve some of the issues.

Cllr Fewkes arrived at this point in the meeting at 6:42pm and apologised for being late due to technical issues.

51. PLANNING

a) R20/0552 – *Erection of a single storey rear extension at 11 Carthusian Close. CV8 3NE.*

Following a discussion, Cllr Grainger proposed supporting the application subject to neighbour consultation, which was seconded by Cllr Milne and agreed unanimously.

52. CORRESPONDENCE

A letter was read out from the Allotments Association, addressed to the Parish Council Chairman, thanking the Allotment Working Group for their support with getting the best outcome should the allotment land planning applications be successful.

RBC are looking at a query raised by Cllr Miss Ball in relation to residents struggling to get past wheelie bins which are left on a public path all week (the path by Cllr Fewkes' house to Abbots Walk – the path to the Priory).

Queries have been raised with WCC about the footpath from Brandon to Wolston and the small access gap in the bridge wall which those using mobility scooters and pushchairs struggle to get through. This is being followed up.

53. FINANCE

Councillors reviewed and discussed the accounts for payment and considered payments received.

a) To approve accounts for payment in July 2020.

Date Issued	To whom payable	For what purpose	Cheque No	Gross Amount
03/07/2020	Mr P Owen	Lock, strimmer head, fuel	105908	£111.12
03/07/2020	WALC	Training - Cllr Grainger	105909	£30.00
03/07/2020	Rugby Pest Control	Mole Control	105910	£72.00
03/07/2020	Mrs M Meede	Stamps, Zoom (June), adhesive glue	105911	£61.39
03/07/2020	EON	Streetlight repair (St Margaret's Ave)	105912	£46.80
17/07/2020	Mr A Parker	Bedding plants and pots	105913	£69.69
17/07/2020	Lakeside	Grass Cutting June	105914	£960.00
17/07/2020	EON	Streetlight Maintenance	105915	£735.05
17/07/2020	EON	Streetlight repairs (Priory Rd)	105916	£34.80
17/07/2020	WALC	Training - Cllr Miss Ball x 4 and Cllr Fewkes x 1	105917	£174.00
17/07/2020	Mr P Dixon	Fence repairs - Dyers Lane play area	105918	£70.00
17/07/2020	Shell Energy Retail Ltd	Broadband/phone	105919	£30.55
21/07/2020	Parish Council Employees x 5	Staff Salaries	105920-4	£2,607.28
21/07/2020	HMRC	PAYE	105925	£361.39
21/07/2020	WCC Pension Fund	LGPS	105926	£348.79
21/07/2020	EON	Streetlight Electricity	105927	£1,370.87
21/07/2020	Water Plus Ltd	Water Supply Pavilion	105928	£24.65
				£7,108.38

Following a brief review Cllr Milne proposed supporting the accounts for payment, which was seconded by Cllr Fewkes and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: The accounts, as listed above, be approved.

b) To consider payments received in July 2020. - There were no payments received to note.

54. PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY

The Chairman explained that Sonya Cross had resigned from her position as Councillor on the Parish Council. He said the Parish Council were sorry to lose Sonya and wished for thanks to be recorded for her time and service, and he understood why she felt she could not continue at the current time.

A draft advert and person specification (model NALC document) had been sent to all Councillors on a couple of occasions, and it was agreed to extend the advert deadline date to Friday 4th September 2020. A brief discussion about the 'recruitment and selection' process took place, including the fact the candidates names would not be made public and the decision would be taken by secret ballot. Once the candidate is selected, they may be asked to do a brief presentation/introduce themselves at the Parish Council meeting after their selection, so that members of public can 'meet' them if they wish. Following a discussion, Cllr Wright proposed that the vacancy and person specification be advertised, which was seconded by Cllr Miss Ball and all Councillors were in favour.

RESOLVED: For the Parish Council vacancy to be advertised.

55. RESIDENTS REPORTING ISSUES TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr Wright stated he was concerned about resident's names being given in meetings and recorded in the minutes. It was noted that names are never put in the minutes and the agenda item specified that names would not be given in meetings unless requested by the resident. The Clerk confirmed that people are only ever named if they are in an official capacity (such as representing a group or organisation). Cllr Cross noted that Councillors names are in the public domain, but the Chairman confirmed this was because Councillors signed up to being on the Parish Council and part of this meant Councillors names were in the public domain.

Following a discussion Cllr Wright proposed that the status quo should remain, which was seconded by the Chairman and the motion was passed.

RESOLVED: For residents who report issues to an individual Councillor to remain anonymous.

56. ALLOTMENT WORKING GROUP REVIEW OF MEMBERS

Cllr Wright said he had concerns about the allotment land lease and queried discussions which had taken place about the lease. It was explained that the only discussions so far in relation to the lease had been between the Allotments Association and Godfrey-Payton, as the Allotments Association had raised queries about the length of lease and had requested a rent holiday due to the uncertainty. The Parish Council has so far raised no queries about the lease and so correspondence about the lease has been between the Allotments Association and Godfrey-Payton. However, Councillors have been aware of the queries raised by the Allotments Association through their attendance at joint meetings, and from updates in Parish Council meetings and Working Group meeting notes. The Chairman also confirmed that no decisions have been made in relation to the lease, and the lease has not been rescinded – and so the lease is still currently in place. Cllr Wright wanted to know if the Working Group had been involved with changing the lease, and Cllr Milne reiterated that the Working Group had not been involved with creating a new lease, but felt a new lease would be similar to the old lease but with reduced rent (due to land size) and for a longer term. The draft Heads of Terms had been sent to the Allotments Association by Godfrey-Payton via the Parish Council to see if they had any other areas for concern, but it was confirmed that if a new lease was produced it would be sent to the Allotments Association and all Parish Councillors. If the Allotments Association are happy with the terms of any new/amended lease, it would be down to the Parish Council to agree and endorse any changes/a new lease as appropriate, before the lease is sent to the Parish Council Solicitor. Cllr Wright also raised concerns about the loss of open space and trading shed.

Cllr Miss Ball noted that Cllr Milne had declared an interest in the Allotments Land agenda item at the last Parish Council meeting, and she wanted to confirm for the record that there was no conflict. The Chairman stated there was no conflict and being an honorary member had no more influence or authority than associate members, who would have no influence or voting rights within the Allotments Association. Cllr Miss Ball explained that she was not sure what being an Honorary member would mean and had therefore wanted clarity on the matter. Being an Honorary Member is normally awarded to a member of an Association who has served that Association with dedication and service over many years and they have no voting rights or any involvement or participation in the running of the organisation. It is simply a way of saying ‘thank you’ for past service.

Cllr Wright proposed that, in light of the information received today and the letter from the Allotments Association, the current membership of the Allotment Working Group should remain unchanged. This was seconded by Cllr Parker and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: For the Allotment Working Group membership to remain the same.

57. LAND AGENT FOR THE ALLOTMENT LAND

Cllr Wright stated that the Parish Council had sought professional advice in the early stages of the allotment land planning process, and he felt it would be amiss to not to take advice from a Land Agent on such an important issue like the allotment land lease. He doesn't feel the current rent is fair or reasonable, and so wants a Land Agent to argue on behalf of the Parish Council and the village. Cllr Grainger agreed that instructing a Land Agent would be beneficial, but felt that it was too early to do this now, but that it may be too late to do once a decision has been made on the planning application as the agenda item suggests.

A discussion took place and Cllr Wright then proposed that a Land Agent be instructed which was seconded by Cllr Grainger. A recorded vote was requested.

Cllr Fewkes made an amendment to Cllr Wright's proposal, proposing that a Land Agent should be instructed once the draft lease is received. This was seconded by Cllr Cross, and Cllr Milne, the Chairman, Cllr Cross, Cllr Fewkes, Cllr Parker and Cllr Miss Ball were in agreement. Cllr Grainger abstained and Cllr Wright was against the proposal.

A further discussion took place before a vote on the substantive motion took place. Some Councillors felt that the decision on a Land Agent should wait until the decision was made by RBC in relation to the planning applications, but Cllr Grainger again said this was too restrictive as it may be too late. He wanted the Parish Council to be in a position to proceed with negotiations as soon as was necessary, and he felt the previous proposals would not allow this. Cllr Wright and Cllr Fewkes agreed and their previous proposals were withdrawn and retracted.

Cllr Grainger proposed that a Land Agent be instructed to assist the Parish Council in rental negotiations with the Trustees of the Allotment land as and when appropriate. This was seconded by Cllr Wright and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: For a Land Agent to be instructed to act on behalf of the Parish Council and assist the Parish Council with rental negotiations with the Trustees of the Allotment land as and when appropriate.

58. CHRISTMAS 2020

A discussion took place about the tree, and it was agreed that Councillors Grainger, Parker and Milne should select the tree from Cadeby Tree Trust again and arrange for the tree to be installed. The budget was confirmed. Cllr Miss Ball mentioned that the Christmas Light Switch on Event (in some form or another) was being organised for Saturday 5th December 2020.

New lights along Main Street should be put up this year. Cllr Wright mentioned that residents had offered the use of a cherry picker to assist with getting the tree up and decorative lights on the tree as long as they are given enough notice. This was noted along with thanks to the residents.

Cllr Grainger proposed purchasing a tree with installation, which was seconded by Cllr Miss Ball and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: For a Christmas tree with installation to be ordered as soon as possible.

59. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP) DRAFT PLAN

The Chairman gave a brief summary of the meeting with the NDP where the draft plan was presented. He stated that he found the presentation very useful, informative and comprehensive, and was really pleased with the work the NDP Working Group had been doing. He praised the work that had gone into the document, and was pleased the NDP Working Group recognised that the Parish Council supported their work. Councillors were reminded that the 13th August 2020 was the deadline for submitting comments on the draft plan to the NDP.

Cllr Wright noted that the Parish Council supported both the proposed Local Green Spaces (LGS) designation within the plan and also the allotment land planning application, and he felt these issues contradicted each other. The Chairman stated that neither the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group nor the Parish Council were in a position to rescind either decision at the moment as both were still valid. Cllr Grainger agreed with the Chairman and stated that if the advice from Avon Planning Services is that a change needs to be made, the decision is one that the NDP Working Group should make, and not the Parish Council. Cllr Grainger continued, confirming that in his opinion the proposal for Local Green Spaces designation needs to remain within the plan for the moment so that if the allotment land planning application is refused by RBC then this aspect is still part of the plan. He therefore felt it was too early for the NDP to withdraw the proposed designation of the allotments site as a LGS until the decision on the planning applications has been made.

60. PLANTING AND PLANTERS IN THE VILLAGE

Cllr Miss Ball mentioned that a number of residents complimented the new flowers on the tree guard. Councillors agreed it made a difference to the centre of the village. Cllr Parker gave thanks to Cllr Milne who has been watering the planters, and also other residents who have been helping to look after them. A discussion took place about adding additional planters to the tree guard, and it was decided that these should be funded by the Parish Council this year. In future years it may be possible that the Millstone and/or War Memorial Gardeners may take responsibility for them, or other residents who wish to get involved.

Cllr Milne proposed purchasing more planters and plants for autumnal flowers. This was seconded by the Chairman and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: For Cllr Milne and Cllr Parker to arrange for additional planters and plants to be put on the tree guard this year.

A discussion took place about the Lime tree which had fallen down, and the fact WCC agreed to ensure the ground was clear of disease before another tree is planted. The Clerk agreed to chase this up with the WCC Arboriculture Officer.

61. ROADS AND FOOTPATHS

Councillors discussed the new reporting methods which have made it easier for residents and Councillors alike to report issues around the village, including potholes and footpath issues. The Clerk noted that WCC have a scheme whereby they can assist local volunteers who want to maintain or report issues to WCC. Councillors agreed that this should be followed up and volunteers sought. Cllr Wright noted that a resident has been clearing vegetation off stiles to keep them clear, Councillors said they appreciated this as it would be a great help to residents.

62. DOG FOULING

Cllr Miss Ball reported that dog fouling was still a problem in the village, and there had been more comments about it during lockdown – perhaps because more people were staying local. It was noted that the new signs on the play areas ask for dogs to be kept on leads around the play areas – which is following Government guidance during the current pandemic to try and maintain social distancing by ensuring dogs don't run off around the play areas and come into contact with children (so the children and adults then do not have to come into contact).

A discussion took place about the possibility of having a fenced off area specifically for dogs within the playing field. It was noted however that without a PSPO dogs could be off leads in the whole of the playing field/recreation ground, and so the few irresponsible dog owners who are likely to be causing the issues would be allowing their dogs to foul around the play area. Without a PSPO there would be no powers to stop this, and there is no guarantee dog owners would use the fenced off area. Cllr Cross noted that fenced off areas can be abused and difficult to keep clean. The Clerk advised that she had spoken to RBC who said there were issues with fenced off areas if no PSPO is in place and had suggested that the village starts a Volunteer Dog Warden scheme (non-confrontational) which they would be willing to assist with. The Clerk also reported that a dog fouling stencil had been purchased to remind dog owners to bag and bin their dog mess in the village 'hot spot' areas.

RESOLVED: For the Clerk to get more information about the Volunteer Dog Warden scheme and for a request for volunteers to be advertised.

63. DELEGATES REPORTS

The NDP had been discussed in the Public Forum part of the meeting.

- a) Allotments Working Group – Due to time constraints, Cllr Milne agreed to send a written report to Councillors after the meeting.
- b) Ling Hall Quarry – Cllr Fewkes advised that the next meeting had been postponed due to the coronavirus. Cllr Wright raised queries about if the solar panels would be installed, and Cllr Fewkes confirmed that it was a financial and funding issue which the committee was still looking into. Cllr Fewkes agreed to report the concerns to the Ling Hall committee and a letter to the MP.
- c) Wolston Leisure and Community Centre (WLCC) – Cllr Fewkes provided an update, including the fact a grant had been received by WLCC, and the centre was now open and complying with Government guidelines on social distancing and use of the gym.
- d) Smith's Quarry – Cllr Parker provided an update, and noted that the quarry were complying with guidelines and also still liaising with the relevant people such as animal welfare. Cllr Wright reported that the white lines on the road had been worn out from the road cleaner, and Cllr Parker agreed to report this to the committee.

64. INFORMATION FOR UPLOADING TO THE VILLAGE WEBSITE

Cllr Grainger appreciates Councillors providing him with information and articles for the website as soon as they are available – rather than waiting for the Parish Council meetings.

- Parish Council Vacancy -Volunteer Dog Wardens and Footpath Team
- Web-links to WCC reporting site

65. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Vegetation clearance at the entrance to the skate park (to increase visibility)
- Remembrance Sunday

66. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Chairman asked that in accordance with Paragraph 1 (2) of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Parish Council is invited to Resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following agenda item owing to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and the public interest would not be served in disclosing that information. The exclusion is on the grounds that items of business to be discussed are likely to include staffing and Human Resource issues - which should be treated as confidential and are exempt from disclosure.

RESOLVED: For members of the public still present to be asked to leave the meeting at this point.

67. HUMAN RESOURCES AND STAFFING MATTER

The Chairman gave an update on behalf of the HR Working Group, including information about staff salaries and the work undertaken by the Lengthsman and the Clerk – especially during the current pandemic. Thanks

were given to all staff for carrying out work in a Covid-compliant manner. Information was also provided about the need for the Parish Council and all Councillors to understand their responsibilities as a good employer, and the Working Group were looking at policies that may be relevant for the Parish Council. No other issues raised under this agenda item.

68. DATE OF NEXT MEETING/S

The Chairman confirmed that the next Parish Council meeting will take place on Thursday 3rd September 2020 via zoom. If an interim meeting is required, an agenda will be issued to Councillors and put on the website three clear days before the meeting is held.

As there were no further items on the Agenda the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:50 pm.

Signed:..... Chairman

Date:

Notes on the Public Forum and Parish Matters held during the Parish Council Meeting on 6th August 2020

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited representations from all who were present.

Borough Cllr Poole has reported the rubbish which is being left by the viaduct and river by Bluemels to the Environment Officer, and he is still awaiting a response. He also advised that fly tipping continues to be reported, and the Rural Crime Team are working hard and have had positive results in recovering stolen property. Cllr Poole advised that the Borough Council are looking to get back to work in early September, with a staged return and staggered working times likely.

A discussion took place about the bollard that had been requested at the end of Larchfields to stop vehicles driving up the path and on public grass. A resident has been in contact with Cty Cllr Mrs Timms about the matter but has not had a response as yet – Cllr Poole agreed to chase this up. It was noted that the Parish Council could supply a bollard, but it would have to be approved and installed by WCC.

Cllr Miss Ball reported that there was a lot of vegetation growing in the William Cree Close play area and also the skate park. Both areas are currently closed but it is hoped the skate park will be opened soon, and so the Lengthsman will be cutting the grass and vegetation back.

Mr T Willis then provided an update on the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). The highlight report is available for viewing on the village NDP website (www.wolstoneighbourhoodplan.co.uk) or from the Parish Council Clerk. Mr Willis reported that the draft plan had been reviewed by Avon Planning Services and the team had been commended for their hard work and diligence. The Chairman agreed you could see the work that had gone into the plan and the dedication needed by the team to produce a quality draft plan. Mr Willis explained that some work was still required, but on behalf of the NDP Working Group he expressed his thanks to the Parish Council for the ongoing support and spirit of collaboration shown. The Chairman again agreed that the recent meeting had been constructive and reminded Councillors to get their comments on the plan to the NDP by 13th August. Councillors thanked the NDP Working Group again for their work.

Cllr Wright asked Cllr Poole to look into the issue of vegetation on the bridge from Wolston to Brandon, as it was causing an obstruction, and Cllr Poole agreed to look into the concerns.

Cllr Wright also noted that the telephone box in the village was dirty and in need of a clean. The Clerk agreed to ask the Lengthsman to act on this matter.

As there were no further questions, the Chairman closed the public forum part of the meeting and all Councillors agreed to start the Parish Council meeting at 6:30pm.

Note: Borough Councillor D Poole and Mr T Willis (NDP) gave their apologies and left the meeting at this point.

Signed.....